

The idea was that the plants would improve water quality by reducing nutrient levels and the amount of suspended material in the water. This would reduce the possible advantages that cyanobacteria had over other algae and photosynthetic life in the water.

After consulting the Department of Natural Resources, I chose to use native vegetation but specifically plants known not to dominate water bodies.

The plants I originally used were Oval-Leafed or Swamp Lillies (*Ottelia ovalifolia*), Spike Rushes (*Juncus sp.*), Curly Pond Weed (*Potamogeton crispus*), and Water Primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*). These plants were sourced from nearby dams on Cedar Flats and our other nearby property, Nirvana.

After the initial planting, I was concerned it would take a few years to effectively control the cyanobacterial problem. To my surprise, the plants began growing and reproducing rapidly, most likely because of the large quantities of nutrients.

The Water Primrose (*L. peploides*) showed the most rapid growth, covering the entire perimeter of the dam and extending two to three metres into the water within six months of planting. (A description and picture of this plant is available at [www.noble.org/image-gallery/Forbhtml/CreepingWaterPrimrose.html](http://www.noble.org/image-gallery/Forbhtml/CreepingWaterPrimrose.html)).

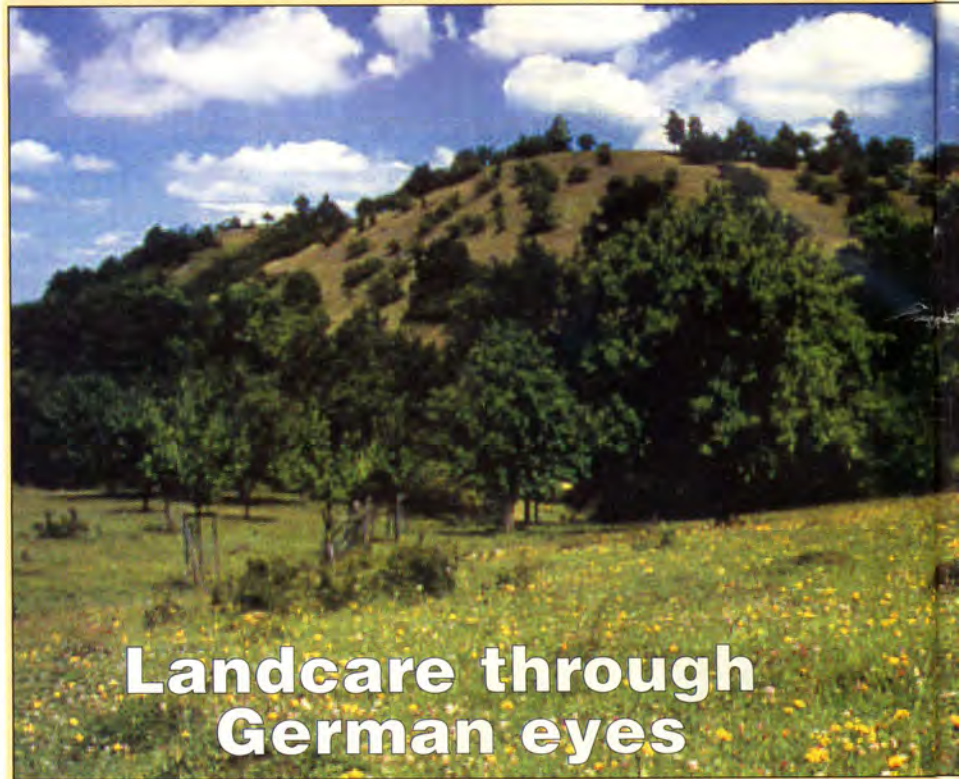
Another feature that makes Water Primrose very suitable for revegetation is that it is very easy to propagate. When I planted the dam, I cut the plant runners into 10-centimetre sections planted at one-metre intervals around the dam.

Within 12 to 14 months, the water in the dam had cleared substantially. Evidence of cyanobacteria, in this case a smelly greenish-grey scum, was not present.

In all, the revegetation took about 18 months from identification of the problem, fencing off the dam and revegetation until I was satisfied the problem was under control.

What's more, in the two years since the dam was revegetated, the blooms have not occurred – even after falls of rain washed animal waste into the dam catchment. 🌿

Source: Queensland Country Life.



## Landcare through German eyes

**IN THE** past five years, the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) has hosted many people from around the world. Recently it was delighted to introduce German, Beate Krettinger, to the many complexities of Australian landcare.

The first time I heard about landcare in Australia was in 1999, when I travelled Australia as a tourist. Being a landcare co-ordinator in Germany myself, I was impressed to find a movement on the other side of the world supporting the same philosophy of linking farmers' interests with aspects of sustainable land use and biodiversity.

The first time I heard it, the expression 'landcare' sounded so right to me that I took it back to Germany. We now use this term in all our English publications.

Visiting Australia again this year, I wanted to get a better understanding of the structure and activities of landcare in Australia. Fortunately I met up with Mike Gooley, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria; Sue Marriott, SILC; and Rob Youl, LAL.

Through them I met other enthusiastic people working for landcare who, I think, are greatly responsible for its lasting success.

It was about the same time, in

1986, that the idea of landcare came into existence in Germany. The first regional Landcare Association (LCA) was founded in Bavaria to enhance co-operation between the participating groups of environmentalists, farmers and local politicians who are all represented equally on the board of each LCA.

The LCA's working areas mainly cover one shire or one natural region. The LCA I work with – together with eight colleagues – covers a district of about 5000 square kilometres and includes five shires and three cities, with a total population of about 880,000 people.

Rather than formal landcare groups, we deal primarily with branches of the farmers' association, of which there are about several hundred. Remember, Germany has a population of 80 million over an area 20 times smaller than Australia.

Like in Australia, over the years it has become obvious landcare in Germany means substantially more than just planting trees. A new strategy was developed to support extensive land-use systems by helping farmers with locally marketing their high-quality products, such as apple juice or lamb.

These are produced under envi-



ABOVE: Pupils of a primary school class planting fruit trees.

LEFT: Typical landscape in Middle Franconia, Bavaria, with orchards, sheep pasture and meadows.

visions, there are some major differences in implementing our work.

**Cultivated landscapes:** In contrast to Australian landscapes, Europe has been cultivated for centuries, which has led to a varied countryside with mountain-meadows, poor-soil pastures, hedgerows and orchards.

Unless continually managed by farmers, areas like these would revert back to forests. The endangered flora and fauna that have adapted to these habitats would disappear. Thus maintaining these diverse cultivated landscapes benefits conservation, rural communities and tourism.

**Political background:** German farmers depend on the political framework the European Union (EU) determines in its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In 2001, expenditure under the CAP averaged 333 Euro per hectare of agricultural land in the EU. In Bavaria, that made up about 50% of a farmer's income on average.

EU subsidies also contribute to the Bavarian landcare program. However, the CAP favours intensive agricultural regions, as a large proportion of CAP subsidies go to the largest and most productive farms.

In my opinion, these farms need them the least, and rather contribute to many of the more serious environmental problems, such as air and water quality or loss of biodiversity. For this reason, German landcare supports the proposal to reform the CAP in order to decou-

ple the subsidies from production and link them to environmental and sustainable rural development objectives.

**International co-operation:** Working with landcare means we all have individual visions. My vision for future landcare contains an international network of landcare organisations all over the world.

**At international conferences:**

- we'll talk about the successful land rehabilitation projects we carried out on large areas of private as well as public lands;
- politicians from every country will participate because landcare is one of the major issues in their political program;
- the food for the conference will come from local farms that have prospered by producing under environmentally friendly conditions;
- workshops will be held to discuss the tourism attractions that Landcare has to offer; and
- youth delegates will present their program and provide creative song and dance during the conference dinner.

Why not start with Landcare International – Darwin 2003?

Contact: Beate Krettinger, landcare co-ordinator working with the LCA of Central Franconia, email <lpv-mfr@lpv.de lpv-mfr@lpv.de>; Sue Marriott, SILC, email <smarriott@silc.com.au>, website <www.silc.com.au>.

– BEATE KRETTINGER

ronmentally friendly production systems and are typical commodities from the respective region.

By the end of last year, 134 regional LCAs existed across Germany. In 1993, the German Association for landcare was formed as an umbrella organisation for all regional associations in order to represent landcare at national level.

From my experiences here, I have chosen three key initiatives I would like to implement in the German system:

- the work of Landcare Australia Limited – co-operating with businesses and with their support, starting new projects that focus on nature conservation;
- the idea of 'Junior Landcare' – providing landcare education for our future;
- the power of International Landcare – as a means of establishing a truly global network of committed land managers, and to help in transfer of landcare throughout Europe, just as it has already been successfully transferred from Australia to other neighbouring countries.

#### Major differences

Though Australian and German landcare both aspire to similar