

Introduction

The “Notes on the Silviculture of the Major Forest Types of New South Wales” are a unique historical reference. They describe how silviculture has been applied over the past century to produce the ecologically diverse, multi-purpose forests that we value today in New South Wales. They are published here for a new audience who have many points of view about the establishment, management, regulation, conservation and preservation of native forests. If you have an interest in any aspect of NSW forests, you will benefit from taking the time to read these Notes. While forest values have changed since these Notes were written, the forests have not

The Silviculture Notes were compiled and revised between 1982 and 1989 by George Baur while he was Silviculturist for the Forestry Commission of NSW and just prior to his retirement in 1990. The citation for the N.W Jolly medal awarded to George in 1984 and reproduced in this collection provides a good biography of his contributions to the profession. George had been a forester and researcher with the Forestry Commission for many years by the time he came to work on this compilation. He had carried out research into the silviculture of NSW forest types, particularly rainforests, and was involved in developing practices that are now standard world wide for the management of Australian forest species. In his long career in silviculture he gained wide knowledge of the range of species, ecosystems, vegetation associations and forest types in NSW. It was because of George’s work and understanding of the dynamics of NSW forests that the Forestry Commission asked him to produce the Silviculture Notes. He also found time to compile and contribute to Forestry Commission Research Note 17 “Forest Types in New South Wales” published in 1965, revised in 1989, and still a standard reference.

The Silviculture Notes are not a silviculture textbook or a scientific paper. George’s purpose was to provide information that was relevant, practical and easy to read. The Notes were intended for use by working foresters so they could gain from the knowledge of those who preceded them. George recorded the experiences and observations of generations of foresters and forest workers and added to that the published and unpublished research. The whole mix is leavened with his experience, style and humour. The result is a readable body of work that demonstrates a long-standing and profoundly professional understanding of the ecosystems of these forest types and the silvicultural processes that have shaped them.

Older professional foresters in NSW have long recognised the value of the “Baur Notes” in providing an authoritative basis for the active management of native forests. There is now a much wider interest in understanding and managing our productive and biodiverse native forests to deliver a range of values and products using progressive silviculture. Members of the Northern NSW Branch of the Institute of Foresters familiar with the Notes recognised the opportunity and the need to introduce a new audience to the knowledge they contain. With greater knowledge on the part of all people involved in their use, our forests should benefit from better informed and improved forest management.

The Notes are reproduced here just as George wrote them, using the terminology and scientific names of the day. George resisted having his name attached to the Silviculture Notes because of the vast amount of material contributed by others, something he acknowledges at the end of each Note. Despite his modesty, if it were not for his efforts this unique body of knowledge would not exist and forestry as a profession would be far poorer for it.

The Institute acknowledges State Forests of NSW for their assistance in making the Silviculture Notes available to a new and interested audience. We also acknowledge the NSW Office of Private Forestry for their financial assistance. This new release would not have been possible without the voluntary contribution of time by members of the Northern NSW Branch of the Institute, particularly Ellis Nicholson. Hours were spent converting and reformatting the old documents, reproducing many of the original charts and graphs; and endlessly proof reading. All of us involved in this project hope that no matter what your interest in forests and forestry and no matter what your point of view the result will inform you, assist you and perhaps even amuse you.

Spencer Bruskin
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Northern New South Wales Branch
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