

# Opportunities for a durable hardwood industry in Marlborough

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**Birch Hill Forestry / Lowlands Wines**

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# Who are we?

## Lowlands Wines

- 182 ha vineyards
- Dillons Point / Lower Wairau



## Birch Hill Forestry

- 1000ha commercial pine forests
- 400ha planted 1992-1995, replanted 2021-2024
- 600ha first rotation planted 2020-2024

# Dual interest

## Production Forestry

- Looking at alternative species & management regimes



## Vineyard posts

- Exploring viable alternatives to CCA treated pine



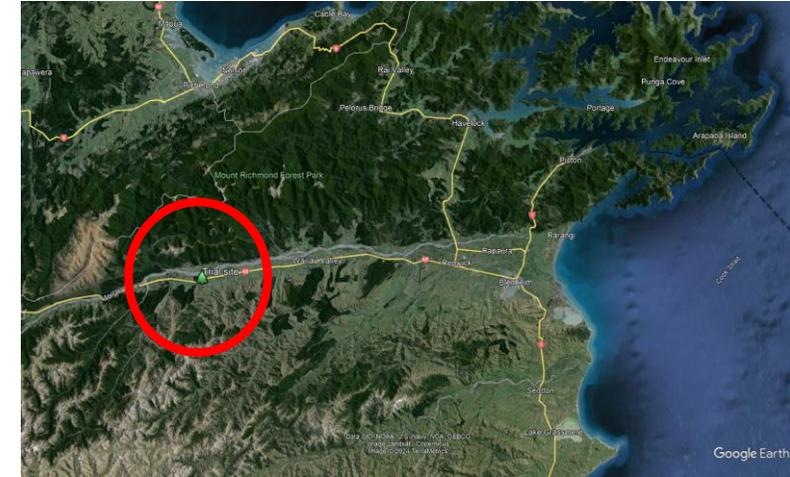
# Eucalypts for commercial forestry

Our concerns:

- Site suitability / climate
- Seedling costs & establishment success
- Pests & disease
- Growth rates
- Harvest & processing infrastructure
- Quality and quantity of wood produced
- Do the economics stack up?



# Hardwood Eucalypts – 6ha trial planted 2021



Short rotation (15-20 year)  
peeler pole stand for  
hardwood posts

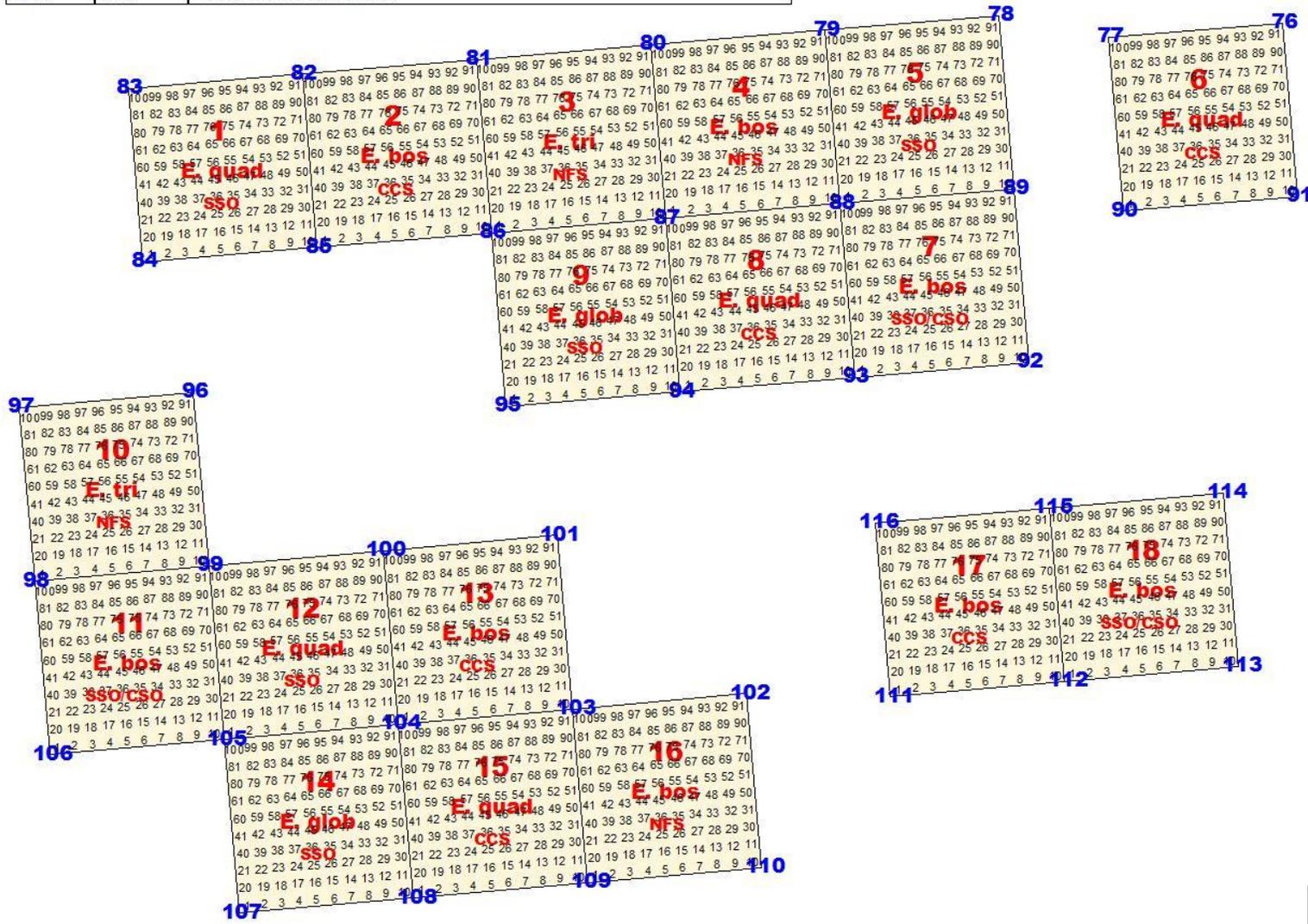
Species planted  
*E. globoidea*, *E. bosistoana*, *E.*  
*quadrangulata*, *E. tricarpa*

Species	Code	Source
E. glob	SSO	Ex-Atkinson progeny trial. Mix of 35 families collected 2020. Xylogene.
E. bos	NFS	Native forest stand seedlot 16/619 Noorinbee Gippsland
E. bos	SSO/CSO	Cravens Rd progeny trial & clonal seed orchard. 26 families 2020. Xylogene.
E. bos	CCS	Clones. Ex-Woodville trial
E. quad	SSO	Webbs Barn SSO 21/712
E. quad	CCS	Clones. Ex-Woodville trial
E. tri	NFS	Tucker Box seedlot 21/711

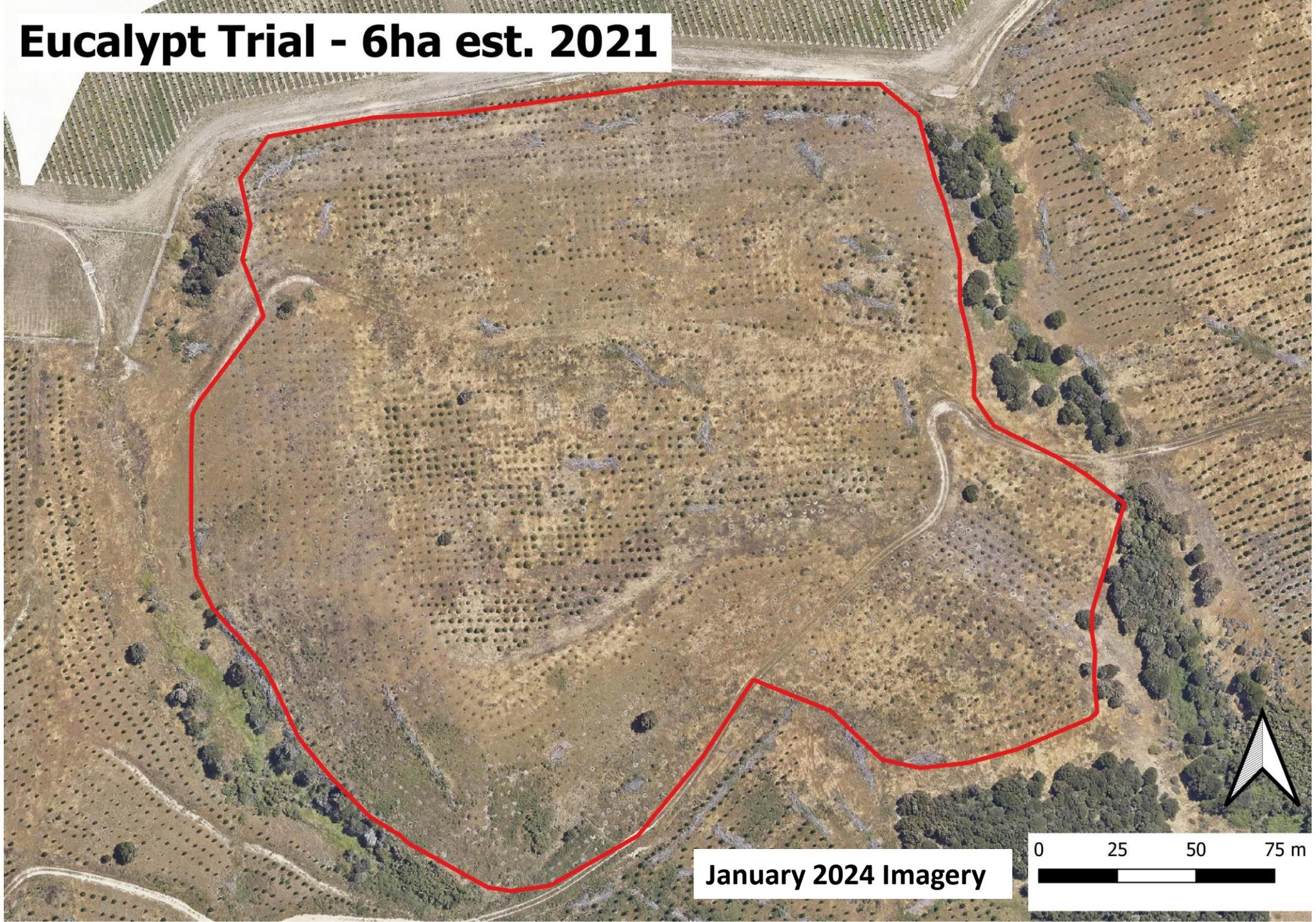


**Holdaway Demonstration Trial**  
**Reg No. DF0148\_02Mix21**  
**Planted 2021**

**Blocks 28.0 m x 28.0 m**  
**Tree spacing 2.8 m x 2.8 m**  
**100 trees per block**



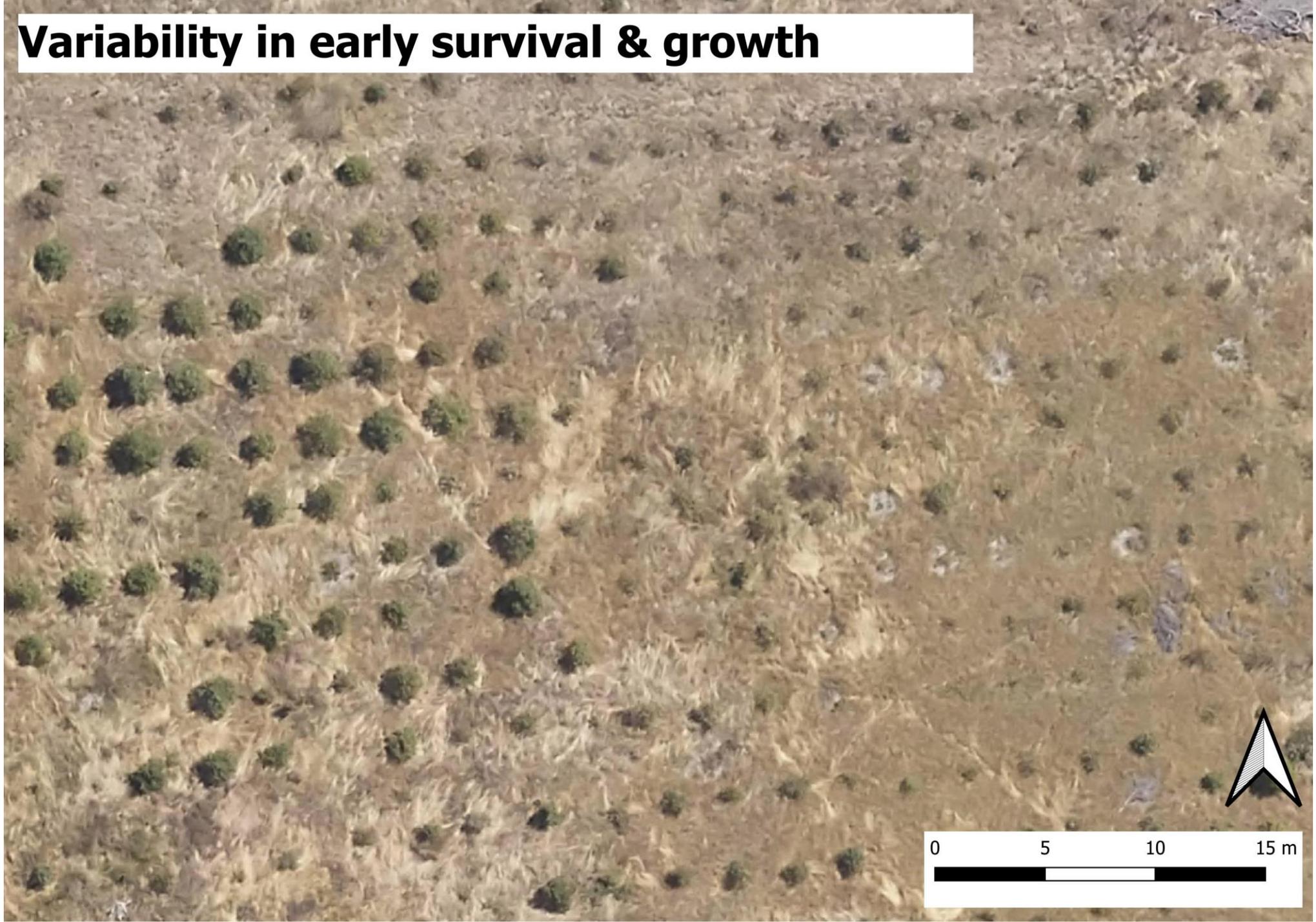
# Eucalypt Trial - 6ha est. 2021



January 2024 Imagery



# Variability in early survival & growth

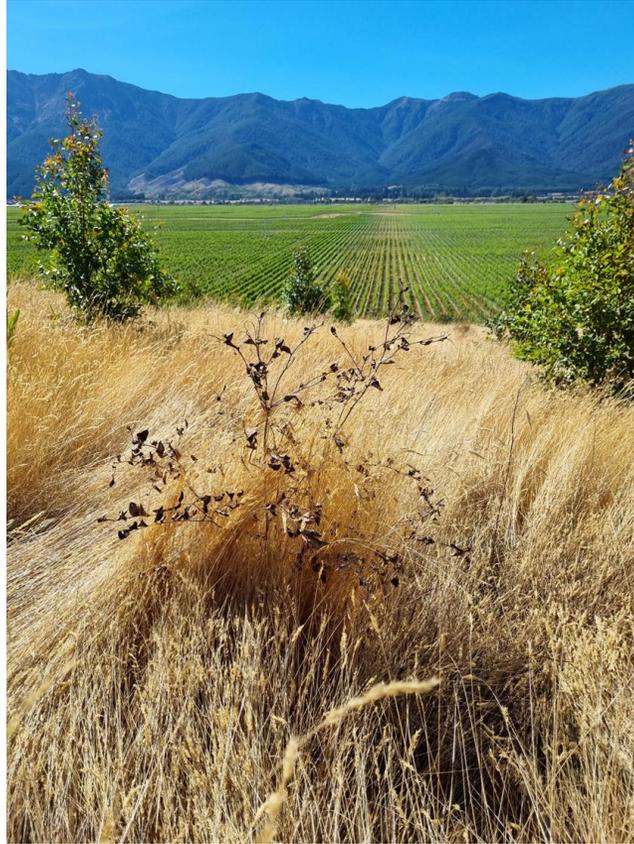














# End use - vineyard posts

## Sizeable demand

- 182 ha – approx. 80,000 posts
- 1500-2500 break each year = 1.8% to 3%
- Replanting forecast next 10-20 years – all new posts

## Current standard is CCA treated radiata pine

## Benefits of pine

- Locally produced
- Affordable (\$14/half round), available, lightweight, easy to use

## Cons

- They break and need replacing
  - Repost (long ends); Landfill (short ends)



# Alternatives – the competition

- Plastic posts – available, recycled, and recyclable
- We've used them in a new vineyard (10ha)
- Local manufacturing plant
- Cost-competitive (\$14-\$20)
- Unknown how they perform with a full canopy and heavy crop load



# Hardwood eucalypt posts

- No personal experience with them yet
- Is there infrastructure to make them?
- Will be heavy and hard to nail
- How do ground durability & breakage rates compare to CCA radiata?
- Can they be cost-competitive?



# Summary

Our aim: Use our 6ha stand to investigate viability of hardwood timber vineyard posts

- A 20 to 30-year experiment
- Lots of potential
- But also, lots of questions & uncertainties

