Rule 5: Right buyer – find a buyer to buy your logs at the right price.

Selling balsa: Sell balsa based on log volume (left) to secure the best price. Care is needed to convert any purchase offer based on sawn timber, back into a log price to compare offers. Ensure that you have a Balsa Purchasing Agreement in place (right) with a reputable buyer.

Better returns from balsa...

By following the 5 simple rules shown, a farmer will have the best possible chance to grow and sell balsa logs at the best returns. An important consideration is to ensure that balsa fits with your land and your livelihood plans for your family.

For more information: See www.pip.com.pg for copies of the fact sheets. Contact: The ACIAR Project Officer, Mr Jaupo Minimulu on 7251 2787 or the Integrated Agriculture Training Program, The Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and Environment on 983 9736.
Rule 2: Right seed – buy good seed or seedlings.

Balsa seed: A balsa seed pod (left) contains balsa seed but it is better to buy quality seed rather than collect wild seed. Purchase balsa seedlings (right) from a reputable supplier and do not collect wildlings as they could grow poor into trees with few logs to sell.

Rule 3: Right spacing – plant at 4 x 4 m.

Right spacing: At 4 X 4 m spacing balsa will grow the right size trees for harvest and sale.

Rule 4: Right management – weed, prune and protect.

Weeding: A manual ring weeded seedling where the grass has been chipped away (left). Control weeds by slashing for the first 6 months (right), after which balsa should shade out the weeds.

Pruning: Use a saw to remove the growing tip of the unwanted jorquettes branches (left). Carefully prune rest of the unwanted jorquette at 2 to 3 months (right) to reduce stem defects. The pruned branches should be cut flush with the balsa tree stem in a second cut with the pruning saw.

Protect balsa: Fire will kill balsa (left) and keeping weeds down reduces fire risk. Insect pests such as African Giant Snails damage young balsa (right) and good weed control can also reduce the impact of pests.