ECO VINEYARDS
GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY



EcoVineyards: Geelong wine region

EcoGrowers ‘open call’ information session

Presented by Dr Mary Retallack, Retallack Viticulture / Ecology
EcoVineyards, Founder and Custodian

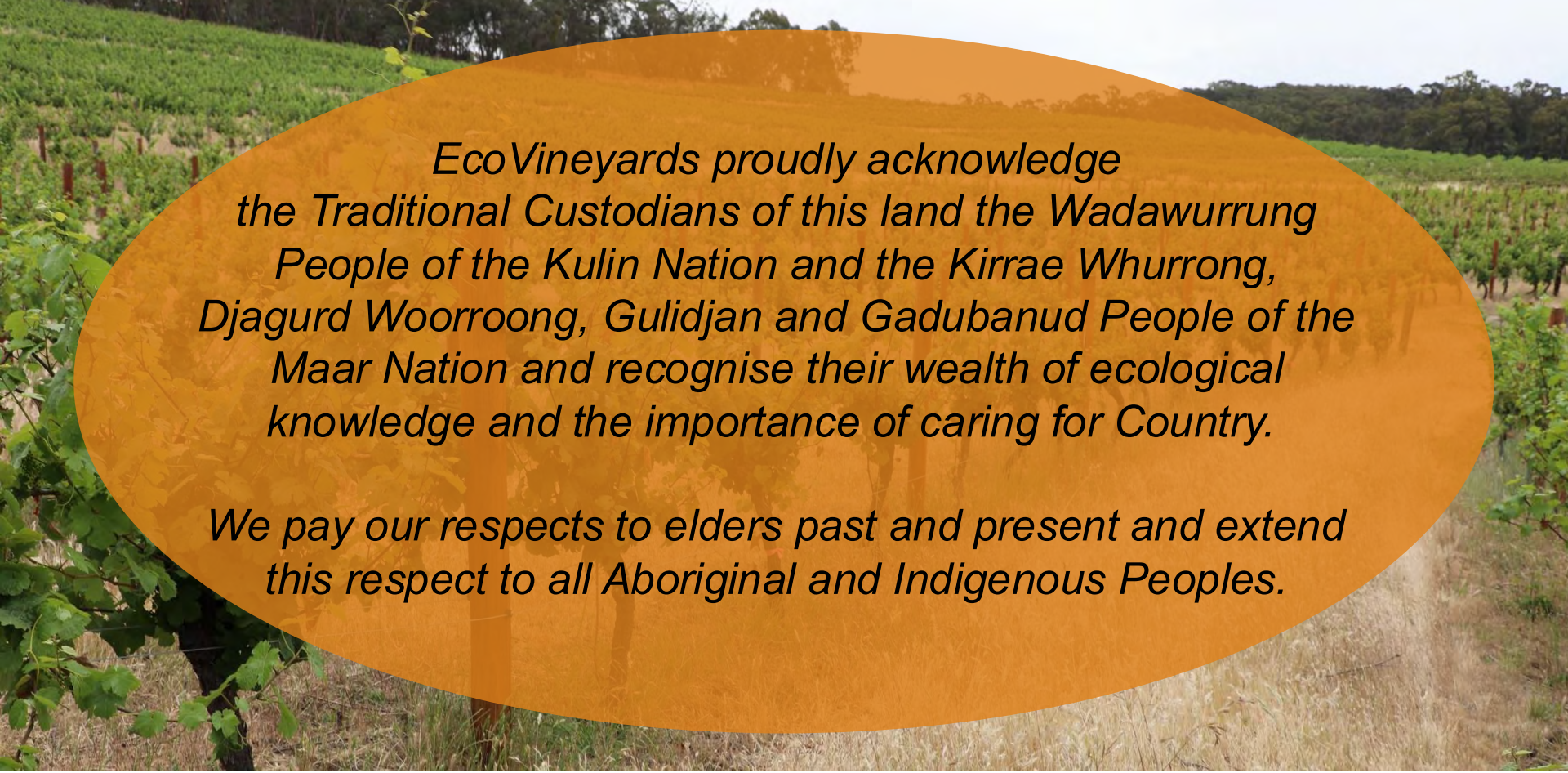




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EcoVineyards proudly acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation and the Kirrae Whurrong, Djagurd Woorroong, Gulidjan and Gadubanud People of the Maar Nation and recognise their wealth of ecological 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 Indigenous Peoples.

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Australian Government



CORANGAMITE CMA



DIVERSE FARMS RESILIENT CATCHMENTS











Corangamite CMA's Diverse Farms Resilient Catchments project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program. EcoVineyards is delivered by Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd with significant support from regional communities.

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wine growing for the future

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growing in harmony with nature

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www.ecovineyards.com.au

@ecovineyards (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)

An introduction to EcoVineyards

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We work with wine growers; however, they choose to grow:

- Conventional
- Minimal input
- Organic
- Biodynamic
- Regenerative or other

We suggest **ecological** practices that can be incorporated to create incremental step change and empower wine growers with the knowledge and confidence to incorporate these practices.

We find this is the quickest way to accelerate meaningful practice change.



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Our measure of success…

Do your practices bring you closer to or further from the goal of

growing in harmony with nature?



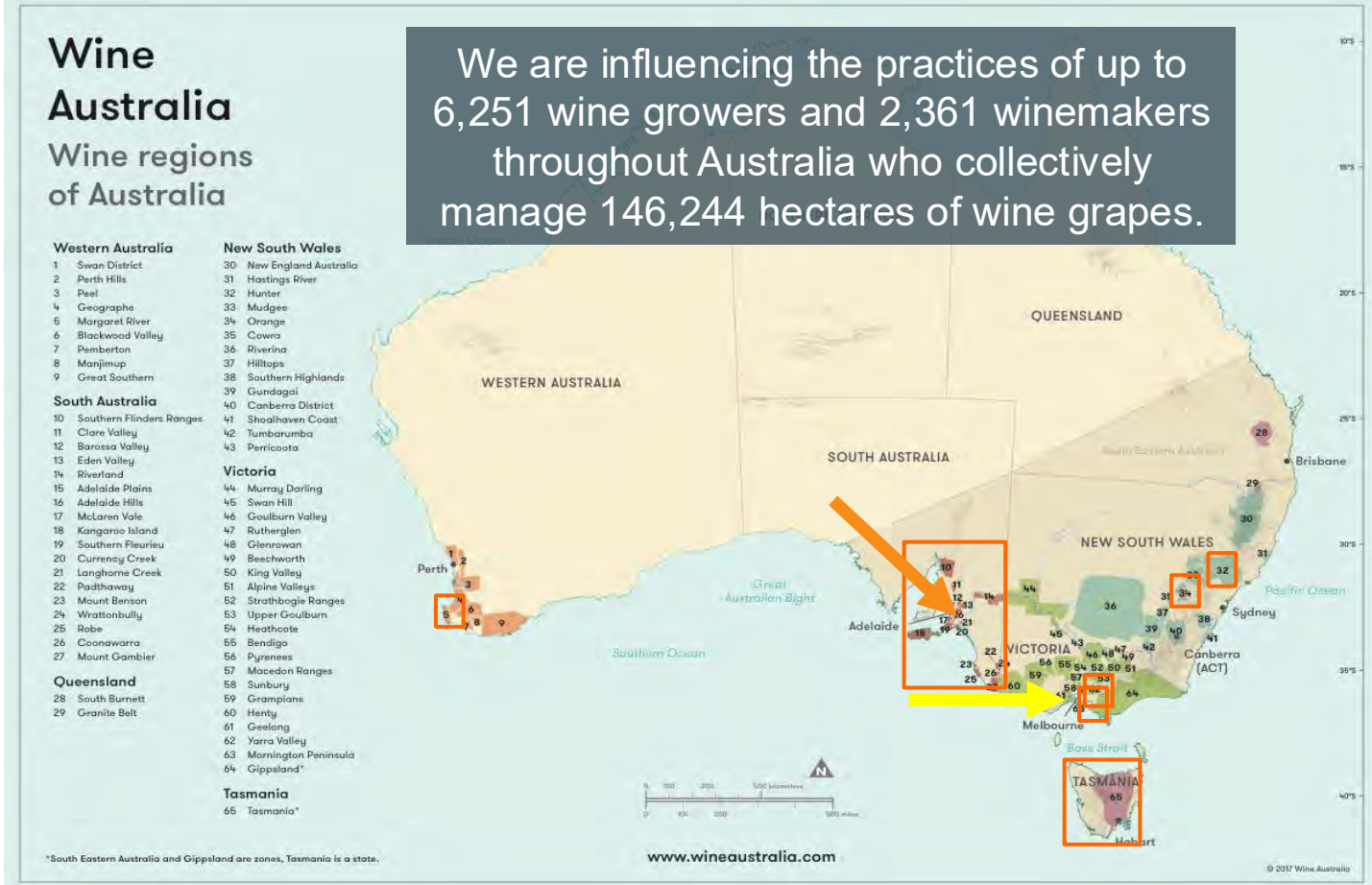
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The ecological information I share is applicable to a range of crops and regions…

Consider how these concepts apply to your region



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Why does the EcoVineyards approach work?

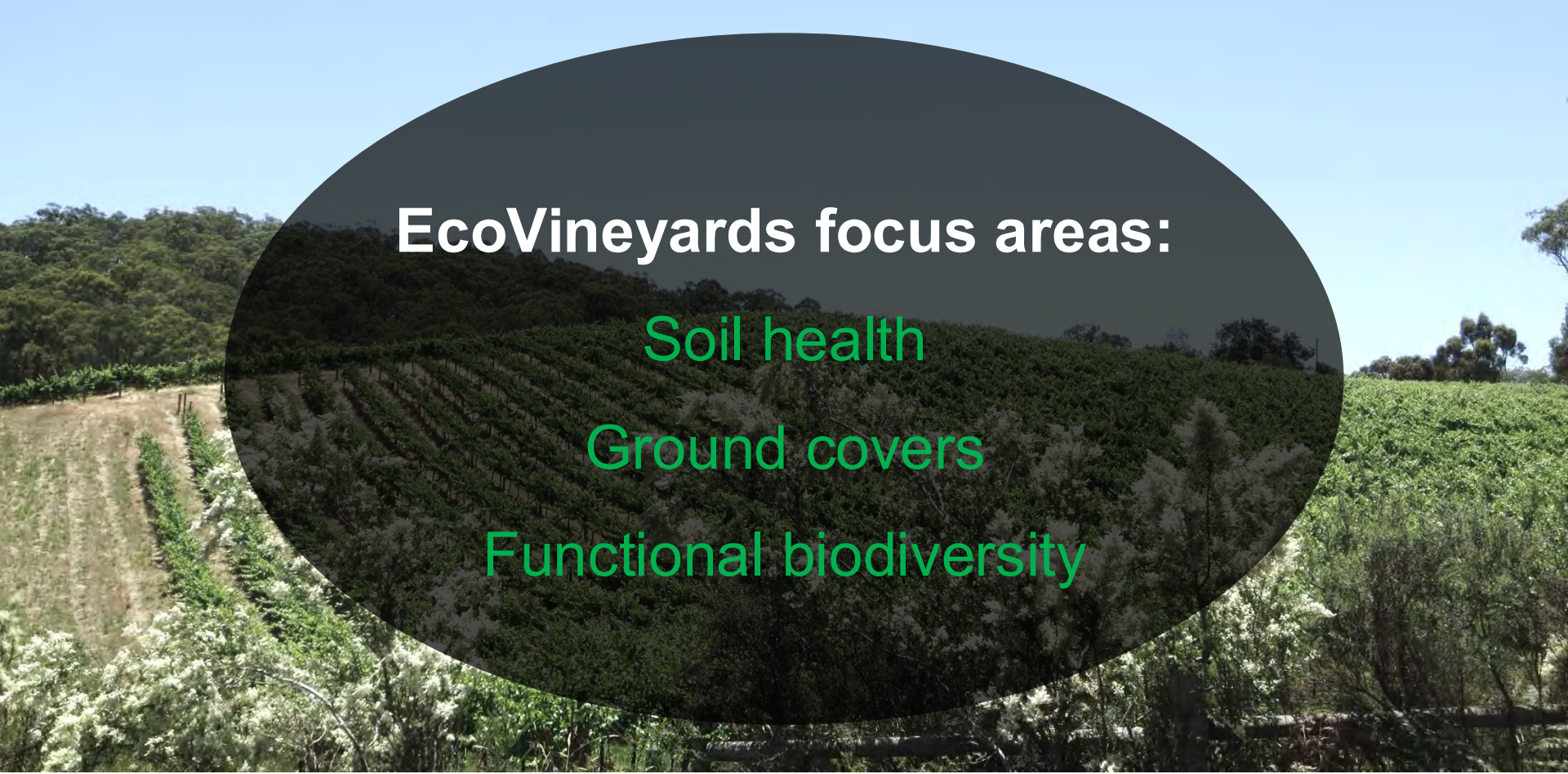
- Bridging the knowledge, confidence and culture gap
- Creating an understanding of agroecology
- Demonstrate practical benefits (showing not telling)
- Creating long lasting solutions and breaking the cycle of intervention
- Highlighting complementary connections between nature and farming
- There are leaders (early adopters) in every region, they lead the way to inspire others



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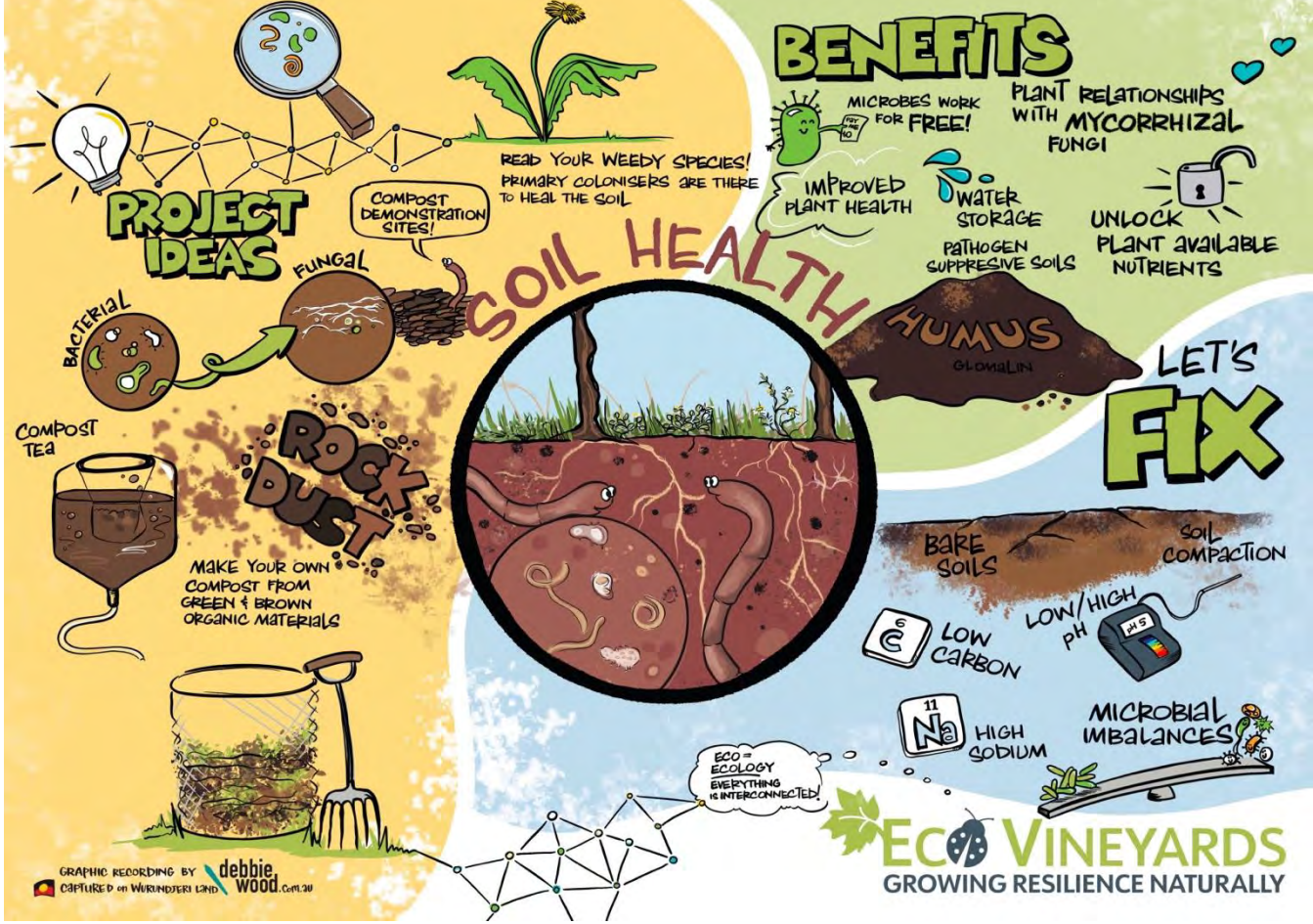
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Soil health

With a focus on:

- Covering bare earth and nourishing soil biology
- Creating fungal dominated soils for perennial plants
- Composting and compost tea
- Biostimulants
- Addressing compaction, water infiltration
- Weedy species as indicators of soil health



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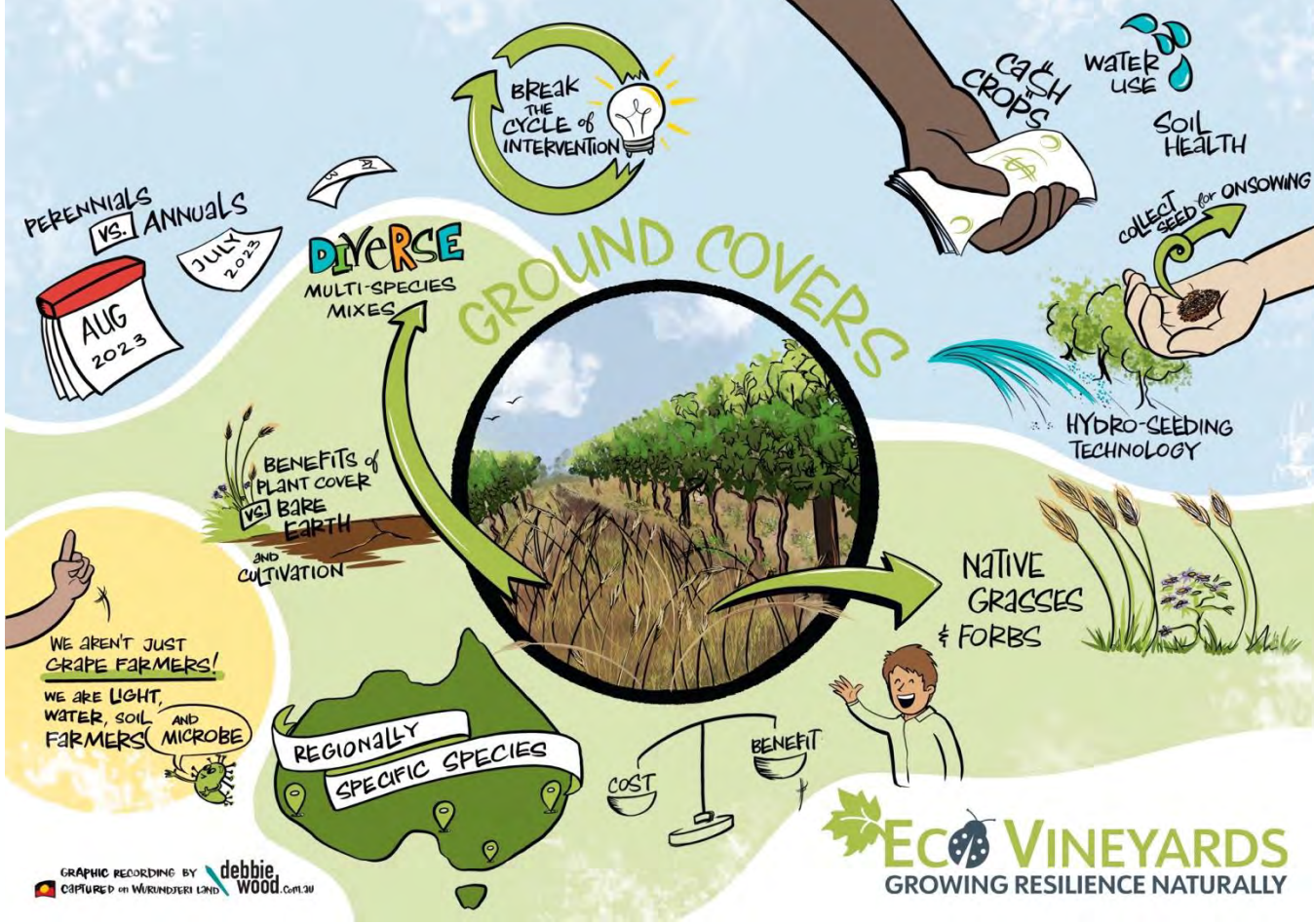
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Ground covers

With a focus on:

- Moving from annual to perennial ground covers
- From introduced to native (locally adapted species)
- From monocultures to multispecies mixes
- 100% ground cover (including the mid-row, under-vine area) and adjacent to the vineyard
- Stacked enterprises



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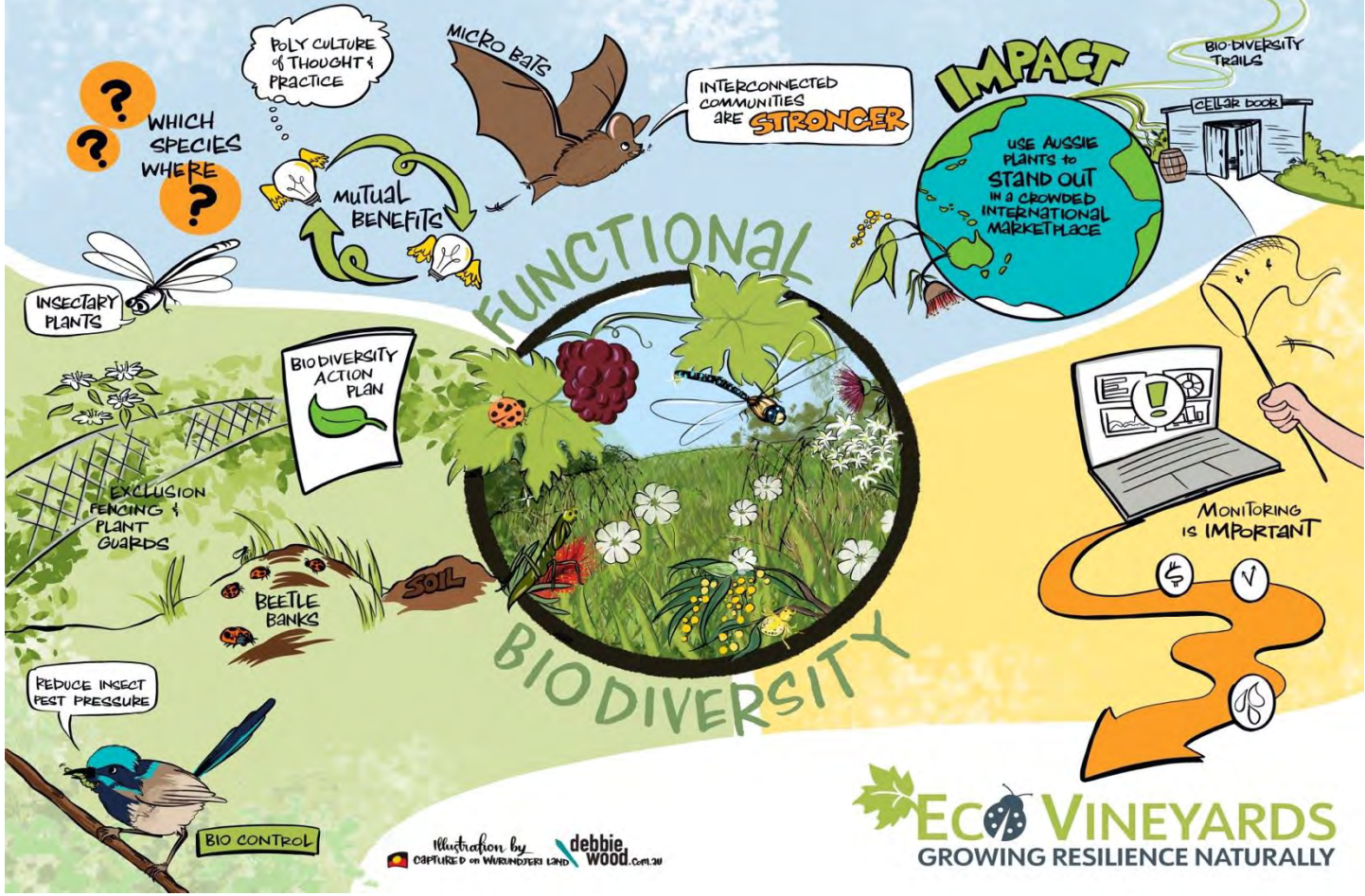
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Functional biodiversity

(flora and fauna found in association and their inter-relationships)

With a focus on predatory:

- Arthropods (insects, spiders and mites)
- Microbats
- Insectivorous / raptor birds of prey



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EcoVineyards: Geelong (Surf Coast, Moorabool Valley and Bellarine Peninsula) **– open call**

Four EcoGrowers will be selected in the Geelong wine region
Growers do not need to have a fully developed project idea before applying

Background

Growers will have access to new region-specific resources, events, and the establishment of four demonstration sites in the Geelong wine region. Over the next two years, there will be many learning opportunities and strong regional collaboration to help support fruit quality, productivity and the resilience of local vineyards.

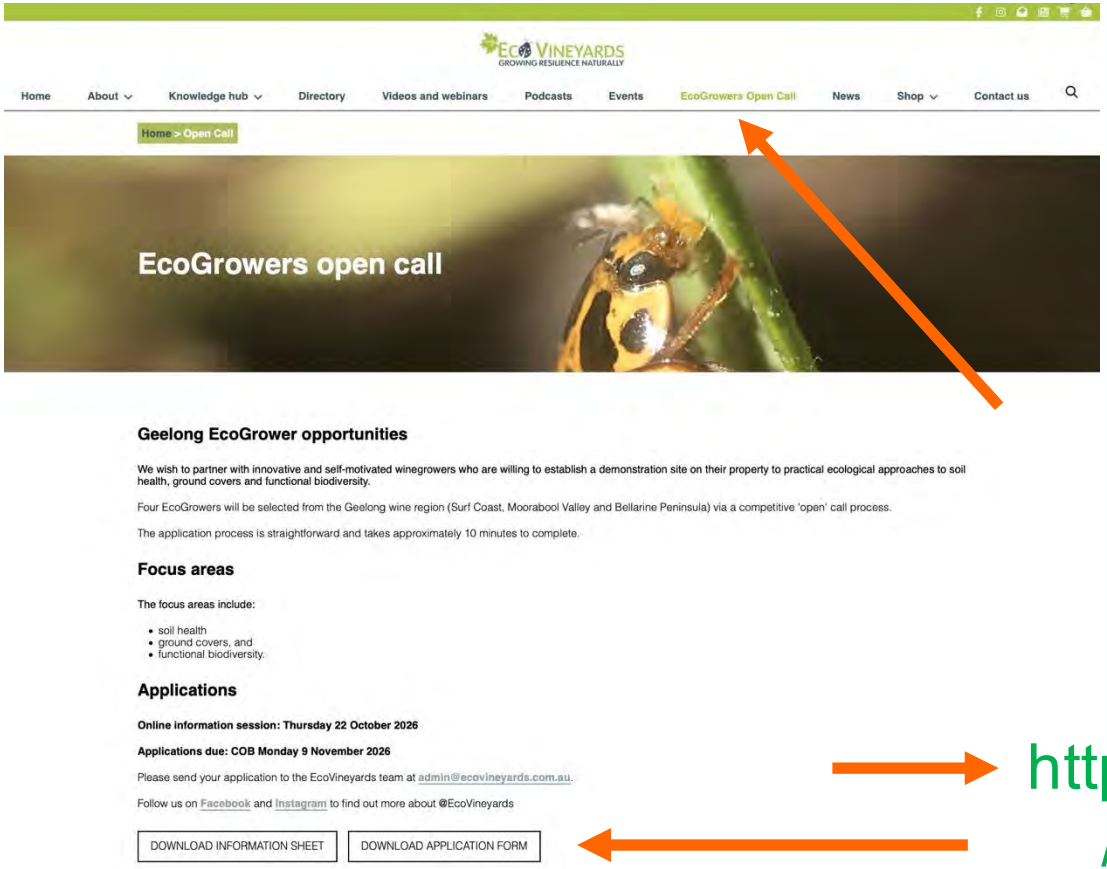
We wish to partner with innovative and self-motivated winegrowers who are willing to establish a demonstration site on their property to showcase the use of soil health practices, ground covers and/or functional biodiversity.

Apply by: COB **Monday 9 November 2026**

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https://ecovineyards.com.au/ecogrowers-open-call/

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‘Open call’ to select Geelong EcoGrowers

Four EcoGrowers will be selected in the Geelong wine region (Surf Coast, Moorabool Valley and Bellarine Peninsula) and each will receive the following benefits, up to the value of $14,450 for a $3,000 upfront investment

Assistance

Dedicated support and guidance to develop a biodiversity action plan (BAP), demonstration site and case study.

Estimated value $8,500

Grant

Financial support to develop a demonstration site, undertake soil health benchmarking and receive an extras package.

Estimated value $5,950

GROWER BENEFIT OF $14,450 / $3,000 = 4.8 X RETURN ON INVESTMENT

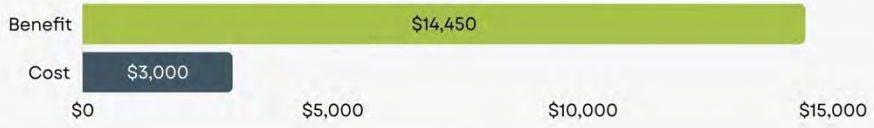


Table 1. EcoGrower Support Package and Return on Investment (ROI)

EcoGrower support package	Value (ex GST)
Demonstration site establishment funding	$4,000
Dedicated technical support and mentoring	$6,000
Biodiversity Action Plan	$1,250
Baseline soil health benchmarking	$1,100
EcoGrower case study	$1,250
EcoVineyards promotional and monitoring package*	$850
Total Value	**$14,450**
EcoGrower contribution	**$3,000**
ROI	**4.8:1**

Extras package (value $850)

- Demonstration site signage
- Permanent photo monitoring point
- EcoVineyards branded bucket hat
- Set of EcoVineyards Best Practice Management Guidelines (BPMGs) x 4
- Bird and native grass reference books
- EcoVineyards educational posters x 3
- Two microbat boxes
- Nutriscope nutritional sampling report x1
- BirdWeather app monitoring

Apply

Please refer to the **‘open call’** documents on the **EcoVineyards** website for more details **(scan the QR code below)**

Apply by:

COB **Monday**

9 November 2026

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Extras package

- Demonstration site signage
- Photo monitoring point
- EcoVineyards branded bucket hat
- Calico monitoring strips
- Set of EcoVineyards Best Practice Management Guides (BPMGs) x 4
- Bird and native grass reference books
- EcoVineyards educational posters x 3
- Two microbat boxes
- Nutriscope nutritional sampling report x1
- BirdWeather app monitoring



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EcoGrower:
Janet Klein, Ngeringa,
Adelaide Hills,
South Australia

https://ecovineyards.com.au/case-study-ngeringa/





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Calico strips and cotton clothing used to assess microbial activity

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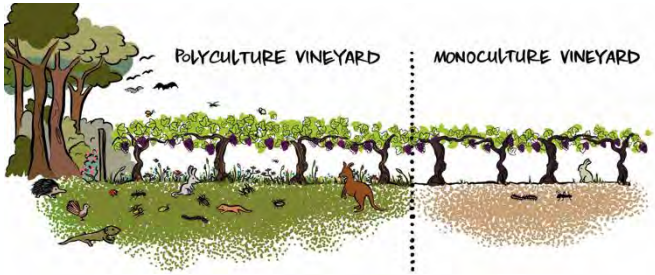
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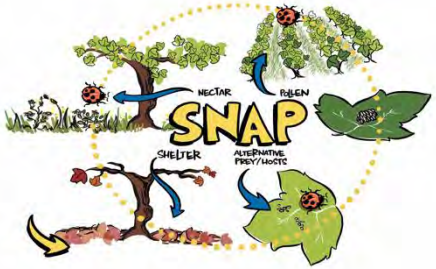
More than 2,200 pages of practical resources for wine growers

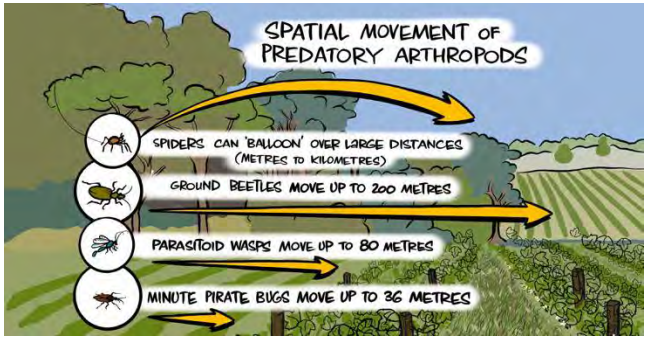
Including best practice management guides on soil health, ground covers and functional biodiversity

https://ecovineyards.com.au/bpmg

Download for free or hard copies are available for purchase via the EcoVineyards shop $40 ea or all 4 for $120 (inc GST)

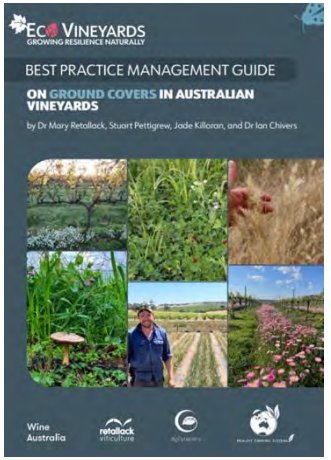














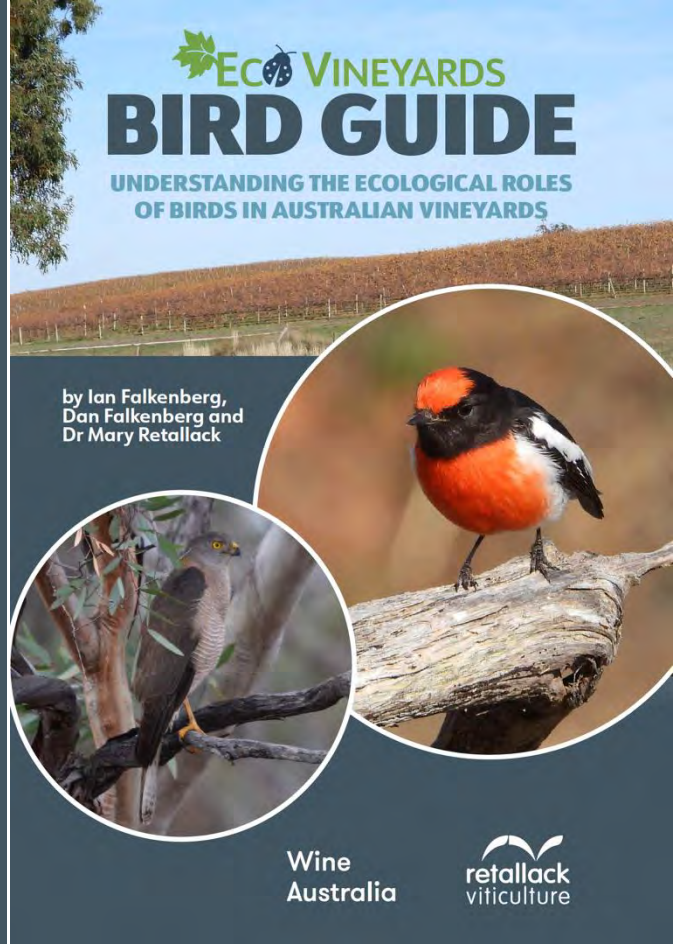
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Understanding the ecological roles of birds in Australian vineyards

https://ecovineyards.com.au/ecovineyards-bird-guide-understanding-the-ecological-roles-of-birds-in-australian-vineyards/



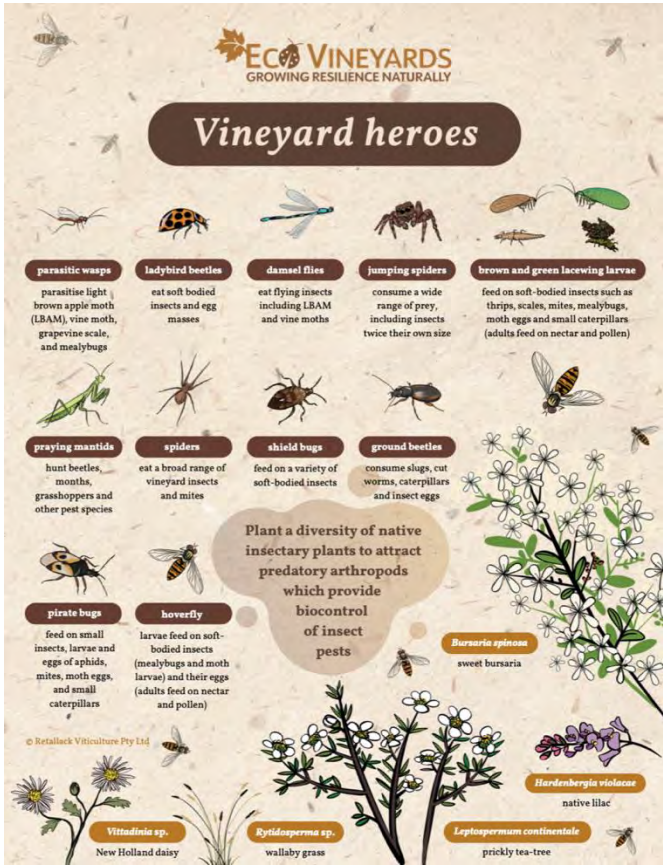
Hard copies available for purchase $40 ea (inc GST)



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Printed copies available for $40 ea (inc GST)

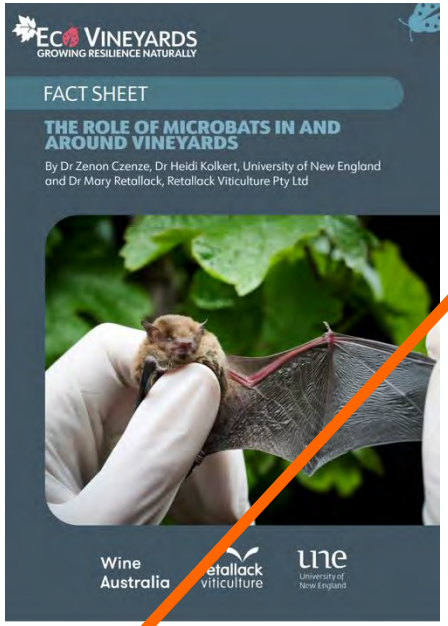
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Microbats – a natural insect controller in vineyards

- Small to medium in size (2g to 150g)
- Most are insect eaters and can eat up to half their body weight in insects in one night and they feed primarily on moths!
- There are 23 microbat species in Victoria.
- Most live in tree hollows but also in human made shelters e.g. houses, sheds, bridges and bat boxes/hotels
- Use echolocation for navigation and finding prey (monitor using a Chorus)





[Photos: Mary Retallack]









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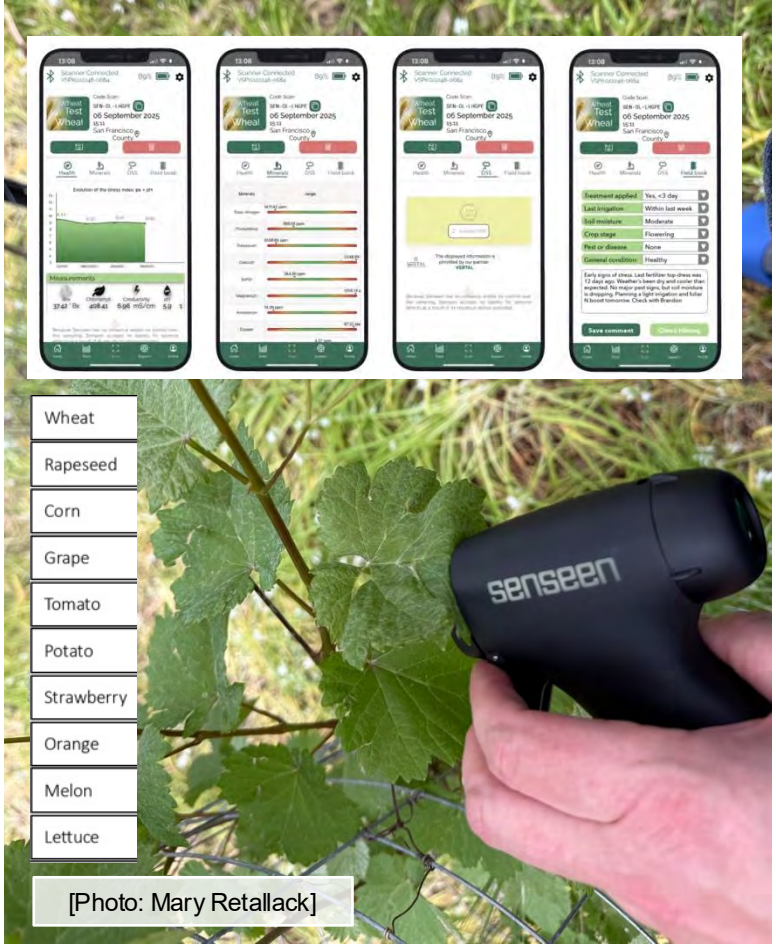
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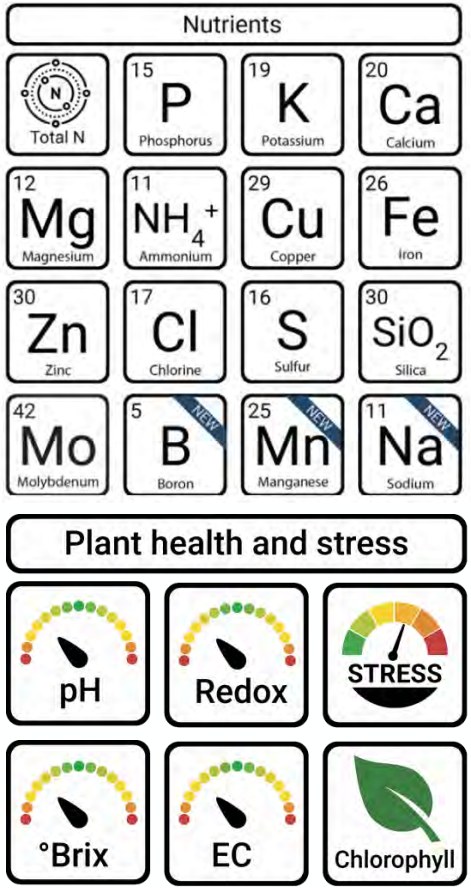
How to assess plant nutrients?

Send leaf blades to the laboratory for sap analysis or use a handheld device for in-field and immediate results!

Nutriscope™
USD $ 3,250.00
One-year subscription
USD $ 750 per year



[Photo: Mary Retallack]



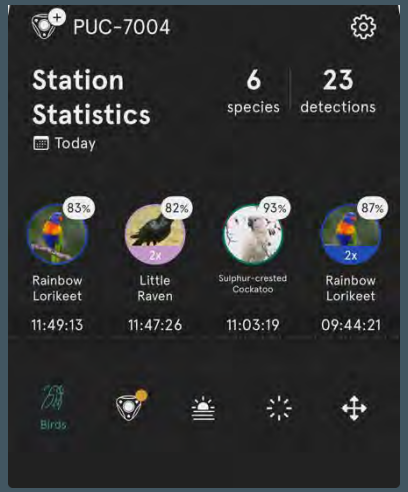
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Monitoring birds using AI

https://www.birdweather.com

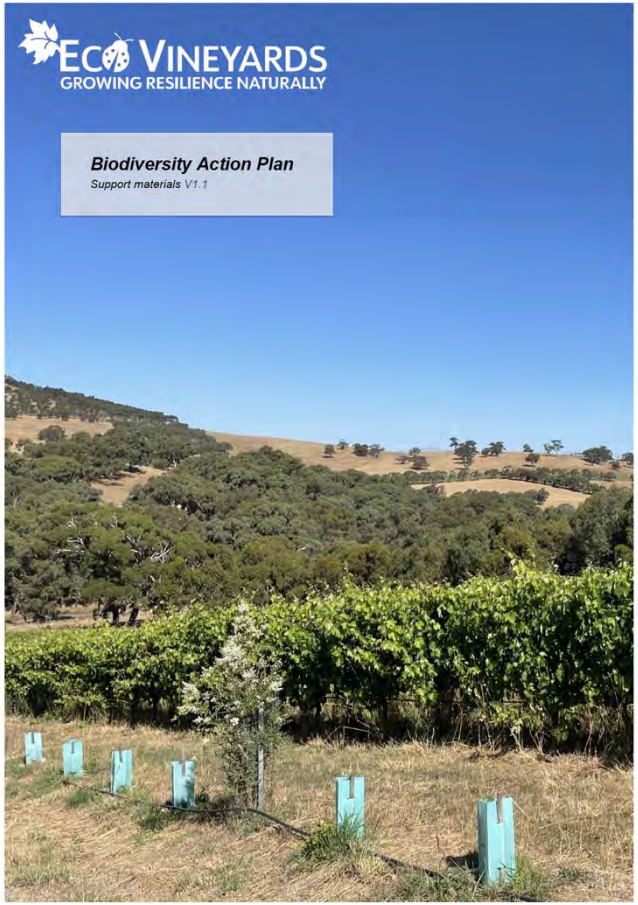


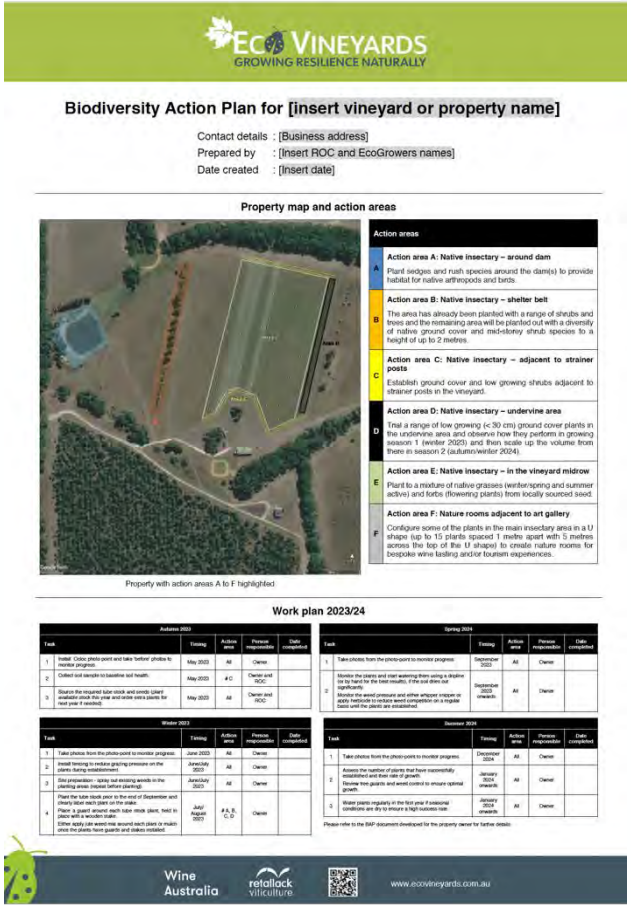
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Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and case studies for each demonstration site





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Biodiversity Action Plan for [insert vineyard or property name]

Contact details : [Business address]
Prepared by : [Insert ROC and EcoGrowers names]
Date created : [Insert date]

Property map and action areas

Property with action areas A to F highlighted

Action areas	
A	**Action area A: Native insectary – around dam** Plant sedges and rush species around the dam(s) to provide habitat for native arthropods and birds.
B	**Action area B: Native insectary – shelter belt** The area has already been planted with a range of shrubs and trees and the remaining area will be planted out with a diversity of native ground cover and mid-storey shrub species to a height of up to 2 metres.
C	**Action area C: Native insectary – adjacent to strainer posts** Establish ground cover and low growing shrubs adjacent to strainer posts in the vineyard.
D	**Action area D: Native insectary – undervine area** Trial a range of low growing (< 30 cm) ground cover plants in the undervine area and observe how they perform in growing season 1 (winter 2023) and then scale up the volume from there in season 2 (autumn/winter 2024).
E	**Action area E: Native insectary – in the vineyard midrow** Plant to a mixture of native grasses (winter/spring and summer active) and forbs (flowering plants) from locally sourced seed.
F	**Action area F: Nature rooms adjacent to art gallery** Configure some of the plants in the main insectary area in a U shape (up to 15 plants spaced 1 metre apart with 5 metres across the top of the U shape) to create nature rooms for bespoke wine tasting and/or tourism experiences.

Work plan 2023/24

Autumn 2023

Task	Timing	Action area	Person responsible	Date completed
1 Install Ciloc photo-point and take 'before' photos to monitor progress	May 2023	All	Owner	
2 Collect soil sample to baseline soil health.	May 2023	# C	Owner and ROC	
3 Source the required tube stock and seeds (plant available stock this year and order extra plants for next year if needed)	May 2023	All	Owner and ROC	

Spring 2024

Task	Timing	Action area	Person responsible	Date completed
1 Take photos from the photo-point to monitor progress	September 2023	All	Owner	
2 Monitor the plants and start watering them using a dripline (or by hand for the best results). If the soil dries out deeply, water. Monitor the weed pressure and either whipper snipper or apply herbicide to reduce weed competition on a regular basis until the plants are established.	September 2023 onwards	All	Owner	

Winter 2023

Task	Timing	Action area	Person responsible	Date completed
1 Take photos from the photo-point to monitor progress	June 2023	All	Owner	
2 Install fencing to reduce grazing pressure on the plants during establishment	June/July 2023	All	Owner	
3 Site preparation - spray out existing weeds in the planting areas (repeat before planting)	June/July 2023	All	Owner	
4 Plant the tube stock prior to the end of September and clearly label each plant on the stake. Place a guard around each tube stock plant, held in place with a wooden stake. Either apply jute weed mat around each plant or mulch once the plants have guards and stakes installed.	July/ August 2023	# A, B, C, D	Owner	

Summer 2024

Task	Timing	Action area	Person responsible	Date completed
1 Take photos from the photo-point to monitor progress	December 2024	All	Owner	
2 Assess the number of plants that have successfully established and their rate of growth. Review tree guards and weed control to ensure optimal growth	January 2024 onwards	All	Owner	
3 Water plants regularly in the first year if seasonal conditions are dry to ensure a high success rate.	January 2024 onwards	All	Owner	

Please refer to the BAP document developed for the property owner for further details.

Wine Australia retallack viticulture www.ecovineyards.com.au

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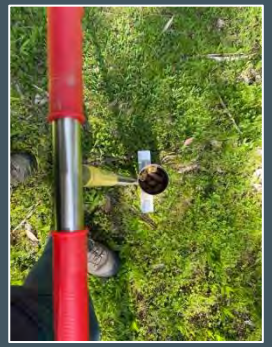
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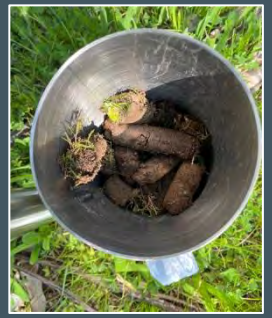
Regional benefits

Upcoming events in spring and autumn

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Regional toolkit







Hamilton soil sampler (0 to 10cm)



NTS advanced sap extractor

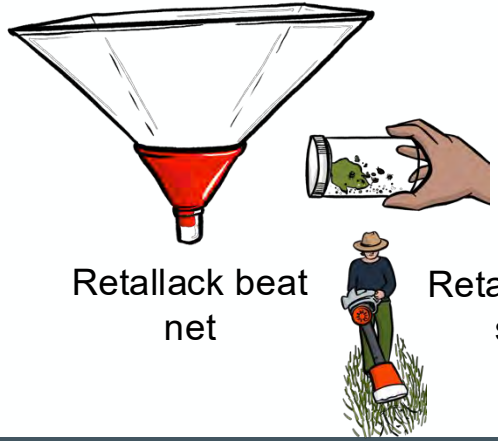




Penetrometer



Water infiltrometer



Retallack beat net



Retallack modified sweep net

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Plant community lists for the Geelong wine region

https://ecovineyards.com.au/plant-lists/

New plant community lists to be developed for the region based on each EcoGrower site





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Fact sheets x 2

Regional fact sheets

(what are your key interests, vote at the next EcoVineyards event)

- Understanding early succession, indicator, pioneer, and managing ‘weedy species’
- Managing pest and diseases using the plant health pyramid approach
- How to get started with undervine native insectary ground covers
- ?????

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EcoGrower: Lulu Lunn,
McLaren Vale

"I have learned so much more about the ecology and interactions of plants, insects and even soil and its microbiome since beginning with EcoVineyards.

It has encouraged me to read, learn and research more and be more inquisitive. After 35 years of being in the same job it has reintroduced enthusiasm back into it and I am excited about the future."

Demonstration site ideas and application form

Project ideas

Potential demonstration site ideas include, but are not limited to, the following examples. They are intended to stimulate ideas rather than limit the scope of proposals. EcoGrowers are encouraged to identify a practical project that reflects an opportunity, challenge or area of interest within their own vineyard and has potential to generate useful learnings more broadly.

Some examples are presented in existing EcoVineyards case studies and resources.

Soil health

- Exploring ways to shift soil biology from bacterial- to fungal-dominant.
- Trialling compost tea, soil microbiology and plant health inputs, including rock dust, fish hydrolysate, fulvic acid, molasses, seaweed extract, amorphous silica and chitin etc. to objectively assess changes in soil and vine health using complementary measures such as the EcoVineyards soil health indicators for Australian vineyards and leaf Brix and/or Nutriscope™ by Senseen measurements.
- Trialling different compost formulations to improve soil health and/or insectary plant establishment.
- Quantifying the benefits of soil remediation practices on soil and plant health, including high-fungal compost, compost tea and worm vermicast solutions.

Ground covers

- Trialling regionally specific ground cover species selected for soil health and/or functional biodiversity benefits.
- Establishing diverse mixes of native grasses, forbs and/or botanicals in the mid-row and/or undervine area.
- Establishing ground cover species with the capacity to produce and collect seed for on-sowing and, potentially, supplementary income.
- Trialling woody prostrate groundcover species and/or low-growing shrubs in and around vineyards to create woody meadows.
- Using hydroseeding technology to apply insectary plant seed using liquid mulch formulations.
- Assessing the benefits of plant cover compared with bare earth across different soil types.
- Understanding the role of weedy species as early successional, pioneer or indicator plants and exploring non-chemical approaches to their management.
- Incorporating beetle banks into vineyards.
- Establishing bio-hedges that provide both biodiversity and biosecurity benefits, including improving biocontrol of insect pests and creating passive barriers to restrict visitor access to vineyard areas.

Functional biodiversity

- Enhancing functional biodiversity outcomes and associated ecosystem services within and around vineyards.
- Developing biodiversity trails adjacent to cellar door facilities.
- Assessing predatory arthropods and/or insectivorous birds associated with different insectary plant communities.
- Assessing microbat communities associated with vineyards.
- Assessing raptor bird species associated with vineyards.
- Assessing different exclusion fencing and plant-guard options to protect insectary plants from rabbits, hares, deer, kangaroos and other browsing animals.
- Trialling insectary plants in mobile wicking beds prior to incorporation into the vineyard.

Corangamite CMA's Diverse Farms Resilient Catchments project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program. EcoVineyards is delivered by Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd with significant support from regional communities.

Geelong EcoGrower application Separate word document

Complete your application using the Word version (via https://ecovineyards.com.au/ecogrowers-open-call/).

Include your name when you save the word application: GeelongEcoGrowersApplication - Name.docx

Details		
Legal entity name		
ABN		
Postal address		
Business name		
Contact Person		
Phone number		
Email address		
Vineyard location (street address) or attach a site map		
Longitude and latitude (see https://www.latlong.net)		
Demonstration site ideas (outline your interest in a few paragraphs or dot points)		
Do you have a project in mind and/or have you been engaged in biodiversity enhancement and/or soil health projects? Please detail your project ideas in dot points or a few short paragraphs. **Complete your application using the Word version of this document.**		
My project aligns with one or more of the following deliverables (tick):	• Functional biodiversity • Ground covers • Soil health	☐ ☐ ☐
What is unique about your project and how will it create new knowledge?		
Commitment (mandatory question)		**Yes**
Are you able to commit to the deliverables by 30 June 2028 (tick)?	• Upfront cash ($3,000) and in-kind time contribution (2 to 4 days), plus time to plan, establish and maintain your demonstration site • Development of a Biodiversity Action Plan with ROC support and ground works commencing after vintage 2027 (or sooner). • Hosting and/or attendance at EcoVineyards events (spring and autumn) and completion of a case study together with assistance from the ROC by 30 June 2028.	☐ ☐ ☐

Please send your application to the EcoVineyards team at admin@ecovineyards.com.au by COB **Monday 9 November 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Corangamite CMA's Diverse Farms Resilient Catchments project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program. EcoVineyards is delivered by Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd with significant support from regional communities.

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Open call:

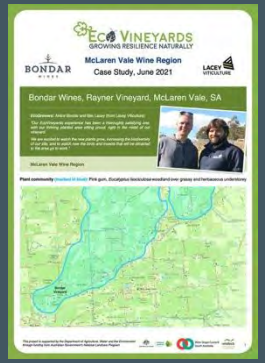
- It is a competitive process, put your most compelling application forward
- Be succinct but provide enough detail to set the scene and convey your aspirations
- We are keen to hear what you have already done and capacity to deliver
- How will your project ideas provide insights that will benefit each region more broadly?
- The commitment questions (cash contribution, development of a BAP, In ground works, hosting and attendance at events) are mandatory!

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Check out the case studies for more inspiration

EcoGrowers:
Andre Bondar and Ben Lacey, Bondar Wines, McLaren Vale

We have established 76 demonstration sites in 14 wine regions across Australia and created 67 case studies



[Photo: Mary Retallack]

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We invite you to join the EcoVineyards community!



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Facebook and Instagram
@EcoVineyards
#EcoVineyards
#EcoGrowers

Facebook

@Retallack Viticulture and Ecology

Instagram
@RetallackEcology









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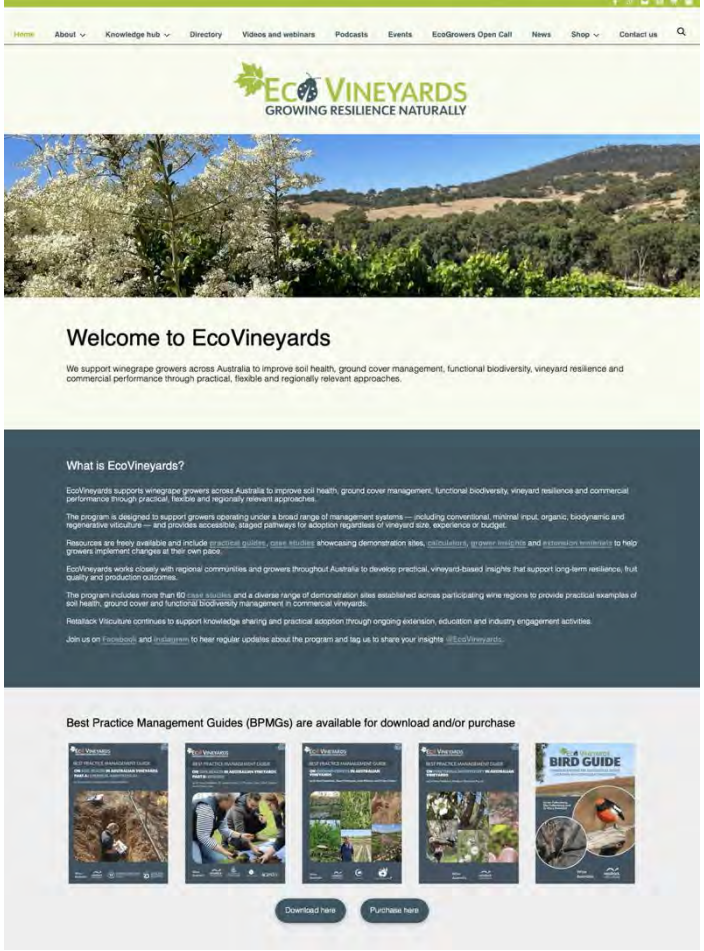
ECO VINEYARDS
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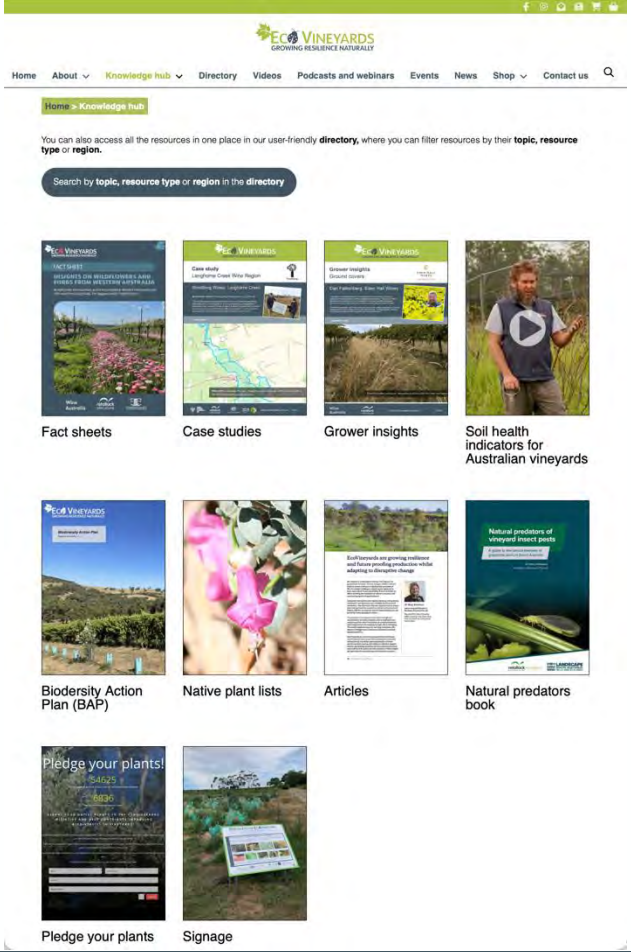
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EcoVineyards knowledge hub

https://ecovineyards.com.au/knowledge-hub/

Sign up to the newsletter!





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Continue your journey

Sign up to the newsletter!

- ✓ Download the ‘open’ call info sheet (PDF)
- ✓ Download the application form (word)
- ✓ Check out the case studies for inspiration
- ✓ Apply by **COB Monday 9 November 2026**

- ✓ Join @EcoVineyards online
- ✓ Register for the next EcoVineyards event (**30 November**) details coming soon!

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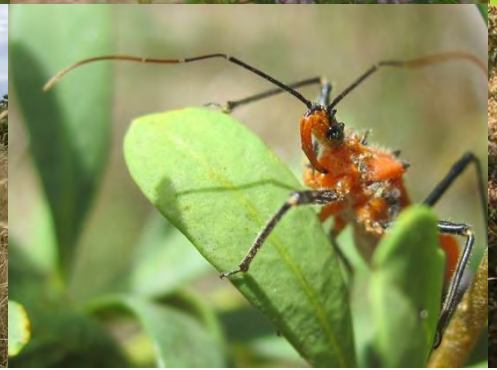
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Questions?










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Dr Mary Retallack

BAppSc., PGradDip (NRM), BEd., GradDip (Viti), PCert. (Arb), PhD (Viti/PlantProt), CPAg, GAICD, ARLF

Viticulturist / Agroecologist / Managing Director, Retallack Viticulture Pty Ltd / Retallack Ecology

EcoVineyards program founder and custodian

South Australia

https://retallack.com.au
https://ecovineyards.com.au

Member, Global Alliance of Independent Agricultural Consultants
Chartered Agriculturist (CAg)