

# Revegetation Site Preparation

Limestone Coast Landscape Board

## Soil

Weeds love soil disturbance; Only modify the soil if really necessary, as soil disturbance will encourage plenty of weeds.

**Speak with your revegetation contractor to confirm if soil preparation is required for your specific reveg circumstance.**

## Ripping

Ripping can improve plant growth particularly if there is an impervious clay layer in the soil profile, heavy compaction or where shallow soil sits over a limestone layer. Once ripped, moisture and plants' roots more readily penetrate deeper into the soil improving survival. Rip effected soil to a depth of 45 – 75cm when soil is dry, at least six months before planting. Rolling at the time of ripping will aid soil settlement and make planting easier.



Ripping on heavy stone is essential for good root establishment

## Mounding

Planting on sites that are very wet for extended periods (i.e. into summer) is very difficult and best avoided. However, mechanical mounding 12 months before planting may be useful. Seek professional advice.

## Planting wells

Shallow wells 10 – 15cm deep and 45 – 60cm wide improve tubestock survival because moisture is directed straight to the plant's roots and competing weeds and the top soil containing weed seed is removed. It also makes watering quick and easy.

Wells are best done at time of planting, but can be done two weeks in advance, Autumn may be better for heavy clay soils. Vehicle mounted augers are the most efficient as hand driven augers are extremely fatiguing, especially after a few hundred holes.

## Grazing Pressure

Everything loves to eat our precious seedlings (...or so it may seem). Simple and timely actions will stop it happening. The worst grazers are those you don't even see; the invertebrates.



Snails. Small but deadly to direct seeding.

## Invertebrates

### Red-legged earth mites (RLEM)

Destroyers of countless reveg projects, they are tiny creatures that suck the life out of seedlings. Typically, damage first appears on clovers and medics soon after break of season. Look for pale, silvery patches on the leaves. RLEM look like tiny black spots with red legs that will fall off the leaf at the slightest disturbance.

RLEM can only be controlled by spraying a miticide. Seek professional advice (revegetation contractor or agronomist).

RLEM lay summer dormant eggs, so its best to start control the spring before revegetating.

Spray again at the following break of season when the first hatching of summer eggs occurs. You'll have three weeks before the next lot of eggs are laid. Direct seeding may require follow up spraying through the year and again after 12 months. Monitor regularly.

### Snails

Bait for snails straight after planting or direct seeding. Use iron EDTA Complex based snail bait because it won't kill birds and lizards. Keep looking for snails after rain and bait again if necessary. Snails will rapidly decimate direct seeding. Baiting may be required the following year.

## Vertebrates

Rabbits, hares, deer, kangaroos, corellas and occasionally stock that get through fences will be eager to eat your seedlings. Most can be managed by conventional methods (baiting, shooting, fencing etc.) but seek advice from your Landscape Officer. Sturdy tree guards will provide short term protection.

**You must obtain a destruction permit from Limestone Coast Landscape Board to control over abundant native animals such as kangaroos and corellas.**

## Weeds

Weeds make life tough for seedlings. Weeds reduce deeper water infiltration, which limits seedling survival over summer as well as competing directly with seedlings for moisture.

In small or narrow areas (up to 20m wide) blanket spraying may be acceptable, but avoid it for large block areas. Follow up weed control is very difficult in large blocks. **Do not blanket spray sandy soil - it will blow away.**

In large areas spray spots for tubestock or lines for direct seeding.

**Be prepared for follow up weed control.** Tree guards make follow up weed control easier – you can spray around the guard and not spray the seedling.



Augering planting wells provides great insurance for tree survival

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RLEM are often first seen as black dots among silver patches on clovers

## Perennial pasture grasses

Big pasture grasses like Phalaris, Cocksfoot and Tall wheat grass easily outcompete seedlings and destroy revegetation. They are a major threat to success.

Start spraying 12 – 18 months before planting as they don't die easily. If grasses are tall and rank, slash first and spray regrowth after two to four weeks. Their large crowns readily resprout and new plants soon emerge after the first control. Lots of follow up control will be needed. Check every six weeks after rain, including summer. Also control any thistles that appear (before flowering!).

## Annual pastures

Annual pastures can be sprayed one month before planting or direct seeding.

## Summer weeds

Don't forget summer weeds, e.g. Caltrop, Bathurst Burr. Check after summer rain or heavy dew. Control as soon as they appear as Caltrop will seed within one month of germination!

## Herbicide

Broad spectrum knockdown herbicides will control most weeds. Residual, grass specific or broadleaf herbicides can be used, but be very cautious - they could kill your seedlings too. Seek advice from revegetation contractor.

## More information

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