

Paddock Trees

Restoring the Missing Links Project

Paddock Trees

Large old trees scattered across paddocks are an iconic image in our rural landscape and can provide significant and potentially irreplaceable benefits.

Many landholders appreciate these magnificent trees for maintaining the productive capacity of our land through providing shade and shelter for stock, reducing the risk of salinity and improving soil properties.

Fewer people are aware of their value in conserving biodiversity. Scattered paddock trees provide an important role for our wildlife including:

- **Hollows** for many birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs, insects and spiders. It takes at least 60 years for hollows to develop, therefore we need to conserve mature trees, including those which are dead, to ensure the survival of animals and plants that depend on them.
- **A stepping stone** for the movement of wildlife through the landscape especially between areas of remnant vegetation.
- **Food Sources** - Honeyeaters, sugar gliders and many other animals depend on nectar and pollen whilst leaf eating animals like koalas, possums and gliders need a range of trees to choose from.
- **Nesting sites:** Paddock trees provide nesting sites for a variety of small to large bird species.

Paddock trees are considered keystone structures because their benefits are believed to be disproportionate to the small area they occupy.

Why are Paddock Trees Disappearing?

Scattered paddock trees overlap with the most productive areas of our grazing landscape, making them particularly vulnerable to grazing pressures. These large trees are disappearing due to:

Senescence - Many large trees are at the end of their lifespan and if regeneration is not encouraged these trees, their genetics and their habitat value will be lost from the landscape.

Research shows that unless the management of paddock trees changes, most will be lost from our landscape within the next 100 years.

Mistletoe and Insect Damage: Stressed trees are in more danger of being attacked by mistletoe and insects such as Christmas beetles, sawfly larvae and lerps.

Clearing - for firewood, fences and access for wider machinery.

Fertilisers and herbicides change soil nutrient levels and herbicide drift can slowly kill seedlings and mature trees. Seed germination is also significantly reduced in highly fertilised soil as it is unsuited to native species.

Livestock contribute to paddock tree decline directly by ringbarking rough-barked trees such as Stringybark as well as eating seedlings. Their impacts can also be indirect through camping under trees which changes soil fertility, causes soil compaction and degradation.

Fire - the burning of stubble and tree debris often leads to the death of paddock trees.



Paddock Trees

Restoring the Missing Links Project

How can paddock trees be saved?

In recognising the importance of paddock trees on farms, landholders can protect and encourage paddock trees through:

- Fencing around selected trees to prevent damage and encourage regeneration,
- Avoiding fertiliser and cultivation near trees,
- Avoiding herbicide spray drift onto paddock trees,
- Leaving fallen timber on the ground as habitat
- Including paddock trees when designing revegetation sites
- Managing grazing to help young plants survive, and
- Controlling herbivores such as rabbits and hares.

About the project

This project aims to enhance native habitat and increase connectivity throughout the landscape by providing paddock trees as stepping-stones for native fauna.

The project will provide planning support for landholders to help identify and map key sites for paddock trees protection/restoration. The project will also provide financial assistance to landholders to implement these actions through assisting with the costs of fencing off clumps of paddock trees and planting locally native individual trees.

Who is involved in the project?

This project is a partnership between the Riverina Highlands Landcare Network, the Riverina Local Land Services, NSW Environmental Trust and the Australian National University.

What incentives are available?

Funding is available to landholders in the Riverina Highlands to protect and reinstate paddock trees in our landscape. The project will assist with the costs towards:

1. **Protecting Paddock Trees** - large hollow bearing trees mature or dead can be fenced to minimise livestock damage and allow natural regeneration. Fencing off from stock followed by revegetation will extend the life and the habitat value of these trees.
2. **Planting New Paddock Trees** by planting locally native trees and constructing individual paddock tree guards to prevent stock damage whilst the plants are growing.

How can I become involved?

Landholders wishing to participate in the project will need to complete the Expression of Interest application form below.

LAND MANAGER EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Name

Address

Phone No.Mobile Ph No.....

ABN

Email Address.....

Are you a member of the Riverina Highlands Landcare Network?

Please return this section to:Riverina Highlands Landcare Network

PO Box 3 TUMUT NSW 2720

Email:cherie.white@lls.nsw.gov.au or Fax—02 69474339