

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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VicForests Probes Bloodwood

VicForests has undertaken the first stage of an investigation into the sawing and recovery of Red Bloodwood (*Corymbria gummifera*), a native hardwood species common in areas east of Cann River.

Red Bloodwood is a difficult timber to market due to its reputation for the unsavoury timber characteristic known as 'water shake'. Water shake is formed as the living tree attempts to fend off attack by pathogens or to heal wounds caused by physical disturbance, including the effects of fire. Water shake is identified by the permanent separation of growth rings. In a severe case, it will appear to peel off along the growth rings.

In the case of Red Bloodwood, the space between the two separated rings is often filled with a solid or liquid reddish brown sap. Pockets of escaping liquid sap give the tree its common name.

VicForests has become increasingly interested in Red Bloodwood due to its natural durability and the potential to improve on the present poor demand.

In ground use, Red Bloodwood timber has the highest durability class rating of 1 in a scale of 1 to 5. Within East Gippsland, only Red Ironbark and Coastal Grey Box are credited as having the same durable attributes.

"There is a decline in the availability of class 1 durable hardwood species across Australia," said VicForests, Sales and Marketing Officer, Mick Theobald.

"The problem of low recovery associated with Red Bloodwood may be overcome by increases in the retail price as demand continues to outstrip supply," he said.

"We are seeking to understand through research and development, the timber attributes and commercial viability of this species and to better promote its potential in the durable hardwood market."

The Red Bloodwood trial logs were contract sawn into board sizes suitable for outdoor decking and internal flooring, by Mectec Sawmill, Newmerrella.

"The boards show high feature and colours ranging from red through to deep brown. Boards will be air dried for – four to six months and will then be dressed for sale and final recoveries tallied. A small sample will be kiln dried and the products once tested will be offered for sale," Mr Theobald said.

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Further information or telephone Mick Theobald, Sales and Marketing Officer, 0429 176 568.

Attached image: Example of sawn Red Bloodwood boards and Lincoln Saunders, Forest Officer, VicForests block stacking trial boards.

