Central Region Newsletter
May/June 2022

Your Central Region Newsletter From The Alpaca Association New Zealand

Welcome to the latest edition of our Central Region Newsletter. This newsletter is produced for our AANZ Central Region members, with the intent that it can be shared with ALL alpaca owners.

The Central Region held its AGM at McKenzie Fields Alpacas at the end of May. It was great to see a big turn out and meet some new members. Whilst it was a bit a rubbish day weather-wise we had some great discussions and it was just nice to hang out with fellow alpaca owners. The Committee members for the year are:

President:	Ros Scott
Vice President:	Stephen Kellam
Secretary:	Cheryl Hunter
Committee Members:	Virginia Darlow
	Cheryl Wheatley
	Carey King

In case you have missed it our National Show is being held in Feilding at Manfeild at the end of September. We have included details in the newsletter. This is a great opportunity to show-case your animals, meet new people and have a great time. It will be open to the public, so even if you only have a few animals I would really encourage you to come along. There is plenty to do, so it would be great to have volunteers to help out. Please email me aanz.nationalshow@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer a bit of your time.

We are hoping to hold a workshop prior to the show season kicking off on how to prepare your fleeces. We will let you know when we have locked a date in.

Stay warm and of course if you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us on the Committee

Ros Scott, Central Region President

2022 National Alpaca Show

Alpaca 2022
NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL SHOW
23-25 SEPTEMBER, FEILDING

Preparations for our 2022 National Alpaca Show are well underway. We have got the website up and running and that along with regular newsletters will be the main “go to” for all the information you need to know. The event will be open to the public, so everyone is welcome!! For those members of the Alpaca Association that may have missed the latest update – here is a summary of the main points.

Key Info & Dates

- **Judges:** We are fortunate to have two very experienced judges from Australia (Natasha Clark and Shane Carey).
- **Venue:** Manfeild Park, 59 South Street, Feilding
- **Fleece Show: Date:** 20-22 September
- **Fleece Convenor:** Cheryl Wheatley
- **Breed Show: Date:** 23-25 September
- **Breed Convenor:** Ros Scott
- **Schedule and Entry forms** can be found here
- **Entries close** 31 August 2022

Sponsorship & Advertising Opportunities

We have a range of sponsorships available – See here for details. This is a great way to promote your business and support the show. We appreciate that some of the sponsorships are highly sought after. Sponsorships will become available on Friday 24 June at 8am. To reserve your sponsorship email sponsorship@alpaca.org.nz

Trade Sites

This year we are offering Trade Sites for free. We feel that this is a great way to show our support to our members and businesses that either directly have an involvement in the Alpaca Industry or support Rural New Zealand. We will have a limited number of Trade Sites available. See here for details. To express interest please email nationalshow@alpaca.org.nz

2022 National Alpaca Show

Communication Channels

Website

www.alpaca2022.com

Facebook Pages

Alpaca Association New Zealand

Alpaca 2022 - Official Show Facebook Page

What we need from you

- Any suggestions or ideas you may have to make this a great show. Whilst we might not be able to accommodate them all, we can certainly give it a go
- Items you may have for the “Good Night Out” Auction or Raffles. We have a number of items already, but if you have something you would like to donate please get in touch
- Businesses that you might think may consider being corporate sponsors. They can contact Ros Scott directly or email sponsorship@alpaca.org.nz
- There are a range of jobs to be done, so it would be great to have people to help out. Get in touch with Ros Scott

This is **our** show and for it to be successful we need participation, enthusiasm and any great ideas you may have. This event is a great opportunity for us to promote the alpaca industry in New Zealand and to the rest of the world – and of course have a bit of fun!

We are really looking forward to seeing you all there. It’s going to be a great show!

The 2022 National Show Working Group

Alpaca 2022
NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL SHOW
23-25 SEPTEMBER, FEILDING

Alpacas In Winter

Republished from the AANZ Autumn 2011 Magazine

Author: Gina Bromage *MA Vet MB DVM MRCVS.* Gina was born in the UK into a farming family. Her family emigrated to WA in 1965 where they ran a fine woolled merino. Gina returned to the UK to study Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge, followed by further study and qualification as a vet in the USA. Gina is a camelid specialist at her practice in the UK.

Whilst this article is written from a UK perspective and in NZ we typically don't get quite as cold the advice is still very relevant to alpacas in New Zealand.

The following paragraph from Wikipedia, summarizes the Winter the UK has suffered this season: The winter of 2010 in the United Kingdom saw the UK's earliest widespread winter snowfall since 1993 with snow falling as early as 24 November across Northumberland and North Yorkshire. A maximum snow depth of 30 inches was recorded on 1 December in the Peak District and Sheffield. In this event Scotland and Northern England were most severely affected. This was the coldest winter since 1890 and the second coldest winter since records began in 1659. Yes, 1659.

One experienced alpaca owner, having been airily informed by the breeder who had supplied the animals that 'they are very hardy, and don't need shelter or supplementary feed" took that advice literally. The animals began to start to death and when rescued by a national animal charity, were in a very weak state. One member of the group, a 3 month old cria, sadly succumbed, but the other animals were successfully nursed back to health by an experienced local alpaca breeder.

Temperature

It might be reasonable to think that since alpacas are evolved to survive harsh conditions. Winter will present no particular problem to them. However, there are special preparations you need to make for your animals over Winter, and these are directed at the ways in which your Winters differ from the harsh dry season on the Altiplano, in South America, where alpacas have evolved their special resistance to harsh environments. There's no actual Winter on the Altiplano; it's at such a low latitude that the season is either dry or wet, but temperatures don't fluctuate very much with the seasons. At night when the sky is clear it can get very cold, and alpacas with fleeces can cope with temperatures of down to -10C as long as they have shelter from the wind and precipitation. Colder than that, though, and they will struggle to maintain body heat.

Food

Supplementary feeding should always talk place from racks, bags or troughs which are cleaned daily and to which no wildlife have access. Inviting in the local birds and mammals to share your alpacas' feed also invites disease. Do not feed on the ground: That's where the bugs are.

In Winter, the grazing at temperate latitudes is reduced, and if there is snow cover, it disappears altogether. The shorter days and colder temperatures mean that even when the grass is visible, it hardly grows, so that an area of ground which will easily support your herd in Summer is inadequate to feed them in Winter. As a rough guide, unless the ground temperature is 10C or greater, then the grass will not really grow. Even in mild spells, short days mean that only small amounts for energy are produced in herbage, so the feed value is dramatically reduced compared with Summer forage. In general the faster grass is growing, the more nourishing it is.

So far, then, we have absolute temperature to think about, and food supply. Actually, cold animals will utilise some of the energy produced by their 'fermentation factory' i.e. the microbes in C1, C2 and C3 to keep them warm. This means that some of the energy content of their ration is required just to enable them to do this. The key to a successful Winter is good hay, and plenty of it. Alpaca digestion is not only specialised to get the best from bulky forage ration, it absolutely requires a bulky forage

ration to function. It's no use shovelling large amounts of concentrated feeds like grain or pellets into alpacas. Such feeds are broken down in the fermentation process to highly acidic compounds, and they acidity pollutes the environment the microbes require in order to function. Over feeding concentrated foods upsets the digestive processes and eventually ulcers may develop in the gut, from which the alpaca may easily die. While all this is going on, the excess of energy from grain feeding causes excess fat to build up on the animal and the liver. Liver failure can result from a condition called hepatic lipidosis. So, while it's tempting to keep your animals 'on the fat side", it can be hazardous to their health.

Concentrate Feeding

Some form of concentrate feeding is nevertheless required, especially for young, pregnant and lactating animals, because hay alone rarely provides sufficient nourishment for these animals. Ideally concentrates should be specifically formulated for camelids, and have a high level of trace elements, unless your forage already contains them, so that only a small amount needs to be fed to achieve the required supplementation. Extra protein and energy are needed by young, pregnant and lactating groups, too, to support growth and production. Alfalfa, crushed pulses, and sugar beet pulp are feeds which have been used for these purposes. Mature males, non pregnant and non lactating mature females require very little in the way of supplementary feed if they have plenty of good quality hay, and only mineral deficiencies are of significance in them.

Liquid Sunshine

When the days are short, alpacas suffer from Vitamin D deficiency. This vitamin is normally manufactured in the skin as a result of the action of ultraviolet light. The thin ozone layer over the Altiplano means that in South America, there is far too much UV light, and the alpacas have developed a resistance to manufacturing too much Vitamin D (which is toxic in overdose). However, at higher latitudes, where the days are short in Winter, and especially if the skies are gloomy, nowhere enough UV light penetrates to the skin for adequate Vitamin D manufacture to occur. As a result, all classes of stock, not only young growing animals, can suffer from deficiency. Although only youngsters will develop limb deformities associated with rickets, where the bone growth is damaged, even older ones become stiff, lame and reluctant to move. Any biologically active source of Vitamin D can cure this problem, but an artificial source is needed. I favour injectable Vitamin ADE compound, because it works, and I only need to give it every 2-3 months. Oral preparations work too, but you have to be sure the animal has swallowed the stuff (and not spat it out) and you have to give it every 1-2 weeks.

Shelter

If your alpacas have several months' growth of fleece on their backs, they don't need artificial shelter until conditions become extreme. However, relentless rain will cause fleece to rot, and exposed areas where wind chill is high adversely affect welfare. The fact that most alpacas quickly learn to take refuge in a shelter when it starts to rain hard implies that they prefer not to get wet. Also, you may manage without a built shelter while your animals are in perfect health, but if one becomes ill, then suddenly you will need a shelter very badly indeed. Besides, it's really no fun at all to trim feet to do other husbandry tasks in the pouring rain, and if their feed gets wet, they won't eat it.

Resource Allocation – who gets what?

We all know that alpacas are highly social and need to be kept in groups, but it's equally true that in every group a hierarchy will develop. This means that one or two animals will dominate the others, and one or two will be bullied by everyone else. Feed and shelter are the resources all animals in the group need, and it's very important to ensure that all individuals have opportunity to get access to them, and aren't prevented from doing so by the dominant individual(s). Shelters must be sufficiently large, and feeding stations sufficiently numerous for all animals to do the same thing at the same time if they want to. Observe the behaviour of your alpacas frequently and for sufficient time to understand which individuals need a special eye kept on them.

Alpacas In Winter

Condition Score

Since we want our animals to have a good covering of fleece for Winter, it's absolutely imperative that at least once a month you catch each one and condition score or weigh it. It's impossible to notice from the other side of a field whether a fully fleeced animal is losing condition, (or indeed, getting too fat) and this is usually the earliest and therefore the best warning sign that you need to change your management in some way.

Parasites

Although most internal parasites are dormant on pasture in low temperatures (less than 10C) your animals should be assessed for worm or coccidial burdens in Autumn, because you don't want them to carry these parasites into the Winter with them.

Skin parasites can spread more readily in the crowded conditions of housing or supplementary feeding, so these should also be addressed prior to the onset of Winter.

Wet Ground and Wet Feed

Remember that alpacas are specialised for largely arid environments, even though they paddle and ruin their fleeces by lying in water with great glee when it gets hot, if they get the chance. If the ground is permanently wet, the feet are affected. Typically, the leathery covering of the digital pad softens and gets a rather moth eaten appearance. Usually the animals don't seem to suffer when this happens, but occasionally infection of the interdigital cleft between the toes is seen.

Soft ground allows toenails to grow unchecked by wear and it's necessary to trim them as often as monthly to prevent overgrowth. If left untrimmed, over long toenails can be forced away from the nail bed during weight bearing and allow infection to enter. Affected animals become lame from the resulting abscesses.

Although alpacas feed are generally gentle on pasture, prolonged waterlogging of the ground will allow even these to poach and damage it. They really dislike being up to their fetlocks in mud too, so freely draining paddocks and dry standing areas are important to them.

Gastrointestinal Parasitism in Alpacas

Author: Peter Aitken BVSc MACVSC MRCVS (Totally Vets)

Alpacas are subject to infestation with a number of intestinal parasites common to both Sheep and Cattle. Along with these they are also subject to some more specific worms such as the relatively recently found Camelostrongylus. There have been few published studies done to look at the extent of parasitism and its effects on Alpacas, so it is not easy at this stage to state with confidence which of the common parasites found here are the most detrimental or prolific within Alpaca population however we know that certain worms such as *Haemonchus* (Barber's Pole) is often a culprit that causes clinical signs!

Different areas of the country will be subject to different worm problems, the dry warm conditions occasionally found in the north for example could be expected to result in fewer worm problems than in the wetter areas heading south; conditions here being wetter and more conducive to worm survival, the warm and wet middle of the country being the worst of both worlds.

Of those papers that have been published, they would suggest that Alpacas are slightly less susceptible to parasitism than sheep, however, the broad range of worms found within Alpaca faeces would suggest they can play host to both cattle and sheep parasites. Based on experiences and discussions with colleagues, I would say that camelids are most likely more susceptible to GI parasites at much lower levels of infestation than sheep and cattle; due to their evolutionary adaptation (dry cold climate, not conducive to parasite survival on the pasture), and on experience of low parasite burdens causing severe clinical disease in camelids.

One of the key tools we use to determine the need to drench is faecal egg counts (FEC); unfortunately, these need to be interpreted with care as unlike in sheep and cattle we have no solid data around what is significant. If, for example, an alpaca is anaemic but has a low FEC they could still have a significant barber's pole challenge. Similarly, a count of 50 eggs per gram (epg) in an animal in good body condition with well formed faeces (pellets), this may be insignificant.

When we think about worms, it is quite common to think of the worms within the animal as being the problem, and to a point they are. Worms within animals are the visible problem; it's what we see as scouring alpacas, loss of condition and failure to thrive.

However, the worms that are causing the damage within the animals are only about 10% of the actual worm population.

Where is the other 90% of the population then?

They can be found in the pasture on which the animals are grazing, either as eggs, or the more dangerous stage three infective larvae. They hide in our pastures waiting to be taken up by the unsuspecting animals as they graze.

Gastrointestinal Parasitism in Alpacas

It would be easy to assume that if they are on the pasture and not actually in the animals themselves then what harm can they do? The harm comes from the rate at which they are ingested following drenching and the speed with which the gut can become repopulated with worms after the ‘annual’ or ‘biannual’ drench. It can take as little as 10 days before worm burdens within the gut have started to cause damage to the gut lining again, even following an effective drench! If the pasture that the Alpaca has been grazing, post drenching, has a high level of contamination with infective larvae, a 10-day respite is all the drench has achieved. It is therefore paramount that, together with sustainable drenching, appropriate management techniques are employed to control pasture contamination levels and thereby get the most out of your drench.

These techniques can include:

- Moving animals onto clean pasture following drenching. (this can encourage worm resistance though so important to maintain your refugia population)
- Maintain a refugia population! Don’t routinely drench all your animals but leave 10% of the herd that are looking fit and healthy and in good condition untouched as the worms these will be harbouring will then not be exposed to the drench family used and will therefore not develop resistance.
- Ensuring that correct and adequate drenching doses are used (check that drench guns for oral drenches are delivering the required dose by squirting a ‘dose’ into a measuring cylinder, check it for five consecutive doses).
- After drenching hold the animals penned for around four to six hours to allow the drench to start to take effect before release onto clean pastures. This is more important with injectable drenches and free access to clean water should be available while being held off feed.
- Drenching should be done at appropriate intervals for your individual situation, which under intensive stocking rates could be as frequent as every 6 weeks (needs will vary depending on numbers of alpacas, farm design, movement of animals and many other factors and should be discussed with your vet)
- Pick up the faeces in a paddock after the animals move on. In summer harrow the paddock to break up the faeces and allow for desiccation of the larvae (this may facilitate spread of worms over the cooler winter months or when rain is frequent so restrict it to the warmer summer months).
- Quarantine any animals being introduced to your herd. Drench them as soon as they arrive on your property (with a triple drench) irrespective of when they were last drenched. Keep them separate from your own animals for at least a week (by doing this you can also observe for any additional health problems and prevent rapid spread to the existing animals). This land should then not be grazed by any other livestock that are resident on the farm. Preferably it would be a housed area with removable bedding (straw/sawdust) that can be mucked out and disinfected after the animals have been allowed into the general population.
- Bringing animals in and keeping them penned up for a period of up to 24 hours prior to using an oral drench may help to increase the efficacy of the drench used, again, access to clean water while in the yard is essential.

---

1 Clean pasture is considered that which has not been grazed recently (i.e. up to 6 months by any stock), has been shut up and cut for hay/silage or been recently re-sown with new grass or crops.

2 Doses will vary depending on products used but most should be dosed at rates above the standard sheep dose rate.

- If using an oral drench that requires a high volume, split it into two doses (if a 10ml dose is required give two doses of 5ml) this may help to prevent it being spat back out at you!

But what Drench do I choose?

Choice of drench is ultimately up to the Alpaca owner as he or she will be the one giving it. As a rule of thumb however it is important to choose a drench that will work!
Pour on drenches are not recommended for Alpacas as Alpacas do not have the oils in the skin/fleece that the products were devised for therefore they do not penetrate effectively, and results can be quite variable.
That leaves oral and injectable drenches. If using an oral drench, the ones to be cautious of are those containing Levamisole ('clear drenches'). This is due to the low safety margin of this product at normal dose rates which would be lower still at the 1.5x dose rate. They do work well but care in administering them at accurate dose rates must be taken.
Injectable products must all be given subcutaneously (SQ). Ivomec (Merial) as a product tends to sting the most when administered.

It is important to remember that no products available for the treatment of Alpacas in the NZ are registered for use in this species; therefore, all use is strictly off label and subject to owners consent
It is worthwhile remembering that there is no hard and fast rule for the treatment of worms in your camelids (Llamas or Alpacas). It is highly dependant on your farm and your management practices as to what will be required. It is therefore worthwhile talking to your vet to determine what is the best approach for you.

Faecal egg counts are highly advisable and should be done at least once a year to determine what sort of worm burdens your animals are carrying as this will give you some indication of the level of infection they are being subject to and the level of pasture contamination that may be occurring. Separate requests must be made for fluke eggs and for coccidia when submitting samples. If your vet is doing the testing 'in house' then please ask them to use a fluid with an increased specific gravity (S.G.) of 1.3 if possible. If not, then please ask for them to send the samples away on occasion to the veterinary pathology laboratories to ensure they are counting correctly!

Work from the U.S. (Jarvinen *et al*. 2002) has given us more insight into the availability of drench products such as ivermectin. Concentrations in the blood were measured following various dosing routes (injectable, oral and pour-on). An interesting outcome of this was that the injectable routes gave an adequate concentration whilst the oral preparation did not develop quantifiable levels in the blood. The authors therefore concluded that oral ivermectin was less available to the animal than when it was given by the injectable route. Another study (Burkholder *et al*. 2004) showed that Llamas given the sheep dose of ivermectin developed only 1/10 of the blood levels that sheep attained; this would support that using the sheep dose rate is inadequate! Finally, Hunter *et al*. (JvetPharmThera, 2004) showed less than optimal absorption of pour-on doramectin used at cattle doses in llamas and alpacas supporting the recommendation not to use the pour on products.

Further work such as this needs to be undertaken to determine which of the drenches, and which routes of administration, are best for our camelid friends. The only way to monitor how effective we are being with our current protocols is to perform regular faecal egg counts and make sure that

what we are doing is working or we will very quickly be facing problems with drench resistance if we continually under dose animals.

Making sure we know our target audience is also important as potentially if Haemonchus is the one we are targeting then a closantel based product should be the one of choice rather than a generic triple or single injectable action family. Again, this is something to discuss with your vet to ensure that you are using the right product at the right time.

Gastrointestinal parasitism is an area of farm management that cannot be overlooked and should be approached with a reasoned attitude to both the animals well being and sustainability. If we drench every month for example it won't take long before the drench we are using is ineffective. It is therefore paramount that we approach this from all angles and use the resources available through your local vet, the laboratories, and your fellow breeders (i.e., understanding and acceptance of quarantine procedures when moving animals between properties). The problem of parasitism is not insurmountable but will take coordination and support from everyone involved.

Best Shelter Belt Trees

Republished from the AANZ August 2018 Magazine

Author: Nadene Hall, NZ Lifestyle Block

If investing in a good shelter is one of your goals this winter, there are very few people – if any – who come close to being as expert on the subject as Diana Loader.

The Trees Crops Association stalwart and past president has arguably one of the best sheltered blocks, using the widest range of trees of anyone in the country. Her 12ha Kai Iwi block, 25km north-west of Whanganui, is surrounded by 15,000 shelter trees. She grows more than 3000 fruit and nut trees including hundreds of walnuts, apricots, plums, feijoa, macadamia, chestnuts, and a range of heritage apple trees as well as other fruit and berry crops.

There's one shelter tree species she would choose as the best of the best. Hers have already withstood some huge tests: Cyclone Bola; the big 2004 storm that devastated the west coast, and most recently the 'weather bomb' that hit Taranaki in early 2012, ripping roofs off 60 homes in Patea and devastating pine plantations around Waverley.

'We lost some big trees in that storm, our own power was off for fiver days. Fifty one large trees blew down around here – 60 to 70-year-old trees – but we didn't lose any alders. I planted my first ones more than 25 years ago, one metre apart, and they are the best shelter.

The alder has several secrets to its success as a great shelter tree:

- It grows big roots, but they go deep so you don't rob your crop
- It is deciduous
- There are lots of varieties to suit different climates and soil conditions
- They grow a centre stem which Diana advises are 'like a carrot, nice and straight', but have small side branches so they're easy to prune and don't form big bushy tops
- They're easy to grow from seed
- The timber is good quality so prunings are useful

The one thing that alders on Diana's farm appreciate is pruning, and it's another key to their success as a good shelter belt.

'Our alders took no damage (in the 2012 storm) but they are all pruned. Every year we cut them down to 20ft (6m), they grown 10ft (3m) every season and we cut that off. We do have some unpruned alders that stood up to the wind though, they're about 40ft (12m).

The timber quality isn't so important for shelter requirements but it's pretty impressive. "It's excellent. The piles of the city of Venice have been under water for 500-600 years and they're all alder, so I believe"

Diana sowed the seeds for her alders, then potted them onto root trainers before planting them out. She got an almost perfect strike rate – "I lost 2 out of 6500" – and she's very fond of hers, and the other alder varieties she has seen.

"South Korean alder (*Alnus japonica*, right) a very good hedge; red alder (*Alnus rubra*), a very good hedge; grey alder (*Alnus incana*) very good."

Best Shelter Belt Trees …

Diana's shelterbelts have been the subject of a lot of talk over the years. The main criticism from commercial famers is that her trees must make her block less productive. Diana – in her typically straight-forward manner – says that they are dead wrong.

"I've had them say my husband spoils me for spending $2,000-$3,000 for hedges, but I can recoup that with one hay crop. My grass starts growing 6 weeks earlier, it grows six weeks later – that's an extra hay crop right there.

"When we had a facial eczema epidemic down here I went to a seminar held by a local vet and they all talked about zinc (as a preventative). The countryside [around her block] was bleach brown in the middle of a terrific drought. So I stood up and said I had 15,000 shelter trees at 60m intervals right across my block., I had 8 inch high green grass all over the farm, plenty of shelter and shade, no facial eczema, and it was the only place in the district with green grass. One farmer buried 200 ewes, another buried 40 cattle. I didn't have FE and I didn't lose any stock. "The reason is I have the best shelterbelts, and they are all pruned."

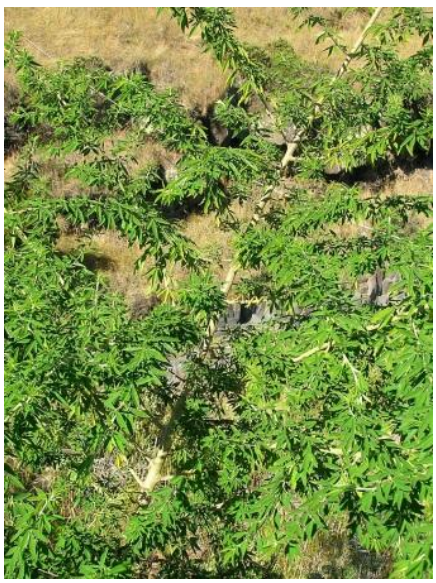
The best shelter belts around

Diana's years of observing trees in action, along with the trials she has run, led her to declare some clear winners along alders.

'I did shelterbelt trials on orchards in Tasman, Hawkes Bay, Kapiti, Christchurch and in the Waikato. I grew rows and rows of shelterbelt trees, so I got to see them all growing in five different soil types in five different climates.'

***Tarata/Lemonwood* (*Pittosporum engenioides*)**

Diana's notes: loves the wind, grows near the sea, excellent shelter, makes a good hedge for about 20 years but doesn't last well, needs rich soil.



***Tagasaste/Tree Lucerne* (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*)**

Diana's notes: must be pruned, useful as fodder especially when cut and dried, makes good winter tucker, very useful for getting magnesium into cattle

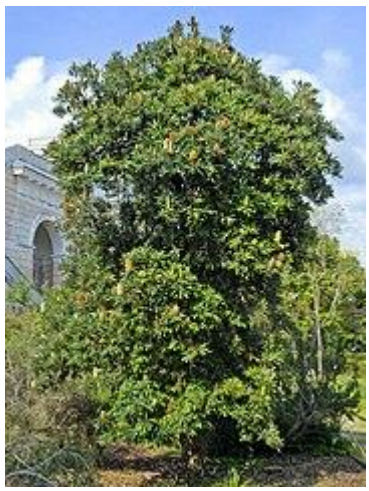
Best Shelter Belt Trees …

Golden Totara (*Podocarpus totara* 'Aurea')

Diana's notes: takes a lot of time to grow them but once pruned they are very, very robust

Japanese Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*)

Diana's notes: a wonderful hedge, they grow as straight as an arrow, must be pruned



Banksia (various)

Diana's notes: these grow throughout the country, they've got to be pruned…but be careful not to create big holes [when pruning] or they don't make a great shelterbelt

The worst shelter belts around

The horticultural boom in NZ in the 1970s and 1980s meant a lot of new shelterbelts were planted, with one aim: to grow as fast as possible.

"There was a lot of news about shelterbelts, particularly matsudana willows and poplars." Says Diana. "They were the most popular ones planted and they were a horror story."

Willow 'Matsudana'

Matsudana does have its place, but not for crop shelter. It is an excellent option for holding together erosion prone slopes or sucking moisture out of damp soils.

Diana's notes: They're very hungry for water, they grow fast but steal moisture to do it. These were planted all over the Bay of Plenty and they grew so fast that within a few years they will pulling them out. They have great big stumps so they were dumping the stumps in the town dump where they continued to grow and had to be dug out using big machines.

Summary: Grows too fast, too vigorous, a lot of pruning required, robs moisture

Conclusion: no bloody good

Poplar 'Crow's Nest'

Another popular option, but again, too much of a good thing.

Diana's notes: They grow too tall. Worse, poplar roots grow close to the surface so if you put poplars in, their roots will grow right across your orchard or paddock to the next row of poplars.

[Orchardists] had to get a big saw and cut the roots to the tree, but when you cut the roots, suckers grow up from the cut root right next to the stem. So you get a bit of a hedge, but the cut roots remain in the soil get Phytophthora (root rot), which transfers itself to kiwifruit in your orchard or whatever.

Summary: Too vigorous, robs moisture from crop

Conclusion: No bloody good

Eucalypts, various species

It's not that Diana doesn't like the eucalyptus family, but she's not a fan of it for shelter belt purposes.

Diana's notes: All eucalyptus species are greedy, they're surface rooting so they rob the soil and they rob from the very plant you're trying to grow – they're just soil robbers.

In recent storms it was eucalypts (and poplars) that had their tops blown out. In the big storm of Wellington and Paekakariki, the poplar shelters blew down, the eucalyptus shelters tipped over – 20 year old eucalypts tipped over! They're very prone to wind damage once they get beyond the hedge trimming machinery.

Summary: soil robbing, prone to wind damage

Conclusion: No bloody good

Overall Diana is not a fan of any of these trees for shelterbelts. "They're all useless. Do not plant any of them, they are a horror story."One tree that's not on her 'never ever plant' list is macrocarpa, but it's not good for shelter either in her opinion.

'I have macrocarpa in my [forestry] wood lots, but I don't really recommend it for shelter: it's evergreen and poisonous to pregnant livestock. 'Lots of people like that kind of permanent shelter but I hate it. If you miss pruning, the next time you can't cut it back as far, then somebody cuts it back too far and it can't grow again.

Your Central Region Committee

Ros Scott	President	rtg.scott71@gmail.com
Stephen Kellam	Vice President	tekorito-alpacas@inspire.net.nz
Cheryl Hunter	Secretary	cherylfletcher@inspire.net.nz
Cheryl Wheatley	AANZ Committee Rep	Cheryl@zl2max.gen.nz
Virginia Darlow	Committee Member	corinium@inspire.net.nz
Carey King	Committee Member	home@monarca.co.nz