

PALMS TURN UP IN JOONDALUP



Eighteen huge exotic palms have been transported from Millstream-Chichester National Park, in the Pilbara Region, to a new major shopping centre just north of Perth.

These particular palms were chosen to provide an outdoors feel in the main promotions area of the \$80 million Lakeside Shopping Centre at Joondalup, where they have been replanted along with weeping figs, umbrella trees and other palms to form an interlocking canopy.

The palms, some as tall as seven metres, are believed to have been introduced into the national park by camel drivers, who transported supplies to outback cattle stations in the early 1900s. The introduced date palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*) and cotton palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) have

been gradually taking over and are presenting an enormous threat to the riverine and aquatic ecosystems of Millstream. They are aggressive colonisers and have the ability to exclude other, native species because of their thick root systems and large shady canopy. In addition to this they produce a huge quantity of dead fronds, which present a fire hazard. Fires fuelled by material such as this burn with such intensity that native plant species are killed, but the palms quickly regenerate vigorously with no competition. The introduced palms should not be confused with the native Millstream Palm (*Livistona alfredii*) which is much slower growing.

Now, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) is aiming to save and restore the

Millstream wetlands by regaining control of the palms. Although a few palms will be left near the homestead for heritage value, the rest of the delta area will be returned to open forest of paperbark and red gum trees, with native couch grass and other species growing together in the understory.

Geoff Kregor, the Ranger-in-Charge at Millstream-Chichester National Park, enlisted the help of the Arbor Centre to remove mature trees and transport them from the area, then to assist with the rehabilitation process by preparing the ground for reseedling. The mature palms are easily replanted and ideally suited to landscaping projects around large developments such as housing estates, shopping centres and hotels. During the first half of this year

*Top left: The palms are carefully removed with their root system and the fronds wrapped for protection during their long journey from Millstream to Perth.*

*Photo - The Arbor Centre*

*Top right: Some of the 18 palms that have been replanted inside the new Lakeside Joondalup shopping development.*

*Photo - David Gough*

alone, some 70 trees were removed by the Arbor Centre for replanting at various sites throughout the State, including Newman, Rockingham, Canning Vale and Buckland Hill near Fremantle. Smaller trees are being cleared and burned or chemically controlled to allow the rehabilitation of native species to begin. The entire project is expected to take 20 years to complete.

## LANDSCOPE

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Yellow-billed spoonbills have visited Star Swamp for the last three years. They sift small crustaceans from the shallow water. The story of this suburban wetland is told on page 45.



A marine park is proposed to adjoin the Prince Regent Nature Reserve. The Complex Coast (page 49) discusses the need for integrated management of land and sea around our coast.



Found all over Australia, short-beaked echidnas are one of two Australian egg-laying mammals. They still occur around Perth. See page 18.



About a quarter of Stirling Range National Park has been closed to protect its unique flora from dieback disease. Turn to page 10 to discover these plants on the edge.



The orange-bellied frog is part of the South West's fine-scale richness and variety. Find out more about these fascinating creatures on page 35.

## C O V E R

The coral gardens in the sheltered lagoons of the Rowley Shoals contain dozens of different varieties of staghorn coral and are inhabited by a huge range of colourful reef fish. See 'Coral for Keeps' on page 28.

The illustration is by Philippa Nikulinsky.



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Millstream palms, transported from the  
north-west, tower over Lakeside Joondalup  
Shopping City's central promotions area.

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