

Case study

Adelaide Hills Wine Region



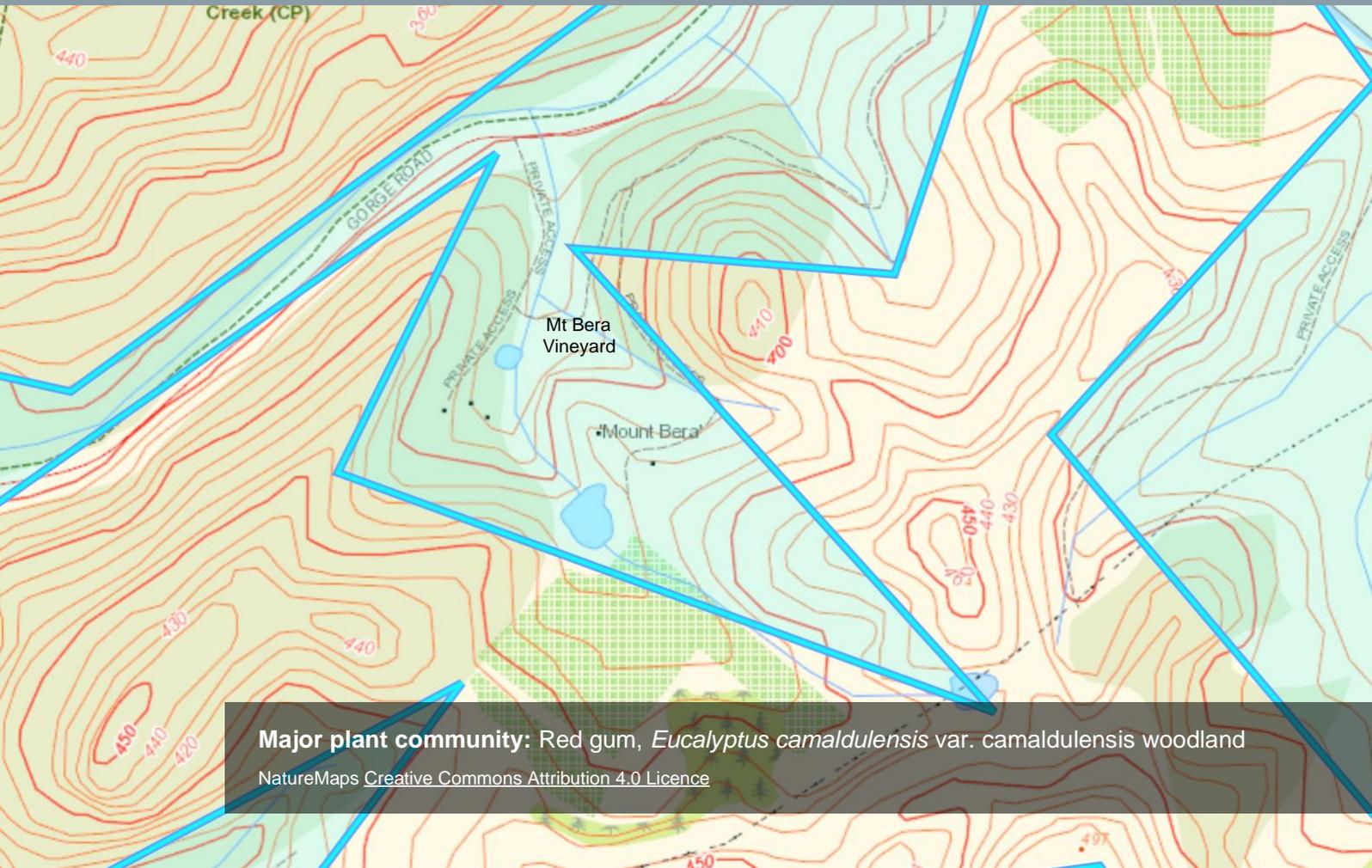
Mt Bera Vineyards, Cudlee Creek

EcoGrowers: Greg and Katrina Horner

“It makes so much sense to allow natural systems to maintain health and life within and around the vineyard, reducing the work for us and improving the quality of what we produce. Carbon storage is a natural byproduct of a healthy system.”



August 2023



EcoGrowers: Greg and Katrina Horner, Mt Bera Vineyard

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What worked well?

Most things went reasonably well. How much growth of native grasses we achieve is yet to be determined, and ongoing control of competing species is still needed.

Pitfalls to avoid?

Wish we had completely prepared and planted all the new vineyard area for native grasses which would be throughout the undervine area as well. Not having done this first means we have to try to manage the undervine area.

Progress (June 2021 to 2023):

What were you hoping to achieve and why?

With a new vineyard planting, we want to ensure maximum diversity within the vineyard, while at the same time continuing work on the diversity surrounding it.

We hoped to achieve a wide diversity of native grasses in the mid rows, fence off remnant redgums next to the vineyard, and commence removal of large swathes of gorse, blackberry, and broom prior to further biodiverse plantings.

What did you do and when?

Completed fencing, established vineyard with entire Ecotrellis posts, sprayed large amounts of gorse, blackberry, and broom. Planted midrow with native woodland seed mix.

What were the highlights?

Sweet bursaria, *Bursaria spinosa* seems to be one of the most robust plants for arid areas.

Microbats are plentiful on our property due to the water and bush areas.

What are you more aware of now?

Observing processes to provide better outcomes with less work.

Where to from here?

We are planning to work on undervine low growing species to have permanent undervine that can hopefully provide both productive crops as well as colour, smell and habitat for beneficial insects.

On top of this we are continually subdividing paddocks for better natural management of the farmland to recover and regenerate; fencing off water courses and extremely steep dangerous slopes – to regenerate native bush and additional plantings of species from the area.



Photo above: Seeding Natives Inc specialised native grass and forb seeder 'Blue Devil' in action.

Photo left: Predator perch at the top of the vineyard. The hill behind is so steep that kites and other predatory birds can soar with no effort most of the time (Photos: Greg Horner).



Inset: Mixing the native seeds with sawdust for planting with the seeder.

Main photo: Hidden Valley Vineyard with seeder working through it. See piles of hand pulled weeds at the bottom from undervine. Remnant redgums on fenced off on the left. Eroded creek line ready for some love (Photos: Greg Horner)



Clockwise: Work in progress. Note the undervine with newly planted vines. Planting on 19 May 2022, down below and top up time (Photos: Greg Horner)



EcoGrowers: Greg and Katrina Horner, Mt Bera Vineyard

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Insights

What has been the most valuable aspect of the program for you personally?

Interacting with other people with similar intent.

Has your level of knowledge increased significantly since you became an EcoGrower?

It's a constant learning process.

Thanks to Mary Retallack and the EcoVineyards team and all those who support the work.

Native plant list:

- *Anthosachne scabra*, native wheat grass
- *Austrostipa nodosa*, knotty spear grass
- *Austrostipa scabra*, spear grass
- *Bothriochloa macra*, red grass
- *Bursaria spinosa*, sweet Bursaria
- *Chloris truncata*, windmill grass
- *Dichanthium sericeum*, silky blue grass
- *Microlaena stipoides*, weeping grass
- *Rytidosperma caespitosum*, common wallaby grass
- *Rytidosperma geniculatum*, kneed wallaby grass
- *Rytidosperma pilosum*, velvet wallaby grass
- *Rytidosperma setaceum*, small-flowered wallaby grass



Photo above: View from the top 29th of June 2022

Photo left: Looking good on the 31st of January 2023 (Photos: Greg Horner).

Expenses (cash and in-kind)

Name: Mt Bera Vineyards		Region: Adelaide Hills	
Date	Activity	Grant cash expenses	Additional cash co-contribution
19/05/2022	Direct seed 1.6 hectares of the mid-row at Mt Bera Vineyards (Truck, tractor, seeder, 2 personnel)	\$1,440	
19/05/2022	Low growing native grassland seed mix 1.6 ha of vineyard (approx. 1 ha actual seeding area) @ 30 kg/ha	\$2,560	\$ 1,400
TOTAL		\$ 4,000	\$ 1,400

ECO VINEYARDS

GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

Program partners



This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Acknowledgement of country

The EcoVineyards program acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

Disclaimer

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For more info about the National EcoVineyards Program see <https://www.ecovineyards.com.au>

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