

Lower Blackwood Land Champions



**BEE WINFIELD & STEWART
SEESINK**
SUSTAINABLE FARMING A WAY OF LIFE

**“Soil is our greatest
hope”**

“Soil is our greatest hope”, Bee expresses at her kitchen table. Bee Winfield and Stewart Seesink are a passionate farming duo. They farm 29 acres on a rolling landscape in Nannup and 50 acres in Karridale. When I ask them what they farm they chuckle, “everything, we farm everything, sometimes we forget what we've planted and have lovely surprises when fruit trees mature and bear their first fruit”. Stewart and Bee have been farming together for more than fifteen years; you could say sustainable farming is their way of life.

Stewart bought his first piece of farming land at the age of seventeen, he clearly remembers his first crops, “..alfalfa, lucerne, wheat, white millet and sorghum”. After his initial farming success, his life went in other directions. Travelling with his family originally from Queensland to South Australia in 1982 and then to Greenbushes in Western Australia in 1985. Stewart became his father's right hand man; managing farms, building roads and dams were just some of their undertakings. Stewart became a master of many things, practical and problem solving were his stand out talents. He describes his working relationship with his father like they were one entity, one the left hand, the other the right, they knew each other's moves so well.

Bee dreamed of organic farming from the age of ten, her passion became a reality when she bought the Nannup property just over thirty years ago. Bee does not describe herself as a farmer for the first fifteen years but it was this time, living self-sufficiently, nourishing her family from her garden that her passion and knowledge of soil and permaculture farming principles really took hold. And then, one day fifteen years ago the universe bought Stewart and Bee together. They describe the day with a twinkle in their eyes, “...I delivered a load of gravel to Bee and that was that” Stewart remembers fondly.

Stewart and Bee take me on a tour of their Nannup property, they have created an incredible oasis in their pocket of the world. “There is always something in season”, Bee says. They describe to me so many of the plants (my mind boggles), what they're for and where they are from. Everything has a form and function in their closed loop farming system. They have pigs, ducks, geese, chickens, sheep, alpacas, cows, fruit trees, nut trees, vegetables galore and more! They have built swales on both their properties to capture and retain more of the precious rain and Stewart moves their pasture fencing around on a regular basis, micro herding another of their farming methods. Stewart was recently acknowledged on the Conservation Council's 2018 honours list for his, “Services to the Environment” for his farming practices.

Stewart and Bee are dedicated to soil health, they share their knowledge holding soil workshops whenever they can. Stewart manages to fit in volunteer fire fighting and is extremely proud to have recently become his local fire crew's captain. You find the Merri Bee Farm stall at the Margaret River farmers Market most Saturdays', their passion and dedication to healthy soil on display in all its glory with their colourful, wonderful and sometimes weird seasonal produce.

Story by Katrina Lombardo March 2019



Lower Blackwood Catchment
Land Conservation District Committee

A HEALTHY CATCHMENT STARTS WITH
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

