

Introduction

Benefits to property and local wildlife can be achieved by revegetating your property with indigenous plants.

This factsheet illustrates the easiest way to establish rural landscaping or revegetation as part of an Environmental Works Grant, Sustainable Land Management Rebate Scheme, Planning Permit or a Land Management Plan.

Benefits of Native Vegetation on Rural Properties

As much of Whittlesea's native vegetation has been cleared over the last 150 years, many rural properties now contain only scattered paddock trees or pockets of remnant vegetation.

Protecting existing plants and planting new native vegetation on your property provides habitat, food and shelter for local animals.

It also has significant benefits to farm productivity.

Benefits include:

- **Reduced soil erosion** as plant roots bind soil.
- **Shade and wind protection** from trees.
- **Reduced soil salinity** as plants lower the water table.
- **Recycling of nutrients** that have leached beyond the pasture root zone.
- **Pest and vermin control** by microbats and birds attracted to native vegetation.

Revegetating your Property

Plant species native to the local area

Planting species native to the local area will provide the best results. They are most attractive to local wildlife and are adapted to the local soil and climate.

Tubestock seedlings survive better and grow faster than older plants. They are also cheaper to purchase.

Plant a range of local species

In the bush, a mix of different tree and shrub species occur together. Planting a similar variety will be most beneficial to your property and the local environment.

Benefits include:

- Flowering and fruiting at different times, therefore providing food to wildlife across the year.
- Providing a range of habitat options for wildlife.

- Creating a wind barrier by planting different sized plants and shrubs.

Acacia and Pea species are particularly important as they improve soil nutrients for other plants to use.



Revegetation of land beside a watercourse reduces bank erosion and creates wildlife habitat.

Plant species as they naturally occur

Allow plants enough room to grow unrestricted. A general guide is to allow 5 to 10 metres between trees and 2 to 3 metres between shrubs.

Plant species where they usually occur in the bush. For example, if they are naturally in gullies, plant them in gullies on your property. The same applies for plants that occur on hills, plains or drainage lines.



Remnant trees being incorporated into a revegetation project funded through the Environmental Works Grant.

Order plants ahead of time

Depending on the size of your project, plant orders may need to be placed with your local indigenous nursery up to six months in advance of when you want to plant. This allows the nursery time to collect seeds and grow plants.

Prepare your land for planting

Effective weed control before planting seedlings is important. Weeds and pasture grasses can smother seedlings and compete for light, water and nutrients.

To prepare for planting, undertake the following:

- At least one round of weed control, one month before planting, should be undertaken.
- Apply herbicide in a circle at least 50cm in diameter to create a weed-free zone around the establishing plant.
- Do not plant straight into grass.

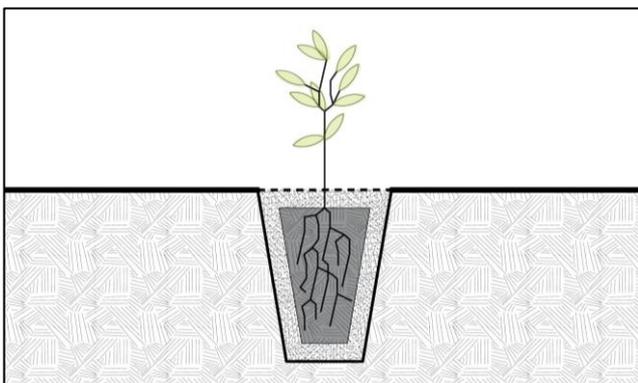
If you have livestock, permanent stock-proof fencing should be placed around the area before planting. Do not use barb wire as it is dangerous to local wildlife.

Plant at the right time

Planting must be undertaken between autumn (after good rain) and early winter, to allow time for plants to establish before the hot and dry months of the year.

Plant correctly

1. Plants should be moist for planting. Soak tubestock plants in a bucket of water until bubbles stop and the pot sinks.
2. Dig a hole slightly deeper than the pot height.
3. Remove plant from the pot and place in the hole. Fill around the plant with soil removed from the hole.
4. Make sure the potting mix is covered with soil, and press down. If the tubestock potting mix is exposed, the plant may dry out.
5. Water the plant with two to three litres of water even if the ground is moist. This will reduce transplant shock and settle air pockets which can damage the plant's roots.
6. Protect the plant from rabbits with a tree guard ensuring the guard is taut and will not blow off.



When planting your tubestock, ensure the hole is deep enough to cover the potting mix.

Maintain your plantings

To increase the success of your planting, you will need to conduct regular checks and maintenance.

- Keep a weed-free buffer around seedlings for as long as possible.
- Keep guards around the plant until the plant has grown over the top of the guard. After this, remove the tree guards.
- Undertake additional watering only on hot and dry summer days. Regular watering isn't advised as plants can develop shallow root systems which dry out.



Removal of tree guards is required as part of ongoing maintenance of revegetation.

If revegetation is a requirement of a Planning Permit or Land Management Plan, the landholder must replace any plants that die with the same or similar species to the satisfaction of Council.

Further Information

Council's Sustainable Land Management Officers can provide a list of indigenous plants for your property.

City of Whittlesea Sustainable Land Management Program: www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/sustainability-and-waste/sustainable-land-management