

Revegetation planting with tubestock

Planting within or next to existing bushland to provide habitat for native animals can be a satisfying endeavour. Taking time to plan and prepare your revegetation will give you the best chance of seeing your plants survive to maturity.

What to plant

Connecting Country, a local ecologist or indigenous nursery can provide a list of appropriate plant species for your property. Many of our local Box-Ironbark Woodlands have lost important diversity and understorey vegetation, including key shrubs. Prickly understorey plants provide small birds and mammals with essential protection from predators, food and nesting habitat. Some missing plants from the Mount Alexander region include Bushy Needlewood, Tree Violet, Sweet Bursaria, Silver Banksia, Buloke, Drooping Sheoak and Acacia species.

There are many revegetation methods. For smaller projects, Connecting Country sources plants from local indigenous nurseries specialising in locally collected and grown plants. Young plants are grown in pots (tubes) to a point where they are big enough to survive with minimal care but not so large they become root bound. They are grown from seed or cuttings (collected under licence). This means they are adapted to local conditions, not invasive and provide resources for local fauna.

When to plant

In the Mount Alexander region, planting usually begins in June or July, unless rains arrive earlier bringing moisture to the soil. This gives the plants time to establish a robust root system before their first summer.

Where to plant

Revegetation planting can be done almost anywhere, but it's good practice to:

- Connect up or expand on existing native vegetation, create corridors and larger patches.
- Add missing understorey species to existing vegetation.

Planting will need initial watering and ongoing maintenance, so your planting location should be easily accessible.

When deciding where to plant, try to visualise the plants at their full size. Although small when planted, some plants such as Black Wattle can grow to over 3 m tall, depending

on conditions. Consider access for activities like weed control (either on foot or in a vehicle). For most shrubs 3-5 m apart is a general guide. Planting in lines makes maintenance easier but looks less natural. Planting layout is a personal preference - animals won't mind!

Weed control

Site preparation is key in helping your plants survive. Weed control is essential as weeds compete with tubestock for space, water and nutrients. Start controlling weeds at your planting location as soon as possible, and ideally remove all invasive weeds prior to planting.

For information on weed control methods visit our website: connectingcountry.org.au

Planting tubestock

Use a mattock to loosen the soil to about the size of a garden bucket to ensure enough loosened soil to accommodate a tree guard. Creating more loose soil around the roots makes it easier for the plant to establish and grow.

Dig out enough soil from the hole to enable you to bury the roots of the plant. Make sure all the roots are well covered and firm down the soil around the plant. Heap up the soil around the outer edge of the hole to create a small dam, big enough to hold at least half a bucket of water, preferably more. This is important to allow water to be absorbed and not run away from the roots. The deeper the watering, the more you will encourage the roots to grow deep into the soil. Avoid frequent smaller watering as this encourages roots to grow towards the surface, where they dry out quickly.



A small dam created around the plant to hold water

It is essential to water in the newly planted seedling immediately, to allow the soil to settle around the roots and remove any air pockets in the hole. Adjust the dam walls as necessary, to contain the water.

For further information please call us on (03) 5472 1594 or visit our website connectingcountry.org.au

Fact sheet



Protecting plants from stock and wildlife

Plant guards are highly recommended to protect your young plants from hungry or curious animals, which may include rabbits, wallabies, kangaroos and stock. Selecting the right guard depends on the animals active in your area, plus cost and material preferences. Connecting Country often uses rigid corrugated plastic (corflute) guards with two hardwood stakes as a good compromise between cost and longevity. Pros and cons of some common guards are shown in the following table.

Guard type	Cost	Longevity	Comments
Milk carton	Low	Low - not reusable	Breaks down, biodegradable, less light and space for plant
Plastic sleeve	Low	Low – reusable if care taken	Can blow away, causing plastic pollution, not biodegradable
Corflute	Medium	Medium - reusable	Hardy, not biodegradable
Wire mesh	High	High - reusable	Requires assembly, labour intensive

In high wind areas it can be helpful to staple guards to the stakes, so they don't blow off. Regularly checking and maintaining guards is good practice for revegetation success no matter which type of guard you choose.

Plants will likely attract some damage from animals, even with guards. Providing the guard remains intact, the main part of the plant and its roots will be protected and continue growing.

The guard can be removed once the plant is well established. A good indicator is if the plant is growing beyond the guard. If in good condition it can then be reused for your next planting.

Plant guards

Corflute guards (right) are pre-assembled and flat packed for transport. To install, open out the guard and insert a stake into the pre-cut slits. Centre the guard around the plant and hammer the stake into the ground until sturdy. Add a second stake in the opposite corner inside the guard to prevent movement.



Wire mesh plant guards (left) can be secured with hardwood stakes. These are more expensive but provide more space for plants inside the guard and increased protection from browsing animals.

Contact Connecting Country or your guard supplier if you need guidance on installing other types of plant guards.

Avoiding too many nutrients

Australian plants have adapted to our local soils over millions of years. Unlike most introduced garden plants, native plants generally prefer a low-nutrient environment. Avoid adding fertiliser or compost to your revegetation planting as it can reduce success and increase weed growth.

Mulch can help protect plants from harsh summers by insulating the roots and reducing evaporation to keep moisture in the soil. However, too much mulch can add nutrients to the soil, change pH and prevent rain from penetrating through to the plant roots. If using mulch, ensure it is weed-free and low in nutrients (e.g., aged woodchips). Avoid fresh woodchips as they can strip soil nitrogen.

Ongoing care

To give your plants the best chance of survival, maintenance such as watering and weed control will be required. Continue watering during the first year or two when there are extended periods of dry weather.

It is better to water more deeply, less often, to encourage deeper root growth. During extended hot and dry times, weekly watering may be necessary. Make alternative plans for watering if you intend to be away so that your plants will be healthy when you return.

Keep the area within and around the plant guards clear of other vegetation. This will increase the available resources for your plant, increasing its chance of flourishing.

