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SANDALWOOD WORK IN SPRIG

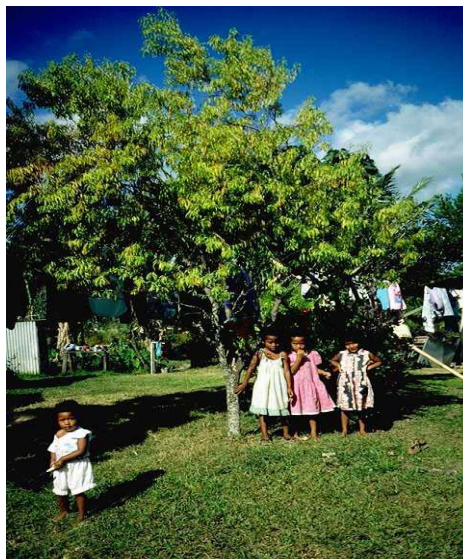
A pilot phase of SPRIG (South Pacific Regional Initiative on Forest Genetic Resources) ran for three years from 1996 – 2000. This project was funded by AusAID and implemented by the Forestry Departments in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu and an Australian consortium comprising CSIRO Forestry & Forest Products, Queensland Forest Research Institute and Fortech. Sandalwood is an economically important, but threatened, indigenous tree in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. During Phase 1, conservation and management strategies were developed for the two local species, viz. *Santalum yasi* in Fiji & Tonga and *S. austrocaledonicum* in Vanuatu. These strategies will continue to develop over time and be progressively implemented as resources allow. Copies of these strategies are available from the Australian SPRIG Project Office (see contact details).

SPRIG Phase 2 is a five-year AusAID-funded regional project in the South Pacific which commenced in May 2001. The project goal is “to help Pacific Island countries conserve, improve and better promote the wise use of the genetic resources of priority regional tree species to enhance environmental protection and to promote economic and rural development”. The purpose of SPRIG Phase 2 is “to strengthen the capacity of the participating Departments and Regional Organisations to conserve, improve and better promote the wise use of priority genetic resources in order to promote sustainable rural development”.

The five components of SPRIG 2 are:

1. Institutional strengthening and regional networking,
2. Conservation and sustainable management of priority species,
3. Tree improvement,
4. Demonstrating linkages between conservation, tree improvement and enhanced rural incomes, and
5. Project Management.

The main work on sandalwood in SPRIG Phase 2 will be in Components 2 and 4. As part of Component 2, key elements of the sandalwood conservation strategies will be implemented, while in Component 4 three ha of sandalwood seed stands/gene conservation stands will be established in each of Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. Training will include a short course in conservation of forest genetic resources, including sandalwood, and forest biodiversity in Vanuatu in June 2002.



Sandalwood: a vital tree genetic resource for sustainable rural development in the South Pacific (*Santalum yasi*, Vanua Levu, Fiji).

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