ECO VINEYARDS
GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

CASE STUDY

ESTABLISHING NATIVE INSECTARY GRASSES, FORBS AND SHRUBS
AT TAYLORS WINES, CLARE VALLEY, SA

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ESTABLISHING NATIVE INSECTARY PLANTS

Background

Taylors Wines is set on 750 ha of rolling hills in Auburn, SA and was established as a family owned winery in 1969. The vineyard produces Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Merlot, Viognier, Gewurztraminer and Tempranillo for a domestic and export market and has been increasingly adopting an ecological focus to soften our environmental footprint.

What were you hoping to achieve and why?

The motivation to improve the natural assets on the property coincides with an interest in exploring more natural solutions to supressing Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) damage by creating a large-scale insectary planting and habitat for beneficial predatory species.

This insectary replaces almost 0.5 ha of vineyard with native shrubs planted on old vine rows while longer-term native grasses can be infilled to complete a wholly native habitat. Sections of the vineyard had end of row native shrub plantings with the intention to trial complimentary novel approaches for LBAM control.

The insectary planting is in grid form, with 3 m rows and 3 m spacing between plants to enable a vision of seeding native grasses both on the inter-row and in cross-hatch between plants across the rows.

The project provides us the opportunity to learn about management of natives within the vineyard and gain the confidence to continually increase plantings across the property and improve understanding of native grass management for inter-rows.

Figure 1: Preparation of the site prior to planting with native insectary shrubs (June 2023) [Photo: Mary Retallack].

Figure 2: Emma McInerney and Ben Mitchell discussing the project plan (June 2023) [Photo: Mary Retallack].

What did you do and when?

- **May 2023:** Preparation for the insectary with removal of vineyard infrastructure (posts, wire, dripline) followed by disc cultivation and marking along the existing 3 m rows for planting. Chemical weed control was conducted through June before seedlings were planted and protected by stakes and guards. Both slashing and herbicides were used in the following months to ensure weed suppression, while plants were monitored for predation from kangaroos and rabbits.
- **June 2023:** Planting of natives at end of rows.
- **August 2024:** Ongoing weed control was conducted in the insectary in preparation for native grass seeding on the inter-row.

A raptor perch was installed and soil biological sampling was conducted in the insectary.

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

Initially additional planting of native shrubs was intended for fencelines however given the need to be outside and on council land, it became difficult to negotiate.

The native grass cross-hatch seeding has been delayed, to ensure that management of grassland is trialled to build confidence. Not being confident about seeding the entire insectary area to native grasses has meant we've sown medic in the alternate rows to the native grasses to help with soil health, cover and weed suppression.

What worked well?

In very dry conditions we have had a high rate of survival among the natives planted in the insectary and at the end of rows. In the early days some watering was required in the insectary to ensure establishment. We are pleased to see how well the area is growing.

Pitfalls to avoid?

We're waiting on the germination of the native grasses given the very dry conditions over two seasons. We've learned that any future native grass seeding will require a high level of weed control.

Figure 3: Site planted with native insectary shrubs (March 2024) [Photo: Mary Retallack].

Figure 4: Site planted with native insectary shrubs (September 2024) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Figure 5: Sowing native grasses and forbs by Seeding Natives 'blue devil' specialised seeder (August 2024) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Figure 6: *Enchylaena tomentosa*, ruby saltbush sown adjacent to strainer posts (June 2025) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Figure 7: *Enchylaena tomentosa*, ruby saltbush sown adjacent to strainer posts (June 2025) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Figure 8: Installation of a Chorus microbat detector to capture echolocation signals and species present [Photo: Emma McInerney].

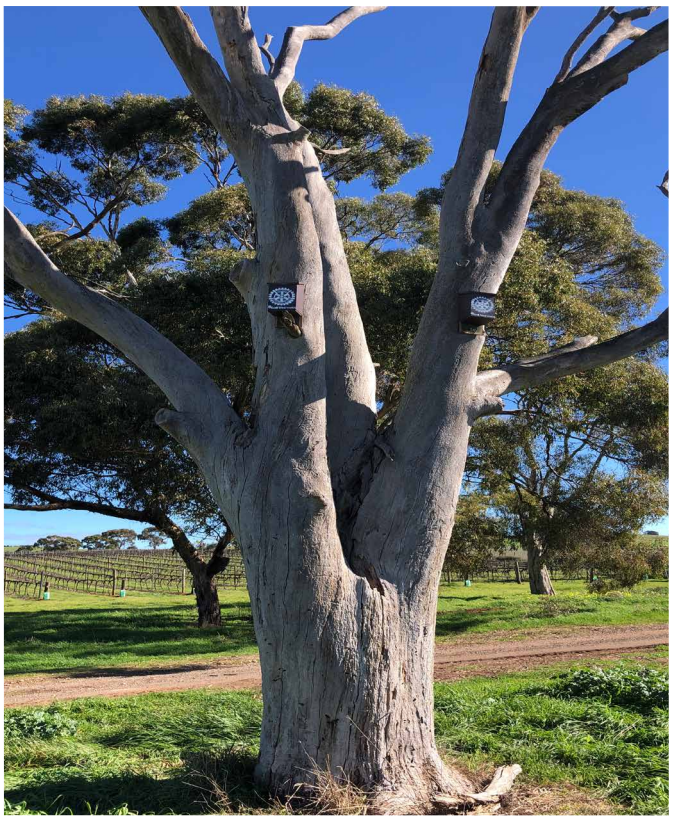

Figure 9: Microbat boxes [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Figure 10: Native insectary area (June 2025) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Plant lists

Native insectary adjacent to Riesling block			Native insectary - adjacent to strainer posts		
#	Botanical name	Common name	#	Botanical name	Common name
1	*Acacia acinacea*	wreath wattle	1	*Acacia acinacea*	wreath wattle
2	*Acacia paradoxa*	prickly wattle	2	*Acacia paradoxa*	prickly wattle
3	*Bursaria spinosa*	sweet bursaria	3	*Bursaria spinosa*	sweet bursaria
4	*Dianella revoluta*	black anther flax lily (buzz pollinated)	4	*Dianella revoluta*	black anther flax lily (buzz pollinated)
5	*Einadia nutans*	climbing saltbush	5	*Einadia nutans*	climbing saltbush
4	*Enchylaena tomentosa*	ruby saltbush	4	*Enchylaena tomentosa*	ruby saltbush
5	*Eremophila maculata*	spotted emu bush	5	*Eremophila maculata*	spotted emu bush
6	*Hardenbergia violacea*	native lilac	6	*Hardenbergia violacea*	native lilac
7	*Lomandra densiflora*	pointed mat rush	7	*Lomandra densiflora*	pointed mat rush

Figure 9: Native insectary area and vineyard manager Dick Bryksy (September 2024) [Photo: Emma McInerney].

Costs

Date	Item	EcoVineyards costs (ex GST)	Co-contribution (landholder contribution)	In-kind contribution (time)
14/08/2024	Native grass seeding over 0.4ha, incl 5kg seed mix by Seeding Natives	$2,240	$150	2 hrs
	EcoGrower contribution		$3,000	
	Total	**$2,240**	**$3,150**	**2 hrs**

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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.


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