



Plant Propagation Business Unit Manager Peter Young. Photo by Jiri Lochman

Operations impress new nursery manager

MEET Plant Propagation Business Unit Manager Peter Young. Peter recently arrived in Manjimup from South Africa to take up the position and, together with CALM's Plant Propagation Centre staff, has just completed a review of the Centre.

"I am impressed with the way the nursery is run and the quality of both the softwood and hardwood seedlings grown," Peter said.

"The Centre produces genetically improved stock in a technologically advanced operation that is backed by research.

"We can't forget, though, that competition is increasing and we must work to maintain existing customers and to expand our customer base wherever possible so the nursery remains viable.

"I want to meet all existing customers, to discuss their needs and to develop contacts

with other forestry seedling users, as the basis for preparing an improved marketing strategy.

"The nursery industry is one that evolves fairly rapidly, and a successful nursery should be involved in continuing research and should keep abreast of new developments by maintaining contact with as many similar operations as possible."

Peter is also examining possible improvements to seedling production highlighted by the review.

These include erecting tables on which to raise karri seedlings, (currently grown on pallets on the ground) the introduction of tree growing from cuttings, further research into germination rates and growing some pine species in containers.

The 202-hectare Plant Propagation Centre is one of the biggest facilities of its

kind in the southern hemisphere, with the capacity to produce 24 million seedlings a year.

Peter was born in Zimbabwe and after acquiring a diploma in agriculture, he farmed for 10 years, growing tobacco, maize, seed maize, soya beans, wheat and coffee. He also raised beef cattle.

He has lived in South Africa for the past 11 years, where he worked as a nursery manager for Sappi Forests, which managed 450 000 hectares of plantations.

The nurseries department had the capacity to produce 40 million containerised seedlings per annum.

Peter is married to Mary and they are the proud parents of Ian, aged nine years, and Connor, aged seven.

Peter tells us he knew all along that the Springboks would win the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

