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## PLANNING FOR TREE PLANTING

Putting trees back in the landscape has many benefits they include: stock shade and shelter, providing habitat for our native birds and animals, lowering water tables, aesthetics, weed control, nutrient management, halting erosion, providing a source of firewood or timber and others.

Planting trees is a long-term commitment and needs careful planning. So before starting any establishment works such as fencing, spraying, ripping and mounding, it is important to consider where the trees are being planted and why they are being planted.

Different planting objectives will impact on the size, shape, species and long-term management required for the site. For example a biodiversity corridor for native birds and animals will require a large range of indigenous species which have all the requirements needed by your local animals, whereas a timber belt will require different tree species and management techniques.

When planning your tree planting project you need to answer these questions: why plant?, where will I plant?, what size area do I need?, how will I plant?, when will I plant? and what future management will this site require? This will help you put together a better picture of what is required.

To ensure proper planning of your project, you need to understand that nurseries begin sowing seed in November/December for seedlings that you purchase in the following spring. **So to ensure you get the number of plants you need and the right species please put in an order with your local nursery before the end of January for Spring plantings or end of August for Autumn plantings.**

So remember early planning is very important to ensure a successful project.

## HOW TO GROW SUCCESSFUL TREES - WEED CONTROL

No weed control, then don't bother! Research has shown that controlling weeds is one of the most important activities for successful tree growing. Without weed control the plants are competing for nutrients and water against a plant that is already well established. Planting with poor weed control will decrease the survival of the planted trees and for those that survive, slow growth is often a result.

The first step is to look at the site and determine what weeds are present and what methods of control you may use. They can include chemical, mechanical, or manual. The steps to successful weed control that we recommend using is a chemical regime, which is as follows: The preferred regime is three sprays-

- ◆ in spring the year before planting use a knockdown chemical,
- ◆ in the autumn before planting (after the autumn rains have begun) with a knockdown chemical and
- ◆ approx. 3 weeks prior to planting with a knockdown and residual chemical.

Don't forget about weed control after the trees have been planted. The residual chemical should give you a few months of good weed control but this is not enough to guarantee a successful tree planting. Weed control should be undertaken until the plants can adequately compete against the weeds.

Don't forget weed control is one of the most important steps in successful tree planting.

## HOW TO GROW SUCCESSFUL TREES – RIPPING & MOUNDING

If you want the trees to exceed your expectations in growth then site preparation is the key. Ripping and mounding will provide an ideal environment for a seedling to grow. It provides an environment that is free of barriers such as buckshot gravel, hardpans caused by livestock or machinery, it provides an increased depth of nutrient rich topsoil and a greater volume of cultivated soil for the roots to grow in. Mounding improves the survival and early growth of seedlings. Mounding is essential for sites prone to waterlogging, and saline sites.

A variety of machinery and equipment can be used to achieve the desired result; we use savannah plough and a rotary moulder that provides a bed of cultivated soil with a flat top.

The cultivated soil will allow plant roots to grow down quickly; the flat top of the mound makes walking on mounds for tree planting easier.

## TO GUARD OR NOT TO GUARD?

The two main functions of tree guards are:

- ◆ to protect plants from grazing animals (e.g. hares and rabbits) and
- ◆ provide a beneficial microenvironment during the plants early establishment (e.g. protection from drying and/or saline winds and extreme temperatures).

Tree guards can protect slower growing species from hares and rabbits and species that are attractive to hares and rabbits e.g. *Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina* species. Tree guards can also provide a barrier to young plants from wingless grasshoppers and other insects.

A wide range of guards are available but we recommend the use of milk cartons and bamboo stakes for their biodegradability and cost effectiveness, they also do not require follow up removal. Another benefit of milk cartons are they help to funnel rainwater to the base of the plant. We don't recommend the use of milk cartons on farm forestry sites as our experience shows that they can in some circumstances adversely effect the form of the tree by promoting "butt sweep" in young seedlings. We suggest the reduction of vermin such as rabbits and hares prior to planting, or our Oz Net tree guard may offer the protection you require in these cases.

So when considering the question of 'To guard or not to guard?' You need to weigh up the potential benefits for your site, taking into account the species you are planting, any microclimate benefits such as drying winds together with the costs.

**For more information on any of these or other topics related to successful tree planting contact one of us on (03) 5233 6280**

**So for excellent tree growth results remember plan, control weeds, rip, mound and plant!**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring (year prior to planting)	1st Weed Control Spray
December (year prior to planting)	Order Plants from Nursery
Autumn (planting year)	2nd Weed Control Spray
Autumn (planting year)	Rip and Mound
Late Winter to Spring	Plant trees and guard
Autumn year after planting	Follow up weed control