

RETURNING THE BUSH TO A SECTION OF THE YARROWEE RIVER BANK

WHAT DIDN'T WORK

As you can see, the first planting in this area didn't work. All we have is a plastic farm. About 1 in 20 plants survived, or perhaps 50 grasses, shrubs and trees out of 1000 planted. Oops!



WHAT WENT WRONG?

Not floods! The soil is quite sandy, so it is likely that the plants dried out before they could grow their roots down to water. But we can only speculate. What is known is that there was no follow-up care of this planting, apart from some gorse removal (you know, the prickly yellow bushes).



HOW TO FIX IT? Take care of our plants during and after putting them in!!!

1. **Site preparation:** remove and/or poison the weeds; replace missing tree guards and damaged stakes. Tree guards are necessary to stop brer rabbit from eating the young trees and shrubs.
2. **Decide what species of trees and shrubs to use.** This decision should, by rights, be made at least 12 months beforehand, so we can grow them. It was. Of the 700 shrubs and trees we will be planting, only 170 of them will be purchased, and that because we didn't have the right seeds. In case you're interested, the species we will use include: river bottlebrush, woolly tea-tree and swamp gum close to the river bank particularly, as these can tolerate being flooded. Then further away, some woolly tea-trees, silver banksias, wirilda wattle, manna gums, scent bark eucalyptus, candlebark eucalyptus, blackwood wattles, in the main.
3. **The day before planting:** soak the plants in a tub of water if the roots are at all dry; distribute the plants to where they belong; make sure all stakes and guards are complete; get the water cart, buckets, tools, etc. ready to take onto site.
4. HERE'S WHERE WE KINDLY INVITE STUDENTS TO HELP: **National Tree Day planting, 17th July.**
 - a. Welcome and demonstration of planting techniques and sequence.
 - b. Make the planting holes and add some slow release native plant fertiliser.



- c. Plant until ½ hour before our working time is up. The last half hour is for watering.



- d. Watering is critical! A cup (250 ml) of water should be used at minimum to wash the soil into the roots of the plants. When watered, put the tree guard over the plant and the 3 stakes. Then water again with another cup of water.



WHAT ABOUT ALL THE PLANTS THAT DIDN'T GET PLANTED??

Another group of students is coming in to help us on another National Tree Day event on the 28th of July. Don't worry, the unplanted trees are hiding inside the guards, so they should be good for another 11 days. We'll give them a good soaking, if they look at all dry in their tubes, the day before that event.

AFTERCARE

We hope that students and Garibaldi Landcare Group members and friends alike will take part in this CRITICAL set of activities.

- **Water** whenever it is dry for a while, up to 3 times until summer starts if necessary, then leave them alone. This year, we may not have to do this more than once, in late November. But we must not neglect this follow-up, at least at the start of the dry season if it stays wet throughout winter and spring.
- **Weed** around the trees in the guards after 3 months or so. This is a good time to see whether they need watering. Do it again after about 6 to 8 months.
- **Generally weed the area**, either with hoeing or spraying depending on how heavily weed-infested the soil is. Start this process within 2 months of the planting: in this case, September, and again in November, and again in January or February, and again in the autumn.
- Next winter, **remove the guards** from plants which no longer need guarding. Do another weeding.

WHAT ELSE?

- Either next winter, or the one after that, add more varieties of plants.
- Continue weeding until the site is relatively weed-free.
- Continue to debag as plants are big enough to resist rabbits.
- If it becomes a nice place to hang out, we might add some amenities (picnic table? walking path? etc.)