

# 7 VALUE ADDING

Camphor laurels can be a valuable resource. As there can be substantial costs to control them, land managers should take advantage of value adding opportunities wherever possible.

The following chapter lists some of the many camphor laurel products, provides information to help answer some of the questions such as “is my camphor laurel worth anything?” and describes what is being done to help expand the industry. Over 40 camphor laurel millers and merchants are listed at the end of the chapter.

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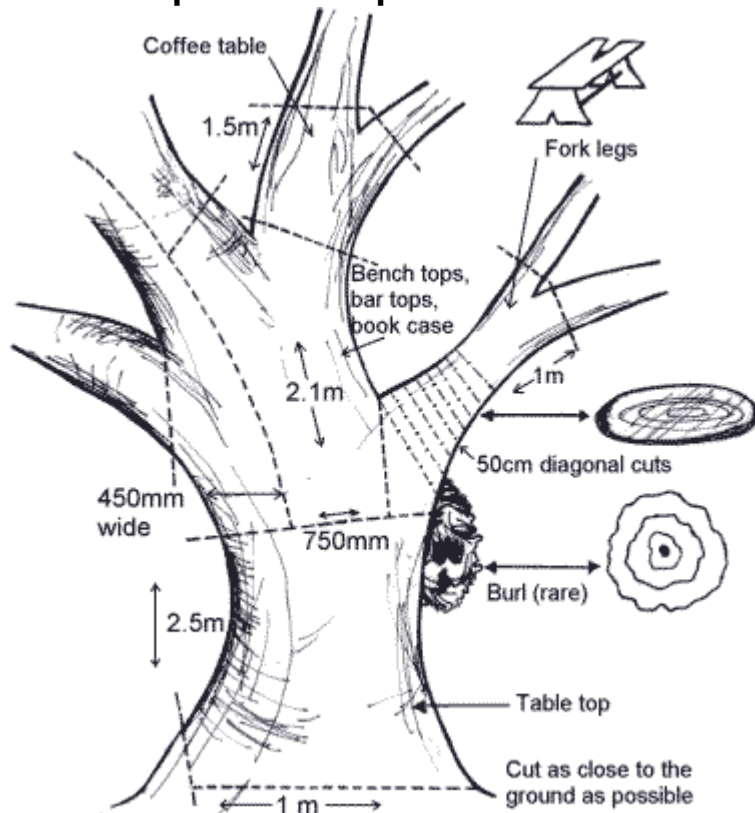
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## 7.1 **Harvesting camphor laurel**

The harvesting, milling and value adding of camphor laurels in north-eastern NSW currently exceeds \$1 million in annual turnover (Stubbs et. al. 1999). As the available resource is estimated to be in excess of 50,000m<sup>3</sup> within the NSW Northern Rivers area alone there is a huge potential for the industry to develop further (Stubbs et. al. 1999).

Due to the general lack of funds to undertake control it is important to take advantage of value adding opportunities wherever possible, particularly roadsides and agricultural situations where there is good access. Ensure millers are fully insured and accredited.

### 7.1.1 **Camphor laurel products**



- Camphor laurel wood products include furniture, interior finishings such as doors, shelving, architraves / scurting, stairs and step treads, hand rails, balastrating, pelmets, vanity and kitchen bench tops, breadboards, candelabras, kitchen cupboards, cabinets / chest linings; veneer and material for turning, carving and sculpturing;
- Wood chip for use as mulch and weed suppressant fibre;
- Camphor oil, and;
- Biomass for fuel production.

**Plate 37:** Dissection highlighting some timber products. Source - Information: B.Marshall, drawing:

S.Jamieson and T.Scanlon.

### 7.1.2 **Is there any value in my camphor laurel?**

The short answer is YES; the long answer is a little more complex!

Nearly all of a camphor laurel tree is usable for various products, however, the main limitations as to whether it is of any worth are:

**Access.** There needs to be relatively good access to the tree(s). Trees located along poor access tracks, steep sites or amongst native (or other valuable) forests will usually be more expensive to mill;

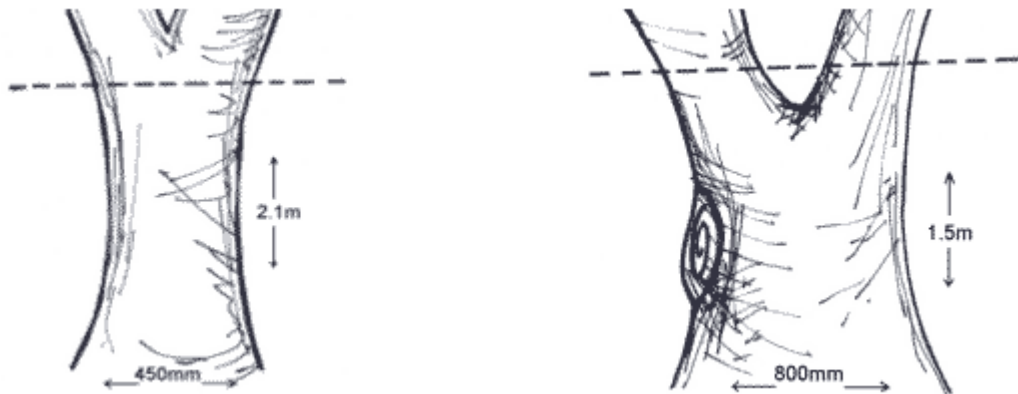
**How many?** It is not worth travelling up a poor access track if there is only one tree. The more millable camphor laurels you have, the more economically viable it will be to mill them;

**Size and shape.** Tall, wide, straight trees are, as you would expect, worth considerably more money than twisted multi-stemmed trees. Trees generally wider than 450mm are considered to be millable, however, trees wider than 1m are preferred. Some millers are quite interested in trees only 300mm wide.

**Foreign objects.** It is vitally important that trees to be milled DO NOT contain any nails, fencing wire or other foreign objects. Camphor laurels will grow over and around objects so trees in public parks, for example, are at risk of containing bottles, bottle tops etc. Foreign objects within trees to be milled can render a saw blade worthless and could kill the operator. It's that important!

**Colour.** Something usually not known until it is cut, however, camphor laurel timber with more colours is generally worth more.

**Plate 38:** Preferred minimum size of tree trunks by most camphor laurel millers using a band saw. NB: Some will take down to 300mm width. Ensure the section is clear of knots, limbs and major bends. Source of information: B.Marshall, drawing: S.Jamieson and T.Scanlon.

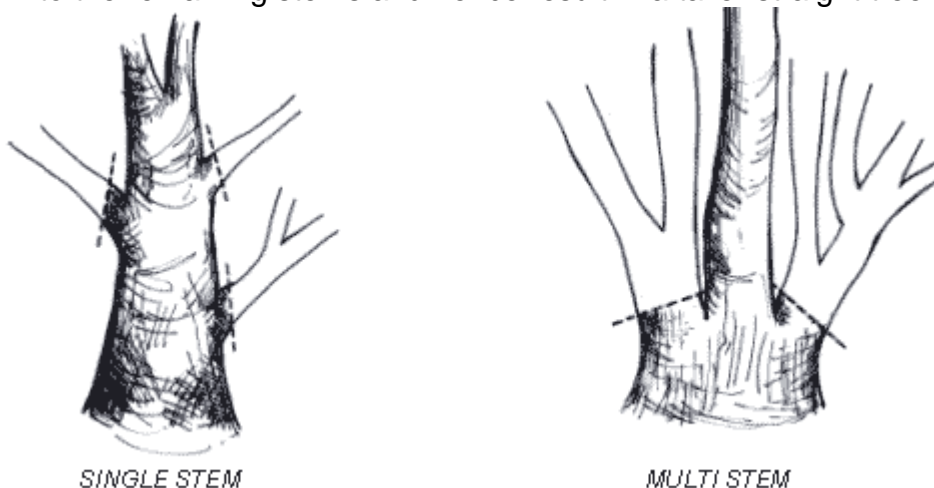


A: Sawn timber, cut below the fork.

B: Slab timber, cut above the fork.

### 7.1.3 Crop improvement

The quality and quantity of millable camphor timber can be increased through what is known as “crop improvement”. In single-stem trees this involves removing the lower limbs. In multi-stemmed trees it involves removal of all bent and twisted stems as well as the lower limbs to leave one or two straight stems. The tree will then concentrate its growth into the remaining stems and hence result in a taller straight tree.



SINGLE STEM

MULTI STEM

**Plate 39:** Crop improvement by trimming branches (along dotted line) for single and multi-stemmed trees. Source – information: B. Marshall, drawing: S.Jamieson.

### 7.1.4 How do I mill a camphor laurel?

SEEK ADVICE before you cut or lop camphor laurels. It can be very dangerous. If done incorrectly it can make the timber worthless. Once the tree is cut down it needs to be milled quickly. Lists of camphor laurel millers and merchants are included at the end of this chapter. Contact details for tree loppers can be found in the yellow pages. Many of the millers can advise you over the phone or inspect your property to let you know how much the timber may be worth and how it should be harvested.

Plate 40: Storage and drying of milled camphor laurel timber. Source: Bill Marshall



Plate 41: Camphor laurel bread board. Source: Rob Latham



Camphor laurels are most successfully injected with herbicide when actively growing (i.e Spring – Autumn in most areas), however, it is best to fell them for milling between May and September. After 4-6 months of being injected they start losing their bark, thus exposing the sapwood to rain and borer attack. Therefore, when you plan to mill your camphor laurel it is best to inject it in Summer or Autumn so that it can be felled / harvested in early Winter (before the bark falls) (Shaw, pers. comm. 2000).

Camphor timber may lose 50% of its weight during drying but does not usually shrink much (Latham, pers. comm.). It is often dried differently depending on the miller and the end use. The Australian Camphor Timber Association plans to set guidelines for drying, treating and racking to improve quality assurance for the purchaser.

### 7.1.5 How is the industry being developed?

- In 1999 the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils (NOROC), with assistance from the State and Federal Government, commissioned the report "From pest to profit". The report (Stubbs et. al. 1999) investigated and recommended ways to further develop value adding industries and includes the following information:
  - the quantity of the resource in the Northern Rivers area;
  - a description of the resource characteristics and its implications;
  - costs of harvesting, milling and processing etc.;
  - legislation etc., and;
  - marketing plans for various products.

For further information about the project contact NOROC on 6622 2650, Fax 6622 2638, Email: [noroc@nor.com.au](mailto:noroc@nor.com.au)

- **“The Australian Camphor Laurel Timber Association Inc.”** has been established to help encourage communication and coordination between millers, merchants and government agencies. Those involved in the local industry are now able to pool their resources to expand locally, nationally and internationally. China, Japan, Taiwan and India are some of the key international markets being pursued (Shaw, pers. comm.).
- The internet is a very valuable tool to help the industry expand. A camphor laurel website [www.wolftracks.com.au/camphor](http://www.wolftracks.com.au/camphor) puts individual millers and retailers in touch with world-wide markets. Millers and merchants can trade on the website for a small membership and annual fee to cover its cost. The site has links to other sites.
- NSW State Forests, Sunshine Sugar and Delta electricity plan to harvest camphor laurel to produce “green” electricity through their Bioenergy Project, due to commence in 2002. The project may also result in the extraction of camphor oil. Although the main focus will be on private property, it is hoped that it may also result in the harvesting of mature camphor laurel trees from roadsides. The project is summarised below. For more information contact 1800 639691.

## 7.2 The State Forests camphor laurel replacement program

State Forests of NSW has been investigating harvesting the woody weed camphor laurel, and replacing it with native species (the State Forests camphor replacement program).

The NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative (NSWSMC) and Delta Electricity have been investigating the use of camphor laurel for renewable energy generation in the sugar mills at Condong and Broadwater outside of the sugar crushing season.

A camphor laurel replacement program also has the potential to provide camphor veneer logs, sawlogs and other products as well as access to high productivity plantation sites (and subsequent plantation products) and biodiversity benefits.

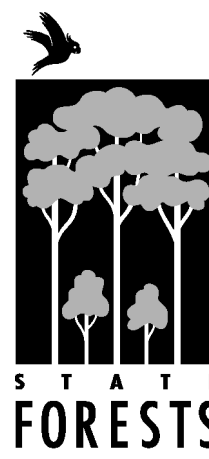
Once a camphor site is harvested, it is proposed to establish and manage native species plantations for production of sawlogs and bioenergy (sustaining a long term supply of renewable fuel to the sugar mills) as well as environmental plantings on non harvested areas such as near waterways.

There is strong community support to remove the camphor, which covers many thousands of hectares of private land on the far north coast of NSW.

The program is still a proposal that requires further investigation into quantifying the commercial and environmental benefits.

Preliminary estimates show camphor laurel covers over 70,000 hectares between the Condong and Broadwater mills with an estimated standing volume of 2.7 million tonnes. Twice this volume may exist in total.

Camphor has largely taken over formerly cleared grazing land in the last 40 years with some areas having large standing volumes. However the resource is highly variable both in the size of the stands, tree size and form and can be on steep and rocky terrain.



Initially the area converted to plantation is proposed to be about 150 hectares per year rising to about 500 hectares per year before establishment is completed after about 15 years of planting.

The proposed total area to be converted to plantation, is about 10,000 hectares with a further 1000 hectares of environmental plantings.

In the early years of the project, the volumes to be harvested for fuel per mill could be in the region of 15,000 tonnes ramping up to a maximum of 80,000 tonnes per annum as quickly as possible. This may decline after the first ten years of the project as thinnings from the replacement plantations come on stream.

The presence of existing native species within a camphor stand to be replaced will be an important consideration in determining if and how a new plantation can be successfully established.

Camphor removal and the subsequent establishment of plantations would be part of an integral package managed by State Forests possibly on behalf of investors.

The replacement plantations would be managed as joint ventures with landowners, who would either receive an annual payment for the use of their land or share in the crop harvest.

Other harvested areas, which have a significant presence of native species could have enrichment planting of native species and be managed for biodiversity values.

Riparian zones could be planted with rainforest species to replace any damaged in the camphor harvest and provide a long term food source for pigeons that previously fed on the camphors.

The community and environmental benefits of camphor removal under this project are substantial. This is a major attempt to remove camphor laurel as a crop rather than as a weed and as such can provide a long term incentive for landowners to not only dispose of their camphor but enhance local industry, incomes and the environment.

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18<sup>th</sup> December 2000

## **LISTS OF CAMPHOR LAUREL MILLERS & MERCHANTS**

Below is a list of Sawmills and Timber Merchants who are interested in utilising camphor laurel. They are listed in order of their location, however, many of them are also interested in trees from outside their area. The dimensions of timber that they will take will vary from operator to operator. Give them a try!

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>PHONE No.</u>
<b>Ashby</b>	Ashby Sawmill	6645 3280
<b>Bangalow</b>	Quetzal Woodcraft	6687 2609
<b>Bangalow</b>	Timber tales milling	0409 085881
<b>Bellingen</b>	Heartwood Originals	6655 2482
<b>Bilambil</b>	Ross Smith, Rosebrook	07 5590 7225
<b>Byron Bay</b>	Eco. Furniture & Timber	6680 8655
<b>Casino</b>	Richards Milling Co.	6661 7144
<b>Coffs Harbour</b>	Leonard J. Williams Timber	6652 3427
<b>Coramba</b>	Coramba Timbers	6654 4252
<b>Coutts Crossing</b>	Tomsys Timbers	6649 3761
<b>Dorrigo</b>	M.J and R.J Hodgson	6657 3219
<b>Dundurrabin</b>	Cockatoo Creek Timbers	6657 8122
<b>Glenreagh</b>	F.T Shipman Sawmilling	6649 2266
<b>Grafton</b>	Lillypool Cabinet & Craft Timbers	6642 6116
<b>Karang</b>	Scott Seccombe	0410 586488
<b>Kempsey</b>	R.D Short & Son	6562 5086
<b>Kyogle</b>	Dingo Ridge Timbers	6636 4308
<b>Lismore</b>	Solar Slabs	6629 3226
<b>Meerschaum Vale</b>	M&G Lutter Mobile Sawmill	6683 4526
<b>Mt George</b>	R.H Selection Sawmilling	6550 6400
<b>Mullumbimby</b>	Enchanted woods	6684 5000
<b>Mullumbimby</b>	Mullumbimby Wood Turning Supplies	6684 3103
<b>Mullumbimby</b>	Mullumbimby Wood Works	6680 4455
<b>Mullumbimby</b>	Timber Slab Factory	6684 3661
<b>Murwillumbah</b>	Ray Hall Engineering	6672 3523
<b>Nashua</b>	Nashua Timbers and Dave Shannon	6629 1406
<b>Nimbin</b>	Nimbin Sawmill	6689 1464
<b>North Tumbulgum</b>	Camphor timbers Australia (Ian Shaw)	6676 6270
<b>Northern Rivers area</b>	NSW State Forests	1800 639691
<b>Nymboida</b>	Oakey Creek Mobile Milling	6649 4007
<b>Rosebank</b>	Paul Snape Fox Timbers	6688 2115
<b>Rosebank</b>	Rosebank Timber Traders	6688 2215
<b>Stokers Siding</b>	Mark Williams	6677 9505
<b>Tyringham</b>	Devine Timbers	6657 8195
<b>Uki</b>	Bill Marshall	0413 323629
<b>Uki (Smiths Creek)</b>	Uki Sawmill	6679 5116
<b>Ulong</b>	L.E.H Timms & Co.	6654 5252
<b>Uralba</b>	Greg Saville	6628 6994
<b>Urunga</b>	Bushwood Timbers	6655 5243
<b>Wauchope</b>	Timber Corner	6585 2385
<b>Whiporie</b>	Hanna's Mills	6661 9147

**TREE LOPPING:** Look under "Tree felling &/or Stump Removal" in the Yellow Pages for the nearest operator to you.