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Natural regeneration of senescent even-aged beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) stands under the conditions of Central Bohemia

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The natural regeneration of beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) was studied under various shelterwood densities and silvicultural treatments in senescent beech stands in Central Bohemia. Four permanent research plots differed in shelterwood density, crown cover and average relative light intensities. Between 2003 and 2007, seed production, seedling emergence and survival were followed. The mean density of beech seeds (full and empty) per 1 m² was estimated in another forest stand. In the autumn of 2003 the values were distinctly higher than those indicated for full mast years of beech. Despite high losses during the wintering of seeds, relatively low germination and high first-season mortality, the high density of 1-year-old beech seedlings indicates that these elements are not the factors which hinder natural regeneration. The thickness of the humus horizons influenced the density of young beech seedlings during all the three years. Ground vegetation was more frequent outside the crown projections of parent trees and increased with distance from the nearest tree. A reduction of crown cover to the level of 80% was an appropriate measure that assured the high survival of beech regeneration during the observed four-year period. Border cutting with the outer face oriented towards the east has to be considered as less suitable for beech regeneration than shelterwood systems and group selection harvesting.

Keywords:

Fagus sylvatica L.; natural regeneration; stand density; seedling survival; mortality; Voděrády Beechwoods

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