



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

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## Propagation of 2013 species well underway!

Welcome to the thirteenth edition of the Lower Lakes Community Nurseries Newsletter produced by the Lakes Hub.

In this edition we would like to provide an update on our third season growing for the Coorong Lower Lakes & Murray Mouth Recovery Project.



### *Germination is well underway in the Community Nurseries.*

The Community Nurseries Network have been busy sowing seed and are beginning to transplant seedlings. With a species diversity of 180 different plants we are continually learning new methods of propagation and upgrading our nurseries to enhance germination and success rates. Our volunteers and managers have been working tirelessly to ensure another successful growing season this year.

## What's happening in the nurseries!

All seven community nurseries are busy transplanting newly emerging seedlings and working hard to achieve their numbers for plants grown from cuttings. The Melaleuca nursery has installed a hothouse and heat bed to improve their success rate with germination and striking of cuttings. The heat bed is proving to be a



*Root system on Adriana quadripartita after 26 days*

success with healthy root systems appearing in a few weeks.

The misting system runs for 90 seconds every 5 minutes and is turned off at night. Winter germinating species such as Callitris that were sown late have germinated well using the heat bed. The irrigation system is also in the process of being upgraded and the shade house is now filling up with transplants ready for 2013.



*New hothouse with heat bed*

*Good germination of Atriplex suberecta*



Greg Dalton from Creation Care visited the Finnis Nursery to give them advice on how to improve their hot house as their previous success with cuttings was low. They have upgraded



*Hot house improvements*

their hot house installing a leaf sensor irrigation system which automatically turns the



*Leaf sensor*

misting system on to keep the humidity at a constant level. The leaf sensors are available from [Sage Horticulture](#) (click on the link for more info). Greg also suggested placing

curtains alongside the benches to keep the humidity around the plants and to place the cutting trays on chipboard covered with black plastic to reduce heat loss at night. The team are anxiously watching their cuttings to see the results and they are also busy transplanting seedlings.

A group of 9 students from the Eastern Fleurieu School, Ashbourne Campus visited the Finnis nursery in late November to learn about life at the nursery. The nursery has adopted strict hygiene guidelines due to the Phytophthora fungus being found in the Finnis region, and all of the students sprayed their boots before entering the nursery. They then did some transplanting and seed collecting around the nursery. The transplanted seedlings will be grown on for the students to plant out at the Ashbourne cemetery next winter. The children were especially interested in the different types of seed and how they were sown and are keen to visit the nursery again. The visit was organised by the "Friends of Cox's Scrub" group in conjunction with the Finnis Catchment Group Nursery.



*Transplanting at Finnis*

## What's happening in the nurseries!

The Raukkan Community Nursery have almost completed their extensions which will give them the capacity to grow 50,000 plants. They have also set up trellises to grow *Kunzea pomifera* (Muntries) plants which will produce lots of fruit as well as nice cutting material. Robert Mrongovius is continuing to assist the crew with many aspects of seed collection, timing for propagation and nursery management.



His contribution to the Raukkan and Melaleuca nurseries is invaluable and very much appreciated.



The Milang Nursery team have been busy sowing seed and propagating the 1,500 or so cuttings required for next year. One new species the nursery is growing from cutting this year is *Halgania cyanea* (Rough-Blue Flower). Deb has found this plant has struck quite easily with a good root system visible after 4-5 weeks. Plans to install power to the hot house in the near future will give the nursery the opportunity to improve their environment for growing cuttings.



The Milang & District Community Association are continuing to employ local community members to conduct post planting site care which includes weed control and watering. Deb was most impressed with the rapid growth of the plants at Pobby Bonk Point at Milang with many of them taller than the tree guards in the first season. The Milang Nursery grew the plants for this site and the GWLAP will ensure that each nursery is contracted to grow for sites nearest to them where possible so local community can have a sense of ownership of local sites.



**Good growth at Pobby Bonk Point**



**Weed control at Pobby Bonk Point**



## What's happening in the nurseries!

It's full steam ahead at the Clayton Bay Nursery with not only sowing and transplanting happening, but also construction of a new hold station area. The hold station will enable plants to be ferried over from the Melaleuca Nursery at Meningie and held at Clayton in a separate area until they are planted into sites near Clayton. This will assist with keeping track of plants from elsewhere and double up as a quarantine area as well. The



The holding station site



Bill & Jill & the new double door

volunteers have also been busy making improvements to Jill's new office with a double door so she can keep an eye on things and a new shed has been erected as a workshop.

Kylie Moritz from the SAMDBNRM Board visited the nursery in early December to collect leaf samples from the *Acacia pinguifolia* to be



Jill & Kylie

sent off to the State Herbarium for genetic testing. Two leaf samples from 100 young plants were collected and labelled to assist with tracking the parent stock when these plants go into the ground. Kylie was impressed with the size and health of the plants and congratulated Jill and the team on their efforts as this amount (approximately 1,500) has not been grown in a



Kylie collecting samples



Tagging the samples

nursery before. It will be interesting to find out the genetic variability of the nursery grown plants to assist with the regeneration of this endangered species.

Members from the Ranges to River NRM Group and GWLAP staff also visited the nursery in December for a tour. They were impressed with the nursery and the large group of volunteers involved who take pride in keeping it neat and tidy and running efficiently. After some anxious moments the 1,500 plants the Strathalbyn Parent Environment Group are growing for the Clayton Nursery have started to germinate so there should not be a problem with these numbers.



Ranges to River & GWLAP visitors

The Alexandrina Nursery is also on track with their 15,000 plants they are growing for the project. They have also purchased a new trolley, fabricated by one of the volunteers at the Clayton Bay Nursery which will make life easier.

## What's happening in the nurseries!

The Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group is once again on track with their propagation and transplanting activities with 35,000 seedlings potted up before the end of December. They are growing a total of 48,000 plants this year of 83 different species.

I have been fortunate enough to spend some time with Jenni Fontanot who is the propagation specialist at HILG. Her

contribution to the propagation guidelines specific to the nurseries is very much appreciated. They are also in the process of constructing a new shed which will give them a lot more office space. I look forward to seeing the new improvements.

Young seedlings



Tarni Warra



Richard Owen also took nursery members, volunteers and GWLAP project officers out collecting grass seed on Hindmarsh Island. We collected 3 species of *Stipa* at the seed orchard and at Richard's property. We were lucky enough to have a cuppa on the deck and the wetland at Tarni Warra is looking amazing at the moment. Many thanks to Richard & Jenni for their help.

## Phytophthora Workshop

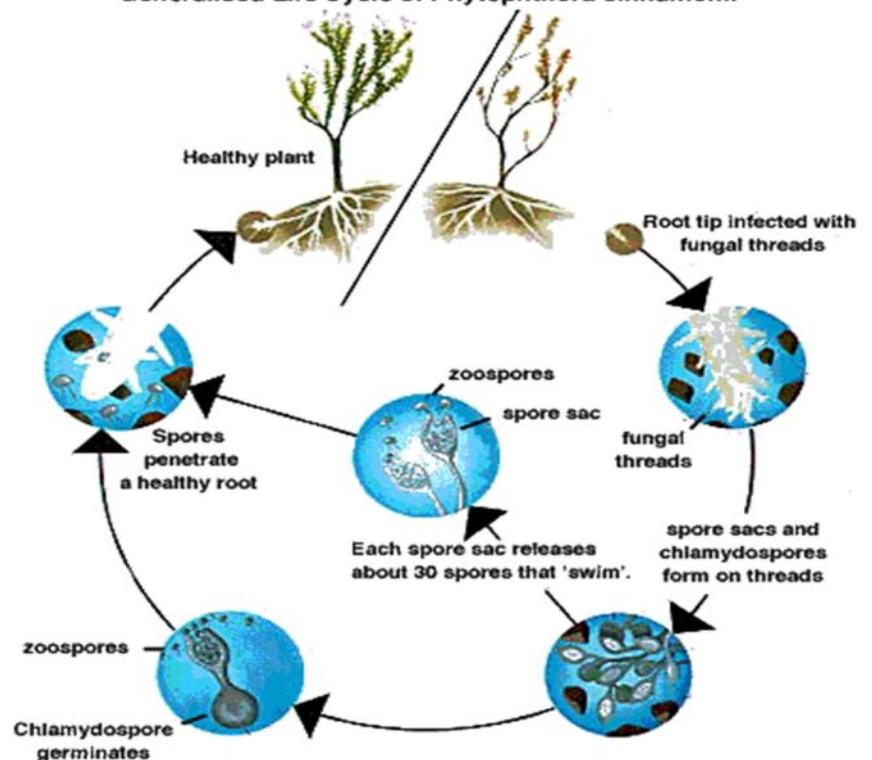
Nine people attended a Phytophthora (PC) awareness workshop in December at Milang. The workshop was facilitated by Nicola Sampson from Mt Barker TAFE and was run by the Lakes Hub in conjunction with the Community Nurseries Network. Nicola discussed the life cycle of the disease and how the spores can survive in harsh environmental conditions and germinate when favourable moist conditions return. These spores produce mycelia and sporangia that can infect host roots and so the cycle continues. Nicola also talked about preventative measures which can be taken when out seed collecting and reiterated the importance of becoming familiar with areas where infestations are present.

For further information on the distribution of PC in the Fleurieu region please contact the Lakes Hub.



Collecting grass seed

Generalised Life Cycle of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*



PC workshop



## **Plant Profile: *Halganea cyanea* (Rough-Blue Flower)**

Low growing perennial shrub 30 - 50cm tall. Leaves are dark green, rough, 2-5cm long with sometimes toothed edges. Flowers are blue with 5 petals and occur in Winter to early Summer. Common in low rainfall mallee areas (Berkinshaw, 2009). Collect seed from Jan - March, however times may vary according to seasonal conditions. Collect mature fruit and dry in a sunny position. For unopened capsules the fruit may be rubbed over a sieve to release the seed. Seed requires no pre-treatment and can preferably be sown onto sandy soil from around the plants where the seed was collected. Cover with a fine layer of gravel and sow in late Autumn to early Winter (Bonney, nd). Alternatively, will grow well from soft tip or semi-hardwood cuttings propagated in early Spring.



## **Propagation tips for *Hibbertia* species**

As some of the nurseries have had difficulty with propagating *Hibbertia* species from cuttings I thought some extra propagation information would be helpful. Although it is difficult to propagate from seed it may be worth trialling different methods in the nurseries. Seed can be collected January - March (Bonney,nd) with viable seed being darker in colour and non-viable seed smaller and light brown in colour. Increased dormancy of *Hibbertia* seed could be exacerbated by drier conditions or less reliable rainfall patterns. Evidence suggests that the seed needs 12 months of natural weathering followed by smoke treatment to enhance germination. A period of dry storage followed by smoke treatment may also increase germination. There are other methods such as smoke treatment followed by soaking in gibberallic acid (Ralph, 2009). It is difficult to collect large amounts of viable seed due to insect attack but we will endeavour to collect what we can for sowing next year. Another option is to try propagating by cutting earlier in the season using the vegetative tip growth to allow sufficient time for plants to mature.



## **General Propagation Tips**

- Soil wetta may be added to water when soaking seed to prevent it from floating to the top
- Fungus gnat infestations can be managed by sprinkling some ant powder on top of the soil
- Xanthorrhoea benefit from regular feeding of aquasol
- Trim Rhagodia and Enchylaena regularly to maintain a compact form
- Bay leaves can be placed in seed bags to deter insects
- Achieve a better germination rate by sowing into seedling trays rather than direct to tube