



TEDERA ESTABLISHING WELL ON GUTLESS SAND IN WATHEROO

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Tedera (*Bituminaria bituminosa* var. *albomarginata*) is a new drought resistant forage species from the Canary Islands in Spain, which the Liebe Group has been researching along with Daniel Real, DAFWA in the Liebe area since 2006 with promising results. Initially the tedera was trialled at the Long Term Trial Site in Buntine for breeding selection and later for grazing palatability. When it became part of a new project Carbon Farming Futures - Action on the Ground program the new trial was established to see if tedera could establish and provide sheep feed on gutless sand in Watheroo whilst also increasing the soil organic carbon. Tedera has shown excellent ability to produce green fodder in the summer months on pear tree country soil at Buntine but has yet to show that it is viable on poorer soils like gutless sands. However, it is looking like it could be an interesting option as permanent pasture.

When the tedera was seeded in 2013 the majority of the seedlings and all of the seeds perished most likely due to a late sowing date (August) for establishment not allowing enough time before a very dry summer. This season it was sown 23rd of May and with the good start to the season it was looking very promising, however, it was very badly windblown on the 18th of June. At sowing there were seeds that had failed to germinate in 2013 but had germinated at the beginning of May with the early rains and given that they had more time to establish they survived the wind event and are thriving. The tedera seeds are competing aggressively against yellow serradella on the site as other than an initial knockdown the site hasn't been sprayed or received any fertiliser. This is to see how adaptable the Tedera is.

Tedera has the ability to survive on 150mm of rainfall and can exist without rainfall for up to 5 months which makes it readily adaptable to the Northern Agriculture Region. This makes it a very promising forage species for sheep farmers in Western Australia as it shows excellent ability to provide palatable green forage over the dry summer months.

Other tedera trials have been established in Newdegate, Mount Barker, Dandaragan and Kojonup. The first tedera cultivar was released to commercial partner Seednet/Landmark in 2014 for a small scale seed increase.

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Figure 1: Tedera seedling planted in 2013.



Figure 2: Seed germinated early May 2014.