



REVEGETATION

Stone grown

An idea seeded thirty years ago has finally sprouted.

Paul Cockram asked Richard Stone how it started ...

I studied production horticulture way back in 1988, the bicentennial year, and graduated in 1990 with an Associate Diploma of Horticulture, specialising in nursery production. Here I am 28 years later actually fulfilling my goal of setting up a nursery.

It has taken me some time — I guess having the land to do it on has been the major thing. I purchased the land that Lorinda and I are living on in 1999. One of the first earthworks I did was clearing a nursery pad, but then it took me another ten years to actually do something with that pad.

I had local contractors come in and do all the drainage works, the fabulous Paddy Burns, of course. It was fortunate that some shadehouses and hothouses became available for a reasonable price secondhand, and I employed a few locals to help me set them up.

Here we are on the journey at last. The shadehouse went up by November 2017, and all the other bits and pieces have followed on. Because I studied production horticulture, I knew what I wanted as far as layout and setout and ergonomics, ease of use, and everything else. I guess the only thing I can look back at in hindsight is that I didn't make it big enough.

Initially we want to do native plants for farm planting and, of course, urban plantings as well. When Currajuggle Creek Nursery ceased production about four years ago I saw the opportunity to acquire the fabulous stock that Lyn and Murray produced. I saw an opportunity to do what they were doing — I'm hoping to capitalise on their market. So far with only very minimal advertising I've had enough to keep me very, very busy.

When I get enough stock I hope to do



RICHARD IN THE SHADE HOUSE AT THE BENCHES FOR SORTING ORDERS.

markets but at the moment, all I've been doing is filling orders that people have been putting in. The local Landcare office with Rebecca and Simone has been fabulous in pointing people in my direction, and they've actually put my propagation list on their website.

I've had calls from far and wide asking if I can fulfil orders for different species that I'm growing.

What I'm trying to concentrate on is local natives that will do really well — great for shelter belts, for farm forestry, for windbreaks and for landcare plantings.

But we also want to cater to the urban market, so I'm growing some smaller stock that's suitable for urban gardens that will get your nice nectar eating birds in and attract insects. These plants will supply ecological services to your garden or to your farm for free. It's just amazing when you do plant native shrubs that are nice flowering shrubs like correas and bottlebrushes and others, just how much birdlife will come into your garden. Of course, with the birdlife also comes the beneficial

insects. Also the nasty insects, but that's where the beneficial birds will come in and pick them off.

BWD: Do you think it's something that the Australian landscape needs to have — especially on farms where there's nearly always an emphasis on farm clearing, at least in the media, and not so much talk about native vegetation regeneration?

It's an interesting point. I'd say our local farmers are really on board in trying to establish tree belts and shelter belts and woodlots and what have you. I've got a client at the moment who's thinking way beyond his lifetime and wants to establish a non-farm forestry woodlot for whoever he passes his property on to.

He's really keen on establishing trees that will do well for timber production, for firewood basically. We're not blessed around here with great firewood type trees, unlike down the coast where the trees are a lot denser and burn hotter and longer than our local species. But this fellow wants to establish a wood belt.

You could put 30% of your property under trees and shrubs and groundcovers with no detrimental effect to your production from the land. In fact, you will get an increase in production because of the shelter that the trees are providing.

Let me ask you a question. You drive

into a carpark, what's the first thing you look for?

BWD: Shade.

Shade, yeah. What's the first thing an animal looks for in the middle of a treeless paddock?

BWD: Well, I see them on the way to Braidwood. I see where there's only one or two trees left, and that's where all the cows are hanging out.

Exactly. So you actually get an increase in production. And as I said, up to 30%. The biggest champion tree planter in our region, who's on the Kings Highway, has an annual tree

UNSIFTED SEED FROM A TEATREE, A LEPTOSPERMUM, SHOWING HOW FINE THE SEED IS. AFTER SIFTING TO GET RID OF ALL THE LEAF AND EVERYTHING ELSE IT ENDS UP MOSTLY PURE SEED.

