

A Plot for Sustainable Living

The BestFarms Environmental Management System (EMS) program, managed by the Blackwood Basin Group, is helping two environmentally committed women to develop and plan practical solutions to the environmental issues they face on their property.

Bev Lockley and Margo McGurk are two sisters with a shared vision. They bought 64 ha of cleared farmland near Katanning in 1998, with a view to revegetate it with local species to provide wildlife habitat and to lower the water table.

“Tiddlicks Plot” is located on the flood plain of the Coblinine River. The terrain is flat and low lying and as a result, prone to salinity and waterlogging. The soils are predominantly deep, slaking clays, which are extremely hard in summer and sticky and wet in winter.

Although they both live in Perth, they have made the property they call “Tiddlicks Plot” their second home and have worked tirelessly to bring it back from salt flats to healthier soils, more diverse vegetation and a variety of native fauna habitats.



Photo above: Bev and Margo and one of their projects, a dam that they are rehabilitating as wetland habitat for native species.

Bev and Margo attended BestFarms training workshops in 2007 to learn how to best tackle some of the environmental challenges on their property. These include strong wind, difficulty of surface water harvesting, difficult soils and above all, salinity and waterlogging.

Bev and Margo feel that they have benefited from committing to the BestFarms EMS program because, ‘Participation in BestFarms has reaffirmed our commitment to landcare. By focusing on EMS we are working towards our goals while monitoring and documenting our activities. BestFarms has enabled us to improve our record keeping and focus our attention.’

In the last 12 months Bev and Margo have been very busy, spreading mulch on bare salt-scald areas, making improvements to existing dams for habitat, planting sandalwood and brushwood, planting native wetland species, continuing to plant along a w-drain through the property and improve habitat value in the wandoo woodland areas. In addition, they have installed a piezometer to monitor their progress towards lowering water table levels and reducing salinity levels.

One of the most inspiring aspects of Bev and Margo’s efforts on the property relate to the way in which they live. They rely completely on solar power, have a composting toilet that they use to fertilise their fruit trees, have installed rainwater tanks to supply all of their water needs and even run their truck on biodiesel.

One of Bev and Margo’s BestFarms objectives is ‘*To live as lightly on the landscape as we can*’. Going through the BestFarms process provides them with recognition for the great work they have already undertaken over the years to meet this objective.

Having made significant improvements to the property with the rehabilitation work they have done so far, Bev and Margo are very interested in developing the commercial side of the property. They want to illustrate to surrounding landholders that a profit can be made, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment. They have planted large areas to sandalwood, brushwood and olives, which have been very successful, and they plan to develop them as commercial interests in the near future.

These two women are an inspiration and show us that anything can be achieved if you work hard enough and believe enough in what you are doing.



Photo above: Bev and Margo with Facilitator, Nerilee Boshammer. One of their success stories; growing olives where once nothing would grow.

When asked what message they would give to other farmers, they said, “To look at their enterprise with the assistance of BestFarms Facilitators and work towards sustainable practices.”

Congratulations Bev and Margo, on your impressive achievements so far! For more information, contact Nerilee Boshammer or Kirsten Martin on 9765 1555.