



SEEDS TO REEDS

LOWER LAKES COMMUNITY NURSERIES NEWSLETTER

Plants are going into the ground!

Welcome to the seventh 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 details of our success with propagation this season.

Seventh Edition June 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 nursery network are celebrating another successful year and our plants started going into the ground in early June.

The nurseries had their final inspections in June with Jeff Edwards from Rural Solutions. Jeff was impressed with the high quality of stock and numbers achieved considering the large variety of species grown. The inspections at Melaleuca proved to be a bit of a challenge but thankfully Di and Jane were on hand to help us count. The final numbers grown for the project by each community nursery were:



Jeff & Jane at Melaleuca

Melaleuca: 98 588, Alexandrina: 9 269, Clayton Bay: 17 150, Milang: 22 789, Finniss: 10 235, NRC Murray Bridge: 7 650 and Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group: 50 000. The Narrung Progress Association grew 4 757 through Robert and Margaret Mrongovius and the Eastern Fleurieu Strathalbyn R-6 Campus grew 1 404 plants with the help of Liz Schofield and some helpful parents. Liz and her group of helpers plan to get a nursery up and running at the school using the funds from the sale of the plants.

Overall this gives the nurseries a grand total of 221 842 plants!!!

Liz Schofield checking her plants



Jeff and Jill inspecting at Clayton



Nursery Progress Update cont

The Milang nursery now has an undercover propagating area thanks to the handyman skills of John Bradford. He even installed a night light so Deb and her volunteers can keep propagating into the wee hours. The Clayton Bay nursery is in the process of constructing another shed which will double up as an office for Jill.

Undercover area under construction



New shade house at Melaleuca



Melaleuca nursery has upgraded their facilities to accommodate their extended numbers and have a new dome shadehouse (10m x 24m) which was kindly donated by the Coorong District Council. The shade cloth can be pulled back when it's time to harden the plants off which saves a lot of double handling.

Good results with Dianella



Article on fertilisers

The following information was supplied by Richard Owen from HILG which outlines some trialling he has carried out using a new soil conditioner which could be useful for the nurseries.

“Some pretty unscientific observations on messing about with Fertilisers”

Several years ago we came across TerraCottem, which is marketed as a soil conditioner, “an especially powerful tool when facing challenging growing conditions. In poor soils where water is limited, TerraCottem’s soil conditioning properties produce results and resilience.”

I understand it was developed in Belgium by the University of Ghent for greening the Sahara Desert through improving both water and nutrient retention. As a soil conditioner, it also stimulates root growth.

Fertiliser Article Cont.

We decided to set up a trial on a woodlot of sugar gums that was being planted on a sand dune at the end of Hindmarsh Island. We carefully identified several rows up and down and across the dune which we fertilised with the recommended dosage of TerraCottem.

Subsequent years of prolonged drought have meant that no detectable difference has been able to be noted across this dune and all of the gums have struggled.

We didn't use it again until last September 2010 when we planted the front of our house with a number of local species in an area we had cleared of buffalo grass. We dug holes using a Hamilton tree planter, put a small amount of TerraCottem in each hole and then planted the tubestock. We must have put too much TC in each hole, for after watering, the tubes were almost pushed out of the holes by the water retention crystals in the mix. Still we planted the tubes a bit deeper to accommodate this, and the plants have all survived and put on extremely quick growth for the species concerned.

We planted *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Dianella revoluta*, *Leucopogon parviflorus* All are like 4 year old plants now, yet they have only been in for 9 months but with pretty good rains and hardly a summer. Whilst it is difficult to factor in the seasonal conditions, we can't believe that on this occasion the fertiliser, sorry soil conditioner, has not had a substantial effect.

We have always had trouble with *Leucopogon*, they just sit there until eaten by something, but two of these are growing well. The *Dodonaea*'s are almost a metre high and the *Dianella*'s bushy and healthy.

The Community Nurseries Network needs to try out some of the fertilisers available to see if we can overcome some of the obstacles we face through non-wetting and very depleted soils to give our plants a really good start in the relatively harsh world of the lower lakes and Coorong. Maybe this kind of work could become part of the Network's experimenting with raising a wider range of plants, particularly understorey plants, for the many environments we are trying to rehabilitate.

Richard Owen

Nursery Visit Day

On Thursday 7th April a group of nine people including GWLAP staff, CLM members, and Lakes Hub staff visited the community nurseries from Milang to Hindmarsh Island.

We all boarded the MOSHCC bus and started the tour at the Milang (MEC) nursery with manager Deb Melville on site to give us a tour and talk about how far the nursery has come in just 12 months. She also discussed the key challenges she faced with propagation this year as her propagation numbers have doubled from last year.

At the Milang nursery with Deb



At the Finnis nursery with Helen



We then moved on to Clayton Bay to have a look at the excellent job Jill Dennis and her volunteers have done to fulfil their plant numbers this year. The nursery is looking great thanks to the dedication and hard work from Jill. Then it was on to Finnis for coffee and delicious cake baked by Silver. Helen and Sally were pleased to show us around the Finnis Catchment Groups newly established

nursery and the organisation of the nursery and quality of plants here was great. Lastly we went to the Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group Nursery. Richard Owen and Jill Masters gave us a history of the nursery and we looked around the facilities and discussed many different propagation issues. We also talked about planting and how these guys are so organised in every aspect of their revegetation from site assessment to seed collection, propagation and planting. It was a great experience to visit the nurseries in the one day to see the comparison between how each nursery is managed. Thanks to all the nursery managers for showing us around!

We will be planning another nursery visit day for Raukkan, Narrung and Meningie in the near future.

Melaleuca/Orana Open Day

On Thursday the 2nd of June around 80 people attended the Melaleuca/Orana Open Day celebrations. The second stage of the nursery project has been completed which has allowed the nursery to extend their numbers from 80 000 in 2009/2010 to 140 000 in 2010/2011. Manager Jane Swan thanked all staff, volunteers, Coorong/Tatiara LAP, Coorong District Council, GWLAP and Lakes Hub Meningie and Milang staff for assisting Melaleuca with their propagation and on ground works. The range of species grown has

Guest speaker Tony Randall from GWLAP



increased from 10 to 80 in the last year. Three staff and seven employees have also undergone training at Melaleuca and have almost completed “Cert III in Conservation & Land Management”. Jane also gave special thanks and a gift of appreciation to Fern Burgoyne who has volunteered

Jane presenting Fern with his award



many hours at the nursery transplanting thousands of seedlings. Everyone then enjoyed a lunch of fresh Coorong mullet donated by a local fisherman.

Jane, Coorong Council Special Services Team & Acting Orana CEO Tony deVries



Tony de Vries, Mayor Roger Strother, Councillors Andrew Dawes & Sharon Bland & Jane



Planting at Narrung

On Thursday June 30th three members from the Finnis Nursery and I made the journey to Lake Albert to assist the Narrung Progress Association with their planting. Robert and Margaret Mrongovius had kindly donated 200 *Schoenoplectus pungens* (Sharp Club Rush) plants to the Finnis nursery so they could fulfil their numbers for this year. When asked what they could do to repay the favour Robert suggested helping with planting at the Henshall site. The group had a great day and planted around 600 grasses with Robert, Margaret and other members of the progress association. It was a good opportunity for the Finnis members to network with people from Lake Albert and see the great work that is happening over there. Derek, Helen, Sally and myself enjoyed a lovely lunch in the paddock with delicious muffins supplied by Bill Henshall.

The planting site



Sally (FCG) & Lorraine (NPA)



Margaret Mrongovius



Derek & Helen (FCG)



June/July Schedule of activities!

June/July is the time to be:

- Coordinating projected numbers for next year
- Washing pots and collating numbers for ordering extras
- Ordering potting mix ready for spring
- Collaborating information from last years propagation experiences for future reference
- Sowing winter germinating species such as *Callitris gracillis* and *Bursaria spinosa*
- Arranging plants sales to offload extra stock from last year.

*Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group are currently sowing the following species:

- *Myoporum insulare* (Common Boobialla)
- *Vittadinia australasica* (Sticky New Holland Daisy)
- *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Yellow Buttons)
- *Mariana oppositifolia* (Blue Bush)
- *Mariana brevifolia* (Short-leaf Bluebush)
- *Adriana quadripartite* (Coast Bitter-bush)
- *Atriplex paludosa* (Marsh Saltbush)
- *Atriplex semibaccata* (Berry Saltbush)
- *Hakea vittata*
- *Hakea mitchellii* (Heath Needlebush)
- *Bursaria spinosa* (Sweet Bursaria)
- *Callitris gracillis* (Slender Cypress Pine)

Bursaria germination rates

Records from propagation at the Milang Nursery last year indicate an average germination rate of 100 plants per seedling tray. The seed was sown into 340mm x 285mm size trays. These averages may vary according to how densely the seed is sown but could be a useful guide for planning.

