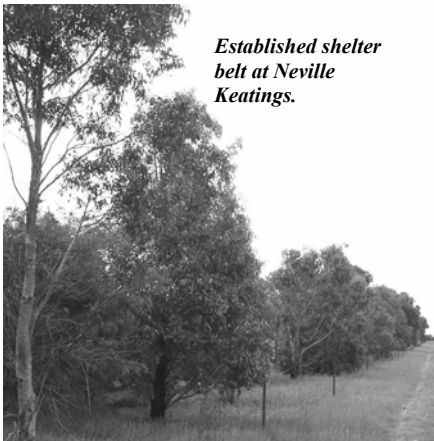


Plantations for Shelter Benefits.

Establishing belts of vegetation for shelter has been a part of the farming practice of many Woody Yaloak farmers. Shelterbelts lower wind speeds, reducing the risk of loss of animal, crop or pasture productivity. Shelterbelts are established by planting seedlings and/or by direct seeding (refer to Fact Sheet – *Direct Seeding Shelter Belts*).

Neville Keating, Duverney Road
Neville Keating on Duverney Road plants seedlings where the soil is a heavy clay loam, commonly difficult soils for direct seeding. Over the years Neville has modified his site preparation and now works up sites two to three times, mounds and then sprays in both autumn and spring with glyphosate knockdown such as Roundup.

Planting has been by hand – timed to coincide with the September school holidays. Previously, Neville guarded with plastic and three hardwood stakes but has recently changed to milk cartons with bamboo stakes. The seedlings are always watered in and Neville achieves over 90% success rate. Usually follow up weed control is not necessary. A couple of times spitfires (Sawfly Larvae) on the River Red Gums have been controlled.



Established shelter belt at Neville Keatings.



Cattle enjoying shelter at Daniel Laffan's.

Neville is sure the grass grows better near the plantations due to the effect of shelter, stock are benefiting from the shelter and the aesthetic value of the property has increased. The three row plantations established in 1992 and 1993 provide some food and habitat for various birds including honeyeaters and thornbills.

The invertebrate counts being done throughout the Woody Yaloak Catchment for a PhD study analysing the different populations of invertebrates close to plantations has initially revealed that there are less Red Legged Earth Mite in pasture next to plantations with understorey or grass cover.



Shelter belt at Troy Missen's.

In these plantations, Yellow Gums when flowering provide a good source of nectar for birds. Other species which have grown well are River Red Gum, Bog Gum, Sugar Gum, Swamp Gum, Ovens Wattle, Sticky Wattle, Golden Wreath Wattle, Silver Banksia, Honey Myrtles and Bottlebrushes.

Les Fagg, Mt Mercer

Les Fagg has been planting trees on his Mt Mercer property for many years. The main reason for planting has been for shelter and Les feels the best effect is achieved with five to six row plantations. Les prepares the site with spraying before planting and plants in spring, having tried autumn planting unsuccessfully.

The plantations are mainly on the basalt soil and Les prefers the species which can handle the heavy conditions best such as Swamp Gum, Bog Gum, Mahogany, Sugar Gum and Melaleucas.

Troy Missen, Werneth

At Werneth Troy Missen has established plantations for shelter purposes on three sides of most of his paddocks. He has decided success depends on good weed control, achieved by scarifying and spraying for two years prior to planting. More recently Troy has also mounded the area in July which allows planting easily with Pottiputkis.

Troy plants in October using five or six rows spaced four metres apart. His favoured design has a row of Black Wattle on the windward side

of the plantation to provide quick protection for the other rows.

As the Black Wattle is next to a fence, it can also be harvested for firewood or pruned for timber, if applicable. Other preferred species are Spotted Gum, River Sheoak, River Red Gum, Southern Mahogany and Bog Gum.

Kevin and Alice Knight, Linton

On a hilltop near Linton, Kevin and Alice Knight have established an eight hectare block of trees on a recharge site, initially for salinity control. The site is a granitic rocky area with sandy soil and they have planted a mixture of species including Grey Leafed Box, Sugar Gum, several Sheoaks and Tagasaste. The area, which has rabbit proof fencing, was sprayed and ripped before tubestock hand

planting. Plastic guards were used and the trees were watered in the first summer.

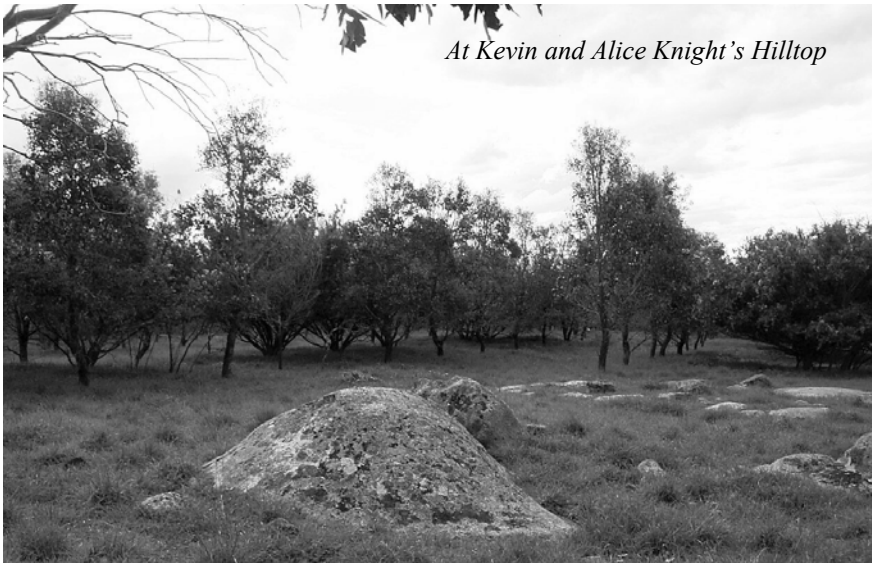
The block of trees provides shelter for the surrounding paddocks and, within the block, for off shears sheep and lambing ewes. The trees have also encouraged an increase in the variety and number of birds.

When this site was being planted in the early 1990's, the only birds sighted were Skylarks and Willie Wagtails (David Coutts pers.comm.).

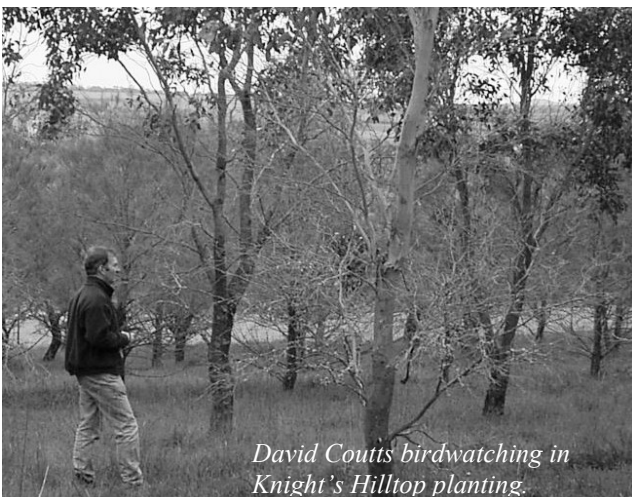
Now the area is supporting nine different species of birds and the tree canopy is providing nesting sites. Moths, native bees, ants, butterflies, spiders and snakes (Copperhead) are now also present in the block.

Although the benefits for salinity control are unproven, the shelter offered by this area is substantial and there are the other positive benefits to the bird population and other fauna.

Conclusion: Site preparation is the most important factor for successful revegetation. Wider plantations and more diverse plant species mix to include all structural layers (trees, shrubs, understorey, grasses) will provide habitat for a wider range of birds and other fauna.



At Kevin and Alice Knight's Hilltop



David Coutts birdwatching in Knight's Hilltop planting.

Some of the species used are not indigenous to the Woody Yaloak catchment and may be environmental weeds. It is recommended to follow the species guidelines in the Corangamite Native Vegetation Plan and use indigenous species of the ecological vegetation class occurring in that area.

Further reading: Trees for Shelter: Windbreaks for Australian Farms by Helen Cleugh, A Joint Venture Agroforestry Program report published in Jan 2003 & available from RIRDC, ph: (02) 6272 3186.

The information and opinions expressed in Fact Sheets represent actual experiences as described by those interviewed and are not to be interpreted as recommended treatments of Alcoa World Alumina Australia or Greening Australia and may not be appropriate for all situations. Seek local area advice.
Compiled by C. Dennis.