



Key Messages

- Protect your land so it can be a valuable asset in years to come
- Seek volunteers when undertaking your next revegetation project
- Saltbush is a 'good fit' for degraded valley floors and along creek lines
- Trees will establish well if planted when the signs of a problem are first diagnosed

Project Snapshot

Land Manager's Name/s:	Greg and Glenys Rutherford
Property Size:	1875 hectares
Location:	Bruce Rock, Lockhart Catchment
Annual Rainfall:	325mm
Enterprise mix	60% crop, 40% pasture
Soil types/vegetation types:	Mixed loams and heavy soils

Their story

Greg and Glenys Rutherford have been farming for much of their lives and have faced many challenges during this time. Planting trees on the property to protect their land asset is something they have done many times. Greg commented, "I am probably one of the few surviving small farmers around. We have less than 4,500 acres but we still strive to improve our farm, where we can".

In recent years the Rutherford's had noticed small areas across three paddocks starting to lose pasture cover and erode due to wind and water. Instead of continuing to crop these areas they decided to isolate them and find a way to protect the soil from further degradation. After seeing an advertisement placed by their local Natural Resource Manager seeking farmers to apply for tree projects funded by Caring for our Country via Wheatbelt NRM, they decided to apply for Old Man saltbush (*Atriplex nummularia*) and River saltbush (*Atriplex amnicola*) seedlings to revegetate these non-productive areas.

Working together to stop degradation

With help from family visiting from Perth for the weekend, the Rutherford's machine planted over 10,000 saltbush seedlings in the winter of 2012. "It was a great opportunity to expose the kids to an important aspect of country life", Greg mentioned. Hiring a Chatfield one pass tree planter from the Bruce Rock LCDC made the job much less labour intensive too. Greg explained, "Without the tree planter we would have found it very hard to plant the trees efficiently. Having the use of the tree planter and extra help from the family meant the planting only took a couple of days".

Greg and Glenys are very grateful for the funding opportunity. Greg said, "We have been able to rehabilitate some small areas of the farm which were in the early stages of salinity". Although it will change the way they crop the paddocks they realise that it was step they needed to take to improve the farm's overall soil health. Greg added, "The fact that we \

can improve a deteriorating patch in our paddock, by planting perennials, will force us to seed around the area, instead of cultivating it". In regards to their sheep enterprise however, they view saltbush as being very well placed. "Saltbush are the key to improving our seeps and valley floor degradation problems, because it still allows production from them in the way of sheep grazing".



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