



### Project Snapshot

<b>Land Manager Names:</b>	Martin and Sheena House
<b>Property Size:</b>	3,000 ha owned, 1,200 ha leased
<b>Location:</b>	Ardath
<b>Annual Rainfall (mm):</b>	320 mm
<b>Enterprise Mix:</b>	70% cropping, 30% pasture (sheep)
<b>Soil Types/Vegetation Types:</b>	Mixed, with a large portion of granite derived loams and rocky soils with associated clay flats

### Key Messages

- **Funding can help you take on that large revegetation project you have always wanted to do, but couldn't finance.**
- **Integrating tree belts across a cropping paddock can protect crop seedlings from furrow infill.**
- **Preparation is important when planting windbreaks across paddocks to avoid complications with the cropping program.**

## Their story

Situated between Cunderdin, Merredin and Corrigin sits a small town called Ardath. Here Martin and Sheena House farm a large property comprised of mainly medium to heavy country. Each year they plant trees on their property to create micro climates and protect the landscape from erosion. With funding available through Wheatbelt NRM they decided they would apply for some oil mallee seedlings to protect three low lying, flat paddocks (330 ha) which are susceptible to frost. With the aid of their local Natural Resource Management Officer their submission was accepted and they received funding for 20,000 oil mallees. Martin mentioned, "Without this project our budget limits the amount of trees that we plant each year".

## Integrating tree belts into cropping paddocks

In July 2012 the House family planted the oil mallee's in several two-row belts, in an east/west direction. Martin explained, "The logic behind planting east to west was to minimise the shading effect on crops and to shelter the paddocks from damaging north-westerly winds". Using a Chatfield Tree Planter enabled them to rip, scalp and plant at the same time. "As the trees were planted after the cropping program was seeded, we used a grass spray to eliminate the crop within the belts", Martin said. "We then used A-B lines to establish the tree belts [approximately 100m apart] in accordance with our machinery widths". This approach significantly improved the efficiency of the extensive planting, during what can be a very busy time on the farm.

Unfortunately 2012 was a dry season and so the trees had a tough start. By the following summer Martin concluded that the oil mallees were well suited to sandy soils, but struggled to grow in the sodic grey clays. Yet he has since planted some more, and has found that the wet 2013 summer

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has improved establishment in these soils.

He intends to plant saltbush in areas that remain patchy. "I would like to incorporate saltbush into the tree lines, so they can serve as a shelterbelt as well as a feed source for sheep", Martin mentioned.

## Thoughts in retrospect

Before the project the House family had limited experience planting tree in belts across cropping country. Therefore, encountering some issues during the first year was expected. Martin said, "We will have to be careful not to overspray the oil mallees when spraying the crops with post-emergent". He added, "I will also have to reprogram my GPS to account for the tree lines". These teething issues haven't deterred Martin however, and he will be accessing another 9,000 trees via Wheatbelt NRM's Soil Conservation Incentives Program to provide infill's this season.



Above: Sheena & Martin House

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