ECO VINEYARDS
GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

CASE STUDY

INCORPORATING NATIVE INSECTARY PLANTS AT STORMFLOWER, MARGARET RIVER, WA

By Joel Page, Stormflower; Rebecca Archer, Lower Blackwood LCDC and Dr Mary Retallack, Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd

Wine Australia

retallack viticulture

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NATIVE INSECTARY SPECIES

Background

Stormflower is located at 3503 Caves Road, Wilyabrup and consists of a total of 20 hectares with 10.2 Ha planted to Cabernet sauvignon, Shiraz, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Albariño.

The vineyard was planted in 1995 and purchased by Stormflower in 2007. Organic conversion began in 2013 and full organic certification was achieved in November 2016. The certified organic winery was built in 2019.

> ***"The EcoVineyards program has contributed a vast depth of knowledge to our land management principles. The emphasis on planting native plant species to enhance biodiversity was concurrently ideal with our core philosophies here at Stormflower Vineyard."***
>
> **Joel Page, Stormflower**

Project description

We promote the natural environment as a major influence in the uniqueness of our wine. However, being certified organic does have its challenges, and we hoped that our inclusion in the EcoVineyards program would help us to broaden our skills in regenerative and organic vineyard management.

Our project aimed to establish a native seed trial area and a revegetation area, as well as plant native species at row ends, to enhance plant diversity and increase the abundance and diversity of beneficial insects and birds.

Figure 1: EcoGrower Joel Page, Stormflower [Photo: Mary Retallack].

What did you do and when?

A native species revegetation area was established in 2017 as part of our organic certification process (Figures 1 to 3).

Native tree and shrub species planted include:

- *Callistachys lanceolata,* native willow
- *Corymbia calophylla,* marri
- *Eucalyptus cornuta,* yate
- *Eucalyptus gomphocephala,* tuart
- *Eucalyptus megacarpa,* mallee
- *Eucalyptus rudis,* flooded gum
- *Melaleuca rhaphiophylla,* swamp paperbark
- *Taxandria juniperina,* juniper myrtle

We further developed this area with understorey species through the EcoVineyards program.

The native species planted included:

- *Anigozanthos manglesii,* red kangaroo paw
- *Anigozanthus flavidus*, tall kangaroo paw
- *Carex fascicularis,* tassel sedge
- *Conostylis aculeata,* prickly conostylis
- *Kennedia coccinea,* coral vine

A native seed trial was conducted in 2023 with the aim of identifying a strong competitor to kikuyu grass, which continues to dominate the organic landscape.

The native grass species used in the trial included:

- *Dichanthium sericeum,* silky blue grass
- *Microlaena stipoides,* weeping grass
- *Microlaena stipoides*, weeping grass (var. Burra)
- *Rytidosperma caespitosum*, evans wallaby grass
- *Rytidosperma geniculatum*, oxley wallaby grass
- *Themeda triandra,* kangaroo grass

We trialled planting flowering native shrubs at vineyard row ends to bring bees and other beneficial insects closer to the vineyard by planting *Thryptomene saxicola*, rock thryptomene.

In 2024, we trialled planting *Grevillea obtusifolia*, Gin Gin gem, a nectar rich ground cover, on our dam wall to enhance biodiversity, suppress weeds, and improve slope stability (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Native Revegetation Area in 2025, with *Anigozanthus* spp., kangaroo paw in the foreground and *Corymbia calophylla,* marri in the background [Photo: Joel Page].

Figure 2: *Melaleuca raphiopyllia,* swamp paperbark in the revegetation [Photo: Joel Page].

Figure 3: *Taxandria juniperina,* juniper myrtle in native revegetation area flowering in May 2025 [Photo: Joel Page].

What worked well?

The *Grevillea obtusifolia*, Gin Gin gem plantings on our dam wall are thriving and already proving to be a valuable addition to our vineyard biodiversity by attracting pollinator birds and beneficial insects (Figure 4).

The standout success was the planting of *Thryptomene saxicola*, rock thryptomene at the vineyard end rows (Figure 5). This local native species boasts a long flowering period, attracting a range of pollinators. A nearby beehive in a marri tree is thriving thanks to the steady supply of nectar, along with butterflies and other beneficial insects.

The native revegetation area, first established in 2017, is now thriving, with many trees tapping into underground water and becoming well established, removing the need for manual watering.

This success has been further enhanced through the EcoVineyards program, which additional native understorey species, resulting in a richer ecosystem that supports both plant diversity, insect and bird diversity.

Any pitfalls to avoid?

Timing and a bit of luck proved to be some of the biggest challenges.

- Several periods during the program were unseasonably hot and dry, particularly from mid-spring 2023 onwards, which affected the survival of newly planted seedlings.
- Grazing by sheep also posed a problem, with some replanting of *Grevillea obtusifolia*, Gin Gin gem, required in 2024. To avoid similar issues, we plan to rest grazing in 2025, which should benefit our vineyard and support better seedling establishment.

Highlights

Thryptomene saxicola stood out as an excellent flowering native, while *Grevillea obtusifolia* is a great choice as a ground cover, both proving to be valuable and well-suited to this region.

What are you more aware of now?

We've developed a greater awareness of the native plant species in our vineyard, including their annual growth cycles and sensitivity to climate extremes. This has helped us understand which species are most useful for different beneficial purposes in the vineyard.

Where to from here?

This winter, we plan to plant more *Grevillea obtusifolia*, Gin Gin gem, completing coverage along the entire dam wall. We're also considering additional plantings of *Thryptomene saxicola* in the future. While the trial is still ongoing, and it will take time to assess how manageable the end-row plantings are once fully established, the early signs are very promising.

In late autumn, we prunned the marri trees at the centre of the property, removing dead wood and addressing trunk disease to encourage healthy new growth. This should help the trees better cope with heatwaves and the impacts of a drying climate.

Encouraging fresh growth may also boost summer flowering, which could support the management of silvereye birds during harvest. We believe these old marri trees are valuable biodiversity assets for Stormflower, contributing to the biodiversity of the property.

The background knowledge of local plant species has helped to assist in the farming that we do.

Figure 4: *Grevillea obtusifolia,* Gin Gin gem growing successfully on dam wall, May 2025 [Photo: Joel Page].

Figure 5: *Thryptomene saxicola,* rock thryptomene on the end rows [Photo: Joel Page].

Figure 6: Assessing native insectary ground cover growth adjacent to the strainer post [Photo: Mary Retallack].

Figure 7: Joel installing a photo point to monitor plant growth [Photo: Mary Retallack].

Expenses

Date	Item	Number of plants	EcoVineyards costs (ex GST)	Co-contribution (landholder contribution)	In-kind time
12/09/2024	Impact Ecology - Bat call analysis		$124		
1/09/2023	Boyanup Botanical	252	$533		6 hrs
9/07/2024	Boyanup Botanical	11	$113		2 hrs
16/05/2025	Boyanup Botanical	20	$247		4 hrs
	EcoGrower contribution			$3,000	
	Total	**407**	**$894**	**$3,000**	**12 hrs**

Disclaimer

For more information about the National EcoVineyards Program please visit www.ecovineyards.com.au @EcoVineyards

EcoVineyards
GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Wine Australia

retallack viticulture
wine growing for the future

REGIONAL PARTNERS

Adelaide Hills Wine Region

Wine Grape Council SA

riverland wine

Clare Valley

A Drop Above Orange Wine Region

Langhorne Creek Wine Region

wine. Yarra Valley

MPW Mornington Peninsula Wine

Margaret River Wine

Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association

The National EcoVineyards Program is funded by Wine Australia with levies from Australia's grape growers and winemakers and matching funds from the Australian Government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

EcoVineyards proudly acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connection to this ancient land on which we work and live.

As the Traditional Custodians of this land, we recognise their wealth of ecological knowledge and the importance of caring for Country.

We pay our respects to elders past and present and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.


ECO VINEYARDS
GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY