



## SEEDS TO REEDS

# LOWER LAKES COMMUNITY NURSERIES NEWSLETTER

**Nurseries well into their third growing season!**

Welcome to the ninth 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 provide an update on the various activities taking place around the nurseries.

### Ninth Edition December 2011

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The Community Nurseries Project is an initiative of the Milang and District Community Association and is part of the South Australian Government's Murray Futures program, funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative.



## Nursery Progress Update

In early October the community nurseries received their species lists with their nominated plant numbers, the species to be grown and allocated sites for the 2012 plantings.

Our numbers have increased significantly from approximately 220,000 plants in 2010/2011 to just over 350,000 plants in 2011/2012 with a species range of around 130. The addition of a few new species has kept the nursery managers on their toes and once again the sharing of knowledge has been a key factor in getting the ball rolling.



*Jill (Clayton Bay) & Angela (Hindmarsh Island) discussing plant numbers*

The nurseries have also been swapping seedling trays to make up shortfalls with certain species others may have excess of. This year the Raukkan Community Nursery is growing just over 10,000 plants for the project as well as continuing to revegetate areas around the township.

Many of the nurseries have increased their numbers and are currently growing to full capacity which includes extra stock for plant sales and orders for local landholders.

In 2012 five of the local nurseries will together supply the Pt Sturt Landcare Group with their annual order of over 2,500 plants which is a great step forward in building community relationships.

The Milang Nursery is also involved in the “Trees for Towns” project which is an initiative of Trees for Life who have supplied enough seed and materials for 1,000 plants to be grown and planted around the township in 2012. This is part of the activities of the “Street Tree” Committee who work closely with council in maintaining and improving the parks and gardens around Milang.

*Filling tubes for the “Trees for Towns” project*



## Nursery Progress Update cont

Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Contracting are growing approximately 100,000 plants for the project this year and have their seedlings growing at their nursery at Murray Bridge and newly developed facilities at Warrengie on Lake Albert.

*The team at Murray Bridge busy transplanting*



*Seedling trays at Murray Bridge*



## New Inventions

Angela from the Hindmarsh Island Landcare nursery has come up with a brilliant innovation for making transplanting into Hyco's smoother and quicker. As shown in the picture a flat piece of timber can be transformed into a time saving device with a little imagination. Each length of dowel is strategically placed so the holes into which the transplants are going are in the exact centre of each Hyco cell and are the appropriate length. This is a great way of saving time and making life easier for the volunteers who have so much transplanting to do.

*"Hyco Transplanting Helper"*



## **Goolwa Alive**

On Sunday the 2nd of October, myself, Deb from the Milang Nursery and helper Wendy Conaghty attended the Goolwa Alive festival. This proved to be a fantastic opportunity to sell leftover plants from the nursery as well as promote the Community Nurseries Network. The crowd was positive and interested in the great work we are doing and Deb was really pleased with the money raised for the nursery with the plant sales. Many thanks to Wendy for organising the stall and helping on the day.



## **Samphire Workshops**

### *Narrung Workshop*



On Tuesday the 25th October and Wednesday 2nd November the Lakes Community Nurseries Network presented two workshops to raise awareness of the importance of Samphires in saltmarsh ecosystems. The workshop on the 25th was attended by 15 people including the Ngarrindjeri group from Raukkan and was

held at the Narrung Learning Centre with field ID and discussion at the Narrung wetland. Faith Cook from Ecoprotem Environmental Consultancy Services conducted the workshops and discussed the value of Samphires as habitat, as a food source for parrots (especially the Orange Bellied Parrot) and the potential value of saltmarshes for carbon sequestration opportunities. She also demonstrated propagation and seed collection techniques and the somewhat challenging methods of identifying different species. There are eight species of Samphire in the Coorong and Goolwa to Wellington regions, and Faith also discussed the other 20 or more species of plants that occur in saltmarsh areas.

### *Narrung Learning Centre*



# **Samphire Workshops Cont.**

The workshop on Hindmarsh Island was held at Richard and Chris Owen's property with 35 people attending including members from the Lakes Eco Skills Network (undertaking Conservation Land Management training at the Milang Old School House Community Centre) and NRM and GWLAP project officers. As the group was so large, Richard and Angela from the Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group kindly took half of the group on a field discussion and plant identification tour while the other half practiced identification procedures with Faith. There was an opportunity to chat with Faith over lunch on the deck and everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed the workshop. Special thanks to Richard and Chris Owen for supplying the venue and Angela for assisting on the day. Also thanks to the Raukkan Community Centre for supplying a wonderful lunch at the Narrung workshop.

**At Tarni Warra Hindmarsh Island**



**Faith Cook**



**The ID process**



**Field ID with Richard**



## St Peters Workshops

From Monday 21st to Thursday 24th November 4 groups of year 7 boys from St Peters College attended plant identification and propagation workshops. Plant ID was done at the St Peters property on the Finniss River where the boys were camping.

Deb and I discussed the cultural values and uses of various plants as well as giving the boys an insight into the revegetation project and the

*Field discussion*



*Sowing seed at Milang*



work the Community Nurseries Network is undertaking. The group of 24 then split up with half going to the Clayton Bay Nursery and the other half going to the Milang Nursery. Jill and her volunteers were on hand at Clayton to give the boys some hands on experience with cuttings and transplanting while

Deb and her helpers had plenty of seed for them to sow. The students were particularly interested in how various plants disperse seed and how this affects the timing of seed collection activities and some of the boys even took some seed home to plant. Many thanks to Carole, Deb, Jill and volunteers for helping to make they workshops enjoyable and successful.



*Tour of the recycling centre*



*Propagating cuttings at Clayton*

## Propagation Workshop at Clayton Bay

On Wednesday November 30th John and Julie Barry from the Australian Native Plant Society held a propagation workshop at the Clayton Bay Hall and nursery. The session was attended by Community Nursery members as well as participants from the Lakes Eco Skills Conservation Land Management training group. The morning session focussed on plant physiology to assist with collecting the best cutting material at the optimum time for better results. They also discussed the use of appropriate tools when propagating cuttings as well as hothouse operational procedures which the nursery groups found useful as three of them have just had new hothouses installed. After lunch the nursery members joined John and Julie in the nursery for a hands on practical session with cutting material they had brought along. It was a great opportunity to ask lots of questions and the nursery group found the workshop really helpful. Many thanks to John and Julie for sharing their knowledge and experience with us and for further information on the workshop please contact Jo McPhee.



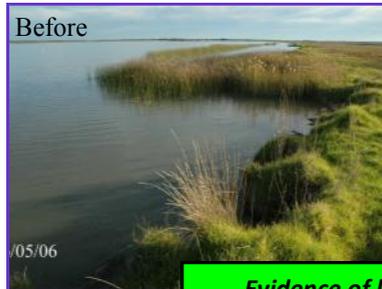
*Focus on propagation of cuttings*



## ***Schoenoplectus validus* (River Club Rush) trials**

Lake bed erosion has been an ongoing issue since the late 1890's, early 1900's. River water diversions from upstream created sea water incursions into Lakes Albert and Alexandrina which killed a lot of the existing vegetation and saw the commencement of the erosion process. The erosion was exacerbated in 1940 when the barrages were closed which created an artificially high water level.

*Schoenoplectus validus* is much taller than other *Schoenoplectus* varieties like *pungens* (up to 2m high) and



**Evidence of lake bed erosion**

appears to regenerate and display substantial growth with increases in water levels. Ken Strother from the Coorong Tatiara Local Action Planning Association has performed trials using existing stands of *Schoenoplectus validus* for transplanting into eroded areas. This method has proven effective but one major issue is there is insufficient parent stock in many of the locations to use for transplanting. It was then decided to carry out trials for propagating the rush and growing it to a suitable height with a sufficient root mass for successful deep water planting. The trials have been set up in conjunction with GWLAP and Coorong Tatiara LAP project officers and the Community Nurseries Coordinator. We have used different mediums and varying water levels to determine the most effective method of accelerating both root and stem growth. Ken will monitor growth rates and record the data which will guide future propagation and planting activities to help restore eroded areas. Ken has identified a 13km stretch of eroded lake bed on the northern side of Lake Albert which will be a good target site for the first plantings. Thanks to the Orana/Melaleuca nursery for helping with materials and providing the trial site.

