

## **Information on Water-saving Crystals & other Planting Advice**

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Newstead Landcare group bought a 10kg tub of the 'Rainsaver' brand of water-saving crystals from Treemax for all their plantings. This tub will be sufficient for 16, 666 plants! We are very happy with the success rate we achieve using this product. We only water our plants once, on planting day. They receive no other follow-up watering aside from natural rainfall. Other factors that may contribute to our success are:

- \* ripping the ground ahead by tractor (if appropriate/accessible);
- \* spraying weeds if necessary prior to planting – this removes competition and the dead grass forms a mulch;
- \* planting at the right time of year – June/July/August;
- \* selecting healthy seedlings of local provenance;
- \* planting the suitable range of species for the site;
- \* ensuring plants are well-watered before they are planted;
- \* planting each plant a little lower than general ground level (as described below under instructions);
- \* giving 5 to 10 L water to each plant on planting day.

2007 price of 10kg tub 'Rainsaver' water-saving crystals from Treemax is \$250 plus GST, or for a smaller 1kg tub is \$20 plus GST. (Curiously, it is cheaper to buy the smaller quantity!) Treemax's phone number is 1800 550 000. They can organise freight of the product to central Victoria, but that will add to the cost. Alternatively it can be picked up from the Treemax depot at 97 Abbott Road, Hallam (between Dandenong and Berwick) between 7.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday. Treemax also sell a lot of other revegetation products such as jute matting, stakes and guards. See their website: [www.treemax.com.au](http://www.treemax.com.au)

Beard's Timber & Hardware store at 125 Main Road Campbells Creek also stock the 1L tubs of 'Rainsaver' water-saving crystals – May 2007 price: \$42.50. Phone 54 721 270.

There are other brands of water-saving crystals available on the market, but I do not have personal experience with using other brands.

### **Instructions:**

Mix 38g of 'Rainsaver' crystals into 6L water in a bucket the day before (or at least an hour before) the planting bee. This amount may vary for other brands – be guided by instructions on the packaging. However for the 'Rainsaver' brand, 6L of gel will do for 60 plants, using 100ml of the gel per plant. So, for example, if you are planting 300 plants you will need 5 buckets of gel. Plastic scoops that come with dry (powder) laundry detergents are usually 100ml, so save these up for your working bees.

Dig quite a deep hole for each plant e.g. 40cm deep, and place a scoop (100ml) of the gel into the **BOTTOM** of the planting hole, and fill about half of the hole back in with soil and mix the gel in. Plant the seedling in remaining soil. Shape the soil surface into a dish facing the sky, approx 60cm diameter i.e. with a rim of soil in a circle around the plant with bottom of the dish being a little lower than the general ground level. This ensures that when the seedling is watered (10L each, soon after planting) all the water stays close to the plant, and ensures that each time it rains each the plants each have their own little catchment areas.