

# EUCALYPTS OR BLACKWOOD

## How to plant a Shelterbelt

A shelterbelt or screen of native species is perhaps just the thing your overall farm program needs.

If you can decide to go ahead, remember that what you do in your plantation in the first two years will virtually determine whether it flourishes or just gets by. The greater the care and effort now, the greater the rewards later. Just as it is for other farm crops.

The exact details of planning and growing native trees vary from place to place, because no two sites are the same – soils, climate, and aspect of the land, all these things vary, some places have been cleared of their natural vegetation, others treated with fertiliser. If you are in doubt as to whether an area is suitable for growing trees you should consult the Private Forests Tasmania in your region who will be more than willing to advise.

### **Ground Preparation**

What type of land have you decided to plant with trees – land carrying timber, waste land or bracken scrub, or a grassed area? Whatever the case total land clearing before planting is desirable for a number of reasons:

- Planting becomes easier, quicker and cheaper
- Seedlings will not have to compete with other vegetation
- Wildlife shelter is temporarily reduced
- After clearing it is possible to cultivate (and so get better drainage and root growth)

### **Ordering and receiving plants**

The Forestry Tasmania's Forest Nursery at Perth grows Eucalyptus and Blackwood, and open rooted Pine for winter planting. Orders should be placed by August for the following winter's stock. Small orders can generally be filled, depending on availability.

**Open rooted** stock will be received in cartons and should be planted within 48 hours of leaving the Nursery:

- Keep the seedlings sheltered and the roots moist and cool
- If planting is delayed, the seedlings should be temporarily planted in loose soil, eg: a vegetable garden.

**Containerised stock** will be received in waxed cartons, which contains approximately 150 seedlings. They should be transported under cover to prevent damage and drying out by wind

- Cartons containing seedlings should be kept moist and shaded but not in a shed
- Plant as soon as possible to achieve the best results.

## **When to plant**

### **Open rooted stock**

Planting should not normally commence until June, when soils are likely to have sufficient moisture. At this time of the year, the seedlings have the best chance of survival because they are dormant.

On very exposed and cold sites, and frost hollows, some shelter from bracken may be beneficial. Planting in August will also increase survival in such situations.

### **Spacing and row direction**

Recommended spacings are as follows:-

Eucalyptus – seedlings each 2.5 metres (8 feet) along rows 4 metres (13 feet) apart.

This corresponds to 1000 trees per hectare.

## **Planting**

### **Open rooted –**

To prevent roots from drying out a number of precautions should be taken:

- Carry the plants in a bag
- Preferably plant on dull, overcast days, when there is no wind
- The planting tool is a V-shaped spade, the diagram shows the method. Flick the roots into the hole to ensure that they lie properly.

The plant in the ground should:

- Be upright
- Be firm, the soil is pushed down with the foot so illuminating any air pockets
- Have roots lying in their natural position without being turned or so tangled
- Have soil loosened on all sides
- Be positioned in the mound of a plough line, or to the side of a rip line.

## **Fertilising**

Your planting area may or may not need fertilising, you will need to seek professional advice on this matter. However, it is standard practise on most sites to apply a mixture of superphosphate and urea in the ratio of 5:2. It is applied using a bucket and cup, the cup having been cut to hold 175g of the mixed fertiliser, ie. 125g 'super' and 50g of urea. There are premixed fertilisers on the market that can be used, but it is recommended that you seek advice on suitable composition and quantity for your soil. Fertiliser should be placed as a lump 15 cm (6 in) away from the base of the seedling on the downhill side. Timing is important. Apply fertiliser when the seedling begins to grow 2 or 3 months after planting your seedlings.

## **Tending**

You can be sure that other vegetation will grow as well as your planted seedlings. If the competing vegetation robs seedlings of nutrition, space, light or water, it may be to be cut back after one or two years. If the competing vegetation is grass, this should be sprayed with herbicide, ensuring that spray do not drift onto desirable seedlings.

## **Control of stock, rabbits and game**

When establishing planted areas stock must be fenced out completely. Months of labour and hundreds of dollars can be lost in a moment. Have at least one gate in your fence to allow easy access in and out of the area. How long is this protection needed? Cattle will need to be kept out for at least 5 years, sheep 2 or 3 years.

Rabbits can be excluded by netting fences. If it is not possible to construct a fence, shooting may be the only option.

Brush possums and wallabies are protected wildlife and may not be destroyed without a permit from the Director of National Parks and Wildlife service. Conventional and/or electric fences will reduce the likelihood of damage. Spotlight shooting is a possible control technique subject to the issue of a permit.

If you think the game damage is likely to be a problem in the woodlot, contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service either in:

**Hobart:** 6233 5732

or

**Launceston:** 6336 5312

And arrange for an inspection of your property by a wildlife ranger. Ideally, this inspection should take place while the project is being planned. In this way the most effective control techniques can be selected and put into operation before, or as soon as, damage is noticed.

Private Forest Division exists to help you, the private landowner, to grow better trees at higher profits. Help us to help you – if you have any queries, contact us.

### **Private Forests Tasmania**

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