

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586



Letter lodged by email by IFA President Peter Volker - 31/05/2010

Dear Gardening Australia and Organic Gardener Editors,

I am National President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia, a not-for-profit NGO which represents professional (ie graduate) foresters around Australia (see www.forestry.org.au).

I have recently been made aware of an article by Peter Cundall in Organic Gardener. I must say I share Peter's passion and love for Australia's forests, that is why I chose forestry as my profession and spent the best part of 15 years at University studying the subject as part of my 30 years working in Australian and overseas forests.

If Peter had restricted the article to his passion for forests it would have been quite reasonable and readable. However, at the end of the article it descends into a rant about forest management with no consideration of the reasons forests are managed in the way they are. While I agree that clear felling can look ugly, it is the means by which forests are regenerated and renewed. Fire is an essential part of forest regeneration in Australian eucalypt forests. The reason Peter could so easily walk through the dry eucalypt woodlands was primarily because of frequent fire.

Peter also points out that Australia's tropical and other rainforests are largely protected (from logging). Foresters would argue that protecting Australia's forests from logging has merely transferred pressure onto forests in other countries particularly in Asia and Africa where illegal logging and institutional corruption is rife.

I am at a loss to understand why Organic Gardener would place in its box for further information a contact for the Wilderness Society, which is an ENGO with an annual income of \$15M, with not one cent actually spent on forest management or research. Surely more credible sources of information on forest management would have been included in the information box, including reference to a number of books on the subject of Australian Forest Management published by CSIRO and others?

Finally, I am somewhat concerned that Organic Gardener has been used by an ABC celebrity to put forward a personal viewpoint, with no opportunity for those with a different perspective to put their ideas forward.

Yours sincerely

Peter Volker
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