

ALEP Learning Guides



Trainer's Guide

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Trainers name:.....

INTRODUCTION

ALEP LEARNING GUIDES

The Aboriginal Landcare Education Program (ALEP) started at Greening Australia in the Northern Territory in 1994. ALEP's training is based around practical community projects and employing Aboriginal staff is central to the ALEP philosophy. ALEP focuses on increased employment and healthy lifestyle options for young Aboriginal people, but ensures the whole community from children to older people are included in projects.

The ALEP learning guides were developed for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Top End, but with the addition of local resources (such as plant identification books) are very applicable to all areas of Australia. The learning guides are aimed at Certificate 2 students although the content will be relevant to other levels and informal training.

Development of the learning guides

- Don Duggan (pictured) developed the learning guides. Don worked for ALEP from 1996 to 2010 including being the ALEP Coordinator. After many years of delivering training he decided to develop his own learning materials – hence the learning guide project. The guides are based on training work and various projects that Don has carried out in many communities across the Northern Territory and north Queensland. Keeping the material practical and interesting and linked to national training competencies has been a focus. www.triodia.com.au
- Nicholas Smith from Nelumbo Botaniks assisted Don write the content for the guides and has taken most of the beautiful photographs that illustrate the guides (some photos also come from the ALEP collection and other contributors). www.nelumbo.com.au
- Lesley Alford, who worked for Don in ALEP, has assisted with project coordination and editing of the guides. www.denhamia.com.au
- Milton Andrews from Square Peg Design developed the design template for the guides and undertook all the layout work. Milton also drew most of the diagrams and drawings in the guides. www.squarepegdesign.com.au

Many thanks to all the Aboriginal rangers, students, trainers and industry experts who provided feedback and photos during the development of the learning guides.

To purchase the learning guides

The learning guides can be obtained from Greening Australia in Darwin (phone (08) 8947 3793 or email info@nt.greeningaustralia.org.au) and preview copies are available on line (www.greeningaustralia.org.au/community/nt/education-information).



GUIDE SEQUENCE

The learning guides are structured into the following groups:

Getting ready

These guides will help trainers and students plan and carry out their project and they give an overview of work to be learnt in other guides.

1. ALEP Learning Guides - Trainer's Guide
2. Carry Out Natural Area Restoration Works

Recognising plants

These guides teach students to identify plants as well as collect, preserve and record plants for future identification or research.

3. Recognise Plants
4. Collect, Prepare and Preserve Plant Specimens

Growing plants

This series takes students through the processes of growing plants, from collecting the seed, through constructing a simple nursery, to all the steps of propagating plants.

5. Collect, Treat and Store Seed
6. Maintain Properties and Structures
7. Install Micro-irrigation Systems
8. Undertake Propagation Activities
9. Pot Up Plants
10. Tend Nursery Plants

Managing country

These guides are for students undertaking revegetation and other conservation and land management work (there are many aspects of managing country not covered by the guides).

11. Treat Weeds
12. Install, Maintain and Repair Fencing
13. Plant Trees and Shrubs
14. Perform Basic Water Quality Tests

USING THE LEARNING GUIDES

These learning guides are designed as reference materials for both trainers and students.

We have attempted to cover most of what is needed for each subject area, and not oversimplify it. In some cases this means there is more information than an average Certificate 2 student should be expected to understand and remember immediately. It must be kept in mind they are reference materials, designed for the student to refer back to as they develop in their chosen field. The more complex information is often put in Resources at the back of the guide.

Having said this, we hope the information is presented in a format that will appeal to and be used by students, even if they don't use everything in the guide.

Training packages

The following guides are linked to Certificate 2 units of competency from the *Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation Training Package*:

- Carry Out Natural Area Restoration Works
- Collect, Prepare and Preserve Plant Specimens
- Install, Maintain and Repair Fencing
- Install Micro-irrigation Systems
- Maintain Properties and Structures
- Plant Trees and Shrubs
- Pot Up Plants
- Recognise Plants
- Tend Nursery Plants
- Treat Weeds
- Undertake Propagation Activities

These two remaining guides are linked to units of competency from other packages but it is possible to import them into the *Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation Training Package* as electives:

- Collect, Treat and Store Seed
- Perform Basic Water Quality Tests

Structure of each learning guide

Each guide is linked to a unit of competency from a national training package (see page 8 for detailed information). Across each of the guides there are some common components:

- A contents page.
- An introduction page summarising equipment needed and assignments.
- A safety section including a safety checklist.
- Tools and materials lists.
- A finishing up section including waste disposal and tool maintenance.
- Three assignments per guide and five additional activities per guide.
- A resources and reference section.





IMPORTANT

The trainer should maintain ongoing communication with the community to ensure the training continues to happen in line with community needs and priorities.



PROJECT BASED TRAINING

The ALEP learning guides are designed to be delivered in a practical project based situation. The main assignments in many of the learning guides are based around a project – it is often the case that many performance criteria are to be assessed as the student undertakes their project – assessment tools will be needed that allow for this.

It is not expected that a Certificate 2 student would be able to undertake these projects on their own, the projects should be team based with a more experienced supervisor or trainer overseeing the work.

Community based projects

An effective training program will be based around a project that is owned by the local community. Locate a real local project for the students to work on, it may be a school garden, revegetation site, or a community park etc. Then attempt to link all training to some aspect of the project. Putting the training in context will really help students to grasp the concepts.

The most successful training projects will be based on an existing community priority. The project will drive the training, rather than the other way around. Involving the community in the design and delivery of the training will further strengthen the outcome.

You need to build solid local relationships and an understanding of the local situation to develop a good project. This will help you to ensure that local people have been part of the process of building the project. It is essential to work at the grass roots and spend time getting to know people by sitting down out on country and listening to people’s view of the world and what they see as issues. Aboriginal communities seem to have an endless stream of advisors and visitors and there are new people and faces all the time – developing a long term relationship will really help make your work more effective.

It’s important to really understand local conditions, to identify the right traditional owners to ensure the work has proper authority, and to understand that housing, health, education and social issues have high priorities. By doing it right and keeping other priorities in mind the project will remain a priority at a local level.

Holistic training and assessment

The training is aimed to be very practical and project based and it is likely students will work through a group of learning guides at once. For example, you may learn about plants, build a nursery, grow plants, then plant them in a revegetation project – this could potentially utilise all the learning guides.

Carry Out Natural Area Restoration Works provides a good overview for linking all the guides together. That guide assumes you will work through a number of other guides to get through the work (ie. *Treat Weeds* for the weed component). There will be units of competency not covered by these learning guides that may also be relevant to the project.

Holistic assessment is also recommended, with students being assessed on a number of relevant units of competency at once.

Training in the field

ALEP’s experience in working with students who have chosen a practical career in land management, is that they respond best to field based, practical training. A classroom based approach is less likely to engage these students.

Undertaking field exercises as early as possible will be most effective. For example, for *Recognise Plants*, spend time in the field actually looking at plants, feeling and describing them, and finding out what the students already know, then later go and start looking at more formal techniques using books etc. For another example: organise trips to a nursery when doing the propagation guides so students can see and hopefully practice the techniques in a real situation.

Seasonal planning

Land management activities are usually very seasonal. Plan your training around the seasons so that training is real, relevant and effective. An example of a Top End training plan may be something like this.

Annual Training Plan for the Back Blocks Landcare Group Creek Revegetation Project				
Months	Project activities		Learning guides	
Jan to April	Spraying weeds	Collect seed throughout year to cover all species	Treat Weeds	Carry Out Natural Area Restoration Works Collect, Treat and Store Seed
May to October	Growing seedlings Mowing and slashing for fire management Nursery and shed maintenance		Undertake Propagation Activities Tend Nursery Plants Treat Weeds Maintain Properties and Structures	
November to December	Planting for revegetation (after first rains) Spraying weeds (when weeds start germinating)		Plant Trees and Shrubs Treat Weeds	

Permits and permissions

Many of the learning guides mention the need for getting the permission of the landowners and relevant permits. Arranging this for the training project is beyond what a Certificate 2 student would generally be expected to do (although involving them in the process will add to the training).

However as the trainer you need to make sure the project has the relevant permissions and permits for both the project and any activities (such as seed collecting). You will need to contact local government bodies, land councils, government departments and private landowners as relevant.

