



SEEDS TO REEDS

LOWER LAKES COMMUNITY NURSERIES NEWSLETTER

Propagation and transplanting all done for this season!

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

In this edition we would like to bring you up to date on what is happening in and around the nurseries and our progress for the 2011 growing season.

Sixth Edition March 2011

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The Community Nurseries Project is part of the Lower Lakes Bioremediation & Revegetation Project funded by the Australian Government and supported by the South Australian Department of Environment & Natural Resources.



Nursery Progress Update

The community nurseries have finished propagation for the 2011 growing season and nursery managers and volunteers have been working extremely hard to fulfil the numbers for the revegetation sites they are growing for. There were some challenges created by the unusual summer we experienced with the occurrence of certain pests and diseases being more prevalent due to higher moisture and humidity. But we put it all down to experience, and our knowledge of how to treat these obstacles has increased. All of the nurseries have almost reached their target numbers with the exception of a few grasses that just didn't want to germinate and some resistant cuttings that would not strike after 3 or more attempts. The beauty of the nursery network is that we can exchange plants between ourselves to fulfil our requirements. It has been surprising that some species that have been troublesome for some nurseries have grown quite well in others. However we are keeping records of our experiences and each year will use this information to improve management. The jump in diversity of the species list has been a great challenge and our plant knowledge has increased dramatically.

Volunteer numbers are continuing to grow, especially at Milang where manager Deb is very appreciative of the extra help. There is still a lot of work to do sorting through the plants and trimming side shoots which avoids tangling and makes life easier at planting time.

Ken Strother from the Coorong Tatiara LAP has also been a great help at the Melaleuca nursery collecting some of the seed they needed and collecting more than 5,000 *Cyperus gymnocaulis* plantlets for propagation.

Deb and her volunteers at Milang



Melaleuca—L-R, Ken, Robert & Jane



Nursery Progress Update cont

Robert Mrongovius from Nurra Nurra Narrung Nursery continues to provide us with valuable propagating tips from constant experimentation using various methods. Robert helped the Finnis nursery to reach their numbers of *Schoenoplectus pungens* (rush) as he had previously collected the material and found the plants propagate really well from division.

The rhizomes can also be found growing from the bottom of the tube and these can be cut into sections where shoots are present and planted.

Robert



New shoots growing up from underneath



Deb from Milang also trialled *Clematis microphylla* (Old Man's Beard) from cuttings with a 70% success rate.

She decided to trial this method as the seed was going to germinate too late for the plants to be used this season.

This plant also propagates well using the layering method.

Clematis cuttings



In February Leah (GWLAP Revegetation Project Officer) and I did some independent nursery inspections to check on how things were progressing. The high standard achieved by all the nurseries was fantastic and shows how dedicated our volunteers and managers are. Special thanks to Leah for her amazing spreadsheets and help with coordinating our species and numbers. Now the nurseries will be focussing on looking after the plants and keeping up with stocktakes until the plants are ready to go in the ground.

Nursery Progress Update cont

New sign for Clayton!

The Clayton Bay Nursery now has a new sign designed by Rob Hilton and made by John Bradford. Volunteer Brian has also shown his creative side by setting up a lovely area under the stringy bark tree where volunteers can sit and relax after a hard days work. The nursery is open Tuesdays and Thursdays and plants are available to purchase from the shop at Clayton Bay.

Jill showing off the sign!



State Flora Visit

On Wednesday the 31st of March members of the nursery network and Conservation Land Management Team (CLM) visited State Flora at Murray Bridge. This was a good opportunity for those who missed out on the visit last year to link in with the CLM group. Phil Collins (State Flora Manager) gave us a great tour and we noticed a few changes since our last visit. He also answered the burning questions we had in regard to fertilising regimes and using the correct media for particular plant species and cuttings. We also saw some Quandongs that had just germinated and will trial some ourselves out of interest.

Phil Collins



CLM and nursery group



Quandong seedlings



Local schools get involved!

Four local schools have propagated and are growing 1 000 *Cyperus gymnocaulis* (Spiny Flat Sedge) each to be included in the Milang Nursery numbers. Deb Melville was kind enough to assist me with all of the schools. The schools project used trays of plants the Milang Nursery had prepared earlier for the students to transplant. We also used plantlets to give the children an understanding of how the plants reproduce naturally and gave information on the traditional uses of the plant by the Ngarrindjeri people for basket weaving.

The children were so keen that we had trouble keeping up with them and they really enjoyed getting dirty. It was then onto Langhorne Creek. The parent support there was great which enabled us to get the job done quickly. Strathalbyn 7-12 Campus and Investigator College at Goolwa propagated their plants using the plantlets as we had run out of transplanting stock. It was great to chat to the students about the project and the wonderful revegetation work that is happening in their local area. All of the schools have received new benches on which to grow their plants and Strath 7-12 has upgraded their propagation area.

Thanks to all of the students, staff and parent helpers for their assistance.

Having fun at Milang Campus



Many hands make light work at Langhorne Creek!



Deb & students at Strathalbyn



Strathalbyn 7-12 before and after



Lucindale Field Days

On the 17th of March Deb (Milang Nursery) and myself made the long trip to Lucindale to promote the Community Nurseries at their field days. We had previously made contact with the Australian Native Plant Society and joined them on their plant stall. We met some really interesting people with a wealth of plant knowledge to share.

Our plant display



It was an opportunity to catch up with NRM and National Parks representatives from the south east who had heard about the great work the Community Nurseries were doing. This was a terrific networking experience with good contacts made in the industry.

We handed out lots of brochures and managed to sell enough plants to cover our costs. One of the most challenging jobs was getting Deb out of the swag in the morning but all in all a great experience and opportunity to spread the word.

Five star luxury



Australian Native Plant Society



BT Financial Group Volunteers

In early February the Milang and Clayton nurseries had some help from the BT Finance Corporate Group. The day was arranged through the 'I Care Communities' urban volunteers program and eight volunteers attended. The group was split in two and they swapped nurseries after lunch.

At the Milang nursery 1,750 *Disphyma crassilolium* (Round Leaf Pigface) were propagated using plant material from parent stock. Clayton nursery was able to transplant 2,500 *Ficinia nodosa* (Knobby Club Rush) with the help from the BT Group and Phil Duigan and his Greencorp team.

The volunteers were interested to know about what is happening around the lakes and how the local community is working together to address the environmental issues. The day was a real success and a second group returned at the end of February to assist Deb with more transplanting at Milang. Some of the volunteers are also keen to return in winter to help with the community planting.

Many thanks to Tiffany and Dan from 'I Care Communities' for their help at the nurseries and coordinating arrangements with BT.

Propagating at Milang



Second group at Milang



Transplanting at Clayton Bay



Nursery Profile

Raukkan Community Nursery

The Raukkan Community Nursery was established in 2006 and has grown to accommodate more than 10,000 plants today.

Last year the group built an extension for hardening off the plants and they also have hot house facilities which are handy for propagating cuttings. The nursery is currently growing a range of around 20 different species and with the help of Robert Mrongovius they continue to experiment with various propagation methods.

There are currently four local people working in the nursery who are also undertaking the Conservation Land Management course through the MOSHCC which complements their nursery and revegetation work perfectly.

All of the plants are being planted around the township of Raukkan and on nearby farmland where the community gets involved in local planting days. The future focus for the nursery will be to propagate and plant various bush food species and local school children have already been involved in picking Muntries. Future plans are to also involve the children in cultural activities such as fishing and protection of significant sites. It is a pleasure to visit the nursery and I look forward to working with the Raukkan team in the future.



The new extension



Cleaning seed



Propagation and seed collection with Robert

