

## Wallaby Protection for Plants

By Barry Lees

Don't you hate it when you put your carefully chosen plants in the ground only to find them nibbled back to the stem 2 days later? If you live near the bush, wallabies are probably the cause. You can't blame them – they think you have provided dinner for their enjoyment. I love them dearly and I want them to keep calling, but I wish they would fill up on someone else's plants before coming! From experience, Landcare members have learnt a few lessons about wallaby protection.

You could start out buying two of any plant, give one straight to the wallaby and plant the other. It won't work – they have no sense of fair play and will eat both.

After planting, it is best to put a plastic sleeve around the plant. This stops rabbits eating them, and provides a moist environment out of the wind for the plants to establish. However our cunning wallabies learn that a plastic sleeve means "dinner is



served" and they come from miles away to sample your offering. You also need to put a cage around them. I buy a roll of 900 high by 25mm square mesh, and make cages of different diameters to suit various plants. Tent pegs hold them in place. Or you can buy plastic mesh in a 25m roll – cut it to the height you need, stand it up and open it out to make a cylinder about 450mm diameter. Hold it in place with 2 timber stakes or steel pickets. Do the job properly as they need to be in place for a couple of years at least. All this material is recoverable and can be used again.

If you have lots of plants in one area, it is cheaper to fence around all of them. Landcare has tried several types of temporary fence. We think the cheapest recyclable fence is made from star pickets at 3m intervals, top, middle and bottom plain wires and a top and bottom run of 900 wide chicken wire. Fold the top 200mm over towards the wallabies, overlap the middle and lay the bottom 300mm on the ground towards the wallabies. Peg this down with wire staples – we find that wallabies would rather push under the fence than jump over it. Make a picket and wire "cockey's gate" for access. We hold the chicken wire on with plastic cable ties – they are easy to remove when the materials are recovered.

One Landcare member has used an electric fence around his 150 new plants. He used 4 thin polywires (to get through wallaby's thick fir) to make a fence 900 high. In time, wallabies learnt to jump over it, possibly during a power failure. He said a 1200 high electric fence with 6 wires would work better. Use alternate active and earth wires. A solar powered fence would avoid the power failures experienced on his place at Berrilee.

If you have other successful methods for wallaby protection, we would like to hear about them. Go to our website at [www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au](http://www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au) or facebook.

