

# Customer profile



## BEVAN WALKER

Bevan and Nora Walker are extremely keen and enthusiastic forest owners.

Bevan's father Nev was a bulldozer operator who crushed and giant disced many thousands of acres of gorse-covered hillsides in the Nelson

province with his trusty D4 bulldozer. In the early 1970s the family purchased 70 hectares of gorse-covered hillside in Tunnel Gully, at the base of Spooners Range in Golden Downs forest, which they planted in *Pinus radiata* at 1200 stems per hectare. The block was extensively tracked with a bulldozer and production thinned with a skidder, yielding some saw logs, but mostly chips, leaving a stocking of 450–500 stems per hectare.

Bevan has been patient with his harvesting and has been rewarded with some very impressive harvesting tonnages. A recent 1-hectare block of 36-year-old trees returned 1000 tonnes of high value log grades, with very little going to the chip mill. Some 32-year-old trees that had recently been wind-storm damaged still yielded between 750–800 tonnes per hectare. He uses a bulldozer and winch and a Bell logger on the skid, and employs a tree feller and a digger, depending on the scale of the harvest.

These high tonnages of standing wood are putting the available boron under real pressure, resulting in branch tip die-back in summer throughout the older stands. Foliage testing showed the need to apply hydroborate chip with a helicopter to correct the deficiency.

Bevan has replanted with *Pinus radiata* and a range of alternative timber species. *Acacia melanoxylon*, and redwood seedlings and clones have been planted along the valley, with Lawsons cypress in the cooler shaded areas. *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *C. lusitanica* are planted on the lower slopes, with clones of Leyland cypress being trialled. There are also some eucalyptus and a conifer arboretum of lesser-known timber species.

The tree planting, spot spraying, releasing and pruning is undertaken by Bevan himself, and the successful establishment and rapid growth in his stands is testimony to the thoroughness and effort he puts into his forest. He is involved in the local farm forestry branch, and always makes his forest available for field days and overseas visitors. He is the ideal person to plant out informal trials and always finds a corner for a rare or unusual tree we have that needs a good home.

Bevan is a builder by trade, and a very keen woodworker who has milled and used the wood of many interesting and unusual tree species. When not building or working in his forest, he undertakes long kayak trips, which have included circumnavigating both the South Island and Stewart Island and following the coastline of Siberia. He recently paddled 2000 kilometres from Great Slave Lake down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic coast in the Northern Territories of Canada.



Thirty-six-year-old trees yielded 1,000 tonnes per hectare.



Coastal redwood, 17 months after planting. *Cupressus macrocarpa*.



Leighton Green pruned to 6.5m.



Bevan's Bell logger sorting 32-year-old logs.