

Green deserts: novel afforestation technologies in semiarid environments

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The LIFE project “Green Deserts” aims to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of the application of an innovative technology to sowing and tree planting in semiarid areas of the Iberian Peninsula and in areas degraded by fire or mining.

The “waterbox” is a smart polypropylene container with a lid, on whose surface there is a series of diagonal grooves which collect water from rain and moisture from air by condensation. Its 15-litre deposit provides water to the plant during its first year by means of a wick, with no additional source of irrigation. The wick penetrates the soil under the box, slowly dripping water to the plant root system. As the plant grows, its roots go deeper and deeper into the soil, eventually finding its own water source. Once this happens, the box can be removed. The vessel design also prevents water evaporation from its top, creating a microclimate in its interior that protects the plant from sunlight, wind, frost and pests.

The results of experimental tests conducted in 5 Spanish provinces (namely Valladolid, Leon, Zamora, Zaragoza and Barcelona), have yielded mean survival rates above 90% in those seedlings equipped with waterbox, without significant differences amongst the species under test, while 78% of the control group planted without any specific device had died after one year. This allows an environmental and economic improvement by avoiding the need for plant replacement.

These results allow the application of this innovative technology in very diverse fields such as agriculture, reforestation and restoration of ecosystems, and could offer an interesting solution for seeding or planting in places where irrigation is difficult and expensive to conduct.

Keywords: waterbox, green deserts, forestry, arid, irrigation control, survival.

New Wood Derived Materials – Potentials

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There is a high interest of replacing oil based materials with renewable, bio-degradable ones. Here the utilisation of the major wood components; cellulose, lignin and the hemicelluloses, glucomannan and xylan comes into special focus. Minor wood components from bark or extractives can certainly be attractive for speciality products but can not serve as replacements for the majority of oil based polymer materials.

Cellulose has traditionally been used (apart from pulp) in producing regenerated materials as well as chemical derivatives thereof. Improvement of the dissolution and reactivity of the cellulose is here a key issue in making way for more environmentally friendly proc-

esses. Nanofibrillated cellulose has acquired exciting interests and energy efficient ways in its production seems feasible in the near future. As a material the nanofibrils possesses high interest as barrier materials or as aerogels in filters etc. The material production in larger scale is though a major development issue due to the high water holding capacity.

Hemicelluloses are of interest as oxygen barrier films, showing excellent properties. One drawback is the relatively low molecular weight of the wood xylan and glucomannan mainly reflected in a too high brittleness. Utilising these hemicelluloses in combination with cellulosic reinforcements or employing cross-linking strategies for increasing ductility of the films may be one way. Another possibility is to modify the xylan by grafting, for example with PLA, into a material with thermoplastic behaviour.

Lignin derived from wood materials generally represents a rather heterogeneous substance. The LignoBoost process has here made it possible to produce larger quantities of lignin more cost efficiently and with less impurities. High interest has arisen in lignin utilisation for carbon fibres. Other promising potential uses of kraft lignin are as activated carbon and for replacement of phenol formaldehyde resins.

Large challenges still exist in the development of competitive materials derived from wood. The progress is however promising.

Keywords: Barrier films; cellulose; hemicelluloses; lignin; nanofibres

Increasing sub/tropical eucalypt timber plantation profitability by value adding to thinnings

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New processing options and end-uses are being developed to create larger, more stable and higher-value markets for plantation-sourced wood. To justify continued expansion of Australia's current hardwood plantation estate it is becoming necessary to develop higher value end-uses for, both pulpwood and smaller ‘sawlog’ resources. To improve its profitability and win new markets, the industry needs to use stems currently culled during thinnings as they have little or no economic value.

This paper describes current Australian R&D into value adding to improve economic returns from small diameter (12 - 25 cm), 8–15 year old sub/tropical hardwood plantation thinnings. The product focus is raised far above the pulpwood commodity baseline to maximise the value of the fibre harvested. Small spindleless veneer lathe technology has been used to optimize the processing of this resource. Results are clearly indicating that the early age hardwood plantation resource, previously thought to be unusable, can be processed to yield valuable structural grade veneer. Plywood and Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL) products have been manufactured and tested utilising multiple construction strategies. New market-relevant options, such as innovative hybrid/composite pole products, arched and straight light structural round members and hardwood veneer-based engineered structural products, are discussed and compared with more traditional sawing approaches. These offer economically viable avenues to more profitable operations in smaller-scale plan-

tation resources and using smaller log sizes than required for conventional peeling, pulping and sawmilling uses.

Keywords: Hardwood, Thinning, Structural Round Members, Veneer-based engineered structural products, Sawing, Pole.

OP121

Physical, mechanical and biological properties of Australian Red cedar particleboards

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Australian red cedar (*Toona ciliata* var. *australis*) has stood out as a planted forestry species in several tropical and subtropical countries. Australian red cedar wood has several uses such as furniture, decorative veneer, civil construction, boats, floorings and others. However, it is important to consider that any wood processing such as veneering and sawing always results in the production of a great amount of residue. Particleboard is a generic term for panels manufactured from particles of lignocellulosic materials, which are combined with a synthetic adhesive or other suitable binder. This work aimed to evaluate particleboards produced with different compositions of Australian red cedar wood by determining their physical mechanical and biological properties.

18-year old Australian red cedar obtained from a commercial plantation was used. The work was divided in four stages: 1) Evaluation of the chemical properties of red cedar wood in order to verify its potential for particleboard production; 2) Analysis of the physical and mechanical properties of particleboards made from wood residues of Australian red cedar produced with different target densities of 0.65 and 0.70 g/cm³ and different adhesive contents, 6 and 9%; 3) Selection of the best processing variables for the production of particleboards made with Australian red cedar mixed with *Eucalyptus* sp. and *Pinus* sp. woods at 50% proportion; 4) Study of the resistance of the Australian red cedar wood and particleboards to dry termite attack, using *Pinus* sp. wood as a control treatment.

The following results were found: 1) Australian red cedar presents a great amount of extractives compared to woods often used for particleboard production, as the average value found was 13%. However, average lignin content was low, 24%; 2) Particleboards made with target density of 0.70 g/cm³ and 9% urea-formaldehyde presented the best results for physical and mechanical properties; 3) For physical properties, particleboards made from 100% Australian red cedar were similar to particleboards made from 50% of this species and 50% *Pinus* sp. and both had better results than particleboards made from 50% Australian red cedar and 50% *Eucalyptus* hybrid; 4) Australian red cedar wood presented much higher resistance to dry-termite attack than *Pinus* sp. wood. The inclusion of Australian red cedar wood resulted in resistant particleboards.

Keywords: *Toona ciliata*; biodegradation; target density; adhesive content.

OP122

Suitability of pulp production from *Salix excelsa* (willow) clones

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In this study, fiber morphology properties of *Salix excelsa* (willow) clones were studied in the view of suitability for pulp and paper industry. The second aim of this preliminary study was to reduce the pressure on forest resources and meet the demand alternative sustainable raw material for pulp.

Clones amples were supplied from The Poplar and Fast Growing Forest Trees Research Institute Izmit-Turkey. The discs which were cut approximately 4 cm diameter and then were divided into group three each ages from earlywood to latewood. These individually were cut chip woods as earlywood and latewood. According to Franklin method were easily obtained microscopic preparations. *Salix excelsa* woods from 64/12 and 84/28 clones grown in Turkey were measured fiber dimensions such as, fiber length, fiber width (diameter), lumen diameter and cell wall thickness. Also, relationships between fiber dimensions determined as felting power, elasticity, rigidity coefficient, Runkel classification, Muhlstep ratio and F factor. The effect of these on pulp strength properties were discussed. As known that there is strong relationships between the strengths of paper and morphologic structure of wood fiber.

Willow clones (84/28 and 64/12) fibers are of mean length with 776.24 µm, 853.90 µm. They also have a mean value of fiber width 18,89 µm; 20,77 µm. Consequently, according to the fiber morphology values it was found that pulp from *Salix excelsa* 64/12 and 84/28 clones wood would be suitable for use in paper board and corrugated board production.

Keywords: *Salix excelsa* clone; willow; fiber morphology; pulp; fiber dimension

OP124

Assessment of Wood Quality and Fibre Properties in Intensively Managed Douglas-fir Plantations using NDT Tools

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Current knowledge on the influence of intensive plantation silviculture on wood quality and fibre properties of conifers in the Pacific Northwest is limited and fragmented. Integration of wood quality into growth and yield simulators is also impacted by traditional methods of assessing wood quality being time consuming and expensive. Routine collection of fibre properties information using NDT technologies has the potential to improve predictions and understanding of contributing factors.



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