



An Eye for the Future: 2018 NSW Tree Farmer of the Year

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Tony Kenway of Coorabell NSW is the winner of the 2018 Australian Forest Growers NSW Tree Farmer of the Year award for his mixed plantations of sub-tropical cabinet timber species throughout the Big Scrub area of the North Coast. The Big Scrub is an area of 75,000 hectares between Byron Bay, Lismore and Ballina.

The plantation has created quite a lot of interest and Tony's company Building Forest Designs is now responsible for about 220 ha of cabinet timber reforestation across five sites within the Big Scrub area. These plantings demonstrate excellence in farm planning, the adoption of farm forestry principles, innovation and leadership - all of which are critical considerations for the award.

Foresters will generally select trees of good form, rapid growth, with small branches and gentle taper. As an internationally recognised cabinet maker, Tony, was keen to ensure that the species selected would yield high-quality cabinet timbers. He also consulted widely with many foresters and timber workers to finalise his list.

It was decided that the planting would be with a species mixture. Tony said, 'There is little information on how to design a mixed species planting as most large plantations are established as monocultures'.

'There is a valid reason for this as all management and records can be limited to one species. However, when two or more species are used, challenges arise as to how to treat each individual species in relation to adjacent trees and other species'

'Each species will have different growth rates, canopy shapes, and water and nutrient requirements and there will be differences in their tolerance to competing trees and weeds.

'It is also likely that management operations such as pruning and thinning will be different for each species. So it is easy to say let us have a mixed species plantation but there will be many managerial challenges ahead that few will have encountered before.

'I am so pleased to be awarded the NSW AFG Tree Farmer of the Year and to assist with the promotion of agroforestry. I'd like to thank Australian Forest Growers for the award and the Forestry Corporation of NSW for sponsoring the competition', said Tony.

Contacts

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