BUNYA NURSERIES

BUNYA HIGHWAY
MURGON
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OPEN 7 DAYS
Weekdays: 8.30am - 2.30pm
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THE BUNYA PINE

Araucaria bidwillii, family*: Araucariaaceae*

The Bunya Pine grew on this land mass over 200 million years ago, at the beginning of the age of dinosaurs, making the Bunya one of the first trees to grow on this planet. Its' reproduction process is very primitive, not unlike that of some Cycads, with the round top of the tree being the female part with the female cones being produced close to the crown of the tree. The male cones are born on the lower branches producing large amounts of pollen over a couple of early winter days and depend on up drafts to fertilize the potential female cones.

The Bunya can produce small cones with few nuts [embryos] after 10 years. After 20 years they will start to grow larger cones at a 10 year average of approx. 10 per year, with 1.5 Kg. of nuts per cone currently fetching around $5 per Kg. at markets. These trees can live for over 700 years becoming tap rooted giants with a large volume of quality timber. Families that have lived at Upper Yarraman for generations tell of a time of mixed farming, when they boiled whole Bunya cones to remove the sap [which contains turpentine] so they could feed them to their pigs. They then used this resin to preserve and protect the timber in their out buildings from fungal attack, white ants and borers. Warning here, the white sap is extremely irritating to the eyes.

The Rainforest, Cabinet Timber, Bush Foods and Chooks trials will plant around 700 Bunyas around the edges of each 10000 tree site for updraft, harvestability and their enduring strength. Producing about 10500 Kg. of nuts per year once established, these bunya nuts are one of the few plant derived food sources that aren't dependent upon insects for pollination. As large volumes become available, turning the harvested nuts into flour and dried flake will make this food source storable, useable and marketable.

These 700 Bunya Pines could potentially produce 30000 Kg. of fodder from the rest of the cone which consists of the segments [placentas], inside which grew the bunya nuts [embryos]. The boiling process would not only remove the sap it will preserve this possible fodder source. The potential of this sap/resin as a timber preserver is unknown, with bunya candles offering an insight. Bunya candles are the knots or glands at the base of each mature branch which can lie on the rainforest floor for a 100 years without attack from fungi or wood eating insects. This is because of the flammable resin which becomes apparent when one of these 100 year candles is burnt.

The Bunya Pine is extremely hardy once established for a couple of years, withstanding extreme heat and cold this tree is capable of growing over most of Australia, including Tasmania.