

Argentina

The "El Povenir" ("The Future") location of the Danzer Group in Argentina gives a vivid example of sustained forestation which makes ecological and economic sense.

Reforestation project involving superior types of wood

Since 1992, Danzer Group has been actively pursuing the goal of reforesting a total area of 15,000 hectares of suitable land with high-quality wood in Argentina to be managed in a sustainable manner and thus ensuring a potential stock of raw wood for its own use and worldwide sales. The new Danzer location is called "El Porvenir", which means "The Future" in Spanish. An auspicious name and perhaps not merely coincidental, after all. It stands for a plantation near the provincial capital Posadas. Posadas in turn is located in Misiones, the most northeasterly Argentinean province, and has a population of 280,000. It is noteworthy, that Danzer Group is not planting on a former forest. This is new timberland that was formerly used for cattle farming.

Concentration on high-quality hardwood

One of the reasons this location was chosen, however, was not only out of logistic considerations, but most especially due to climatic and topographical criteria. A high average amount of rainfall and tropical temperatures along with lots of sunshine in the summertime make this region ideal for growth. The reforestation project in El Porvenir is thus concentrating, in line with the commercial intent and purpose, on high-quality wood which experience has shown to promise worldwide demand and whose growth is easy to control. This is a concern that must be borne in mind when economic and ecological awareness are both given equal importance.

In ten years, 6,000 hectares have been reforested

The project now comprises nearly 13,000 hectares of land in the immediate vicinity; the terrain is slightly hilly and at an altitude of 100 to 200 meters. The long-term goal of Danzer's project is to achieve the reforestation area of between 20,000 and 25,000 hectares; by then, some twenty years will probably have passed. Not until that time can we expect to be finished with the systematic construction of a commercial forest whose substance will remain untouched while, however, ensuring sustainable yields of rare types of wood for integrated industrial use.

What Types of Wood are Being Planted?

The requirement was for fast-growing types of wood with good properties, which would be capable of being made into high-quality veneer. The race for first choice was won by the Paraiso (*Melia azedarach* L.), a tree belonging to the mahogany family, known in English as the Chinaberry tree, White Cedar or Pride-of-India. This was used for the reforestation of roughly a quarter area tackled so far. The rest is shared by such trees as Toona (Australian Red Cedar), *Grevillea* (Southern Silky Oak), Kiri (Princesstree), *Araucaria* (Brazil Pine) and different native hardwoods. In addition, there are more trials going on with other high-quality types of wood.

Replenishing Stocks from the Tree Farm

In the starting phase, we were forced to acquire seeds and saplings from local planters. However, a tree farm took shape in the very first year which made us largely independent and gave us better access to saplings. In 1995 a new, larger tree farm started operations, where up to 800,000 plants can be raised each year. Thus we can be sure of having enough saplings of adequate quality and appropriate provenance at all times. Together with Argentinean universities and research centers, alternative plant trials to optimize specific reforestation attempts under a variety of different local conditions are under way. This project also includes various types of terrain and soil in order to be able to get a more accurate idea of the influential factors. As things stand, we can soon expect definitive findings concerning which types of wood yield the best results under which conditions.