

# FAST-GROWING EUCALYPTUS TREES HAVE MULTIPLE USES

As the citrus industry scrambles to meet the challenge of citrus greening, fast-growing trees like Eucalyptus offer renewed hope . . . and opportunity.

Fast-growing trees not only create a protective barrier, in the form of windbreaks, but may also be a viable alternative crop.

Windbreaks protect crops from wind damage, chemical drift, and airborne disease. Fast-growing trees developed for Florida's climate require little maintenance and are cold tolerant.

Dr. Rockwood, a leading expert and pioneer in the development of Eucalyptus trees for Florida, has more than 30 years of experience in developing and planting fast-growing trees that include five patented *E. grandis* cultivars. He has worked with clients such as Hilliard Brothers in Clewiston and Water Conserv II near Winter Garden to form windbreaks.

Fast-growing trees also are a potential alternative crop especially suited for former citrus beds. "There's just a kind of residue there that makes those lands more attractive than . . . palmetto prairie kinds of soils," Dr. Rockwood says.

Eucalyptus has an established market for mulchwood throughout the eastern United States. Yet, there is the very real prospect of using fast-growing trees as an alternative energy

**“Fast-growing trees are the only viable way, in my opinion, to establish effective windbreaks as quickly as possible. The trees that we specialize in are the only ones that are going to do that.”**

—Dr. Donald Rockwood *President of the Gainesville-based Florida FGT*

source, either for a renewable energy plant or as pellets for an international market.



Eucalyptus and *Corymbia* trees take three to six years to reach harvest size, giving growers a much faster return on their investment. "When everything goes right, these trees can grow 15-20 feet a year," Dr. Rockwood says. That is three to five times the rate of pine trees. Fast-growing trees can be harvested three times before they

need replanting.

Picking the right tree is critical to the success of a project, and Dr. Rockwood's extensive experience in the field enables him to identify what trees are needed and where to get them. He also advises about how far apart to plant them, when they can be cut, and what yields to expect.

Dr. Rockwood is uniquely qualified to advise about the relative merits of *Eucalyptus amplifolia*, *Eucalyptus grandis*, *Corymbia torelliana*, *Populus*, *Taxodium*, and *Pinus* species.

In addition to their use for windbreaks, mulch, and biomass, fast-growing trees are also suitable for pulpwood, lumber, medium density fiberboard, phytoremediation, carbon sequestration, and honey. They also can be grown on lands periodically flooded for water storage purposes. "It's important to get the trees established, and then they can withstand periodic floods," Dr. Rockwood adds.



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