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LOWER LAKES COMMUNITY NURSERIES NEWSLETTER

Lakes Community Nurseries Are Growing Well!

Welcome to the second edition of the quarterly Lower Lakes Community Nurseries Newsletter produced by the Lakes Hub. Contact Jo McPhee (Community Nurseries Coordinator) Ph. 85 370 808 or 0488 465 043.

In this edition we would like to give you an update on how the nurseries are progressing with their propagation and growing stock for the 2010 planting season and take a look at how far we have all come in such a short time!

Second Edition March 2010

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This initiative is part of the *Lower Lakes Bioremediation and Revegetation Project* funded by the Australian Government and supported by the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage.



Australian Government



Government
of South Australia



Nurseries Update:

So far the Community nurseries have all been working extremely hard over the summer period to make sure they reach their target numbers to be supplied to Rural Solutions for this year's planting around the lakes. We have all been busy sowing seed, transplanting seedlings, and propagating numerous cuttings to make up the numbers.

Jane Swan, Robert Mrongovius, and the Melaleuca crew from Meningie have probably propagated enough cuttings to last them a lifetime and have successfully grown 14,000 *Myoporum Insulare* (Common Boobialla) and *Muehlenbeckia florulenta* (Tangled Lignum) for the project.



Wendy White and Jane looking over the cuttings at Melaleuca



Boobialla cuttings growing well at Milang

Collectively the other nurseries have propagated over 5,000 cuttings with Raukkan growing 2,000 of them. Transplanting seedlings has also been a time consuming task for the nursery members with still many rushes and grasses to be done.

Overall the first growing season for this project has been really successful with a lot of hard work put in by the volunteers. The Lakes Eco Skills Conservation Land Management members are continuing to extend their skills and knowledge in many areas of nursery management and plant care.



Nursery members are now experts at transplanting seedlings!

Conservation Volunteers Assist Nurseries:

On Wednesday 10th February the Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group kindly donated a day of Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) time that was owing to them. CVA is a network who partners with individuals, businesses and governments for conservation of the environment. They manage volunteers from around Australia and across the world in their participation in projects to help the environment. Richard Owen from Hindmarsh Island accompanied the group over to the Milang Nursery to assist with transplanting *Melaleuca halmaturorum* and *Atriplex semibaccata* seedlings. In total 41 trays (1,640) *Atriplex* and 8 trays (400) *Melaleuca*'s were transplanted which was a fantastic effort.

There were 9 volunteers in total who came back the following week spending two nights at Clayton Bay caravan park and carried out more transplanting at the Milang and Clayton nurseries. Tricia Curtis the Regional Program Manager attended a nursery planning meeting and is keen to become involved with the nurseries and the Lower Lakes Bioremediation & Revegetation Project. It was great to have large numbers of volunteers to achieve so much of the transplanting which can be a time consuming task. The nurseries will certainly plan to utilise the services of CVA in the future and look forward to building a strong relationship with them.

Transplanting at the Milang



Sorting plants at Milang



Transplanting and spreading mulch at Clayton Bay

Seed Collection:

In January some of the members from the Lakes Eco-skills Training Skills Network carried out some seed collecting in the Milang area. We collected several varieties of seed which included: *Melaleuca lanceolata* (Dryland Tea Tree), *Callitris gracilis* (Southern Cypress Pine) *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) and *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping Sheoak).

Since then we have also collected *Rhagodia candolleana* (Sea Berry Saltbush), *Ficinia nodosa* (Knobby Club Rush), *Atriplex semibaccata* (Berry Saltbush) and *Juncus kraussii* (Sea Rush). These varieties have been collected from various sites between Milang and Goolwa with a focus on keeping plant provenance a priority for the seed banks at each nursery.

Heather from the Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group kindly donated some of her time to walk around Ferryman's Reserve with Jo and assist with plant ID for seed collecting purposes. Many thanks to Heather! Also in January Jo spent an afternoon with Nigel Mallen and Chryss Filsell looking at plant ID around the Milang and Clayton areas. Nigel's knowledge of the local area and his extensive plant knowledge was really valuable for Jo to begin to source local collection areas for certain species. On behalf of the Community Nurseries Jo would like to thank Nigel and Chryss for giving up their free time to assist her with plant ID. Thanks also to Joy Mayberry from Clayton who has kindly been cleaning seed for the nurseries.

Team members collecting seed



Nigel & Chryss



***Themeda triandra*
(Kangaroo Grass)**



***Callitris gracilis*
(Southern Cypress Pine)**



Nursery Profile: Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group Nursery

The Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group (HILG) propagated their first plants for the Murray Mouth Estuary Restoration (MMER) Project in 2001/2 which were 5000 Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) for planting on 12 sites around southern Hindmarsh Island. The MMER Project grew out of the revegetation/restoration of Richard & Chris Owen's property "Tarni Warra".

The aim of the project is to reconnect wetland systems and create corridors of habitat on the parts of the island that have suffered degradation from European settlers. The nursery was relocated from an area behind Narnu Park Homestead (now Karinga Park) to Ferryman's Reserve in 2002. Since then the HILG nursery has expanded to accommodate the growing number of plants for other projects as well as the continuation of the MMER project. At Christmas 2008/9 the nursery doubled in size with funding from the Orange Bellied Parrot Habitat Restoration Project through DEH.

HILG continues to generate landholder interest and participation in planting projects which is vital for the program to be successful. A total of 22,000 plants have been successfully grown for the Lower Lakes Bioremediation & Revegetation project this year and the nursery is currently housing a total of approximately 64 000 plants.

The table on the right shows the growth in species propagated and plant numbers produced over the years. HILG has grown in active volunteer numbers from 4-5 in 2001 to 18-20 volunteers at present. The group has 70 members, some of whom are not directly involved but still like to support the landcare cause.

Stages	No. Plants	No. Species
Stage 1 (2001/2)	8 000	1
Stage 2 (2002/3)	10 000	25
Stage 3 (2003/4)	15 000	30+
Stage 4 (2004/5)	17 000+	44
Stage 5 (2005/6)	15 000+	50+
Stage 6 (2006/7)	22 000+	70+
Stage 7 (2007/8)	25 000+	70+
Stage 8 (2008/9)	55 000+	70+

This nursery provides a benchmark for up and coming community nurseries to strive to achieve the high standards set by HILG. The group has played a significant role in this project and has assisted the other nurseries by offering technical advice on all aspects of nursery operation and seed collection. HILG has also donated seed to the other nurseries for this years propagation which has been very much appreciated.

It is an absolute pleasure to visit this nursery which operates like a well oiled machine. The tireless effort put in by long term members and new volunteers is evident in the quality of the stock grown at the HILG nursery. The Lakes Community Nurseries are pleased to have HILG on board and wish them every success with their continued mission to restore Hindmarsh Island.



Community Nurseries Propagating Tips:

Strathalbyn NRC

- Avoid planting prolific seeding wetland plants (eg/ *Juncus* species) around the nursery as they could potentially become a weed problem in the nursery.

Clayton Bay

- Utilise shaded areas in the nursery when transferring plants from the shade house to full sun. Plants seem to cope better in this environment rather than going out into the full sun immediately.

Alexandrina Nursery

- When pricking out seedlings or cuttings into tubes, dip their roots into water first. This not only stops the bare roots drying out, but makes them
- easier to coax into the soil.
- Try putting Rescue remedy in the watering can when you water in your
- transplanted seedlings. We are pretty convinced that it cuts down stress on the plants.
- Rotate the boxes of trees every now and then if they seem to be leaning over towards the sun, this will keep them growing straighter.
- This may seem obvious but take care to weed out unwanted plants especially those sneaking up in the middle of boxes where you can't see them! We reckon that some weed seeds come through the water supply. A weed *Oxalis* with dark red/brown leaves is a favourite, and Flick weed! A couple of native groundcovers come through a lot too: a *Portulaca* and *Euphorbia drummondii*. Both of these are fine to encourage, but of course they tend to take over in a tube!

Milang Nursery

- Easier to sow grasses and sedges into a tray for transplanting later into the speedling trays.
If sown directly into the speedling trays it is difficult to thin them.

Finniss Nursery

- Make sure seed sowing activities are carried out in a sheltered position as seed can blow away easily, especially she-oak seed.

Melaleuca

- When collecting *Myoporum insulare* cuttings make sure you are collecting the right species. There are variations within the species and the coastal variety has a broader leaf. However there is another New Zealand species called *Myoporum laetum* (Ngaio or Mousehole Tree) growing in the Meningie and Narrung areas which should be avoided. The distinguishing features of this plant are the red fruits (as opposed to purple-black), wider leaves, and a brighter green leaf colour.

Myoporum laetum

