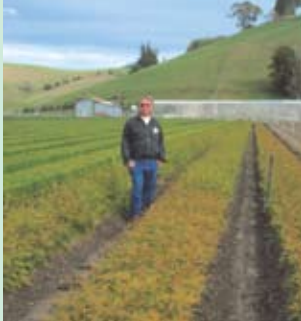




## REDWOODS

### GROWING REDWOODS COMMERCIALLY IN NEW ZEALAND

BY JIM RYDELIUS



Jim Rydelius brings to New Zealand a wealth of Redwood forestry experience. Our involvement with Jim and JPS has broadened our understanding of the potential redwoods bring to the NZ forestry scene. No doubt this is a topic

that forest managers and farm foresters will be interested in.

Redwood is a native of California. So is radiata pine, macrocarpa and Douglas Fir, as are a number of other less commonly grown conifers in New Zealand forests. Kiwis must like Californians or, is it, Californians like New Zealand. I'm Californian and must say I really like New Zealand and the way Redwoods grow in New Zealand. For nearly 40 years, I grew Redwood commercially in California and during that time I met many New Zealand foresters who told me about redwoods in New Zealand. The more I was told and the more I read and saw photographs of redwoods in New Zealand, the more I thought New Zealand would be 'the place' to grow redwood as a commercial forest crop.

Well, I'm now in New Zealand growing redwood forests commercially. I'm doing this for a recently formed New Zealand forestry company called JPS that is owned by a California-based company called Soper-Wheeler Company. Soper-Wheeler has a 100 year history of growing and managing commercial forests in North America. The owners and managers of Soper-Wheeler are forward looking people

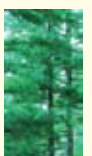
who see New Zealand as the 'land of opportunity' for redwood.

The natural habitat of redwood is a narrow strip of land along the north coast of California. It extends from just north of the Oregon border to a location about 100 miles south of San Francisco. Nowhere does this strip extend inland for more than about 30 miles. Weather conditions within this strip are not much different to those common throughout most of New Zealand. An important exception is that there is summer rain in New Zealand while, in California, there is little or no rainfall during the growing season.

Redwoods in California, therefore, grow for only about one half of what would otherwise be a six month 'growing season', while redwoods in New Zealand grow throughout the entire 'growing season'. This important difference does not mean redwood grows twice as fast in New Zealand but, since they grow for longer periods each year, they do produce more wood volume in a given period than do their 'brothers and sisters' in California.

This is the opportunity the owners and managers of Soper-Wheeler identified and it is an opportunity I would encourage landowners throughout New Zealand to, at least, consider if their plans include forest establishment. I'm here, of course, to establish and manage forests for JPS, but I'm also here to share my experiences, thoughts and opinions with anyone who may be looking for alternative forest opportunities.

Soper Wheeler is a long established, US based private company,, concentrating on timberland ownership. Anyone seeking more information on the above topic view their website at [www.soperwheeler.com](http://www.soperwheeler.com)





## REDWOODS

Appletons have been growing Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) seedlings in our nursery for over 30 years. Nelson is fortunate to have groups of trees which produce viable seed on a regular basis. These trees vary in age from 50 to 90 years. Tall straight trunks with a flat branch habitat make for challenging seed collection.

Traditional sales were for landscaping around ponds and wetlands as well as small woodlots where moist soil conditions precluded other forestry species. However, five years ago more significant numbers began to be planted in commercial plantations, often utilising the moist fertile valleys.

Some of the growth rates have been spectacular – highlighting the need for good weed control after planting, well grown seedlings with active mycorrhizal inoculation and adequate soil moisture and fertility.

Our intensive mycorrhizal inoculation programme has allowed us to successfully grow one year seedlings, identical in specification to 1/0 radiata, including topping at 30cm, should that be requested. Our traditional seedling stock has been a 1/1, a 2 year old which has been transplanted, producing a very advanced root system and heavy calliper stem diameter.



*Soft autumn evening light on radiata 1/0, sequoia 1/0, douglas fir 2/0*



*Winter lifting of 1/0 one year old seedlings*







*Tissue culture clonal plants*



*1/1 two year transplant*



*Farm forestry woods lot*

This winter we have both Nelson and Californian seed sources available. We have various trials planted to compare different seed sources as well as clonal selection. Interplanting with another forestry species such as radiata, douglas fir or larch has proven to greatly assist successful establishment. The huge redwoods at Long Mile, Rotorua still have the scattered old remnant of the pine and larch interplant. We all have much to learn about the role Sequoia will play in New Zealand forestry, and we are extremely fortunate to have the benefit of lifetime experience that Jim Rydelius brings to New Zealand forestry.



*21 year old woodlot*



*35 year old woodlot*



*50 year old Nelson redwoods*



*New Zealand redwood forest overlooking Blue Lake, Rotorua*

