

## INFO BULLETIN-CHRISTMAS TREES

Growing *Pinus radiata* for Christmas Trees can be satisfying and rewarding.

Trees will be ready for harvest in 2½ years (good sites) or 3½ years (drier sites) from planting.

### **Tree stocks**

- ❑ **Stand Select 1/0 seedlings** - These will give good growth with most (approx. 75%) having good form. The other trees may require some form management to produce a saleable tree.
- ❑ **Control Pollinated 1/0 seedlings** - From trees selected for multi-branching characteristics. These trees are too branchy for general forestry use. "Out the gate", yields from these seedlings will be higher with the overall form being more bushy.

We recommend the use of Control Pollinated High Branch Index seedlings to produce Christmas Trees.

### **Planting**

A spacing of 2m x 2m is recommended. Planting much closer will significantly reduce side branch growth in their last year. Allow for a wider vehicle access every 8 - 10 rows.

### **Weed Control**

Use normal forestry herbicides to control weeds throughout the production cycle. Bare earth around your tree will reflect light up into your tree and encourage it to have a bushy base. Long grass will cause the bottom inside needles to die as the grass ages.

### **Form pruning**

Removing the first whorl of branches will assist with harvest and allow the buyer to place it easily in a bucket. Minor form pruning to even up branch size should be done in the late autumn before the tree is harvested.

"Snapping out" the leader about 6 weeks prior to harvest will leave your tree with a firm single leader that will not wilt after cutting. Do not cut it out with secateurs as it will look "cut off".