

FLORA

WIDESCALE clearing of perennial native vegetation has impacted on the landscape in both the metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia. In many cases, only small, isolated pockets of vegetation remain, often in poor condition. Many communities are undertaking widescale revegetation to improve both production and biological values.

Greening Australia (Western Australia) established the Sustainable Seed Banks Project in 1998 to assist up to 20 such community organisations in their efforts to revegetate the landscape. The Natural Heritage Trust and the WA Minister for the Environment also support the project.

The project aims to address the limited availability of local seed for revegetation and restoration of WA's natural bushland. Central to this aim is the use of local seed, especially understorey, in revegetation projects. Incorporating local species provides a more natural composition to revegetation. This in turn enhances nature conservation and biodiversity values. Additionally, putting back local species often means they are better adapted to the environment than planting seed from species that occur in other areas.



Participants are provided with training, technical advice and support to collect, manage and grow local native seed for use in revegetation projects. Education plays a major role in the project, providing participants with a wide range of skills including plant identification, seed processing and handling as well as revegetation techniques such as direct seeding.

The first phase of the project assists the community to establish a seed bank. Seed stored in the seed

SUSTAINABLE SEED BANKS PROJECT

By Julie Thygesen



Banksia sphaerocarpa. - To extract seed, give the nut a quick, hot burn. The nut should then be placed in a water bath to cool and then removed. This process should be repeated until the follicles slowly open and release the seed.

(Drawing by Julie Thygesen)

bank will then be available to the wider community for use in revegetation projects. The information gained about many of these species will also be provided to the wealth of information contained in CALM's Western Australian Herbarium, with specimens being forwarded to the state collection. In the second phase, a portion of the seed collected is then used to establish a seed orchard. This will reduce collection pressures on an already dwindling resource, and provide the community with seed of species that are useful in revegetation.

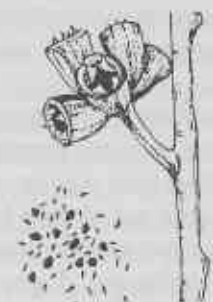
In the long-term, providing resources, education and support to communities will ensure self-sufficiency in the maintenance, management and ownership of seed. We hope that the interest and knowledge gained from this project

will encourage people to establish and manage a wide range of seed orchards and seed banks. We also see the wealth of information gained on a species level will increase the knowledge of the many fascinating aspects of Western Australia's diverse flora.

The following groups are currently managing seed banks as part of this project:

- ◆ Mount Marshall LCDC, Beacon
- ◆ Monjerducking Catchment Group, Beverley
- ◆ Bruce Rock LCDC
- ◆ Calingiri - New Norcia LCDC
- ◆ Corrigin Landcare Committee
- ◆ Koorda LCDC
- ◆ Narembeen LCDC
- ◆ Shire of Kent
- ◆ Cunderdin LCDC & Tammin LCDC
- ◆ Arrowsmith River Catchment, Three Springs
- ◆ City of South Perth (in association with the City of South Perth Environment Association)
- ◆ City of Canning (In association with the Bannister Creek Catchment Group)

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