



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 almost complete!

Welcome to the fourteenth 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.



### ***2013 Propagation almost complete in the Community Nurseries.***

The Community Nurseries Network have been busy transplanting seedlings and conducting regular stocktakes to track progress for 2013 propagation requirements. Once again the benefits of working as a Network have enabled nurseries to swap seedling trays and fill orders. Another busy propagating season is almost complete for the Network and it's volunteers, who have once again done a fantastic job.

## What's Happening in the Nurseries!

Propagation for the 2013 season is drawing to a close with the volunteers transplanting the remainder of the seedlings to be ready in mid May. The recent bout of hot weather has been challenging for nursery managers but a lot of tender loving care has ensured the plants survived the heat well. Sowing the grasses later in the season (February) has been successful, with good germination of most species. Regular stocktakes and communication between the Network has allowed us to swap seedlings between nurseries where extra's and shortfalls were identified. GWLAP Project Officer Leah Sullivan has also been assisting the group to identify possible substitute species so the group can transplant recommended species in good time.



*Busy transplanting at Clayton Bay*

*Milang Nursery extension (Before)*



*Milang Nursery extension (After)*



The Milang Environment Centre Community Nursery extensions are finished and Deb is certainly happy to have the extra space in the nursery.

*Construction underway*



Malang Nursery will have the facilities to grow 50,000 plants in the future, and the extensions were completed just in time for the first round of quality assurance inspections. Deb's team of workers did a great job of constructing the windbreak & fabricating the benches. All that needs to be completed now is the irrigation.

The Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group (HILG) have been busy constructing a new volunteer room at their nursery. The room is fully lined, has kitchen facilities for morning tea breaks and will be a good space for meetings. The volunteers at Hindmarsh Island are very spoilt with their new facilities and Leah and I were lucky enough to get a cup of tea in the new room. HILG have also employed a new nursery manager, Andrea Clark who will take over the reins when Ange goes on a well deserved holiday. Andrea has a degree in botany, and years of experience working with local native plant species. I look forward to working with Andrea and I am sure we can learn a lot from her.



*Leah & Ange going over final numbers*

Melaleuca nursery at Meningie are really close to the mark with their numbers of 118,000 plants. Ten thousand will be planted at the Meningie Foreshore as landscape plantings to complement the Pelican Path Project. It has been a fantastic effort to grow the volume they have and Jane has managed the propagation season really well keeping on top of numbers and targets at all times with her oversized spread sheet.

*Things in top order at Melaleuca*



## What's Happening in the Nurseries!

The Clayton Bay Nursery & Environment Group (formerly Clayton Bay Foreshore Committee) are a newly incorporated body who will continue to manage the Clayton Nursery and undertake restoration works at the foreshore. The group welcomes new members and if you wish to become involved please call Carole on 0459 707 876.

The *Acacia pinguifolia* are still growing well at Clayton Bay and Kylie Moritz from the SAMDBNRM, Jill Dennis and myself collected some leaf samples from parent plants at Finniss. These samples will be tested for genetic viability and results will be collated with sample results from the nursery stock at Clayton. The variation in size of the tube stock over the last 18 month growing period gives a good indication of which plants have greater genetic diversity. Overall the plants look great and it will be good to get them into the ground this year.

## Nursery Inspections!

The first round of Community Nursery Quality Assurance Inspections were conducted in February. Greg Dalton from Creation Care won the contract this year to inspect the nurseries and has provided lots of useful tips and assistance.

Greg was really impressed with the operation of all of the nurseries, and the main issues identified were plants or young seedlings getting burnt in the hot weather. He suggested we leave our plants and seedling trays in the shade for longer (until mid March) to avoid this. Young *Acacia* seedlings seem to be more susceptible to burning and the gravel we use on the seedling trays gets quite hot in the February sun. The Finniss Nursery promptly put up more shade cloth and it is obvious one of the members has spent a lot of time sailing from the set up they have.

*Extra shade at Finniss*



As the Hindmarsh Island nursery sow earlier their plants are more mature and able to withstand the warm conditions. We certainly noticed a difference in growth and health of plants that had been under shade for longer.

Photo below shows the difference in size and health of *Enchylaena tomentosa* plants. Taller plants on the left were left under shade for a longer period.

*Alexandrina Nursery*



*L to R Kylie & Jill collecting leaf samples*



*Acacia pinguifolia ready to go!*



*Enchylaena tomentosa*



## School propagation.

Once again propagation was carried out at Investigator College, Easter Fleurieu Schools Strathalbyn 7-12, Milang & Langhorne Creek campuses. They will be caring for their allocated plants (1,000 each) for the Milang Nursery. Most of the watering is done by hand by the students and parents with the exception of the Strathalbyn 7-12 campus who are fortunate enough to have an automatic irrigation system.

Strathalbyn 7-12 Horticulture Students



## Eucalyptus Arboretum Tour

In February the Lakes Hub & Community Nurseries Network organised a tour of the Eucalypt Arboretum at Currency Creek. Dean Nicolle hosted 2 tours due to the large number of people attending (46). It was interesting to hear how Dean became involved in collecting Eucalypt seed from all over Australia and decided to plant an arboretum back in 1992. There are 7,000 individual plants at the site of more than 900 species. There are four planted and four pressed specimens for each species. He talked about the importance of collecting seed from the younger growth to increase viability and not to choose parent stock that have undesirable characteristics such as falling branches. He discussed his research on fire ecology and how Eucalypts regenerate after a fire. There are 2 main groups of eucalypt, a mallee type which has a lignotuber and sprouts new shoots after fire and obligate seeders where the trees die and come up as seedlings after a fire event. Dean also discussed the research they are doing on carbon sequestration which was really interesting. Mature *Eucalyptus maculata* (Spotted gum) are cut down and every component of the tree is weighed (leaf & branches). The stump is then covered with a black tub to stop light getting in and any new shoots are collected and samples sent to Germany. For the stump to grow the new shoots in the absence of light it needs to use carbon stored in the roots and stem and the research investigates whether it is using carbon sequestered recently or up to 16 years ago. Dean's passion and knowledge was inspiring and it was interesting to learn about how the Arboretum is used for extensive research.



Langhorne Creek Students hard at work



## **Horticulture Students Visit**

In March a group of 6 horticulture students from Eastern Fleurieu School Strathalbyn 7-12 campus visited Milang and Clayton nurseries. The students recently propagated plants for the Milang nursery as part of the ongoing school involvement. Agriculture teacher Mick Breen thought a nursery visit would be a good opportunity to expand their knowledge. They enjoyed the tour of the Milang nursery and it was then onto Clayton to get their hands dirty. The students assisted with some transplanting and collected seed from the gardens. They were also interested in the community veggie garden and one of the students is keen to come back for work experience in May.

*Transplanting is so much fun.*



*Collecting Enchytraea berries*



## **St Peters College Workshops**

In March Project Officer Kerri Bartley and myself ran 3 one hour workshops over 3 days with Year 6 students from St Peters College at their Finnis campsite. This was a good opportunity to educate the boys on local environmental issues.

I discussed the Community Nursery Network and various aspects of the CLLMM program including seed collection, propagation, planting and monitoring. Kerri talked about the importance of controlling weeds in pre and post planting situations and took some samples of the more invasive weed species found in the area. Jo also took some seed and plant samples and explained how different plants



have different methods of seed dispersal. The students found information on the traditional Ngarrindjeri uses of some plants interesting. Kerri talked about the Turtle Project and how

devastating things were when the drought was at its peak. The students were very interested in how the tube worm affected the turtles and how local community and schools were involved in the recovery process. Kerri took along some live turtles which were a huge hit with the students. Many thanks to Amanda Vivian for letting us borrow the turtles from the Turtle Shed and proceeds from the workshops will go towards feeding the turtles at Milang Campus.

*Teaching the students about tubeworm*



## **Visitors from Mt Gambier**

A couple of weeks ago Ken Baker and his wife travelled the long distance from the south east to visit our nurseries. Ken has taken over the role of coordinating the Cross Border Community Nursery & Seed Collection Project. We visited Milang, Clayton, Finnis and Hindmarsh Island nurseries which gave them a good insight into the network. The focus of their project is to grow rare or difficult to propagate species that are often not included in revegetation projects because they require more special attention. They got some great ideas on nursery set-up and operation and I am sure the feedback we gave them on what has and hasn't worked well will assist them with setting up their nursery. Many thanks to the nursery managers for sharing their time and knowledge.

*Chatting with Richard at Hindmarsh Island*

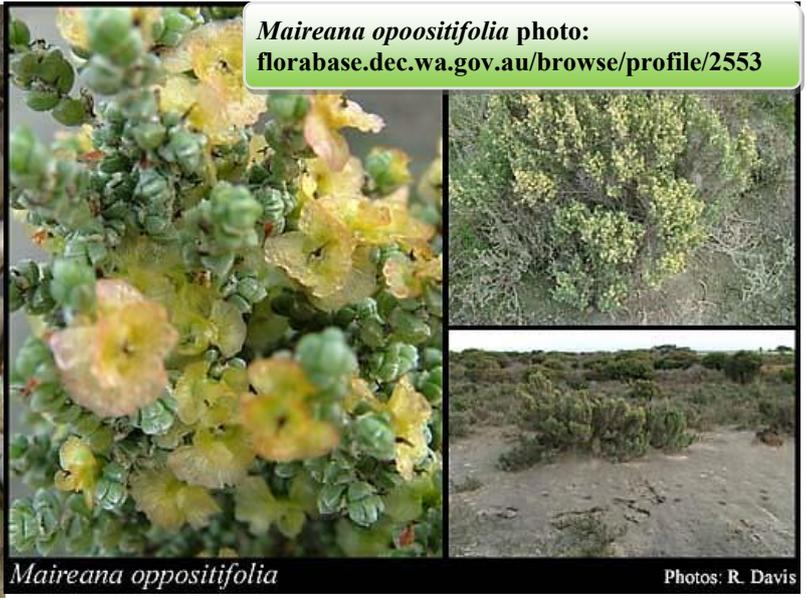


## **Plant Profile: *Maireana oppositifolia* (Salt Bluebush, Heathy Bluebush)**

*Maireana oppositifolia* photo: John Colwil 2013



*Maireana opositifolia* photo:  
[florabase.dec.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/2553](http://florabase.dec.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/2553)



Compact upright perennial shrub to 50cm tall. Leaves fleshy, triangular in cross-section, up to 4mm long in crowded opposite pairs. Flowers small & inconspicuous, fruit with papery discs to 7mm in diameter, late summer to early winter. In the Family Chenopodiaceae. Common to coastal cliffs and saline swamps in SA & WA (often associated with samphire communities).

(Berkinshaw 2009)

Seed, collected as dried fruits can be collected by stripping branches by hand or shaking into a container, usually in dry summer months (Bonney 2003).

### **Propagation tips for Chenopods:**

- Best to use fresh seed
- Germination is increased by washing out salt under running water for several minutes while rubbing over fruits with your hand.
- Place fruit just beneath the soil, lightly cover & keep moist
- Sow in autumn, early winter or spring
- It helps to have some salt in the soil or use some soil from where the seed is collected.

(Bonney 2003)

### **General Propagation Tips**

- Plants that germinate late and are smaller consequently stay in seedling trays for longer and continual watering may be leaching out nutrients from seedling trays. Try watering with half strength Aquasol every two days and place trays in direct sun (Dalton, 2013).
- Don't sow seed too thick in seedling trays to reduce competition (Dalton, 2013).
- Always have two sources of seed available to sow as a viability backup (Mrongovius, 2013).