

Sustainable management of *Pinus radiata* plantations

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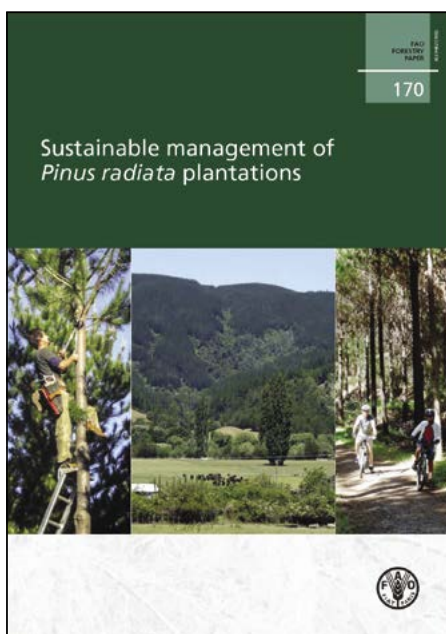
Price: US\$60 hard copy (download free)

At the outset the author states that: 'This book is about how to grow *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine) forest plantations.' It certainly covers a very wide range of topics – from the ecology of radiata pine within its natural range to the complexities of current research into tree breeding, silviculture and wood utilisation. The book also reviews the social, economic and environmental aspects of radiata pine plantations and includes a chapter on the use of radiata pine on farms.

Radiata pine is an extremely important and valuable plantation forestry species and the world's most extensively planted exotic softwood. However the author puts it into perspective by noting that the 4.2 million hectares of radiata pine plantations worldwide is a relatively small part of the global total planted forest estate of 271 million hectares. Certainly it is an important enough species to have generated a large scientific and management literature, more than the forester or scientist could hope – or want – to read in a working lifetime. Hence there is always a need for review publications on radiata pine.

A number of previous authors have produced omnibus reviews or manuals on radiata pine biology, management and silviculture, such as Piers Maclaren's useful *Radiata Pine Growers' Manual*. To my knowledge, however, no-one has previously attempted a review of such wide scope. Given the wide scope of the book it is inevitable that some topics are dealt with more thoroughly than others. Specialists may read the chapter on their pet topic and wish for a more thorough coverage. But that misses the point of this book which is to summarise, within a compact and readable publication, what we have learned about growing radiata pine as a plantation species over the last 150 years. As such, it is a wonderful achievement and should be on every radiata pine forester's bookshelf or hard drive.

It should also be useful to natural resource managers, resource economists, policy analysts or any other professionals with an interest in plantation forestry. Finally it is comprehensive and readable enough to make



an excellent reference for students studying plantation silviculture, including those in countries where radiata pine is not an important commercial species.

Publication of this book has been sponsored by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and it was appropriately launched at the Third International Conference on Planted Forests held in Portugal last year. Like most FAO publications it is readily available and free to download in electronic form (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3274e/i3274e00.htm>).

Alternatively hard copy versions can be purchased from the FAO for US\$60 (http://www.fao.org/icatalog/search/dett.asp?aries_id=111963) or ordered from Amazon for a similar price. However most will find it easier to download and if necessary print either chapters or the entire publication from the FAO website. Note that the book contains numerous colour figures, graphs and tables, which generally reproduce well on a high-quality colour printer.

The book concludes with a chapter covering 'lessons from the radiata pine experience' and a short discussion of the future for radiata pine plantations. The author notes that worldwide, after 'a rapid expansion from the 1960s, the growth in area of radiata pine forests has stagnated' and discusses reasons why this is so, including market uncertainty and competition from other land uses.

However he then also goes on to discuss reasons why there is still scope for the expansion of radiata pine plantations, and suggests that carbon forestry and financial valuation of social and ecosystem services could perhaps drive this growth. One may conclude from *Sustainable management of Pinus radiata plantations* that even if the area in radiata pine forestry remains static in future, the lessons learned from its successful domestication will be useful for managers of fast-growth plantation forests everywhere.

Reviewed by Mark Bloomberg, Lecturer in Forestry Management at Lincoln University.