



SEEDS TO REEDS

LOWER LAKES COMMUNITY NURSERIES NEWSLETTER

Our first growing season has been a success!

Welcome to the third 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 celebrate our achievements and provide an update on what has been happening in and around the nurseries and our plans for the future.

Third Edition
June 2010

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Australian Government of South Australia



Nursery Progress Update

The Community Nurseries have been successful in growing the required number of plants in their first growing season for the project. The final nursery inspections were completed in June and by this time the nurseries were anxious for the plants to be collected as they were more than ready to go in the ground. Rural Solutions is currently in the process of collecting our plants and transporting them to the hold point stations ready to be planted around the Lakes and Tributaries by local Community Groups in the coming weeks.



Tony from Rural Solutions loading plants at the Milang Nursery



Plants ready to go at the Strathalbyn Natural Resource Centre



Inspecting plants at Clayton Bay

We have also been working through the planning process for our propagation this year and there is potentially an opportunity for the nurseries to be involved with site selection and planning if they are interested. The Lakes Eco Skills Conservation Land Management members may also be given the opportunity to be involved in the site assessment process which is a positive step in creating local employment opportunities whilst allowing the opportunity to apply skills acquired throughout the course.

Many of the nurseries are opting to grow the same amount this year with the exception of Hindmarsh Island Landcare who will grow 50 000 for this project, Melaleuca who plan to double their numbers to 140 000 and Milang Nursery who hope to extend in the near future and grow 20 000.

We are also in the process of initiating the involvement of four local schools which will be a great opportunity to include the students in plant propagation and care.



The team at Murray Bridge

A couple of months ago I had the pleasure of visiting the Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Contractors Nursery at Murray Bridge. It was great to see how the team there has progressed and they are conducting their own seed collection as well as being involved in managing the hold point stations for the Lakes and Tributaries plantings. The pride taken in growing and caring for their plants is evident by the high standard and quality stock they are producing.

The team have grown 15 000 plants for the project this year.

Milang Environment Centre Community Nursery Opening

On Saturday the 5th of June around 30 people gathered together to celebrate the official opening of the Milang Environment Centre (MEC) Community Nursery. Community Nurseries Coordinator Jo McPhee took the opportunity to thank the volunteers for all their hard work in setting up the nursery and propagating and caring for more than 12 000 plants (2 000 more than originally planned). She also gave thanks to members of the Milang Environment Centre for their cooperation and assistance with various stages of the upgrade. Income from the sale of the plants to Rural Solutions has allowed the Milang Progress Association (MPA) to employ a Nursery Manager for 1 day per week. Local Conservation Land Management member Deb Melville has recently been appointed to the position and she spoke of her involvement with the nursery and how she is looking forward to many more successful propagating seasons.

President of the MPA Mike Linscott then spoke briefly about the original "Shoreline Plan" which was put together by Karyn Bradford and Shirley Smith from the Milang Old School House Community Centre (MOSHCC). "Although this plan was not adopted Mike said, essential elements of it involved the communities around the lakes and this exists in the programs that are running today". It has lead to the establishment of the community nurseries, The Hub and the employment of key personnel to make the program work. He also commented on the most important key to the future of the lakes being community involvement and the success of the nurseries being brought about by the hard work of a number of people from Milang, Goolwa, Hindmarsh Island, Clayton, Finniss, Meningie and Ngarrindjeri communities. The nursery was then declared officially open by Mike and everyone enjoyed a lovely BBQ tea. Many thanks to Karen from the Port Milang Cafe for donating the salads.



Moving Forward at the Raukkan Nursery

On most Tuesdays for the past couple of months Robert Mrongovius from Nurra Nurra Nursery at Narrung has been attending the Raukkan Nursery and sharing his skills and knowledge with the nursery members. His focus has been on setting up the nursery with a propagating schedule and demonstrating various methods of propagating techniques.

Robert has an extensive knowledge of local native species in the area including where to source materials, when to collect seed and the best time to propagate different species. Some of the recent activities have included propagating *Kunzea pomifera* (Muntries) and *Adriana klotzii* (Coast Bitterbush) from cuttings, dividing *Dianella revoluta*, sewing *Bursaria spinosa* and collecting plantlets from *Cyperus gymnocaulis* and sewing them straight into tubes.

Deb Melville from the Milang Nursery and local volunteer Lyndall Beck have also attended the nursery at Raukkan and have found it to be a rewarding experience. There are also plans to extend the nursery and build an outdoor hardening off area. Carole Richardson has kindly offered to assist with the irrigation for the new area and the Raukkan team have begun the site work preparation.

Overall things are moving ahead nicely at the nursery and the Raukkan team is really appreciative of the assistance from Robert.



Tending to plants in the Hothouse



Plant ID & Seed Collecting



Lyndall helping with propagation



Phil inspecting the shadehouse

Nursery Profile- Melaleuca Nursery at Meningie

The Melaleuca nursery at Meningie is one of a number of business centres that is a part of the Orana Disability Service Organisation. Orana has a number of business centres in Country and Metropolitan SA and is dedicated to giving people with disabilities an opportunity to live and work with support in their local community. Melaleuca has been in operation for over 30 years as a retail plant nursery and nursery manager Jane Swan has been employed since 2003.



There are currently 3 staff, 11 employees and hundreds of volunteers involved with the nursery at different times.

Melaleuca has been involved with the Lower Lakes Bioremediation and Revegetation Project from the very beginning in August 2009.

Funding available from this project as well as from the Coorong District Council (funding for the first shade dome) has allowed the nursery to expand and grow more than 81 000 plants in the first growing season.

This figure includes 2 000 grown by the Meningie Area School and 10 250 from Robert and Margaret Mrongovius at Narrung.

The nursery has grown a variety of species including *Melaleuca halmaturorum* (Swamp Paper Bark), *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping Sheoak), *Disphyma crassifolium* (Round leaf Pigface) and *Myoporum insulare* (Common Boobialla).

Robert Mrongovius was instrumental in assisting the staff with propagation when it first began and his expertise and technical advice for propagating cuttings was appreciated by all involved.

Staff, local volunteers and community groups have begun planting Melaleucas plants around Lake Albert (North of Meningie) and will be planting 41 000 plants in the coming weeks as an opportunity to raise funds for local community organisations.

The nursery intends to increase their plant numbers to 140 000 this growing season and will acquire a new shade dome through funding from the Tatiara LAP and also new benches and another hothouse to facilitate the extra plants.

The nursery also celebrated their achievements on the 27th of May with a BBQ and gathering of staff, volunteers and representatives from various bodies involved with the nursery.

It has been a huge effort by all staff and volunteers involved at Melaleuca and although there were a few challenges along the way a lot of hard work and dedication has seen successful results for the nursery. Well done!

Plants ready and waiting for collection



Celebratory BBQ in the shade dome



Insect Identification:

The pictured butterfly and caterpillars were found at the Clayton Bay Nursery and the caterpillars were caught chewing happily on the Eucalypts.

Mike Gemmell from the South Australian Museum kindly identified them for us.

The butterfly is called an Ogyris sp. Commonly known as a Blue Azure. It is quite rare and the larvae feeds on Mistletoe.



The male butterflies are usually active about the tops of Eucalyptus mistletoe host trees. The two larval food hosts are *Amyema miquellii* (Box mistletoe) and *Amyema pendula pendula* (Drooping mistletoe). These butterflies become invisible when settled as like all Ogyris species they have cryptically marked undersides that make them indistinguishable from the rough bark of trees and bushes. The females are

slower in flight and when not feeding on the flowers of the mistletoe they spend much of their time searching for places on the mistletoe to lay eggs.

These butterflies are widely distributed across the south eastern parts of SA and are not generally under threat except in urban areas where the host plant is considered a pest and often removed.

The caterpillar is a species of Snout Moth (family Lasiocampidae). They feed on **Eucalypt leaves but shouldn't build to such numbers to pose a problem.** This species was prominent in the Strathalbyn area about 50 years ago.

Weed Profile:

Gomphocarpus cancellatus (Broad leaf cotton bush) is a species endemic to South Africa. We spotted this one on the beach at Raukkan and it was easily noticed because of the large prominent flower.

Flowering occurs in winter and the end of summer and the flower heads are dense spherical balls.

This plant is a source of larval food for the Wanderer Butterfly (also known as the Monarch or Milkweed) which is native to North America.

The fibrous root system establishes itself easily and because it can reach productive maturity within a year members of this group can survive either as annuals, bi-annuals or perennials.

Seeds are wind distributed and establish easily in disturbed areas.

This plant is a serious weed in some parks and reserves and an effective method of control is to remove the flower heads before they set seed.

