



# REGENERATIVE ENTERPRISE WITH TREES AND WOOD IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

## REFERENCES AND WEBLINKS

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## INTRODUCTION

Between November 2021 and June 2022, the Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) and Gippsland Agroforestry Network (GAN) co-hosted three events to showcase and promote enterprise in South Gippsland around the growing, processing and retailing of wood products for a local market.

This came about in the context of broader environmental, social and economic shifts that include:

- An increasing awareness of the critical role that trees in forest and farm landscapes play in addressing our global climate and biodiversity emergency.
- Australia's near-dormant plantation timber industry and its growing reliance on product from natural forests of other countries with poor environmental governance and/or with whom we have rising geo-political tensions.
- Recognition of the value in diversifying agricultural business to include on-farm forestry.
- The recent surge in pricing and trading of atmospheric carbon dioxide sequestered in both growing trees and construction wood.

A first event was held online on 25 November 2021 as part of Bass Coast's annual Sustainability Festival. The link below will take you directly to the zoom recording for this session.

<https://vimeo.com/651024343/7e12b4cbd1>

This webinar began with architect **Paul Haar** outlining the timber industry's global context and highlighting the value (environmentally, socially and economically) in advancing local enterprise around trees and wood in South Gippsland.

In this webinar, we were also able to hear from:

- **Frank Hirst** who, with his wife Sharon, established, thinned, form pruned, high pruned and grazed sheep and cattle under plantations of Blue Gum, Mountain Ash and Shining Gum on their farm property at Ranceby. Now 30 years on, Frank and Sharon's Blue Gums are progressively being harvested as a secondary on-farm income stream, in partnership with ...
- **Dan Bright** who, with partner Amelia, operates Amber Creek Farm and Sawmill at Fish Creek. Dan and his team mill plantation Blue Gum and salvaged Monterey Cypress to then fabricate on-farm massive timber frames to be exposed and appreciated in homes, barns and other buildings in their region. They also mill, season and machine wall cladding timbers for ...
- **Chris Ennis** who, with Hayden Cronin and his team, operate CERES Fair Wood in Preston Melbourne. Fair Wood aggregates farmed timber as well as wood from urban tree salvage and sells it to a discerning market ... to a green demographic that cares a lot about where the materials in its building projects are sourced. All profits from Fair Wood go to CERES to help fund its community gardens as well as its vast and crucial education around environmentally and socially regenerative living.

Excellent feedback from this online event encouraged BCLN and GAN to follow up with two field trips for interested South Gippslanders and others, to visit these enterprises and the people behind them in a more COVID safe 2022.

For anyone who may wish to further explore context and detail to such enterprise around trees and wood, we have gathered pertinent references and weblinks to support you in this regard. This information included is grouped according to four themes:

- Growing trees on farms.
- Small-scale processing of farm grown and salvaged wood to timber and firewood.
- Aggregating and retailing farm grown and salvaged wood products.
- Responsible timber selection for a climate and biodiversity emergency.

# GROWING TREES ON FARMS

... for conservation, shelter and timber production.

## Agroforestry Support Networks

These connect you with other like-minded people and inform you about farm tours, courses and other events on growing trees on farms.

### Gippsland Agroforestry Network

The [Gippsland Agroforestry Network](#) (GAN) is a special Interest group of people interested in producing, converting and marketing farm-grown timber. Its members have come from all over Gippsland, from Melbourne to Orbost, from Loch to Maffra and from Erica to Yarram. GAN is associated with Forestry Australia, a national body representing productive tree growing. Aligned with the Landcare movement, the group comprises farmers, foresters, business people, investors, researchers and other people with a shared interest in trees on farms. It is not area based but services all of Gippsland.

### Otways Agroforestry Network

The [Otways Agroforestry Network](#) (OAN) is a Landcare group that encourages farmers to establish and manage trees for the reasons that matter to them. Landholders in our region want trees on their farms to shelter farm stock and crops; control soil erosion and dryland salinity; enhance their property values; and, if possible, generate alternative sources of income from timber and firewood.

### Australian Agroforestry Foundation

The [Australian Agroforestry Foundation](#) (AAF) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing education and extension support to help farmers, and those that work with them, develop and sustain 'forests' within the Australian agricultural landscape that reflect their interests and aspirations.

## Agroforestry Education

### Master TreeGrower Courses

[Master TreeGrower \(MTG\) courses](#) are regionally based educational programs in agroforestry, and vegetation design and management for farmers with the aim of:

- improving the design and management of agroforestry and native vegetation projects on participants' own properties.
- helping participants understand the interests of governments, catchment authorities, industry groups and community organisations in agroforestry and native vegetation management and encourage mutually beneficial partnerships.
- facilitating the involvement of participants in the development and promotion of agroforestry and native vegetation management within their region by providing a wide range of knowledge, skills, experiences and networking opportunities.

[Tree Change - the Australian Master TreeGrower phenomenon](#)

### Bambra Agroforestry Demonstration Farm

About 40 minutes drive west of Geelong, in an area of climate, soils and native vegetation similar to that in much of South Gippsland, this spectacularly treed farm property is owned by Rowan and Claire Reid. Rowan is a leader in the development of agroforestry education and extension programs in Australia having developed the first undergraduate course in agroforestry in Australia and the very successful Australian Master TreeGrower Program. Guided tours by Rowan of his Bambra Agroforestry Farm are very informative and enjoyable ... highly recommended.

[https://agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?\\_Farm Tours and Courses](https://agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?_Farm%20Tours%20and%20Courses)

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/my-garden-path---rowan-reid/13372842>

<https://www.facebook.com/bambraagroforestry/videos>

### Heartwood

Written by Rowan Reid, this beautifully presented book addresses the art and science of growing trees for conservation and profit. Rowan discusses different species that he grows on his Bambra property and visits other farm foresters across Australia and overseas.

[https://www.agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?\\_Heartwood Book](https://www.agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?_Heartwood%20Book)

## Agroforestry Case Studies

### Tantaraboo - Ranceby, South Gippsland

With qualifications in agricultural science and teaching, Frank and Sharon Hirst established 14.5 hectares of their steep South Gippsland farm in the early 1990's as an agroforestry site, combining grazing with trees grown for high-value timber. Species planted included Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Mountain Ash (*E. regnans*) and Shining Gum (*E. nitens*). And now, only 30 years on, the Mountain Ash and Shining Gum have already been harvested. Frank is currently harvesting the Blue Gum for processing at Amber Creek Farm and Sawmill, much of it as external shiplap wall cladding for sale through CERES Fair Wood.

<https://youtu.be/CetQ2uM0sHU>

[Blue Gum Sawlogs - farm forestry harvest case study](#)

[Growing Trees at Tantaraboo](#)

[Tantaraboo Agroforestry Harvest](#)

[Thoughtful forestry and a great story](#)

### Jigsaw Farms - Hensley Park and Melville Forest, Western VIC

[Jigsaw Farms](#), a 3,378 hectare family property of Mark Wootton and Eve Kantor fifteen kilometres north of Hamilton in Western Victoria, integrates forestry, carbon and indigenous plantings with high-productivity grazing on a large scale. The mixed grazing operation consists of a fine wool sheep flock, a prime lamb operation and an Angus/Poll Hereford breeding program. About 600 hectares have been planted out to hardwood timbers, mainly Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*). The underlying focus of Jigsaw Farms is to integrate a profitable, highly productive stock and agroforestry operation while adhering to environmental guidelines, based on the understanding that looking after developing the non-pasture areas of the farm actually assists productivity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSeMyIQqfeo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T05WxAWTso>

### Brimin Lodge Farm - Brimin, Northern VIC

<https://www.briminlodge.com.au/farm-forestry/>

### Multi-Storey Farming Demonstration - Buln Buln, South Gippsland VIC

<http://www.wpcn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Multi-Storey-Farming-case-study-report.pdf>

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/483410522>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YawszlohqM>

### Regenerative Agriculture, Integration of Trees - South Gippsland VIC

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6gJW4R-g\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6gJW4R-g_U)

## Broader Government Initiatives

### Gippsland Forestry Hub

Encouraging farmers to grow trees on their land is a key focus of the [Gippsland Forestry Hub](#), as part of a strategic plan for the future of Gippsland's forest industry, around growing wood products, carbon credits and landscape values.

<https://gippslandforestryhub.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GFhub-Investing-in-Gippsland-final-web-1.pdf>

# SMALL-SCALE PROCESSING OF FARM GROWN AND SALVAGED WOOD TO TIMBER AND FIREWOOD

Once a farm woodlot becomes well established, essential and on-going silvicultural work required to optimise its productivity can start to feel overwhelming and much of it is not without personal safety risk. Thankfully, as an inevitably increasing number of small farm forests emerge across Gippsland over the next decades, so too will roaming contractors who can efficiently and safely with mechanised plant:

- Fell thinnings and process them into firewood.
- Undertake high-pruning of target sawlog trees.
- Mulch trash to minimise wildfire fuel loads on the woodlot floor and potentially also to gather fibre for biofuel production.
- Fell and snig sawlogs to safe truck loading or on-farm milling site.
- Mill sawlogs on farm if that's the preferred option.

It's just an extension to the kind of specialist contract work that shearers, crop sowers, silage and hay makers, fencers and the like commonly do for Gippsland farmers.

## Tree Thinning and High-Pruning, Sawlog Felling and Snigging

Spidermann All-Terrain Solutions

<https://spidermannats.com.au/>

Komatsu Centipede (concept machine)

<https://centipede.komatsuforest.com/>

## Sawmilling

Heartwood

This book by Rowan Reid also discusses the science and practice of milling and seasoning farm grown wood.

[https://www.agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?\\_Heartwood+Book](https://www.agroforestry.net.au/main.asp?_Heartwood+Book)

Norwood Sawmill School

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgoMm0-gtaCeWA-o-rScDoPAu\\_0l2ALt5](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgoMm0-gtaCeWA-o-rScDoPAu_0l2ALt5)

Modern Forest - a huge video library on sawmilling and associated equipment

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBg9WhpIQCZKoJLCC6Hb2ww>

Brands of small fixed and mobile sawmilling equipment available in Australia include:

[Baker Products](#), [Hud-Son](#), [Logmaster](#), [Lucas](#), [Mighty-Mite](#), [Norwood](#), [Select Sawmills](#), [Timberking](#), [Wood-Mizer](#)

## Case Studies in Small Sawmilling

Amber Creek Farm and Sawmill - Fish Creek, South Gippsland

Dan and Amelia Bright own and manage [Amber Creek Farm and Sawmill](#). Dan and his team mill plantation Blue Gum and salvaged Monterey Cypress to then fabricate on-farm massive timber frames that are exposed for a natural rustic aesthetic for building structures in their region. They also mill, season and machine wall cladding timbers for the local and Melbourne market.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1Sp5yX-\\_qI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1Sp5yX-_qI)

<https://ceresfairwood.org.au/blogs/news/the-story-of-amber-creek-farm-sawmilling-the-hirsts-southern-blue-gum-cladding-and-why-we-love-what-they-do>

## Case Study in Sustainable Firewood Collection from Regenerative Forestry

[wood4good](#)

<https://ceresfairwood.org.au/blogs/news/wood4good>

# AGGREGATING AND RETAILING OF FARM GROWN AND SALVAGED WOOD PRODUCTS

## CERES Fair Wood, Melbourne VIC

[CERES Fair Wood](#) has established itself as an honest broker, linking people seeking environmentally and socially responsible timber and firewood with small local farm foresters and salvage sawmillers who can otherwise struggle to find a market for their resource. While still small in scale, this social enterprise's local 'chain of custody' approach has become a new model for sustainable timber sourcing.

[Article in Sanctuary Magazine - Spring 2018](#)

[A worthy opinion piece by John Lord \(Tasmanian farm forester and timber supplier to CERES Fair Wood\) - June 2022](#)

## Kirby Fine Timbers, Sunshine Coast QLD

<https://kirbyfinetimber.com.au/>

## Topaz Sustainable Timbers, Far North QLD

<https://www.topazsustainabletimbers.com.au/>

# RESPONSIBLE TIMBER SELECTION FOR A CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY

A Building Professional's Response - Paul Haar

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/my-garden-path---paul-haar/13396530>

## Responsible Timber Selection - untangling the confusion

In this [webinar](#) for Builders Declare Australia (October 2020), Paul Haar untangles some of the confusion around responsible timber selection and environmental certifications. He interrogates the notion of wood as the ultimate renewable building material and will introduce clear principles and methods for thoughtfully selecting timber for our projects. And he directs us to guides he's published to make selection of responsible timbers easy, across all construction applications and budgets. Paul also touches on his self-help housing work with remote indigenous Australians, Candlebark School Library, Mullum Creek eco-housing project and CERES Fair Wood, to illustrate how his approach to timber sourcing has expressed itself in built outcomes.

## A Knotty Issue - responsibly sourced timber

Just about every building project uses timber. While it's a renewable resource, its harvesting is often associated with deforestation practices that are harmful to the environment. In this [article](#), Sanctuary Magazine looks at the current state of sustainable timber in Australia, and how to make sure the wood you use for your build is as responsible as possible.

## Mullum Creek Knowledge Base

[Mullum Creek](#) is a peri-urban eco-housing project in Donvale Victoria. It is committed to eliciting positive environmental outcomes that go well beyond, and address weaknesses in, what was generally considered to be best practice sustainable residential development. Critical to that is the selection of building materials. Timber has been sourced for the project in accordance with strict selection criteria as set by the project's design guidelines and with tight control on product delivery to site during construction. This requirement was backed by a comprehensive list of environmentally responsible and affordable timber choices for all applications.

### Mullum Creek Timber Products Guide

- [principles](#)
- [selection criteria](#)
- [approved timber products list](#)

[Mullum Creek Structural Timbers List](#)

[Watch Out for Baltic Pine and Spruce](#)

[Watch Out for CCA Treated Pine](#)

If you have any queries or would like to contribute to proposed updates of this infokit, please contact:

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