

# Timberwolf<sup>©</sup>

## INTRO GUIDE





## INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH US?

We're happy to hear it! We are always looking for hard working, positive individuals to join our team. This document will provide you with information on the type of planting we do and what we're all about. If you still want to be part of what we do once you've read this, fill out our Application Form. We'll check to see if you tick all the right boxes and if so, we'll get you out for a trial day to commence what we hope will be a lucrative planting career.

## OUR ROOTS



We are an Australian-owned company, however the foundations of how we work - our planting ethos - originated in the vast forests of Canada. Each summer, huge swaths of land are clearcut and logs are hauled out to be processed before being shipped around the world. By law, these clearcuts must be reforested, drawing tree planters out into the wilderness to plant an estimated 250 million seedlings per year.

The process of becoming a tree planter in Canada is immersive, intensive, and radically transformative. The typical planting 'season' is three months long, beginning as soon as the winter snow recedes. When it does, thousands of planters, primarily university students and young seasonal workers, travel deep into the woods to live and work with anywhere from 30-75 other individuals in a remote camp.

People are drawn to tree planting by both the promise of lucrative work and the lure of planting folklore. Planters are paid per tree, and a motivated planter will earn enough in three months to fund a year of travel or university tuition. The system of direct meritocracy creates a drive and willingness to push through physical and mental boundaries for the benefit of financial gain. Stories of isolation,

wild encounters, extreme weather, and persistent discomfort are common place, so production numbers become a matter of perseverance, pride, and status; a representation of the mental fortitude and strength of spirit of the individual.

The act of planting is simple: a specialised spade, with a blade slightly larger than a human hand, is driven into the ground to create a small hole in which to place the seedling. But planters must do more than wield a shovel, they must learn how to read the raw land without hesitation, and to quickly choose the best 'microsite' for maximum growth potential while also meeting the strict and variable quality standards of each contractor. It typically takes a new planter an entire season to become proficient at the task, and two to three seasons to really master it. Once they do, the level of athleticism they display is astonishing: they burn more than 5,000 calories a day as they weave over challenging terrain with 20kgs of trees strapped to their waists. Average production numbers are between 1,500 - 4,000+ trees for a typical 10-12 hour-long day, and the average shift is five working days with a single day off in between. This level of exertion and physical endurance is among the highest ever recorded in human occupational performance studies.



Planters spend nearly every day of the season at the mercy of the elements, learning how to endure swarms of biting insects, the sting of freezing rain, and the sweltering heat of 40 degree days. The debris left behind on a clearcut creates obstacles that fatigue muscles, challenge balance, and tear at skin and clothing. It's dirty, intense, and occasionally dangerous - planters often work in isolation and need to be knowledgeable about the behaviour of large predators, fire suppression techniques, as well as safe operations around large machinery. Very little halts the production of a planting camp, and supervisors are required to overcome a range of logistical hurdles that emerge from working in remote locations - roads that have been washed out, mechanical failures, extreme weather - equipped with little more than their own creativity and resourcefulness.

For many first time planters, conditions endured during the three-month planting season are shocking, and not all succeed. Those who do find that the experience reveals strengths that they can utilise in every other area of their lives.

The communal aspect of living in a close-knit camp and working together through difficult circumstances breeds a palpable camaraderie, and the intensive planting schedule creates a work ethic that endures beyond the forest. When the season concludes, planters leave with fat bank accounts, life-long friendships, sinewy muscles and newfound grit.

Our company's founders, Robyn Kelly and Andrew Forrester, each worked for close to a decade in the Canadian reforestation industry, clocking up eighteen seasons between them. As a business, Timberwolf takes the technical aptitude, athleticism, and strength of spirit of tree planting in the Canadian wilderness and applies it to the Australian landscape, which is full of unique subtleties, challenges, and adventures of its own. At the heart of what we do is the idea that there are always efficiencies and improvements to be made, and the belief that success comes from mastering your craft, persevering through adversity, and an unwavering commitment to the task at hand.





## OUR STORY

Seeking a change of scenery, Andrew and Robyn came to study in sunny Brisbane (a bachelor of medicine and a master of urban and environmental planning, respectively). They quickly learned that the cost of living in Australia was much higher than in Canada - not to mention the cost of tuition for international students - but limited working rights and demanding study schedules left them with few options for part-time jobs. After finding an ad for casual work arrangements on Gumtree, they began planting on landscaping sites with AWX Contract Planting, a business unit of the large labour-hire company AWX. Just mention augers and hourly pay to them and you'll be regaled with horror stories of the contract planting culture at that time: un-trained, un-motivated workers; inefficient planting methods; and low daily averages. They quickly realised that improvements to the approach and culture could create an incredible opportunity, one where other motivated people like themselves could maximise their hourly earnings while studying or traveling, and they were able to demonstrate to AWX that those changes would guarantee the success of their business, too. It didn't take long for clients to notice the significant improvements in performance, work ethic, and attitude, which, paired with a commitment to quality and professionalism, yielded cost-savings and better outcomes across the board. Having significantly changed the business model and culture, and increased the level and quality of service being offered, AWX Contract Planting was re-branded as Timberwolf Planting, and we have continued to lead the industry ever since.

In a few short years we have grown from a small team of just five planters and a manager based in Brisbane to one with over 60 planters and six full-time managers working nation-wide. We now run full-time operations out of Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne, but we also work for clients in the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Our projects span the commercial landscaping, natural areas and forestry sectors, and work sites include new residential developments, streetscapes, revegetation areas, bioretention basins, wetlands and forestry blocks.



## OUR VALUES

Our culture and ethos are integral to our success, so we've tried to capture them as a set of values. We expect every person on our team to uphold these values in the workplace, but we think they are generally pretty good rules to live by, too.



### **STAY HUNGRY**

We're driven and motivated. Set goals for yourself and work hard every day to achieve them.

### **STAY SHARP**

We're clever and on our game. Think critically about what you are doing, and find ways to be better.

### **RUN WITH THE PACK**

*The strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf.*

We're social animals. Support and help each other to succeed.

### **STAND PROUD**

We have high standards. Take pride in your work and the effort you put into doing it right and doing it well.

### **BE WILD**

We're outside the boundaries. Work harder, do more, and embrace the challenge.

**BE A LEGEND. BE A WOLF.**



## DOLLARS AND CENTS

We use a piece-rate pay system rather than an hourly rate. This means that the harder you work, the more money you can make. Our top planters regularly take home an average of \$300 - \$400 a day, a very attainable goal once you are well-practiced. Plant prices are calculated according to the varying conditions that exist from site to site, and final prices are communicated to you, along with the rest of the job details, in the afternoon before the work day. While you are paid per-unit, you are always guaranteed at least the minimum award rate (\$23.68/hr), and like every other job, we withhold tax deductions for the ATO, and make the required payments to your Super fund.



## YOUR EXPECTATIONS

### THE DAILY GRIND

Planting is hard work. Full stop. Bending over an average 2,000+ times a day in the beating sun is challenging. Often there are early mornings and long drives to get to site; sometimes there are delays or mistakes with plant deliveries, poor site preparation, or clients that are too busy to get us set up properly. You will feel frustrated, bored, happy, sad, hot, cold, tired, and will have sore muscles. Physical strength and athleticism are helpful, but mental fortitude is necessary. You can expect to have to stay motivated, positive, and optimistic in order to succeed.

### SCHEDULING

Scheduling and logistics are not straightforward. Due to the nature of the industry and all of the various factors that affect the timing of our client's programmes, it is difficult to plan too much in advance. You can expect uncertainty and last minute changes to be common, but also that we will be respectful of your time and do our best to communicate what we know when we know it.

### AWARDING WORK

This is a competitive industry and there is not always enough work to go around. You can expect driven, responsive, committed team-players to be given priority for jobs all-day-every-day.

### FAIR TREATMENT

Everyone in management started as a planter and still regularly straps on the bags, which means we truly understand what you are out there doing - blood, sweat, tears, dirt and all. You can expect us to be knowledgeable, helpful, encouraging, and fair when interacting with you or addressing issues on site.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

Our goal as a business is to share the opportunity to make great money, meet new friends, and challenge yourself. We want to provide a platform for you to be able to take that next trip, pay for that next semester of study, pay off your debt, fund your own business venture, or anything else you might have in your sights. In order to continue to provide this opportunity we need to keep impressing our clients; to maintain the competitive advantage we've worked so hard to achieve. A focus on three main priorities helps us accomplish this:

### SAFETY

No one likes an injury in the workplace, not our clients, not us, and not you. There are some very obvious hazards you will encounter when performing physical labour outside - either in a natural area or on a construction site. We follow a number of steps each day to ensure that you are well aware of the risks on any given job and that you are equipped to effectively mitigate those risks. That said, it is important that you understand that you are also responsible for your own safety as well as that of those working with and around you. We expect you to actively participate in ensuring everyone goes home in good health, and to speak up immediately if you spot something unsafe.

### QUALITY

Our clients pay us to plant plants that will not just survive, but that will thrive. We will teach you the proper technique to quickly and efficiently achieve a baseline, best-practice standard, but each client will have their own preferences when it comes to specific areas, plant types, or pot sizes. We expect you to ensure you are clear on these preferences each day, and to exceed the client's expectations when it comes to meeting them.

### PRODUCTION

We have made a name for ourselves by working hard and outperforming the competition. The number of plants you can put in on any given day will range according to the site - the start time, the ground conditions, and the size of the plants that you are planting - so the best way to measure your performance is by the amount of money you make. We expect, on average, for you to be consistently earning more than the industry award rate within one month of commencing work.



## DEAL BREAKERS

### GENERAL CONSTRUCTION INDUCTION CARD (WHITE CARD)

In order to work on any construction site in Australia, you must have a valid White Card. The course is offered online and takes a couple of hours to complete. Please be aware there is a short video-call component.

### MOBILE PHONE

We rely heavily on the use of smart mobile phones in this job; it's essential to have one.

### CAR

While it isn't essential to have a car when you start working with us, you'll find that having one will greatly increase your ability to work. If you are needing to carpool, it will be up to you to organise a ride, and if the driver is one of our team-members (or otherwise), we expect you to respect their property and to reimburse them adequately for their time and petrol.

### EQUIPMENT

Your equipment is your ticket to making good money, so it is essential that you obtain your own and take good care of it. We usually have bags and shovels on hand that you can purchase upfront (at cost) or that you can pay off as you work. Keep in mind that this is specialised, high-quality gear so it isn't cheap. If you decide that planting isn't for you, we will be happy to buy the equipment back at a slightly reduced rate and make it available to someone else. If we have used gear on hand, it can be purchased at the same reduce rate we bought it for. Additional, non-specialised tools will also be required, such as a bigger shovel for larger stock, shears for cutting jute and a mallet for tree guards, etc. These are all available from Bunnings for \$20 - \$50 each.

## THINK YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

If so, the next step is to fill out our Application Form. If you're successful we'll be in contact to let you know what you need to do to get ready for a trial day. We look forward to meeting you!

