TUART REGENERATION

by D.J. Rowe

When utilisation of the tuart (Euc. gomphocephala) began the problems associated with regeneration of the species were not readily recognised. Today the tuart forest is dominated by Agonis flexuosa (W.A. Peppermint). There have been many attempts to re-establish the tuart forest and some experimental plots have been planted.

Tuart, like many other eucalypt species, has a fairly regular flowering and seeding cycle, but one can find odd specimens flowering at irregular intervals. Generally tuart has a five year cycle, from bud formation to mature seed in the seed capsules.

1975 WILDFIRE

In January 1975, a wildfire burned some bulldozing in Jamesies Paddock. Initially it appeared there would not be any seedlings on the ash beds, but as winter came, so did the odd seedling germinate. By the end of July there were, on the ash beds, more than an adequate number of seedlings. Today the average height of the tuart regeneration is 6 metres plus, and it has dominated the Agonis flexuosa on this area.

TUART REGENERATION

In 1975 an area was marked in Jamesies Paddock for clearing, using a Fiat 70C i series, equipped with a rake blade and tree pushing arm. The area was bulldozed in the winter months of 1975. All debris was pushed into openings, where there was no mature or pole sized tuart. The debris was left in bulldozed heaps until May 1977, when it was burned. The resulting ash beds are now literally carpeted with seedlings. Some seedlings are now 1 metre in height, but an average height of the whole area would be about 0.8 metre.

During this summer it is expected that some seedlings will die due to drought and also competition from other stronger seedlings.

It is planned to control burn the 1975 wildfire area in the late autumn. Hopefully this will aid in controlling the Agonis flexuosa and also may help to control insect species which attack the tuart foliage.

The current Tuart Working Plan allows for the regeneration of 25 hectares per annum. Tuart seedlings will be planted on ash beds if insufficient natural seeding occurs.