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THE PERFORMANCE OF EUCALYPTUS SPECIES IN HILL COUNTRY

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Plant Science

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

James Peter Millner

2006
Abstract

*Eucalyptus* species, particularly stringybarks, which produce hard, durable wood are potentially useful in New Zealand, but most species are site sensitive. Twelve species (*E. agglomerata*, *E. baxteri*, *E. botryoides*, *E. cladocalyx*, *E. globoidea*, *E. microcorys*, *E. muelleriana*, *E. nitens*, *E. obliqua*, *E. pilularis*, *E. regnans* and *E. saligna*) were compared on four hill country microsites; upper and lower slope on sunny and shady aspects. Assessments included survival, foliar macro-nutrients, diameter at breast height (DBH), height, stem form, basic wood density and health to age 5 years. Site monitoring included solar radiation, temperature, rainfall and exposure. Foliar nutrients were strongly influenced by species and moderately influenced by microsite. Inter-nutrient and nutrient-growth correlations were identified and discussed. Subgeneric differences in nutrient profile were analysed with the aid of principal components analysis. Solar radiation and temperature were seasonal on both aspects but higher on the sunny face than the shady. Aspect differences were moderate, being greatest in the winter and least in the summer. A strongly seasonal growth pattern resulted, maximum DBH and height increments occurring in the spring and summer respectively. Growth was least in the winter. Seasonal and aspect effects on growth were related to solar radiation. Height and DBH (5 years) were significantly higher on the sunny face than the shady in all species. Slope position did not influence height but DBH on the lower slope was less than on the upper. Aspect had little influence on basic wood density and form. Species differed in growth, form and basic density. *E. nitens* was the most productive species but basic density was low. Conversely, density was highest in *E. cladocalyx*, among the least productive species. The stringybarks were intermediate in growth, form and density. The relationships between growth, form, density and environmental factors were explored with canonical correlation. Two species (*E. botryoides* and *E. saligna*) were adversely affected by possum browsing and infection by a leaf gall wasp (*Ophelimus eucalypti*). Discussion of the results includes consideration of the merits of assessments of relatively young trees as well as implications for tree growers.
Acknowledgements

I consider the opportunity for personal development afforded by PhD study as a privilege. The cooperation and help provided by several University institutions has been important, particularly Massey University Farm Services and past and present farm managers of Tuapaka who provided me with access. The Fertiliser and Lime Research Centre provided analyses of soil and foliage samples and Hugh Neilson was able to isolate and identify fungi from diseased samples. Financial support provided by the Massey University Agricultural Research Foundation and the Institute of Natural Resources is much appreciated.

I have had a number of supervisors over the years, some of whom gave up waiting and retired. Thanks to Denis Hocking and Mike Wilcox for their advice and to Ian Gordon for his firm and persuasive counsel on data analysis. Special thanks to Peter Kemp who got to do the hard work reading and providing feedback on the draft. Information provided by Bruce Bullock on the location and layout of the Wairarapa eucalypt trials was much appreciated.

Many people provided help at the trial site. Members of the Massey Young Farmers Club cheerfully helped with lugging in materials and erecting the perimeter fence, despite the gales. For the big job of planting I was able to call on the help of my father and my youngest brother, Ian. Thank-you.
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(i) *E. obliqua*, (j) *E. pilularis*, (k) *E. regnans* and (l) *E. saligna* from June 1998 to August 1999.
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