TAS. NATIVE FLORA & FILLERS Wildlife Trade Operation - Harvest of various native plant species from Tasmania

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1. Introduction

This application is for the harvest of cut foliage for export of flora from state forest areas and private land in Tasmania and Flinders Island. The management of native species and monitoring of the harvest operation is by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Legislative power to declare protected plants species is found under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas). Other relevant legislation includes the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tas), and the *Forest Management Act 2013* (Tas).

Table 1. Species to be harvested under this operation

Scientific Name	Common name	Harvest portion
Banksia marginata (Proteaceae)	Honeysuckle Banksia	Flowering stems
Gahnia grandis (Cyperaceae)	Cutting Grass	Flowering stems (after seed drop)
Blechnum nudum	Fishbone Water-fern	Unblemished foliage
Dicksonia antarctica	Soft Tree Fern	Unblemished foliage
Gleichenia dicarpa (Gleicheniaceae)	Wiry Coral-fern	Unblemished foliage
Gleichenia microphylla (Gleicheniaceae)	Coral-fern	Unblemished foliage
Lomatia tinctoria (Proteaceae)	Guitar Plant	Unblemished foliage
Nothofagus cunninghamii (Fagaceae)	Myrtle Beech	Unblemished foliage
Polystichum proliferum (Aspidiaceae)	Mother Shield-fern	Unblemished foliage
Xanthorrhoea australis (Xanthorroeaceae)	Grass Tree	Unblemished foliage
Tasmannia lanceolata (Winteraceae)	Mountain Pepper Bush	Unblemished foliage; Ripe fruit

Location of Harvest
All flora is to be harvested from "Permanent Timber Production Zone land" (as defined by Sustainable Timber Tasmania) and privately owned land in Tasmania and Flinders Island, under property owner's consent as and when required. The present location of harvesting is defined as per contract of Sale Agreement with Sustainable Timber Tasmania No. 1120 Prid 18769.

Flora

- Harvesting will not remove more than one third of the leaves and/or branches of each plant.
- Harvesting will be restricted to healthy plants only.
- Harvesting of berries will have minimal disturbance to leaf and branches. The tree must not be removed purely to source berries.

Xanthorrhoea australis

- To avoid harvesting from threatened *Xanthorrhoea* species trunks must be greater than 30cm in height.
- A maximum of 25% of the foliage from any one grasstree plant can be harvested in any one season (i.e. 12 months).
- Foliage should not be re-harvested until the crown has sufficiently regrown, such that the previously harvested area is hidden below the 'skirt' of the plant. The time for this to occur will vary depending on species/location.
- Foliage should be taken from the middle section of the growing mass-avoiding the crown and the lower 'skirt'.
- Harvesting should not occur within the first 24 months following fire or where full recovery of the foliage has not occurred for any other reason. During this period, harvesting will not occur.
- Harvest from healthy plants, preferably from areas of higher population density.
- Ensure foliage is marketable prior to harvesting. Foliage that has been cut and then rejected due to poor quality should be discarded into the immediate area.

Nothofagus cunninghamii

- Plant hygiene principals are essential, where branches are to be cut from mature trees wounds must be painted with a suitable fungicide.

***Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC)**

- Management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is in accordance with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania guidelines[1], and include;
    - Vehicles must remain on formed roads at all times. Where this is not practical (e.g.: collection site to far from formed roads) sites may be identified by Sustainable Timber Tasmania and may require specific hygiene protocols to be applied.
    - Equipment is checked before going into the field (including boots and clothing) to ensure that it is free of all debris (including soil, seeds, plant material, leaf litter) and completely dry.
    - Equipment is checked for wear and tear (e.g. gumboots) and replaced where necessary.
    - Pickers are to move around on foot.
    - Try to collect from specimens adjacent or close to formed roads.
    - Avoid undisturbed catchments.

- Harvesting tools must be sterilised between all sites.
- Boots are to be cleaned to remove all soil between all sites.
- Minimal area is to be disturbed.
- Plan to conduct operations during periods when soils are likely to be dry. Avoid wet soils as much as possible.
- Avoid harvesting areas containing *X. bracteata* and *X. arenaria,* as delineated on maps. If these species are found in the field, findings are to be reported to the relevant Forestry District.
- Infected sites are only to be harvested during summer periods. (It is not normal practice to harvest known infected areas).

Status of species
None of the species in this application are listed as threatened under State legislation. None of the species in this application are listed as threatened under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). None of the species in this application appear in the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

2. GENERAL GOALS/AIMS

Management of the proposed foliage harvesting operation is intended to provide a sustainable long-term supply of selected plant material to niche overseas markets. Low impact collection techniques are being used for current domestic market supply and will be used for export supply. Additionally, harvest quantities are relatively small, as less than about 5% of the total resource available is of quality suitable for ornamental floral use. Harvest for overseas markets will occur at weekly intervals at most.

3. MANAGEMENT MEASURES

3.1 Harvest area Flora
All products are to be harvested from "Permanent Timber Production Zone land" areas in Tasmania (as defined by Sustainable Timber Tasmania), and privately owned land in Tasmania and Flinders Island. The present location of harvesting is defined as per contract of Sale Agreement with Sustainable Timber Tasmania No. 1120 Prid 18769.

Most of the harvest area is dry sclerophyll woodland. *Gahnia* and other sedges tend to dominate in areas of poor drainage, particularly where fires have been frequent. *Blechnum, Gleichenia* and *Polystichum* are more common in riparian scrub areas and in closed forest areas along with *Nothofagus, Banksia, Lomatia* and *Xanthorrhoea* tend to occur in areas of open dry sclerophyll woodland, particularly, where burning has been frequent.

3.2 Land Ownership Flora
The state forest harvest areas are categorised as "Permanent Timber Production Zone Land" administered by Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Permission to harvest material requires a forest licence (authorised by Sustainable Timber Tasmania). The licence specifies the area to which harvesting is restricted and the amount of material allowed to be taken during the licence period. The

licence requires a statement of the amount of material taken and its date of removal. Royalties are paid at the end of each month and are also paid to private landowners where requested.

Harvest is permitted on areas of private land through private agreements with landholders.

3.3 Harvest Quantities

The maximum quantity to be harvested is outlined in the below table. The actual quantity harvested will depend on market demand and prices. Material will not be harvested if prices are too low. Flower and foliage markets tend to have fluctuating prices as product supply often exceeds demand due to growth flourishes.

Table 2. Maximum quantity to be harvested.

Scientific Name	**Harvest Portion**	**Maximum Quantity per plant per year**	**Bunch Size**	**Maximum Number of units* per Year**
Banksia marginata (Honeysuckle Banksia)	Flowering stems from mature plants	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	5 stems per bunch	30,000 units
Gahnia grandis (Cutting Grass)	Flowering stems (after seed drop)	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	5 stems per bunch	30,000 units
Blechnum nudum (Fishbone Water-fern)	Unblemished foliage	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	10 fronds per bunch	30,000 units
Gleichenia dicarpa (Wiry Coral-fern)	Unblemished foliage	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	10 fronds per bunch	30,000 units
Gleichenia microphylla (Coral-fern)	Unblemished foliage	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	10 fronds per bunch	30,000 units
Lomatia tinctoria (Guitar Plant)	Unblemished foliage	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	10 stems per bunch	30,000 units
Nothofagus cunninghamii (Myrtle Beech)	Cut branches from mature plants	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	5 stems per bunch	30,000 units
Polystichum proliferum (Mother Shield-fern)	Unblemished foliage	Not more than one third of foliage per plant	6 fronds per bunch	30,000 units
Tasmannia lanceolata (Mountain Pepper Bush)	Unblemished foliage; Ripe fruit	Not more than one third of foliage per plant Up to 20% of available fruit per plant	5 stems per bunch	30,000 units (unblemished foliage); 3,000 kilo's ripe fruit
Xanthorrhoea australis	Unblemished	Maximum of	180 fronds	70,000 units

(Grass Tree)	foliage	25% of foliage from middle section (avoiding centre of crown and skirt) per plant and from no more that 30% of plants at one site	per bunch	
Dicksonia antarctica (Soft Tree Fern)	Unblemished foliage	Up to 20% fronds per plant	10 fronds per bunch	30,000 units

*One unit is equivalent to 1 bunch.

3.4 Method Of Harvesting

3.4.1 Flora

All material is harvested by hand using sterile secateurs. Secateurs are dipped in methylated spirits between plants to minimise risk of transference of disease between plants. Material is selectively harvested as only a small proportion (less than 5%) of the total resource is of a quality suitable for ornamental floral use.

Transport to and from harvest areas is on made roads only. Harvested material is carried by hand from the harvest site to the vehicle parked on the roadside. Boots worn by the harvester are thoroughly cleaned with a scrubbing brush and chlorine or disinfectant solution between visits to harvest areas.

Harvesting operation from domestic markets has to date had no noticeable impact on the habitat. No plants have died or become diseased and in many cases plants have responded with more vigorous growth. It should be noted that all areas permitted for harvest by Sustainable Timber Tasmania will eventually be harvested for their timber resource, an activity with significant impact on the environment.

3.5 Timing and Duration of Harvest Period

3.5.1 Flora

Harvesting will be conducted year-round, but different species will not be harvested at certain times of the year. For example, ferns are not saleable when carrying spores and other species do not have sufficient post-harvest when soft new growth is present.

Market demand will also influence time of harvest during the period when material is available. Cut foliage's are easily substituted in the marketplace, so availability in the market of a similar product from another source at a cheaper price may mean harvesting is not an economic proposition at times.

Table 3. Approximate harvest period

Species Name	**Approximate harvest period**
Banksia marginata	September to May
Blechnum nudum	March to October
Gahnia grandis	Year round (selective, one year old flower stalks)
Gleichenia dicarpa	Year round (selective)

Gleichenia microphylla	Year round (selective)
Lomatia tinctoria	Year round (selective)
Nothofagus cunninghamii	December to August
Polystichum proliferum	Year round (selective, spores not carried on all fronds)
Xanthorrhoea australis	Year round (selective, not new or old foliage), depending on Management Plan conditions for PC.
Dicksonia antarctica	February to November (selective, no spores)
Tasmannia lanceolata	February to November

4. IMPACT OF HARVEST ON THE TAXA AND THE RELEVANT ECOSYSTEM

4.0.1 Flora

Harvesting for the domestic market has to date not had any noticeable impact on the habitat. No plants have died or become diseased and in many cases plants have responded with more quality growth. It should be noted that all areas permitted for harvest by Sustainable Timber Tasmania will eventually be harvested for their timber resource, an activity with significant impact on the environment.

In the applicant's opinion there is no impact on the ecosystem, or the scrub or ferns which are harvested, and in many cases the quality of growth is better. This can be seen by looking at the growth of the plants. Sustainable Timber Tasmania officers regularly inspect all forest areas covered by this application.

5. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

5.0 Resource assessment

Sustainable Timber Tasmania conducts regular resource assessments of all forest areas.

A population survey was conducted by the applicant in 2024 whilst harvesting foliage for domestic markets has found the following approximate population densities for each of the proposed harvest species.

Table 4. Population densities

Species Name	**Approximate population densities**
Banksia marginata	Widespread in heaths and in light forests: 20-40 plants/10m2
Blechnum nudum	Complete ground cover in wet forest areas, particularly valley floors: 50-70 plants/10m2
Gahnia grandis	Higher densities in wet forest areas: 1 plant/2m2 Thinning out in drier areas.
Gleichenia dicarpa	Dense stands in riparian scrub and gullies, about 50 plants/10m2. Smaller clumps occasionally in drier area.

Gleichenia microphylla	Dense stands in riparian scrub and gullies, about 50 plants/10m2. Smaller clumps occasionally in drier area.
Lomatia tinctoria	Plants tend to be in broad bands at up to 30 plants/10m2. Thinning out to 6m between plants
Nothofagus cunninghamii	Dense stands in wet area, around 8 trees/10m2
Polystichum proliferum	Full ground cover in wet forest areas, average 50 plants/10m2. Thinning to 2-3m apart in drier areas.
Xanthorrhoea australis	From 20 to 45 plants/20m2 plants/10m2 plants touching in higher density areas. Generally found in well-drained hillsides.
Dicksonia antarctica	1 every 15-20m2
Tasmannia lanceolata	Plants tend to be in broad bands at up to 30 plants/10m2. Thinning out to 6m between plants.

5.1 Supervision of harvesting

5.1.1 Flora

All forest harvest areas are controlled by Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Removal of plant material requires a Forest Product Licence, and or a Permit to Collect Plants, which is reviewed annually. Any forester or ranger in the area may demand to see the licence of someone removing material from the forest. All harvest quantities and types of material/s are entered into a logbook for inspection by District staff, as are payment of royalties. This method has been successful for approximately the past fifteen years.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water requires an annual report with a summary of the harvest program, including volume collected, volume exported and dates and harvest.

5.2 Monitoring of harvesting

5.2.1 Flora

Sustainable Timber Tasmania employees regularly inspect forest areas covered by this application. Inspection includes estimation of timber resource and monitoring of the activities of any forest produce harvester in the area. Damage caused by any forest produce licence holder will result in severe reprimand. We greatly value the forest and vegetation, and it is in our best interest to maintain a sustainable product at all costs.

5.3 Other Monitoring

Sustainable Timber Tasmania commissions surveys of plant populations in some areas as part of the Timber Harvest Planning process, to comply with the *Forest Practices Act 1985*.

The applicant will monitor plant health as part of the harvest process. Broad details of

plant decline or loss (if any) will be recorded and reported to Sustainable Timber Tasmania (if requested). Assessment of population density will be on-going. Monitoring of any particular area will of course cease when or if it is subject to commercial timber-harvesting activity.

6. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

If harvesting operations for the selected species or other species in the same habitat cause a noticeable decline in the population density of any of the species, then harvesting operations will be reviewed. The response to population decline will be to harvest from another area, reduce harvest quantities, or cease harvesting altogether, if necessary.

These responses will be forced by Sustainable Timber Tasmania as part of the forest monitoring, regardless of the desires of the applicant.

If harvesting operations result in an increase in the population density of the selected species, then increased harvesting is not likely as market demand for extra product is unlikely to occur. If an increase in population density or particular species were sufficient to threaten other species, then response would be as for a noticeable decline in species.

7. COMPLIANCE

TAS. NATIVE FLORA & FILLERS under the Sustainable Tasmania Management Plan complies with the following statutes:

- *Historical Cultural Heritage Act 1995* which covers Heritage listed sites.
- *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* which covers environmental harm and pollution in the areas where harvesting will occur.
- *Forest Management Act 2013* which covers all activities on Permanent Timber Production Zone land.
- RFA, Permanent Native Forest Estate.

TAS. NATIVE FLORA & FILLERS also complies with the following Policies:

- Reserve objectives under the Forest Reserve Register
- Property Rights
- Rainforest Policy
- Landscape Management Policy
- Forest Management Plan (Sustainability Charter).

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has supplied the maps and necessary information to ensure the above compliance and will update that information as necessary.

8. REPORTS

TAS. NATIVE FLORA & FILLERS will provide annual reports to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water in accordance with their requirements.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Native cut foliage has been widely used by florists for decades. However, the variability in quality associated with wild picked material has tended to limit demand, especially where plantation-grown foliage is available. A similar limited demand exists overseas, which has niche markets for selectively harvested material.

10. REFERENCES

1. Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Keeping it Clean – A Tasmanian Field Hygiene Manual, 15130802_52keepingitcleanspreadswe.pdf (nre.tas.gov.au)