

# Revegetation Maintenance - Watering & Tree Guards

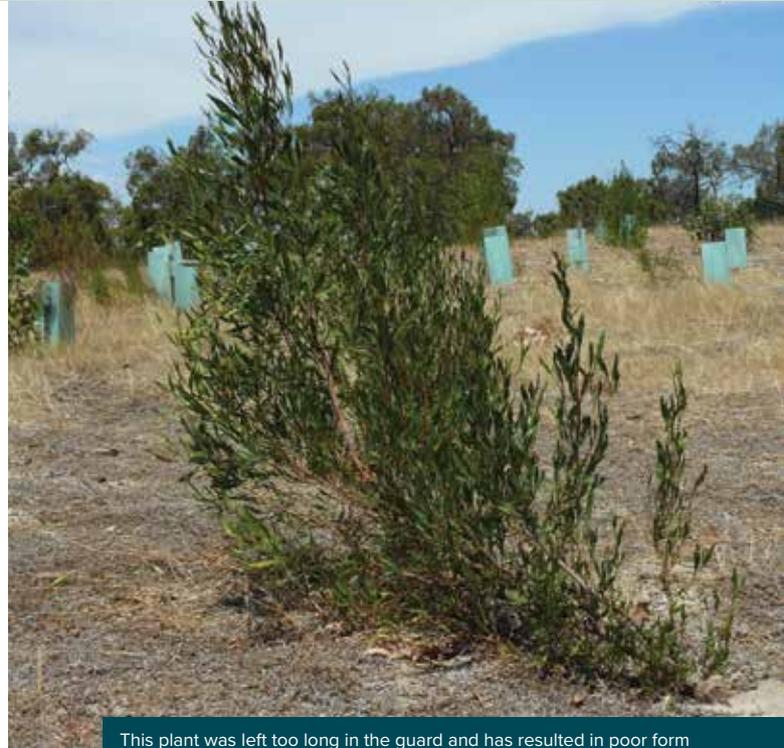
Limestone Coast Landscape Board

## Watering

Watering seedlings will not be required every year. Local native plants are well adapted to our conditions and usually a good weed control program before and after planting will ensure enough soil moisture is retained for your seedlings to thrive.

Look at your seedlings to decide if they need watering. Moisture stressed plants will start wilting at their tips. Each year will be different. If a heat wave is coming make sure to water **before the hot weather hits**. Watering when plants are already struggling can be ineffective.

Do not water just because the weather has been dry. The plants' roots need to go deep into the soil profile. Too frequent or unnecessary watering will concentrate too many roots near the surface at the expense of these deeper penetrating roots. Once summer hits, these plants will likely die because their shallow roots dry out and they have insufficient deep roots. Remember, it's not like gardening.



This plant was left too long in the guard and has resulted in poor form



Spinning guards 180 degrees when they're ready to come off makes them easy to replace if needed

Watering is time consuming. Make your watering effort as efficient as possible. Each plant should receive 10 – 20L of gently applied water each time you water. If you have used planting wells (45cm auger holes), you will find watering much quicker and easier. Water is directed to the plant's base without running away. A soil wetter can be added to the water in non-wetting sand.

1000L shuttles, fire units or similar clean large tanks make watering easier due to fewer refills. Bear in mind, a 1000L tank of water (1 tonne) is beyond most utes' carrying capacity. Check with the vehicle manufacturer or use a trailer. Long 19mm hoses or larger are preferred to deliver high volumes. Do not use high pressure or you will likely blast soil away from the plant's roots. 1000L = 50 – 100 plants.

Direct seeding is more difficult to water, but can be done. Some people have used fire units, or 1000L shuttles with homemade poly pipe 'showers'. Direct seedling is less likely to require watering than tubestock.

## Weeds

Check for weeds a week after watering, including inside tree guards.

## Tree guards

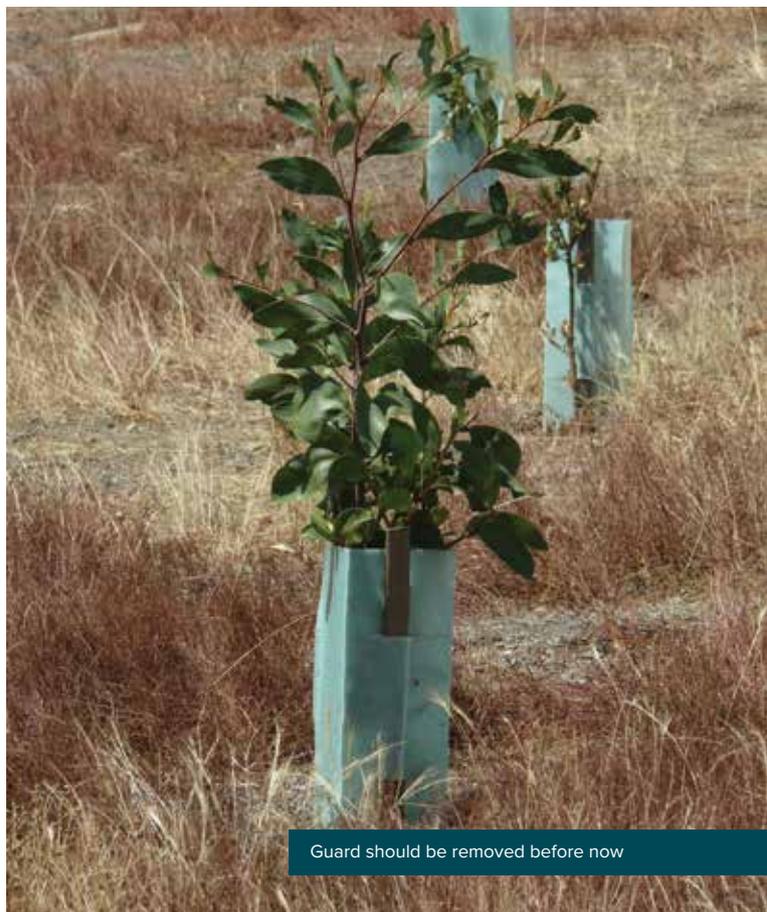
Tree guards should be checked periodically and repaired or replaced when necessary. Some may get blown off their stakes exposing seedlings and creating an untidy mess.

As plants grow the tree guards will need to be removed, usually within the first 12 months. Timing will vary with the type of guard, plant and season. Generally, guards should be removed when plants are 10 – 15cm above the guard, or when growth is clearly being restricted. Wide shrubs may push against the guard and grow out through stake holes. Typically, for trees this will occur around December to March.

Tall plants left too long will not support themselves when guards are eventually removed. These plants will fall over and it will take many months to two years for these plants to recover and re-direct energy to new growing tips.

Vertebrate pest control will be critical. Removing guards when little feed is available will attract rabbits, hares and other pests. Ensure your pest management program is effective.

If worried that seedlings may get eaten, the more robust guards can be spun 180o on their stake leaving the plant on the outside of the guard. If a plant is damaged, the guard can be replaced quickly. Re-assess your pest management program.



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