



GOTTA LOVE LOMANDRA

Lomandra is the backbone of many a revegetation project because of its vigour, ability to bind soil and stellar capacity to survive droughts and flooding. It's easy to grow, you can even sow it straight into the land. Once established, it stabilises banks and waterways by forming a web like root system. It's both bush tucker and a great material for weaving. And it's a great place to live if you're in the small fauna family.

Since the recent floods the landscape especially along the waterways is sorely in need of rehabilitation.

But luckily the season to collect Lomandra seed is mid-late summer. **RIGHT NOW!** It's ripe all around the Wollombi Valley - hard not to trip over them.

Alister Wilkinson and David Carpenter on Watagan Creek have collected literally hundreds of seed heads from their riparian zone and are planning a mass planting. Let your competitive urge take over. Your property will love you for it.

Here is a quick guide of how to collect and sow/propagate the seeds.

1. Put on some gloves - the flower spikes are prickly.
2. Bring a basket or a large brown paper bag/s and some secateurs or kitchen shears.

The lomandra's flowering seed heads are spot on ripe when they are yellow but don't be put off if they are a bit brown, there will still be plenty of seed left. Just handle them carefully as it will be falling out all over the place.

3. Cut off the flower spears just under the flower head and shove the whole thing into the paper bag.
4. Leave in a cool well ventilated place. As the seed heads dry out they will drop the seed into the bottom of the bag. Leave for a couple of weeks.
5. But if you're impatient and the flower heads were well on their way past yellow give the bag a good shake and empty the contents onto a table top. You may get seeds straight away.
6. The seeds look like grains of brown rice. The rest of the material is husk and you can blow it off with a gentle breath.



Now comes the decision - to broadcast the seed directly into the creek bank or propagate....
Or why not do both?

DIRECT BROADCASTING – SOWING SEED (THANK YOU JAN GILLESPIE FOR THIS HOT RECIPE)

1. Mix 1 part lomandra seed with 40 parts sand.*
2. Spread by drawing a line in the creek and filling and covering -
3. Fingers crossed. Hope for the best.

* Alister Wilkinson recommends - buy a bag of sand to use as on our property (and many others in Watagan at least), the flood sand contained a lot of weed seed which has now taken off.

PROPAGATION. (COURTESY OF SAUL HONDOW – LANDFOR WILDLIFE)



STEP 1: Pour boiling water into a bowl – let it cool for 5 minutes before adding the seed and soak for a couple of hours. This treatment helps break down the hard seed coat and controls insects that may damage the seed whilst in the seed raising tray. The viable seed usually sinks in the bowl over time. Anything floating on the surface is unlikely to have a developed embryo and will not germinate.



STEP 2: Drain and sow seeds in seed raising mix. 20kg bags are available at most gardening shops for around \$10. Seed raising mix has no fertiliser, unlike potting mix, so will not damage emerging shoots. As a general rule, seed should be buried about the same depth as the diameter of the seed – in this case only a couple of millimetres. Place the tray under shade and **keep moist**. Seeds generally germinate in 2-4 weeks.



STEP 3: Once an inch high, 'prick out' seedlings and transplant them to tubes or pots to develop.

SO GET YOUR LOMANDRA SKATES ON AND SEND OUT THIS WONDERFUL NATIVE PLANT TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CREEK.