

# Hambly Oil Mallee Soil Conservation Project



**LANDHOLDERS:** George, Pat & Alan Hambly  
"Boyagarra"  
Brookton, WA

**Farm Size:** 2683ha

**Average rainfall:** 300-400mm

**Soil types:** 50% medium, 25% heavy, 25% light

**Enterprise Mix:** 60% livestock  
40% cropping

**History:** Property purchased 2005

**Plantings:** 2007—52,000 oil mallees  
2008—51,000 oil mallees  
2010—30,000 oil mallees  
2011—25,000 oil mallees

**Species:** *Eucalyptus loxophleba lissophloia*



The Hambly family purchased their property in 2005 and had no experience with oil mallee planting prior to that time. Upon arriving in Brookton they were dismayed at the land degradation that was being experienced due to severe wind events. After noticing oil mallees that had been planted on a neighbouring property, they were encouraged to contact David McFall of the Upper Great Southern Oil Mallee Association who assisted them designing the layout of the alleys and also provided assistance to ensure that the most suitable tree variety for their soil types was selected.

Integrated mallee plantings in belts have assisted the Hambly's combat the devastating effects of wind erosion as well as provide much needed stock shelter. The shade and protection provided for lambing ewes without the need for costly fencing is a huge advantage. In the cropping phase the alleys enable accurate calculation of the amount of chemical, seed and fertiliser that is required as exact acreage between the alleys is now known. This provides large cost and management savings to the farming enterprise.

The Hambly's have also noticed improvement in the health of pasture grown in the alleys due to the reduction in wind erosion. Water use efficiency has also increased as the introduction of the alley system has seen reduced run-off on the hillier country.

Reducing wind erosion, not economic return, was the key driver for the project but the Hambly's concede that any potential income from carbon trading opportunities and the oil mallee bio-energy industry would be an added bonus.

Lessons learnt by the Hambly's throughout the project include:

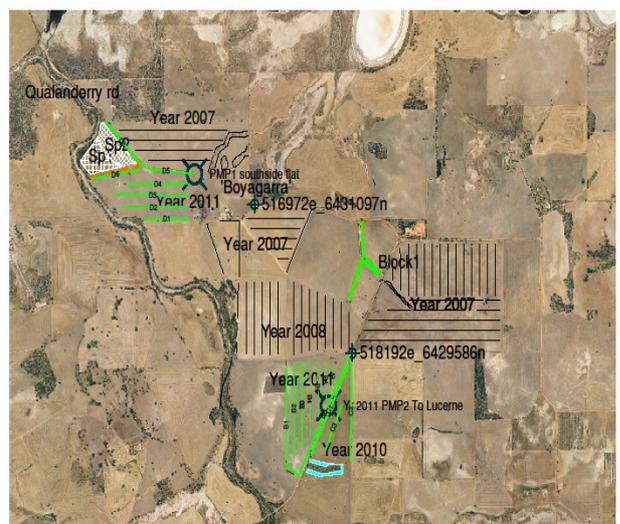
- Matching varieties to soil types is very important to ensure maximum survival.
- Deep ripping in dry years is not a good idea due to the drying effect on the soils.
- A possible alternative is to rip up to 3 years prior and let the soil re-settle.
- Good weed control critical to success. Reluctant to blanket spray over seedlings as it affects the establishment.

The Hambly project has been assisted with funding from Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management as part of their Caring for Our Country Soil Conservation Incentives Program. Previous funding was obtained through Government investment in the National Action Plan for Salinity & Water Quality.

***“With the amount of help available out there, it’s too easy. We have had huge benefits from the oil mallees, I would highly recommend them to any farmer”***  
**George Hambly**



Author: Cheryl Shenton



Photos: David McFall

Map: UGSOMA

**Disclaimer:** The information in this publication has been compiled from personal experience and views of the grower featured. Wheatbelt NRM and Upper Great Southern Oil Mallee Association do not accept any liability for possible inaccurate information provided.