

# Preparing and Planting a Revegetation Site



*A recently planted revegetation site*

This article explains the steps involved in planting a revegetation site, from ground preparation and weed control through to planting tips and follow-up care. Good preparation and management can help minimise seedling losses and encourage healthy plant growth.

## Summer

### Select and order plants

- Locally indigenous species are always recommended, as they are most suited to the local conditions and climate. Where possible, use seedlings from locally collected seed
- Order plants before Christmas (February at the absolute latest) to help guarantee supply.

*"Poor weed control accounts for most planting failures"*

### Control weeds

- Poor weed control accounts for most planting failures, due to their competition for light, moisture and nutrients
- Eliminate weeds early, before they use up stored water – ideally, keep the planting area free of weeds for a year or more prior to planting to ensure the best results
- If using chemical control, apply a knockdown herbicide like Glyphosate well before planting.

### Fence the site

- Fencing should be used to protect seedlings from stock for at least the first three years
- Fencing also preserves the leaf litter at ground level, and protects low leafy shoots
- Complete all fencing before planting.

## Autumn

### Prepare the ground

- Deep ripping the soil helps root development, as it improves aeration and infiltration of water. This allows deeper penetration and faster growth of plant roots
- Rip before the Autumn break, while the ground is hard and dry, to optimise shattering of the soil
- Rip the planting lines 4 m apart, to a minimum depth of 45 cm, if possible 60 cm or more
- Double ripping with rips 50-100 cm apart is very beneficial as it shatters the soil
- On slopes, rip along contours to reduce erosion risk. On flatter sites, cross ripping on a grid layout will guard against roots growing in one direction along a single rip line (which can result in trees blowing over)
- Don't rip under the drip-line of existing trees.

### Control weeds

- Spray phalaris and/or cocksfoot, if present, one month after the Autumn break, when the plants are actively growing (before frost, but 10 days after rain). These plants are very hard to kill so seek appropriate advice on sprays and rates.

## Winter

### Control weeds

- Apply a residual herbicide such as Simazine one month prior to planting, but before the end of July. This will control competition from weeds throughout spring
- If weeds have emerged since the first spray, spray with a knockdown herbicide in conjunction with the residual herbicide.

### Prepare for planting

- Inspect your riplines; if they are too loose or full of air pockets, this can be remedied by driving a tractor tyre along it.

### Plant the seedlings

- Plant in winter (from mid-July) to utilise winter rains and allow seedlings to establish slowly over the cooler months, enabling quick growth as soil temperatures warm up
- Seedlings should be given a good soaking in their pots the day before planting
- Fertiliser is generally not necessary for natives
- Plant seedlings between the rips. Where a single rip line is used, plant trees on the shoulder of the ripline, as those planted in the bottom of the ripline can get waterlogged
- Recommended spacing between seedlings varies, but generally trees within a row and between the rows themselves can be spaced at least 4-5 m apart. Smaller trees and shrubs can be spaced 2-3 m apart. Aim for a maximum of 625 seedlings/ha
- To plant tubestock, dig a hole slightly larger than the tube, then remove the seedling from the tube, trying to minimise root disturbance. Place the seedling in the hole, with the base of the seedling's stem just below the surface. Place the soil back around the hole, and firm down to collapse any air pockets and give good root to soil contact
- Ideally, time your planting with rainfall to avoid the need to water at planting time. If it is particularly dry, one litre of water (or more) poured slowly around each seedling will help overcome transplant shock and remove air pockets. In most cases, no further watering should be required.



*Planting seedlings can be a family activity!*

### Guard your seedlings

- Placing guards around your seedlings can help prevent grazing by rabbits, hares and roos. It also protects the seedlings from wind and maintains a warm and moist environment
- The cheapest guards are milk cartons held in place by two bamboo stakes. Another common guard is the plastic sleeve, held in place by three hardwood stakes.

### Check your site

- In the first week after planting, check your site for vermin or stock damage, to ensure you are able to deal with any interference as quickly as possible.

## Spring

### Check your site

- Make sure there are no weeds within 0.5 m of plants through spring and early summer
- If the summer is especially hot and dry, seedlings may benefit from watering; one litre per seedling should be sufficient, and watering should be limited to once a month at most, so as not to weaken the seedlings
- Watch regularly for grasshoppers, particularly in dry years – spray if they are causing damage.

This information has been provided by Jayfields Nursery ([www.jayfieldsnursery.com](http://www.jayfieldsnursery.com)) and Greening Australia ([www.greeningaustralia.org.au](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au))

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