

# **ECOVINEYARDS** GROWING RESILIENCE NATURALLY

## Community Partnerships in Action:

The @EcoVineyards initiative unites more than 70 project partners for the benefit of the environment and broader community!



**Dr Mary Retallack**

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*"I have learned so much more about the ecology and interactions of plants, insects and even soil and its microbiome since beginning with EcoVineyards. It has encouraged me to read, learn and research more and be more inquisitive. After 35 years of being in the same job it has reintroduced enthusiasm back into it and I am excited about the future."*

EcoGrower: Lulu Lunn, Tintookie Vineyards, Blewitt Springs, SA

**Introduction:** The National Landcare Smart Farms Small Grants funded EcoVineyards project is garnering international acclaim and helping to transform the production practices of vineyard owners across Australia. Forty-five demonstration sites are being established incorporating native insectary plants which provide habitat for predatory arthropods, microbats, insectivorous and raptor bird species. For more information, please visit <https://www.wgcsa.com.au/ecovineyards.html>

### Objectives:

1. To prepare native insectary plant community lists tailored to each wine growing region in SA to help inform local plant selection.
2. To establish 45 native insectary demonstration sites across South Australia to enhance functional biodiversity and soil health.
3. To install promotional signage (biodiversity trails), photo points, raptor perches and microbat boxes.
4. To run regular info sessions to share practical tips on how to establish and monitor native insectary plants and soil biodiversity.
5. To develop a series of fact sheets and case studies to accelerate the uptake of functional biodiversity enhancement practices and communicate findings via social media platforms, Facebook [@EcoVineyards](https://www.facebook.com/EcoVineyards) and Instagram [@EcoVineyards](https://www.instagram.com/EcoVineyards)

**Methods:** Recent PhD research found that native insectary plants can increase the presence of predatory arthropods (beneficial insects and spiders), and thereby enhance biological control of vineyard insect pests. This gives growers the confidence to incorporate selected native insectary plants in association with vineyards while contributing to natural climate solutions.

Existing vegetation structures such as windbreaks, vegetation corridors, mid-row, under-vine, and headland areas can be enhanced to provide resources for insect predators, microbats, endangered insectivorous and predatory bird species.

**Results:** More than 70 partnerships have been created between government, industry and regional community groups who are working collaboratively towards a common goal of growing resilience and future proofing production systems. A broad suite of native insectary plants has been identified that provide functional benefits. Our unique Australian flora also look great and can be used as marketing collateral to stand out in a crowded international marketplace and contribute towards environmental stewardship metrics.

This project is generating multiple measurable, and tangible benefits including functional biodiversity enhancement, biological control of grapevine pests, improved soil health, habitat for endangered birds, microbats and reptiles and improved landscape aesthetics.



**Figure.** Riverland EcoVineyards participant Starrs Reach Vineyard is showcasing the use of native saltbush and creeping boobialla in the undervine area (a), field day participant Lulu Lunn learning about soil microbial health (b) McLaren Vale EcoVineyards participant Bondar Wines have established native insectary shrubs and signage in their vineyard (c) wallaby grasses, *Rytidosperma* ssp. planted in the vineyard midrow in the Barossa [Photos: Mary Retallack].

**Conclusions:** The incorporation of native insectary plants provides habitat to support diverse and functional populations of predatory arthropods, which contribute towards biocontrol of economically damaging vineyard pests and support a range of ecosystem services and natural climate solutions. The results of this project are likely to be applicable to a broad range of Australian production systems.



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