

Case study

Langhorne Creek Wine Region

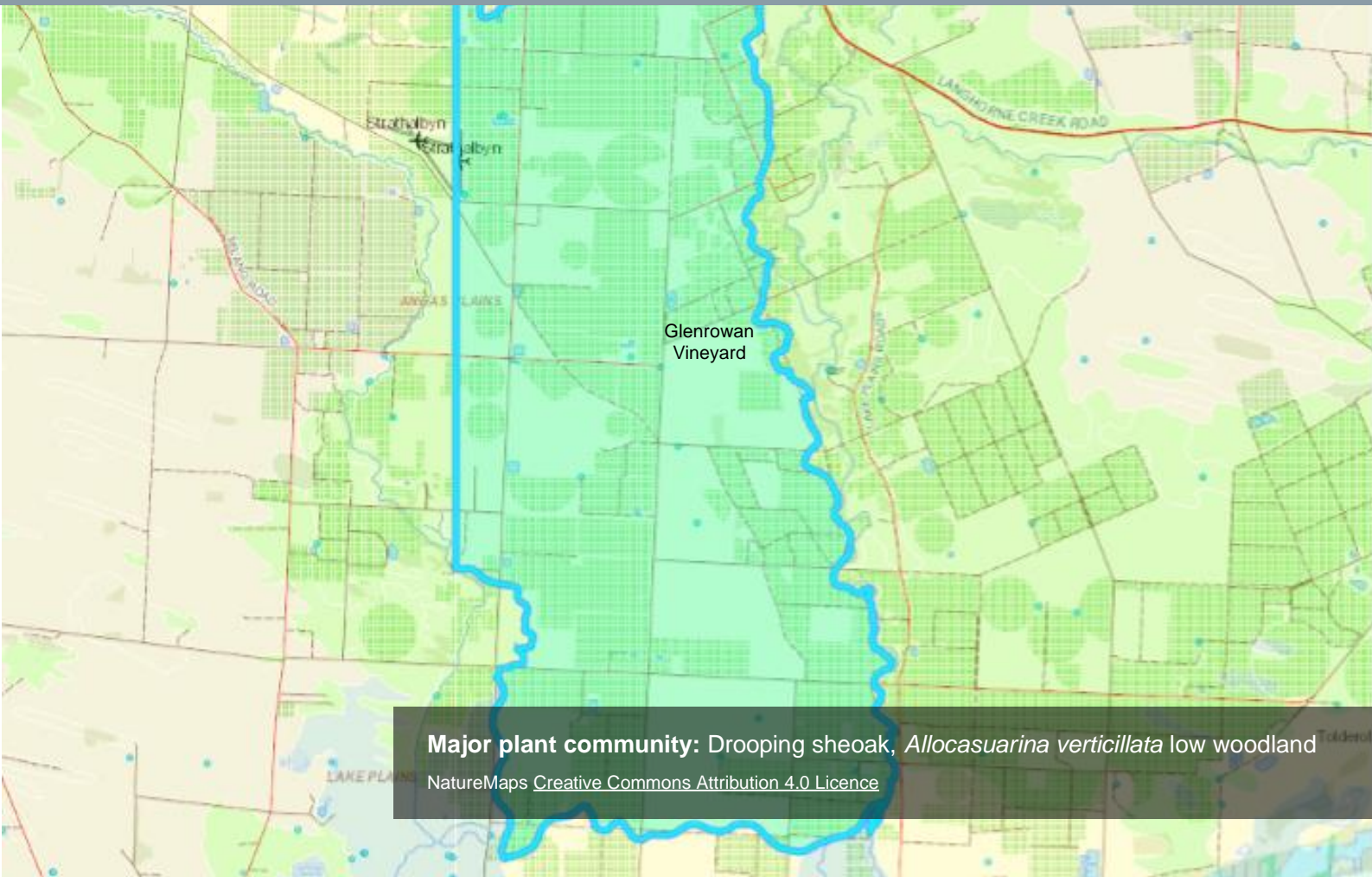
Glenrowan Vineyards, Langhorne Creek

EcoGrowers: Lisa and Dale Wenzel

“This experience has been extremely informative especially the compost making day and time with both Mary’s as their knowledge is incredible. I think it is awesome that as a community we are bringing back and encouraging natural diversity to our soils, plants, and crops.”



October 2023



EcoGrowers: Lisa and Dale Wenzel, Glenrowan Vineyards

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What worked well?

Most of the plants grew well – some were taken by hares and some of the creepers and grasses on the beetle bank died. I replanted these and they are going ok.

I placed tree guards around the larger plants affected by hares. We did have a few floods in 2022 so this assisted in moisture.

Pitfalls to avoid?

On the bank the couch and weed grass has been the hardest to control so may find a better management practice either initially or between times.

Due to the current climate in the wine grape industry, we are low on staff and having the time to attend to this area was put on hold so finding time for maintenance was a little hard. Hopefully once established this will not be a major issue.

Progress (June 2021 to 2023):

What were you hoping to achieve and why?

Our project is a 'beetle bank' to help build diversity by encouraging beneficial predators, insects, and bugs to our property.

We are environmentally conscious so to do our part in restoring, rejuvenating, and maintaining our land for the immediate and ongoing future is our responsibility.

We would also like to reduce the number of harmful bugs and bacteria in our vines, so we are sure this project will play an important role in this and discourage chemical use.

What did you do and when?

June 2022, we planted an old headland that is adjacent to small grazing paddock and vines on other sides. We did need to spray out some sections due to couch grass we couldn't eradicate.

We planted grasses and creepers over a flood bank, that wouldn't spread into the vines where it could cause problems or be damaged (bristly wallaby grass, baby pigface, running postman, common tussock-grass).

On the headland flat area (which is on the flood plain) we planted native bushes (twiggy pea bush, river bottlebrush, creeping salt bush and spiny saltbush). We intend to build a passage between each of the properties.

Are there any highlights/insights that you would like to share?

We did dig up a baby brown snake in June while planting which was a bit of a shock!

We haven't noticed to much in the way of highlights apart from a lot has grown, but just being part of the project, it is amazing how much more awareness you have of plants, insects, bugs, bats (at the house) and birds we have.

A highlight is the predatory perch that is setup at our back door, so we often check to see what is around. Mostly Black shoulder kites, Kookaburra, and magpies. Hawks are prolific due to the floods and the resulting carp populations in the vines.



Photo above: Dale and Lisa Wenzel installing the photo point (Photo: Mary Retallack).
Photo left: A baby brown snake was found during planting (Photo: Lisa Wenzel).



Inset: Native insectary plants. **Main photo:** Newly planted beetle bank (Photos: Lisa Wenzel)



Clockwise: Installing the predator perch (top left and right) (Photos: Lisa Wenzel), installing a photo point (Photo: Mary Retallack) and native plants ready for the beetle bank (Photo: Lisa Wenzel)



Photos: Installing the microbat boxes (Photos: Lisa Wenzel)

EcoGrowers: Lisa and Dale Wenzel, Glenrowan Vineyards

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Insights

What are you more aware of now?

Answered above from our own plantings. From the workshops the composting we learnt a lot and how little amount of compost you need to make so much compost tea and the benefits of this product.

Where to from here?

We would like to build and encourage more buffer zones for all beneficials and work towards less use of commercial chemicals and building a clean and green future.

Are there any outstanding knowledge gaps you would like filled?

Some more information regarding plants as I did find it a bit limiting and also with lack of knowledge of plant species. With more plant knowledge finding ways to utilise the plants for further projects such as essential oils, gin botanicals etc rather than just cutting back for maintenance. It would also be good to incorporate indigenous culture/ awareness of native plants for food supplies, baskets etc that would have once and still maybe that are area specific.

What has been the most valuable aspect of the program for you personally?

Building awareness of ecology, biological control methods with composting and use of plants, cover crops, and bacterial soil improvements within the workshops and then taking this information away to try. Also, to be able to establish nature corridors on the property. It was also a helping hand in the audits for SWA.

Has your level of knowledge increased significantly since you became an EcoGrower?

Yes, as it makes you look at all your practices not only the vines but the broadacre and home gardens and what to plant, beneficial plants, soil improvers, pest and weed management and improvements to feed of health and nutrition of vines, livestock, and us.

Native plant list:

- *Atriplex semibaccata*, creeping saltbush
- *Callistemon sieberi*, river bottlebrush
- *Dianella revoluta*, black-anther flax-lily
- *Disphyma crassifolium*, baby pigface
- *Enchylaena tomentosa*, ruby saltbush
- *Grevillea lanigera*, woolly grevillea
- *Kennedia prostrata*, running postman
- *Leptospermum continentale*, prickly tea-tree
- *Microlaena stipoides*, weeping grass
- *Poa labillardieri*, common tussock-grass
- *Pultenaea largiflorens*, twiggy pea bush
- *Rhagodia spinescens*, spiny saltbush
- *Rytidosperma setaceum*, bristly wallaby grass



Expenses

| Name: Glenrowan Vineyards | | Region: Langhorne Creek | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Date | Activity | Number of plants | Grant cash expenses |
| 10/06/2022 | SF Tube Seeded (@ 3.50 ea) | 200 | \$ 636 |
| 10/06/2022 | SF Tube Cutting (@ 1.00 ea) | 22 | \$ 20 |
| 02/11/2022 | SF Pot 140mm @12.95 each | 6 | \$ 78 |
| 02/11/2022 | SF Tube Seeded (@ 3.50 ea) | 45 | \$ 158 |
| 02/11/2022 | Tree Guards Kit @1.10 | | \$ 66 |
| 26/06/2023 | SF- Tube seeded 702 @ 2.95 ea | 702 | \$ 1,883 |
| 26/06/2023 | SF- Pot 6 @ \$10.00 ea | 33 | \$ 300 |
| 26/06/2023 | SF- Pot 6 @ \$12.95 ea | 6 | \$ 71 |
| 26/06/2023 | SF_ Pot 6 @ \$16.95 | 6 | \$ 92 |
| 26/06/2023 | Tree Guard Kit 550 @ \$1.10 ea | | \$ 550 |
| TOTAL | | 1,020 | \$ 3,853 |

ECO VINEYARDS

GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

Program partners



This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Acknowledgement of country

The EcoVineyards program acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

Disclaimer

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For more info about the National EcoVineyards Program see <https://www.ecovineyards.com.au>

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