
[12 Replies to 12 Lies about Industrial Tree Plantations](#)

>>> Download the publication: [single page](#) - [double page](#)

Introduction

Planting trees can be very good, but it can also be very bad. It all depends on who is planting the trees, what they're planting them for, the scale and location of the plantations and the damage or benefits they bring to communities.

Industrial tree plantations —known as monocultures—are used to produce timber, pulp, rubber, charcoal, and other crops. The companies who own them focus on a single rapid-growth species, such as eucalyptus, acacia, rubber or pine. Plantations are also set up to absorb carbon dioxide, which allows the companies to continue to emit polluting gases. These are called 'carbon' plantations.

Tree monocultures have been particularly popular in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and they have caused a wide range of negative impacts. These include invasion of community territories, water shortages and contamination, and the undermining of food sovereignty. Because of these severe impacts, struggles to resist the development of industrial tree plantations are widespread.

The companies responsible for these plantations deny their negative impacts, and they regularly develop disinformation campaigns designed to garner government support, win over the media, convince investors to finance their plantations, and persuade consumers to buy their products. Just as importantly, these campaigns target the very communities impacted by such plantations and they frequently contribute to intimidating and criminalizing community members who fight against the plantations, in order to silence any resistance.

In response, WRM released the briefing [Ten Replies to Ten Lies](#) in 1999, exposing the most common misleading statements made by plantation companies at the time.

Industrial tree plantations have gained momentum again in recent years under the erroneous claim that they can contribute to efforts to mitigate climate change. Since the UN Paris Agreements were signed in 2015, plantation companies have benefited from new funding sources and policies that favor their interests.

Many of the lies addressed in the original briefing *Ten Replies to Ten Lies* continue to be used, while some have changed and several new ones have appeared. WRM is now publishing **12 Replies to 12 Lies about Industrial Tree Plantations**, based on the 1999 briefing written by Ricardo Carrere.

We suggest that you also read [What could be wrong about planting trees? The new push for more industrial tree plantations in the Global South](#) (WRM, 2020).

Table of contents

- Introduction
- Lie 1: “Tree plantations are *planted forests*”
- Lie 2: “Tree plantations improve the environment”
- Lie 3: “Plantations protect *native* forests”
- Lie 4: “Plantations are set up on degraded land”
- Lie 5: “Plantations counteract climate change”
- Lie 6: “Plantations play a central role in the *bio* or *circular* economy”
- Lie 7: “Plantations contribute to social and economic development, such as employment”
- Lie 8: “Conflicts with communities can be solved through *best practices* and certification”
- Lie 9: “Tree plantation companies are committed to empowering women”
- Lie 10: “The world needs to follow the successful plantation model of Brazil and Uruguay”
- Lie 11: “Tree plantations are financially sustainable”
- Lie 12: “Tree plantations benefit peasant farmers”