FACT SHEET

REVEGETATING AREAS AFFECTED BY DIEBACK IN BLAKELY'S REDGUM

What is dieback?

Dieback refers to the thinning of a tree's crown or canopy. In Red Gum, this is due to the removal of foliage by intense insect attack. It ultimately results in the death of the tree due to a lack of enough leaf area to photosynthesize.

Extensive dieback can affect;

- soil structure
- watertable levels
- salinity
- loss of shelter
- flora & fauna biodiversity
- landscape

Dieback in Red Gum is primarily caused by psyllid (lerp) attack. Research suggests the main causes of lerp infestations are loss of predators, a reduction in the number of trees in the landscape through clearing, and a weakening of the vigour of the tree due to stress.

Lerps !

Psyllids (lerps) are 1-2mm long, feed on sap and can fly long distances. They shelter beneath a white, fan shaped covering or cocoon called a "lerp" attached to leaves. They feed by injecting toxin into the leaf causing the leaf to die. They breed three to four times a year with eggs hatching after one to two weeks. The newly-hatched psyllids immediately commence feeding.

Reducing the impact of dieback

Revegetation is the most effective way to reduce the impact of dieback caused by insect attack. Revegetation will reduce stress on the tress and attract natural predators of the insects.

Things you can do

- ❖ fence trees (mature trees in clumps of 5 - 10) from stock to encourage revegetation
- ❖ encourage a diverse understorey including indigenous grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees which provide shelter for predatory fauna.
- ❖ choose plants with a range of flowering times
- ❖ choose a range of plant shapes & sizes to attract diversity of birds & insects
- ❖ monitor the revegetation areas for evidence of a range of birds & insects, their preferred plants and changes in the conditions of trees.

Who can help?
NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation, Yass Office (02) 6226 1433