



Increasingly, property owners are expressing interest in growing native tree species as street trees, park trees, shelter-belt plantings, wildlife habitat zones, riparian restoration corridors, and, occasionally, as farm forestry projects.

There is little regional information available on urban forestry/farm forestry projects incorporating rainforest cabinet timber trees, and land-holders embarking on such a project locally would be pioneering this land use.

As much cabinet timber was logged from the Lower Hunter previously, it is reasonable to assume that local species such as Red Cedar, White Beech, and Rosewood would grow well, but whether a farm forest could replicate the growing conditions of the original rainforest is debatable- mainly because it hasn't been tried.

Further north, in areas around the Big Scrub remnants in Northern NSW and Southern Queensland, some preliminary work has been done, and some useful information can be found on a few web-sites:

- <http://www.mitchellsforestfarming.com.au>
- <http://www.dorrigonursery.com/555eh.html>
- <http://www.bigscrubrainforest.org.au>
- <http://www.brisrain.webcentral.com.au>

The Big Scrub Rainforest Landcare Group also has a manual entitled “**Subtropical Rainforest Restoration**”, which has plenty of useful information in it.

It may also be worth searching on the Forests NSW and the Master Tree Grower's site to see whether there is any more recent information there.

Local species that would be worth trying are:

- *Acacia melanoxylon* - Blackwood
- *Alphitonia excelsa* - Red Ash
- *Ceratopetalum apetalum* - Coachwood
- *Dysoxylum fraserianum* - Rosewood
- *Gmelina leichhardtii* - White Beech
- *Pararchidendron pruinosum* - Snowwood
- *Podocarpus elatus* - Plum Pine
- *Polyscias elegans* - Celerywood
- *Synoum glandulosum* - Scentless Rosewood
- *Toona ciliata* - Red Cedar



Alphitonia excelsa



Dysoxylum fraserianum

Many of these trees would make excellent large landscape plantings in streetscapes and parklands, but would probably have to be planted as advanced plants in such open environments.

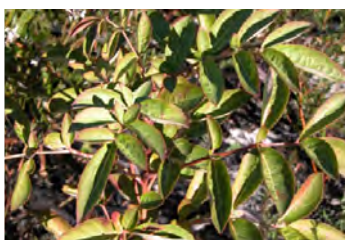
On private properties, there is the opportunity to incorporate these cabinet timber species either into existing remnant vegetation if site conditions are suitable, or as mixed plantation plantings in cleared paddock sites. Both the Dorrigo Nursery web-site and the Mitchell's Forest Farming System web-site suggest suitable models for such plantation systems based on plant-spacings of 3 metres x 3 metres grids.

These structured planting systems would involve using more hardy species, like *Acacia melanoxylon* Blackwood and Eucalypt species like *Eucalyptus microcorys* Tallowwood, *Eucalyptus saligna* Sydney Bluegum and *Corymbia maculata* Spotted Gum, on the edges as windbreaks, and within the plantation to protect more sensitive species from frost and wind damage. The Blackwood and Eucalypts could be thinned or harvested earlier to allow full growth of the mature phase rainforest species.

Other planting models are less structured, and attempt to mimic the natural rainforest systems, where pioneer species with no commercial value, such as *Omalanthus nutans* Bleeding Heart and *Trema aspera* Poison Peach, are interspersed with commercial cabinet timber species. Rob Kooyman, in association with the Big Scrub Rainforest Landcare Network, has been trialing these planting models for the last 10 to 15 years in Northern NSW.

'Rob is a firm believer in close spacings. Forestry is all about site control and canopy must be formed as soon as possible to control grasses. Trees with grass in them are not a forest... If a planting can mimic the natural forest processes that occur in rainforest gaps - the rapid appearance and growth of pioneer and primary species - then all the trees will encourage each other to strive for the light resources. The tightly packed stems competing for the light leaves little room for the development of side stems so that in a woodlot situation there would be little need for side pruning. Rob suggests that the initial cost of planting trees at a denser spacing would easily be compensated for by the benefits of minimal maintenance with canopy closing in, perhaps, 3 years and by little stem training. Even Red Cedars, Rob says, can be grown successfully in such a planting where side shading will keep even a Tip Moth affected tree growing straight. Large spacings can have a never-ending cycle of maintenance with the real possibility of eventually losing control of the planting.'

Ken Dorey, Big Scrub Rainforest Landcare Newsletter



Polyscias elegans



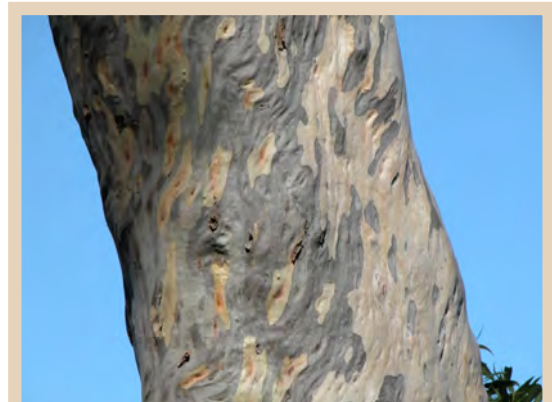
Synoum glandulosum



Toona ciliata

It is likely that some of the cabinet timber species grown further north would also grow well in the Hunter Region. An assessment would need to be made of their weed potential if grown near existing rainforest remnants, but some species to trial could include the following:

- *Agathis robusta* - Kauri Pine
- *Araucaria cunninghamiana* - Hoop Pine
- *Castanospermum australe* - Black Bean, Moreton Bay Chestnut
- *Elaeocarpus grandis* - Blue Quandong
- *Flindersia australis* - Crows Ash
- *Flindersia brayleyana* - Queensland Maple
- *Flindersia schottiana* - Cudgerie, Silver Ash
- *Grevillea robusta* - Silky Oak



Corymbia maculata

The implications of growing rainforest cabinet timber trees as a commercial enterprise in line with the new Native Vegetation Act, and Property Vegetation Plans is not simply explained, and landowners who are considering such a project locally would be well advised to search the Native Vegetation website (<http://nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au>), and to contact the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority for clarification of any regulatory requirements.



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