

Nurseries to improve economy

MORE than a million eucalyptus-oil-producing mallee seedlings will be distributed through the wheatbelt this winter for planting on farms.

The seedlings have been raised in CALM's nurseries at Narrogin and Manjimup and in private nurseries at Esperance and Kalannie.

CALM's Wheatbelt regional manager Ken Wallace says the Narrogin nursery is an important source of Western Australian native trees and shrubs for revegetation programs in the South West.

As well as 600 000 oil mallees, about 250 000 seedlings of other species raised at Narrogin will be sold to land conservation district groups, farmers, other Government departments and the public.

The species suit a wide range of climate, from Dalwallinu to Kalgoorlie and from Denmark through to Esperance.

Ken says the nursery also raises local wheatbelt varieties on an experimental and research basis. Emphasis was placed on species with conservation and production potential.

"For example, local species may be sources of timber or produce leaf oils while providing habitat for wildlife," he says.

Western Australia's tree plantings reached a record

22 million seedlings last year, reflecting the big increase in interest in trees for plantations and land care programs.

CALM's Narrogin and Manjimup nurseries alone supplied 18 million seedlings.

CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea said the swing towards hardwood plantations and CALM's bluegum breeding program – which has developed the genetically superior western bluegum – had meant bluegums now were the single most sought-after variety.

But in wheatbelt areas unsuited to bluegums, farmers were showing interest in high oil yielding mallees.

Dr Shea said CALM was spending up to \$2 million over the next three years to help wheatbelt farmers establish mallee crops in trials at Esperance, Woodanilling, Lake Toolibin, East Narembeen, Kalannie and Canna.

"Revegetation with perennial woody crops is recognised as an important tool in the thrust towards achieving conservation and sustainable agriculture," he said.

"CALM's goal is to develop ways in which farmers can combine these interdependent aims to increase the overall economic and environmental benefits."



Narroginh District senior operations officer Steve Gorton, Wheatbelt Region manager Ken Wallace and Narrogin nursery manager Greg Durell with some of the mallee seedlings being sent out for planting this winter. Photo by Nigel Higgs



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