

Revegetation - Recording Success

Limestone Coast Landscape Board

Recording and understanding your success (or failure) is valuable for future revegetation you may do. There is no point collecting information if we don't use it to learn from or help others.

What to record

Ideally, begin writing down when and what you do from the earliest stages:

- When you do weed control
- The type of weeds treated, how thick are they?
- Pest animal control
- Names and number of tubestock planted
- Direct seeding, seed weight used
- Soil type(s)
- Rainfall
- Watering
- Interesting things you see
- Annoying problems you deal with.

Keep a small note book in the glovebox to make recording easier. This will be useful later on for understanding why your revegetation went well or not, e.g. lots of rain in January or the rain just stopped in September.

Photopoints

Photopoints are great for seeing broad changes over time, but by themselves don't tell you anything about how you got there. When you take the photo write down what is in each photo. Photos don't pick up the finer detail.

How to set up photopoints is covered in the Fact Sheets on photopoints and include a photopoint from a long distance, more than 100m away.



Recording establishment in direct seeding is best done with a friend – four eyes are better than two at counting plants.

Plant survival

Knowing how many and which plants survive can be very useful. Talking with your revegetation contractor can give insight. It may have been a bad season for one or two types of plants, e.g. 'lots of Banksia died this year'.

Recording plant survival is simple, but you can make it more complex if you are keen. Plant survival should first be recorded in December, before summer really impacts. The second recording is then made in May or June. A third recording should then be made the following May/June, i.e. two years after planting.

Many people continue recording for years afterward, but only once each second or third year is necessary if you are keen.

Tubestock

For small plantings, up to 200 plants, simply look at each plant and write down whether the plant is alive or dead. Then work out the percentage alive.

$$\text{Percentage alive} = \frac{\text{number of living plants}}{\text{total number planted}} \times 100$$

For larger plantings you don't want to look at every plant. You should aim to record at least 10 – 20% of all your plants. 200 should be the minimum. For large plantings you will need to record survival for each soil type.

Keen people may wish to record plant type or species as well. Use a similar formula to determine survival of each species.

$$\text{Percentage alive of species one} = \frac{\text{number of living sheoak}}{\text{total number of sheoak planted}} \times 100$$

(e.g. sheoak)

You may find that 95% of golden wattle survived, but only 10% of sheoaks survived. Then you can work out why the sheoaks died; refer to your earlier records, were they eaten, water logged, herbicide damaged, attacked by borers etc.? If you plant that species again, what will you do differently to make sure they survive?

Some people also like to record plant height to get an idea of which plants are more suited to particular sites. This is useful when you have several soil types to consider.

You should be aiming for 90 – 95% survival of all tubestock. There is no point planting if you have to do it all again next year! High losses are expensive and demoralising.

Direct seeding

Direct seeding survival is recorded differently and starts earlier.

The first recording is done six weeks after sowing. This is to see if germination has been successful. Seedlings will be tiny and initially, you may have to get on your hands and knees. Walk along several direct seeding lines for 20 – 50m and record the number of seedlings. If there are hundreds of seedlings you won't need to count everyone. Record as 'lots of seedlings'. A minimum of ten walks should be made, include different areas of the site and soil types. Larger sites will need more walks. Aim for ten walks of 20m per hectare of direct seeding. Talk to your direct seeding contractor if you don't see any seedlings. There is likely to be a simple reason, seed is rarely the problem.

The second recording is done in December, third in May/June then each two or three years thereafter.

These will record each plant type and number per 20 – 50m line. Talk to your direct seeding contractor to see if a good range of species established.

Later recordings become increasingly important. Too many plants, especially trees, are nearly as bad as too few. Overall, in a shelter belt trees should be at least six metres apart. And ten to 20m apart in habitat revegetation. Too many trees and your revegetation will resemble a blue gum plantation in a few years' time. Direct seeding that is too dense can easily be thinned out in 3 – 4 years time.

Acknowledgements

The content of this publication has been funded by the Australian Government and has been reproduced by the Limestone Coast Landscape Board with support from Mister Tucker's business, Ralph Scheel, Eucaleuca Native Services and from text reference "Planning Revegetation on Farms in the South East", Copyright 2010.

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202112 | Revegetation - Recording Success | Reissued Feb 2021

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