

At Woodlea you can see the forest for the trees

Woodlea Nursery, Tasmania

There is an ongoing tussle between green groups and forest groups in Tasmania, but one nursery specialising in reforestation has both groups on its side.

Woodlea Nursery was established in 1979 to grow Eucalypts for reforestation, one of only four main forestry nurseries in Tasmania. Woodlea has since extended its growing stock to include grape vines.

The nursery produces around 7 million Eucalypt trees a year – of three varieties - and holds the tube-stock for about nine months. Up to 4 million trees are sold to the mainland states of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. It sells mostly to forestry organisations and private farmers, however anyone who wants to plant trees can buy from Woodlea.

The main lines grown are for timber, land care and revegetation, plus there are some assorted trees and shrubs for hedges and windbreaks.

While grapevines make up only about 8% of the current turnover, Woodlea was the first Tasmanian nursery to receive Vine Industry Nursery Accreditation.

All those facts present a picture of a typical specialised nursery.

However it is the nursery's work in revegetation that has both green groups and forestry groups on its side. And in Tasmania that's something!

Tasmanian farmers and ordinary landowners have come to recognise that trees are a good way of reducing the amount of carbon being produced.

Taking care of the environment

Woodlea has a number of measures in place to ensure their footprint on the land does not cause damage.

Steam sterilising has replaced chlorine for cleaning pots and trays. Irrigation run-off is collected, filtered, treated and reused and any natural runoff is filtered through wetlands and paddocks.

Much of Woodlea's sensible approach to water management has come from staff who have attended Waterwise courses and have used that knowledge to review and modify the nursery's irrigation design and application.



Forest Enterprises Australia staff, Greg and Sven, inspect Woodlea Nursery's healthy, weather-hardened, ready-to-plant seedlings. Fans in the background are temperature activated to manage frosts during the hardening-off process

The nursery is also proactive with the Wetland & Recycle Project, a local initiative to preserve and protect water quality and surrounding catchments.

Such is the nursery's commitment to reforestation and revegetation, it has an 11 year old Demonstration Plantation of Timber Species that is used by individuals and tour groups.

Even tough trees need tender care

Eucalypts may be a tough species but, like any plant, they require correct levels of fertilising when young to achieve strong growth. Woodlea uses Osmocote Exact Mini and Peters Peat Lite Special in combination. Osmocote is used for a base load and the liquid feed is used to fine-tune growth rates.

During winter, the mix may alter to include higher rates of potassium, being better suited to produce trees with strong survival attributes against frost and fungal attacks. Osmocote is an important component in the nursery's fertilising program. In heavy Tasmanian rain, Osmocote remains stable, continuing to release over a long period, with very little leaching.

If producing 7 million Eucalypts a year is not enough to keep Woodlea busy, the nursery has a strategic alliance with the Pinot Noir Growers Network to develop further grape vine clones, being the only accredited independent supplier in Tasmania to the vineyard industry.