

Mulch Heavily

A thick mulch not only conserves moisture, it provides nutrients, feeding the plants over time.

Leaves, wood chips, hay, cut grass & tree pruning are all good. Flooding thick grass in situ or planting Rye Corn grass works.



400mm of leaf mulch. After brewing in water for 6 months - perfect.

Plant Lots of Plants

Plant plants at high densities. This helps out compete weeds, stabilises soils, absorbs wave energy, creates a micro-climate and leads to quick growth.

Big plants 4/metre² Small 10/m²



Protect Plants with Guards

Wetland birds can inflict heavy losses on newly planted plants (sometimes 100%). Guard plants for the first 6 months.

Eg: Plastic tree guard sleeves with 4x1 metre stakes. Wire or plastic mesh guards with 2x1 metre stakes. Cage with wire netting (see picture below), Vine or orchard bird netting on heavy wire frame.



Keep up Water Through the First Summer.

If possible add water by sprays or occasional flooding to keep soils a little moist through first summer. Mulch helps.

Invitation to Visit Redman Bluff Wetlands

If you would like to see some of the processes at work that have been talked about in this brochure you are welcome to come and visit Redman Bluff Wetlands and ...



... Wetland Creations

Wetland Plant Nursery



Located at *Grampians Paradise*

Camping and Caravan Parkland,
443 Long Gully Road, Pomonal 3381

To arrange your visit call (03) 5356 6309. For the location look for the map in our website www.grampiansparadise.com.au

Establishing Wetland Plants

A Recipe for Success



Wetland Plants 2 years 8 months after dam constructed.

Growing wetland plants is like growing vegetables. With a little care and the provision of the right conditions great results follow. This brochure outlines in an easy to follow manner the steps that can be taken to help you establish wetland plants, be it in a restored wetlands, farm dam or home pond.

Introduction

Through a process of trial and error growing wetland plants & establishing them (particularly in Redman Bluff Wetlands), it was noticed that the success varied greatly from one pond to the next. Some did ok, some were a spectacular success and some even failed completely. Through observation and subsequent experimentation, I've been able to develop a set of steps that greatly increases the success of establishing wetland plants. The more steps that are implemented the greater the success. Think of what you would do to grow great vegetables and you are more than half way there.

The Steps:

Make Loose Rich Soils

Wetland plants need loose, deep, rich soils full of organics.



Farm Dams: Top dress ideally with 300 to 600mm of saved topsoil. 200mm is really the absolute minimum.

Restored wetlands: Soil should be ok, but if compacted may need to be cultivated.

Incorporate Lots of Organic Material into Soils

Where adding topsoil, or cultivating, add as much mulch (wood chip, leaves, grass or hay) into the soil as possible.

Add Nutrients (Fertilise)

Wetland Plants are hungry. New wetlands (dams, pond, or other) and restored wetlands often do not have enough nutrients to allow wetland plants to establish rapidly. If adding a layer of topsoil sprinkle blood and bone below the topsoil. If cultivating, mix into soils. If either of these processes isn't possible, add blood and bone to water, but only during the growing season (spring/early summer) once lots of plants are planted. Blood & Bone is my preferred fertiliser.

Case Study No.1

Valley Lake at Redman Bluff Wetlands

Valley Lake (see pictures on front cover and below) was rapidly established with wetland plants. Growth rates were spectacular, and size of the leaves of the nardoo was up to four times larger than normal. The steps taken in this project allowed vegetation to be established rapidly. The cover photo is taken less than two years after the photos below.



The compacted bank was top dressed with 200mm of topsoil on the inside and 600mm on the top rich in organics (both decomposed and grass sods). This was then covered with 300mm of cut grass and left to rot in the water for 6 months.



Plants were planted at 10/m² in bands up to 2 metres wide. Misting sprays were set up with a timer that kept the soil moist in the first summer. As the dam bank dries out each year (no sub soil moisture) sprays have been left in place, maintaining a vegetation cover and protecting the bank from wave erosion. This is an issue particular to steep dam banks.

Case Study No.2

Tadpole Soup at Redman Bluff Wetlands

While Valley Lake gives a good example of vegetating a dam, Tadpole Soup pond is more comparable to restoring drained wetlands. Only 150mm deep, built on black sandy soils rich in organic material, and on land that waterlogs in winter. No cultivation was needed and only a narrow white sand seam needed to be heavily mulched.



The pond was planted with Milfoils at 25 per square metre, (3000 plants for 120 square metres). 1000 plants were lost to ducks, as they were not protected with netting. We were very lucky not to lose 100%. Two years later the result was a complete carpet of plants (see picture below).



In the first two summers the pond was flooded by a siphon from a dam for a day on several occasions to keep soil moist. As with all the ponds, stock was excluded permanently from Tadpole Soup. Wetland herbs don't tend to survive stock.