

Are you wondering if you can do anything with your tree?

You've come to the right place.

In this booklet the timber production process is simplified, your questions are answered and pertinent information is laid out to help you clearly understand what options you have with your log.

Logs into Lumber Q&A



About the author

Peter de Deugd, husband, father, mill owner and cabinetmaker has been working with wood for over 20 years. Hailed as Australia's foremost classical woodworker he is often to be found cutting up logs on his Lucas Mill under an ancient Cypress tree.

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PD WOODCRAFT



Answering your questions
about turning your tree
into timber.

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log can be reached somehow. However the cost climbs very quickly if zero impact on the surrounding area is required.

What are my options for transporting my log to you?

Various companies around offer a lot of different transport options. For example:



Tilt tray trucks

On the plus side they are fast at traveling to and from the job. They are easier to book than other

options. No other lifting machinery is necessary. They are a good option for small jobs.

On the negative side they can't load or carry many logs at once. They are a large vehicle so they need access right up to the log and to be able to drag the log across the ground. They are limited in the size of the log they can lift. Their capacity is small compared to their cost.



Tip truck and excavator

On the positive side they are fast loading, can lift heavy logs and can load multiple logs at

once. They are particularly cost effective if an excavator is on site already.

On the negative side they are prohibitively

expensive if the excavator has to be brought in. And excavators ruin lawns and paving, etc.



Semi trailer and crane

On the positive side they are fast

loading, can lift any size log, have low landscape impact and a large load capacity. They are least likely of all the options to have lifting capacity problems or access problems.

On the negative side, they can be the most expensive option at a combined cost of around \$250.00 per hour.

How can I contact you?

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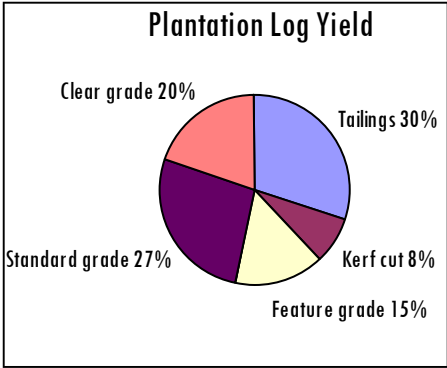
We try to answer lots of timber related questions on our FAQs page.

Thank you for reading. All the best with your log!

get a price on timber a good way to get an idea on the value of my log?

Timber retailers will usually give a price on select (or clear) grade, kiln dried, retailed timber. A log will generally only yield a small portion of this grade (which is the highest grade) and will be green—not kiln dried. This information then is unlikely to give you an accurate picture of the worth of your log.

A good plantation log which has been grown to be long and straight has a fairly high yield. However, salvage logs almost always have a slight bend in one or both directions. When this is the case some portions of the tree won't be able to be cut into boards



and will end up being discarded. These parts are referred to as tailings.

To minimize damage from foreign objects a saw blade with wider teeth is used. If the blade is 6mm wide you will lose this much of the tree with each cut. This is known as kerf cut.

What are the different timber grades?

Feature grade is the lowest grade. A board will be marked feature grade if it is full of knots.

Standard grade is more valuable than feature because it has less significant knots.

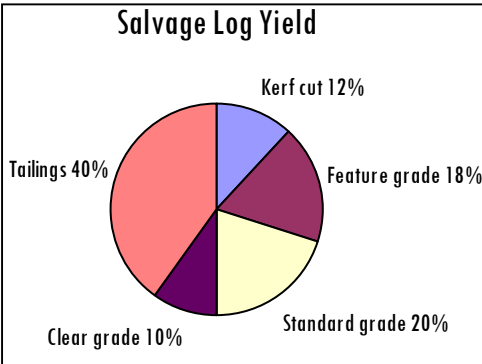
Select or clear grade is most valuable and can be utilized for more purposes because it is free of any significant knots.

How much timber am I likely to get from my log?

Consider these points:

What are some practical

considerations I need to take into account in deciding whether it will be worth it to mill my tree?



First, the larger the logs and the more logs you have the more timber you will end up with to offset your costs.

Second, where is the location of the log from the sawmill? Is the cartage going to be affordable?

Third, how accessible is the log? Almost any

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Are there any good reasons to salvage my logs?

Absolutely! Here are three:

A salvage or urban log can have beautifully figured areas of grain that plantation logs lack. This is because of the uniqueness of urban logs as opposed to plantation logs which are grown uniform and straight.

When factors are favourable, it is possible to save money by having your logs milled into timber rather than buying lumber from a retail outlet.

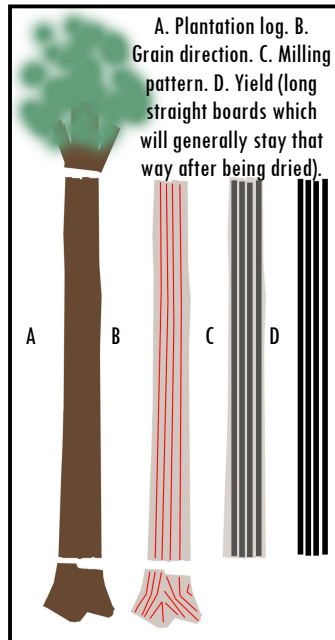
Salvaging your logs is a timeless way to link the history of a property or location with tangible and unique items.

What do I need to know about my tree?

It is important to be able to identify the species of the tree. Is it oak, elm, cypress, etc? This is particularly important for the drying stage. Ask about our brochure on drying timber.

What if I don't know what sort of tree it is?

Collect samples of its leaves, cones, buds and bark. Also draw a rough sketch of its shape (particularly the outline of its canopy).



Are all trees the same in terms of what you can do with them?

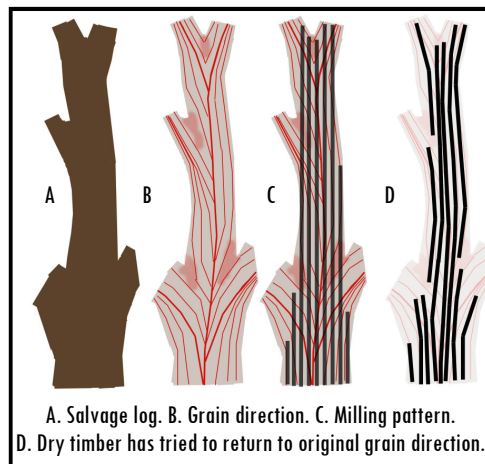
Different trees have different properties. Blackwood has beauty. Hickory has strength. Oregon has low shrinkage and low weight. Cedars are usually very weatherproof, etc.

As you consider whether to salvage your logs consider whether the properties of your tree

are of use to you or someone you know.

My tree has a lot of branches. Could this be a problem?

In the timber industry a branch is in fact considered to be a defect. This is because when a branch grows from the main trunk it disrupts



the flow of the grain. This disruption to the grain pattern can cause distortion to any timber milled from the tree. At first this timber will be straight and green, but as it dries the affect of the branches is seen as the board becomes crooked, twisted, curved, bent or wonky.

Can this be avoided?

It will certainly help if the boards are cut thicker than normal. They can then be machined straighter in a later stage of the process.



Is it possible that my tree might have other defects?

Resin pockets are a defect. They are caused by wind early in a tree's growth in softwoods or by fire in hardwoods. However, they only become apparent once milled.

Other defects that can affect how much of the tree you can actually use (apart from for firewood) are decay, splitting and insect attack.

Are there any factors which might make my tree difficult or more costly to mill?

Trees often contain foreign objects such as nails and bullets.

Why are these a problem?

A saw blade has many little teeth on it. When

one of these hits a metal object in a log like a nail it usually rips off the teeth. It is a costly and time consuming process to weld new teeth on or to order a new saw blade.

How likely is it that my tree would have a foreign object in it?

If the tree has spent its whole life at least 200 metres away from a building or fence the likelihood of hitting metal is pretty low.

However, even in trees that "don't have nails" statistically there is a 99.9% chance of hitting at least one nail if the tree was at anytime within walking distance of a building or fence.

What other sorts of things can be found buried in trees?

A tree near a fence will often absorb the metal fence wire as it grows around it. Shovels, forks and hoes, once lent against a tree, can be found almost at the centre of a large log.

Rabbit snares, being spring steel, are not nice to bite into. Horse shoes are known to collect at the base of a branch.

Peppercorn trees are particularly likely to contain foreign objects because flies don't like peppercorn trees and workers don't like flies or the hot sun. When they do metal work around the tree some of this is likely to find its way into the tree.

Is calling a timber retailer to