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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Farm Forestry Tips – Planting**

With the winter rains, sunny days and cool moist air, planting your commercial tree crop in July provides a fantastic start to your working trees life. A well managed timber plantation is a great way of diversifying farm income and providing an investment for retirement. A timber plantation can also provide shade and shelter for stock and an array of environmental benefits.

Good management starts well before the trees are planted. At this stage, soil cultivation, weed control and browsing animal control should be completed so that the site is ready for planting.

Good planting techniques will improve survival, growth and tree vigour, in turn, improving your returns and bringing forward your harvest event.

For the best results for your farm forestry plantation adhere to the following tree planting principles:-

**Transport** seedlings in a covered vehicle to prevent windburn and drying of the foliage.

**Plant** trees in the rip line or in deeply cultivated soil to enable the roots to penetrate.

**Cover** the root plug with about 3cm of soil to prevent the roots from drying out in the elements.

**Firm** the soil around the seedling with the toe of the boot.

**Create** a shallow depression at the base so that rain can be channelled to the roots.

**Leave** plants vertical to prevent curves in the base of the tree.

**Weed control** prior to planting will reduce competition and improve survival.

Planting is best at a rate of 1,000 stems per hectare on most sites and for many species, however this can vary depending on your own objectives and how the plantation is integrated with other farming enterprises. With normal site preparation techniques, for a eucalypt plantation 1,000 stems per hectare is a spacing of 4m between rows and 2.5m along the rows. If you are unsure, measure the distance between trees with a tape measure.

As you are probably well aware, Gippsland is susceptible to frosts over winter, therefore frost susceptible trees such as Spotted Gum should be planted at the end of winter.

If you are planting a lot of trees, a planting tool such as a Potiputki is ideal to make the job easier. These tools can be purchased from local suppliers or are available for loan from Gippsland Private Forestry.

Gippsland Private Forestry provides free advice and assistance to private forest growers on all aspects of forestry including plantation establishment, management and harvesting. With the right advice to tree growers, Gippsland will have a sustainable, well managed plantation industry.

If you would like further advice, or would like to borrow a Potiputki, contact Emily May on (03) 5153 2947.

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