



THREE GENERATIONS' INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY

Pinus radiata tree breeding is all about the families and their genetics, and it seems that genetics is also at work in the Appleton family.

I am the nurseryman in the middle generation, with my forestry trained father on one side, and a son trained in forestry management on the other. We have great conversations spanning 60 years of forestry establishment, right through to the very latest steep-slope harvesting methods. Ironically, I'm the one who chooses to plant trees in my spare time.



My father Eric completed his 2-year Forester training in the UK, and was top of his class in 1956. He then travelled overland on a motorcycle to New

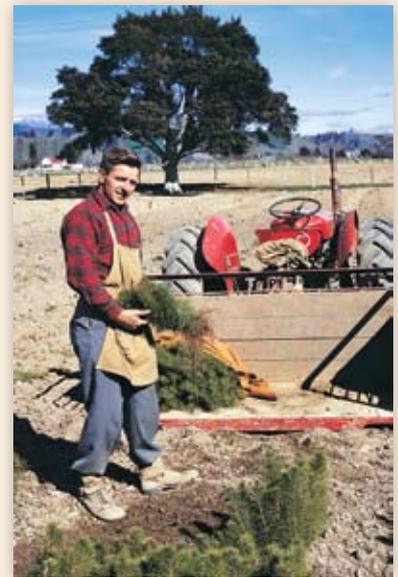
Zealand, and began working for Forest Research as a technical forester, planting species and provenance trials throughout the South Island. Working in a similar role for Baigents, a large forestry and sawmilling company in Nelson, Eric implemented fertilizer trials to correct trees with severe nutritional problems that were occurring on the Moutere clay soils, as well as managing their forestry nursery.

This led to my parents establishing a forestry and ornamental nursery in 1968. They had a productive vegetable garden, selling vegetables at the front gate, which became my responsibility when I was 6 years old as they were more heavily involved in the nursery.

As *radiata* seedlings are a one-year crop and can't easily be held over to the next planting season, a reverting block of steep hillside in Golden Downs was purchased, and progressively planted when surplus trees were

available. Now in its second rotation, we have decided to plant part of the area in a redwood–douglas fir mix, affording a great opportunity to trial seedlings from a range of Californian provenances, clones and different herbicide regimes, and we are now managing the pruning and final crop mix. By the summer of year six we had learnt not to underestimate the amount of regenerating *radiata* seedlings and brush weeds that will compete with the planted seedlings. So on the second area, we sprayed and left it fallow for a season before re-spraying again, with a much improved result. The interplant, while seedling intensive, has given early canopy closure and good suppression of competing weeds, and it appears that the shading of the redwood trunks by the douglas fir branches is a factor in the lack of epicormics to date.

As the availability of cheap forestry land dried up in Nelson, we chose to continue forestry planting with several landowners in forestry joint ventures. This has spread the risk against any particular stand having snow or storm damage.



Eric with the radiata crop of 1969.

We are fortunate to have been supported by excellent contractors, forestry colleagues and customers. The Farm Forestry Association is one of the best sources of practical information, with local field days and an excellent magazine called *Tree Grower*. The local members often have experience of both *radiata* and alternative species and are only too willing to share their knowledge.





James with swing yarder harvesting crew.



Douglas fir joint venture block.

My son James is the third generation involved in forestry. At 10 years of age he took up hunting, and this all-consuming pastime led to an interest in what was happening with the trees in our forestry blocks. During his school holidays James arranged work experience with local forestry companies and harvesting crews. Having completed his forestry management qualification, he is now employed by Nelson Forests Ltd as a harvest coordinator based in Marlborough, responsible for roading and harvest planning, construction and supervision of five harvesting operations. James is now organising the harvesting of trees that we grew in our nursery 30 years ago. It is a privilege to be part of Nelson Forests Ltd forestry operation as their seedling supplier.

Looking forward, we have such continued confidence in the industry that we have been preparing tracking and spraying for a new joint venture. Douglas fir will be planted next winter in a higher rainfall area, which is quite different to our previous experience, but makes it all the more interesting.



Nelson Forests north bank, Marlborough harvesting operations.

