

NATIVE TREE'S FOR DROUGHT PROTECTION

EARTH FIRST ARTICLE

By Peter West, ECCO

In recent years we have heard about Peter Andrews controversial land management approach and Natural Sequence Farming (NSF) on ABC's Australian Story. His book 'Back from the Brink: how Australia's landscape can be saved' argues that we need to rethink how we have traditionally managed our land and water.

Peter's ideas are somewhat contemporary but the principles are simple. His approach involves replanting of trees, and lots of them, as well as reeds along creeks and rivers. He argues that we need to restore the landscape to its original systems, and slow down natural water movement to help replenish groundwater supplies for long-term sustainability of our land.

His approach has helped to transform many water-deficient properties and also supports biodiversity. The simple action of planting trees and encouraging water infiltration can have long lasting benefits.

The benefits of tree planting?

While natural sequence farming and many of Peter's ideas are directed at rural landscapes, the principles are equally suited to urban and residential areas.

Plant trees and you can maintain shaded areas during summer, prevent soil and wind erosion, increase soil moisture levels, and provide wind breaks. Trees and shrubs also store carbon, create privacy and buffer zones, provide an aesthetic value, and are fundamental in providing refuge and habitat for our native animals.

What can you do?

- Identify a good site to plant trees and shrubs that will provide these benefits
- Select appropriate drought and frost-hardy species or consult your local nursery
- Start planting in preparation for the hot summer ahead
- Use biodegradable tree guards and weed matting (if possible)
- Participate in community tree planting events such as National Tree Day at Jack Brabham Park on Sunday August 2
- Read about the benefits of tree planting and encourage others to join in events
- Contact Orange City Council for advice or guidance on planting drought-hardy trees and shrubs in your neighbourhood.

Green dates for the calendar

National Tree Day (Sunday August 2) at Jack Brabham Park (10am - 2pm).

Reminder: ECCO/OCAN Winter Local Environmental Awards close on July 31 - collect an entry form from Book City, Mitre 10, Windyhill Nursery, Central Western Daily or Orange City Council.