



## CASE STUDY

# **ESTABLISHING A NATIVE INSECTARY PERENNIAL GRASS SEED PRODUCTION AREA AT BREMERTON WINES, LANGHORNE CREEK, SA**

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# ESTABLISHING NATIVE INSECTARY PLANTS

## Background

The property is located at Kent Town Rd Langhorne Creek and consists of a total of 43 ha with 32 ha planted to Predominantly Shiraz (5 clones) and Cabernet Sauvignon (8 clones), and smaller areas of Verdelho and Petit Verdot.

*"Participating in the EcoVineyards program has reinvigorated a passion for native flora and fauna by acknowledging and supporting their role in the vineyard ecosystem. We have enjoyed getting together with other participants in the project to share and discuss ideas. Hopefully our native grass site can evolve to be a seed source that can be available for all and provide an alternative income stream for the business. We are excited to see it transform this site."*

Rebecca Willson, Bremerton Wines

## What were you hoping to achieve and why?

We have established an area of native wallaby grass seed as a future source of seed for expansion across larger areas of our property. We have done this on a modest scale to build our confidence and understanding of how native grasses establish in our conditions.

The area we seeded lies between our original EcoVineyard insectary strip and our vineyard for the biodiversity benefits it will bring both. The re-introduction of native grasses to our property will enhance our environmental credentials, a point also important to our customer.

It is our hope, this trial will enable us to expand the area dedicated to wallaby grass allowing us to harvest the seed for commercial sale in the future. Scaling up our production of wallaby grass seed will be a valuable alternative revenue stream for our business.



**Figure 1:** EcoVineyards project area seeded to wallaby grass adjacent the previous EcoVineyard insectary planting and the vineyard [Photo. Janet Klein].



## What did you do and when?

The conditions in Langhorne Creek for the past two years have been challengingly dry. The silver lining however is the low weed growth in the area allocated to this trial, reducing the need for contact herbicide.

We did however run a herbicide application across the block in November 2024. As you can see in the photos, no further weed growth occurred over summer.

**The area was dry seeded with *Rytidosperma geniculatum*, kneed wallaby grass and *Rytidosperma pilosum*, smooth-flower wallaby grass by Seeding Natives on 16 May 2025 using their specialised equipment.**

From here, the prime focus will be managing weed growth during the establishment of the native sward. It is likely we will need to apply a broadleaf selective spray (for wireweed) and to apply glyphosate via a wick-wiper to knock back competitive paddock grasses.

In addition, we purchased native tube stock and pots to fill approximately 30 to 40 gaps from our initial EcoVineyards insectary strip adjacent to the native grass seeding site. This planting will complete the site and bring biodiversity benefits to both sites.



**Figure 2:** Area photo of the triangular wallaby grass trial area [Google Maps].



**Figure 3:** Area prepared for seeding, seeding being mixed with wood shavings for easy dispersal and Seeding Natives direct seeding [Photos. Janet Klein].





**Figure 4:** Seeding Natives 'Blue Devil' specialised native grass seeder [Photo: Photo. Janet Klein].



**Figure 5:** Saw dust and wood shavings is used as a carrier for the native grass seed [Photo: Photo. Janet Klein].



**Figure 6:** Native wallaby grass seed prior to mixing with sawdust and wood shavings [Photo: Photo. Janet Klein].



**Figure 7:** Seeding Natives 'Blue Devil' specialised native grass seeder in action [Photo: Photo. Janet Klein].



## If you changed your project, what was the reason for the change?

Our original plan had been much more ambitious, intending to seed our 8 acre K5 block as a broad spreading understorey prior the redevelopment of the block to vineyard.

After consultation with Andrew Fairney of Seeding Natives and considering his obvious concern with the extent of couch grass across the block and its likely detrimental impact on the viability of the project without adequate ground preparation, we changed our plans to the smaller triangular strip adjacent our insectaria strip.

**Given the excessively dry season, we feel we dodged a bullet, given the lack of growth would have significantly reduced the effectiveness of any attempts at effective couch control.**

## What worked well?

Given the area has only recently been seeded, we are yet to see any results. With the dry year and potentially dry winter ahead, we do not expect to see much germination in the first year.

**We can say however, how grateful we are for the generous support we have received from Andrew Fairney and Seeding Natives. And for the encouragement underpinning our project by EcoVineyards.**

We can also comment on the strong growth of two of the species hydroseeded directly under vine in a neighbouring vineyard by EcoVineyards in Spring 2024.

Both the *Dichondra repens*, tom thumb, and the *Rytidosperma geniculatum*, wallaby grass, have densely established under vine in their trial panels. Along with other species hydroseeded, each received regular irrigation throughout the growing season.



**Figure 8:** Hydroseeding by Vortec Global's hydroviner, *Dichondra repens*, tom thumb and *Rytidosperma geniculatum*, knead wallaby grass established undervine in spring 2024 [Photo. Janet Klein].





**Figure 9:** Hydroseeding completed in May 2024 [Photo: Janet Klein].



**Figure 10:** Undervine hydroseeding ground cover demonstration growth in spring 2024 [Photo: Janet Klein].



**Figure 11:** Hydroseeded wallaby grass growth in spring 2024 [Photo: Janet Klein].



**Figure 12:** Insectary area adjacent to the vineyard in spring 2024 [Photo: Janet Klein].



## Pitfalls to avoid?

We learnt the significant lesson of the importance of ground preparation for native seed establishment! This was compounded by our original area being affected by one of the least compatible weeds with native ground covers, couch grass.

**Should we pursue our plan to scale up our wallaby grass areas across the property, we will need to plan for the necessary ground preparation, to ensure strong germination and ongoing weed management.**

## Highlights

We have participated in two rounds of the EcoVineyards program, with positive results in our first round of native insectary, especially with *Goodenia ovata*, hop goodenia; *Themeda triandra*, kangaroo grass and saltbush. All received irrigation and due to the area's manageable scale, we were also able to keep the area brush cut.

**Working with Seeding Natives, with Andrew's passion and experience in native grass establishment and his available equipment, has been particularly encouraging this round.**

## Where to from here?

We especially find the potential of native grasses exciting – for their insectary benefit, the story they provide and the likely long term commercial return. We are enthusiastic to be at the forefront of native grass establishment in vineyards in Langhorne Creek.

**We therefore intend to expand our wallaby grass area into semi-commercial production in Block 3B to potentially harvest the seed for sale. We have the potential to overhead irrigate across the block should we determine a payoff between potential increase in seed production versus weed growth.**

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

Thinking of our long-term participation in the EcoVineyards program, we have increased our knowledge of ecological viticulture with our focus having been sharpened, in particular, on the combined environmental benefits of natives.

**This has us thinking of other ways in which to increase the resilience of our business – commercially, environmentally and for consumer perception.**



**Figure 13:** The positive growth of medium storey insectary planted as part of the first EcoVineyards program [Photo. Janet

## Plant list

#	Scientific name	Common name	Number planted
1	<i>Acacia floribunda</i>	gossamer wattle	2
2	<i>Acacia gillii</i>	Gill's wattle	1
3	<i>Acacia glaucoptera</i>	flat wattle (WA native)	2
4	<i>Acacia hakeoides</i>	hakea wattle	1
5	<i>Adenanthos sericeus</i>	woolly bush (WA native)	1
6	<i>Backhousia citriodora</i>	lemon myrtle	1
7	<i>Banksia media</i>	golden stalk banksia	2
8	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	sweet bursaria	5
9	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	river red gum	6
10	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	native lilac	2
11	<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	prickly tea tree	2
12	<i>Lomandra longifolia x confertifolia</i> subsp. Pallida	lomandra lime tuff	5
13	<i>Melaleuca diosmifolia</i>	green honey myrtle	1
14	<i>Melaleuca halmaturorum</i>	South Australian swamp paperbark	2
15	<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>	moonah, black tea tree	2
16	<i>Myoporum petiolatum</i>	sticky boobialla	4
17	<i>Olearia axillaris</i>	Coastal Daisy Bush	2
18	<i>Prostanthera ovalifolia</i> 'Compacta'	dwarf native mint bush	2
19	<i>Rytidosperma geniculatum</i>	kneed wallaby grass	0.2 ha
20	<i>Rytidosperma pilosum</i>	hairy wallaby grass	
21	<i>Thryptomene saxicola</i>	rock thryptomene	1
22	<i>Westringia fruticosa</i>	coastal rosemary	2
Total			46





## Costs

Date	Item	Number of plants	EcoVineyards costs (ex GST)	Co-contribution (grant and landholder contribution)	In-kind contribution (time)
1/03/2023	Herbicide (weed control)				2 hrs
1/02/2024	Herbicide (weed control)				2 hrs
12/09/2024	Impact Ecology - microbat call analysis		\$124		
above	Herbicide for ground prep			\$150	
13/05/2025	Ground preparation - remove dead weeds and even out surface for sowing				2 hrs
16/05/2025	Native perennial grasses sown on 2,500m <sup>2</sup> Seeding Natives Australia		\$2,633		
17/05/2025	Set up perimeter barrier to stop traffic				2 hrs
4/06/2025	10L Big Cat Herbicide - weed control whilst establishing native grasses		\$260		
16/06/2025	SF TubeSeeded 29 x \$4.95 (2 x \$2 ea)		\$136		
16/06/2025	140mm Pots 4x \$16.50, 11x \$14.50		\$226		
16/06/2025	200mm pots 2 x \$19.95		\$40		
16/06/2025	Jute weed mats x 46, native fert 3.5kg and 4x30L compost		\$157		
1/06/2025	Planting and prep of replacement seedlings				12 hrs
June 2025 & spring 2026	Application of weed control				3 hrs
	EcoGrower contribution			\$3,000	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>\$3,576</b>	<b>\$3,150</b>	<b>23 hours</b>

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## PROGRAM PARTNERS



## REGIONAL PARTNERS



MARGARET RIVER WINE



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## 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.





