



Farm Forestry in the Adelaide Hills/Fleurieu Peninsula

PROTECTING YOUR FOREST PLANTATION FROM FIRE

John Pratt, Forestry Development Officer

Forest plantations and fire



Forest fires can range from slow-moving flames that may not damage older well-managed trees to “crown” fires which leave only charred stems and branches. While many eucalypts may recover, growth and timber values will be reduced.

In South Australia the greatest risk of bushfires occurs between late spring and autumn. Most fire prevention works should be carried out prior to this period each year.

Each landowner has an obligation to prevent fires. Section 40(2) of the Country Fires Act requires that *“the owner of private land in the country must take reasonable steps to protect property on the land from fire and to prevent or inhibit the outbreak of fire on the land, or the spread of fire through the land”*.

This Farm Forestry Note briefly outlines what can be done when planning and managing a plantation to reduce the risk of fire damage.

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For good fire prevention locate a plantation:

- where there is ready access
- where fire burning through the plantation will not unduly threaten the assets of the owner or neighbours
- set back from roadsides or other likely fire origins to give room for effective fuelbreaks
- where the best protection measures can be taken against fire coming from the most likely directions.

A good plantation lay-out will provide:

- individual blocks or “compartments” not greater than 25 ha in area
- safe drive-through access for large fire vehicles. Remove lower branches alongside tracks if necessary. Clearly sign all “blind” access tracks and provide a turn-around at the end.
- passing bays at least every 400 metres apart on tracks too narrow for large fire vehicles to safely pass.
- as a minimum, powerline clearances specified in ETSA Regulations.



Read the rest of the series

- FFN 1/98 *Introduction to farm forestry in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula*
- FFN 2/98 *Farm Forestry: Frequent questions and common myths*
- FFN 3/98 *Farm Forestry: Establishment Guidelines*
- FFN 4/98 *Woodlots and wided spaced agroforestry for the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula*
- FFN 5/98 *Timberbelts*
- FFN 6/98 *Pruning guidelines for farm forestry*
- FFN 7/98 *Firewood growing in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula*
- FFN 8/98 *Farm Forestry species for the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula*

Enquire as to more recent publications

Good fire prevention plans and works will:

- reduce fuel quantity or modify fuels to increase the likelihood of successful attacks on fire
- suit the particular type of forest — *eg* whether eucalypt or pine, wide or close-spaced plantings. (In pine plantations some pruning of branches on the edges to reduce the risk of crown fire may be worth-while.)
- mesh with your local council's District Bushfire Prevention Plans and neighbours' measures
- be discussed with your local Council Fire Prevention Officer
- use all opportunities to reduce grassy fuels by grazing
- include an effective fuelbreak surrounding each plantation (*ie* a band which may be heavily grazed or slashed including a bare-earth strip)
- ensure a good water supply for fire fighting — preferably from an overhead supply point
- ensure fire fighting equipment is on hand.

Other good precautions:

- arrange for your local CFS brigade members to visit the property to become familiar with the layout, access and conditions of the plantation
- arrange special training for anyone likely to be involved in forest fire suppression
- take out plantation insurance, especially until trees reach sawlog size (when they can be salvaged in the event of fire).

For further information contact:

- your local Council Fire Prevention Officer, or nearest CFS Regional Office
- ETSA Corporation re powerline clearances – Ph (08) 8292 0143 or (08) 8292 0221
- Australian Forest Growers – Adelaide: Ph Bus (08) 8223 2066 or a/h (08) 8223 7943; Mt Gambier (08) 8725 2166

Farmtree\$ for the Mount Lofty Ranges: A Regional Agroforestry Handbook by Peter Bulman, Primary Industries and Resources SA 1995.

Available from PIRSA offices, State Tree Centre, State Flora outlets, Mount Lofty Ranges Catchment Resource Centre (Mount Barker) and community landcare resource centres.

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