

## Yards for horses

Yards are an important land management tool.

Many owners bring their horses into yards each night, and use yarding to keep horses off the pasture when waterlogged to avoid 'pugging' or when ground cover is very poor, to avoid dust and wind erosion.

Yards can be used to manage the access horses or ponies have to 'flush' pasture to prevent the horse becoming overweight or getting founder. Horse owners use yarding as part of their daily paddock management all year around, or just for seasonal horse care, to protect pastures when very wet or very dry and poor.

Yards need to have a surface so that the occupant is not standing in mud or dust or causing erosion. Therefore a solid base such as crushed rock topped with sand is a good idea. A natural or man-made shelter for wind, rain and sun protection is required. Drainage lines will need to go around the yard, to cater for run-off from the shelter roof and other adjacent areas.

The yard itself will also need to be free draining. Also consider the gateway, which will need additional surfacing as this is a higher area for wear and tear. Fencing also needs to be very sturdy, as horses will push or rub on yard fencing more often than traditional paddock fencing.

An area for feeding, using rubber mats or feed bins, should be created so that the horse does not eat and ingest the surface along with any feed or bits of hay. This is especially important for sand surfaces as horses can get sand colic.

A horse should easily be able to lie down, get up and roll in a yard. Yards can be any size, but remember that larger yards cost more to build and surface and reduce the amount of space available for grazing on a small property. Also consider the placement of the yard in relation to your daily routine, property layout and neighbours.



*Horse owners use yarding as part of their daily paddock management all year around, or just for seasonal horse care, to protect pastures when very wet or very dry and poor.*

The initial expense of setting up yards will repay you with years of invaluable use.

### BOOK REVIEW:

#### Plants Poisonous to Horses

By Mellisa Offord  
RIRDC

\$30 including postage



The book is a field guide for horse owners to help them prevent plant poisoning in their horses. It clearly outlines the factors that influence the risk of plant poisoning and the ways to reduce risk.

The types of toxins that can be found in plants are discussed, along with the signs of poisoning that may be seen in horses that have ingested toxic plant material. A description of each plant is provided, including structure, growth habit and identifying features.

The book has over 200 colour photos of poisonous plants. Management notes suggesting ways of dealing with poisonous plants on properties. A comprehensive list of ornamental plants that are known to be toxic to horses is included. The reference list is a valuable resource for further reading and includes the journal articles, industry papers, books, CD ROMs and Internet resources that were used to create this publication.



Did you know you can contact the Greening Australia Exchange Program to receive free advice about land, flora and fauna?

# HorsesLandWater Peri-Urban Project

## Pasture management tips

Managing your grass through droughts and times of high rainfall and through the various seasons of the year can be a very tricky business.

Knowing how many horses can graze on the pasture and what jobs to do at what time of year to suppress weeds, prevent erosion and promote good pasture growth are all aspects that horse property managers need to consider.

If you are unsure how to manage the pasture on your property, seek advice from your local Natural Resources Management Board or Department for Primary Industries. Many offer a free property visiting service. The adviser may recommend having a soil test to see if there are soil nutrient deficiencies. Often certain weeds are 'indicators' for poor soil quality.

A great activity for your horse club is to bring along grasses and weeds found in horse pastures and invite a guest speaker to identify them and suggest management methods.

**Grass height:** Horse owners need to manage grass so that it stays healthy – on average when it is longer than 5 cm and shorter than 15 cm. Long grass can be slashed or, if you regularly have too much grass, then using other animals (called cross-grazing) will help. Different animal types graze differently and also reduce parasitic worms.

Paddock rest and recuperation will help maintain a consistent ground cover and prevent dust or mud.

**Manure management:** Harrowing manure (spreading it) will help to fertilise the paddock and at the same time allow sunlight and frost to kill many of the parasitic worm larvae. Removal or spreading of manure also prevents the development of areas of rank grass growth, which is called 'horse sick' pasture.

You may be able to completely clean the paddock two or three times a week, compost the manure, and return it in several months time as fertiliser.

Pasture management on small holdings is often complemented with the use of horse yards.

## What's coming up?

Registrations/info online at [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

**Managing Horse Properties Workshop**, Sept 8, Boonah, QLD, enquiries to Ben Barton 07 3816 9700, email [bbarton@seqcatchments.com.au](mailto:bbarton@seqcatchments.com.au)

**Managing Horses on Small Properties** (2 courses), Nov 24 9 – 5pm and Nov 20/22, evenings. Panton Hill VIC, Enquiries to Tim O'Donnell, 03 5962 5778, [tom@mooramooraa.org.au](mailto:tom@mooramooraa.org.au)

**A Practical Guide to Rural Land Management for Horse Owners**, McLaren Flat, SA, Starts Wed. Oct 31, 6wks, Cost \$99, contact Pam Brookman 8391 7505 or [pam.brookman@adelaide.nrm.sa.gov.au](mailto:pam.brookman@adelaide.nrm.sa.gov.au)

**Prograze for Horses**, September 8, Picton, NSW, 2-day course. Ph Helena Warren 03 4828 6646, email [Helena.warren@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Helena.warren@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

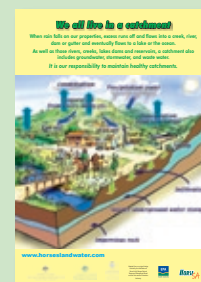
**Horse Haven Spring Field Day**, WA, Aug 25, Tracey Bell 08 89360 6667, email [TBell@greenskills.org.au](mailto:TBell@greenskills.org.au)

## New resources

It is important to maintain a healthy catchment to ensure that watercourses:

- can support aquatic life such as fish, frogs and insects;
- are available from recreational use; and
- can supply safe drinking water for communities.

You can download this poster illustrating the concept of a catchment from [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)



[www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

Project Partners:– Harness Racing Board (AHRB), Australian Pony Club Council (APCC), Melbourne Water, Environmental Protection Authority SA (Watershed Protection Office), Greening Australia Exchange Program, Tasmania South Natural Resources Management Board, Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, [Baulkham Hills Shire Council](http://Baulkham Hills Shire Council), [Australian Trail Horse Riders Association](http://Australian Trail Horse Riders Association)... with more joining in!

**Please promote the Peri-Urban Project through your club or horse-related business website, noticeboard or newsletter.**

### HorsesLandWater

PO Box 483  
Plympton SA 5038  
Phone (08) 8294 2460  
Email [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au)  
Web [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

Funding for the Peri-Urban project has been provided through the National Landcare Programme – Natural Resource Innovation Grant



The HorsesLandWater Action Planner for Horse Properties is supported by:



The HorsesLandWater Community of Practice website was built through funding provided by

