

Tree Guard Removal

Guidelines for sheep grazing paddocks

Introduction

Since it began in 2016 Trees For Life's Paddock Tree Project has been installing specifically designed tree guards across the project area to protect newly planted trees from sheep grazing pressure.

When the first trees in the project reached 5-6 years old, we undertook a trial to determine an appropriate tree height and trunk diameter for guard removal that still ensures the best chance of survival despite ongoing presence of stock.

Removal recommendations

We have developed some guidelines around the best times to remove the guards dependent on tree species, however this is a guide only. Success will be dependent on growing conditions (rainfall, soil etc.), stock breeds and grazing regimes. These new trees are a significant investment on your property, and we ask that you continue to monitor their health and protect them in to the future.

Removing the mesh guards is very simple and if done in winter when the ground is soft, you should be able to remove the start droppers as well. To remove the mesh guard, use a pair of wire cutters to snip the tie wire and then slip the guard up over the star droppers. If it is still intact, we encourage you to use this guard to protect a regenerating tree or plant another new paddock tree. Landholders involved in the project will receive a discount on tube stock purchased from the Trees for Life Betty Westwood nursery, contact the office on 8406 0500.

A trick to removing star droppers is to tap it a few times into the ground with a mash hammer first before trying to pull it out. If the dropper won't budget please don't use excessive force as this could cause an injury. Custom dropper removers can be purchased from most agricultural supply shops and tractors and other farm machinery can also be used to pull star droppers from the ground.

Based on observations over the course of the trials, we estimate most trees will be ready for guard removal at somewhere between 5-7 years old. Some standardised guidelines for when is appropriate to remove tree guards in sheep grazing paddocks have been defined as follows:

<i>Species code</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Minimum tree height for removal</i>	<i>Minimum diameter of trunk diameter at 1400mm above</i>
Are	<i>Acacia retinodes</i>	2000mm	70mm
Ave	<i>Allocasurina verticillata</i>	2200mm	60mm
Cgr	<i>Callitris gracilis</i>	2000mm	70mm
Eca	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	2000mm	70mm
Efa	<i>Eucalyptus fasciculosa</i>	2000mm	70mm
Ell	<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon ssp. leucoxylon</i>	2000mm	70mm
Elp	<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon ssp. pruinosa</i>	2000mm	70mm
Eod	<i>Eucalyptus odorata</i>	2000mm	70mm
Epo	<i>Eucalyptus porosa</i>	2000mm	70mm
Evc	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis ssp. Cyanetensis</i>	2000mm	70mm

Examples of trees ready for guard removal



Photo 1: 4 year old Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) standing up to sheep grazing pressure.



Photo 2: 5 year old Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon ssp. Leucoxylon*)



Photo 3: 4 year old Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) ready for guard to be removed

After Removal

The guard materials are yours and we encourage you to look for opportunities on your property to reuse the materials to guard any natural regeneration as it emerges.

Natural regeneration will have an even better chance of survival than newly planted seedlings, if it can be protected from grazing pressure.

**For further information please contact Paddock Tree Project Coordinator
Stuart Gonda on 0448 888 598.**

The current phase of this project is being delivered in partnership with the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board with funding from the Australian and SA Governments.



Government of South Australia



Australian Government