
[Pulpwood plantations: a growing problem](#)

To millions of people across the world today, the pulp and paper industry is a growing problem. The chipping of native forests to provide raw material for the industry is being opposed bitterly by local people and environmentalists from Australia to Finland, and from Chile to Canada. No less widespread are protests at pollution from giant pulp mills which has sucked oxygen from rivers, ruined fisheries and drinking water supplies, and increased the burden of highly-toxic chlorinated organic compounds in animal and human bodies.

This briefing paper is concerned with a third activity of the pulp and paper industry --one which is often less well-publicized and which, at first glance, might seem more benign: planting trees. To help feed pulp and paper mills, vast monocultures of conifers, eucalyptus, acacia, and other species are being established both in the North and, increasingly, in the South, where fast tree growth, inexpensive land and labour, and lavish subsidies combine to make wood especially cheap. As swatches of exotic trees invade native woodlands, grasslands, farmlands and pastures, the results, in country after country, have been impoverishment, environmental degradation, and rural strife.

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