

.....***promoting, preserving, protecting and rehabilitating native vegetation***

Contact Details

Enquiries, newsletter articles and memberships to:

Oliver Strutt

Understorey Network Coordinator

Phone: (03) 6234 4286)

Mobile: 0407 352 479

oliver@understorey-network.org.au

PO Box 4535 Bathurst Street, HOBART 7000

Office: Level 1, 148 Elizabeth Street. HOBART 7000

Committee Members

President: Joan Rodrigues

Vice-President: Warner Wait

Secretary: Mary Jolly

Treasurer: Rupert Manners

Committee members:

Camilla Hughes

Anne Griffiths

Amanda Cole

Susan Friend

De Deegan

Martin O'Bryan

Editor: Gillian Shannon

Visit our website and Plant Propagation Database:

www.understorey-network.org.au

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Coordinator's Report

Another busy quarter has gone by, with previous co-coordinator, Natalie, going on maternity leave, and several of our grant funded projects winding up. The Caring for our Country funded Bruny Island project, "Linking Biodiversity on Farms" has now ended, although a short documentary was produced, showcasing the project. The film "Caring for Bruny" will be screened at our AGM. Another project "KidsCare for Tasmania's Coasts" is nearing completion, although there are several planting days in the next few weeks, linking schools with Coastcare groups around the state.

Our sponsorship project with Aurora Energy is also progressing well, with seed collecting, cuttings workshops and planting days having been completed. The official launch of this three year project is planned for the 13th of July at Seven Mile Beach, which will include a planting working bee and barbeque.

The other major Caring for our Country project, "Enhancing the critical habitat of the endangered forty-spotted pardalote" is also now in full swing. The Understorey Network welcomes new staff member, Tom Wright, who is doing a marvellous job helping out on this project. Tom's focus has been on developing a habitat management plan and a regeneration trial. Plants grown by members, and at the Tolosa nursery, are being planted at working bees around Tinderbox and Bruny Island, and given out to landholders who want to increase pardalote habitat on their own properties. We also have planting days for other projects coming up, including Dolphin Sands, Ulverstone, and Sandford. Please see the "What's Happening" section for more details.

We are also in the process of upgrading our website, brochure and the growers guide, thanks to another Australian Government grant. The new look website and updated native plant database will be launched at a series of workshops around the state this spring. Thanks also go to Nyrstar for awarding the Understorey Network a community grant towards facilities at the Tolosa nursery.

You will notice within this newsletter membership renewal and growers scheme registration forms. Please return these by the end of August at the latest. This year we will have some great projects to grow for, including a continuation of the forty-spotted pardalote habitat project in Kingborough, and various Landcare and Coastcare sites across the state. If you have any projects requiring plants please register them or contact the office to discuss.

I would also like to say a big welcome to all our new members. Thank you for joining the Understorey Network and we hope you get a lot out of it. If you joined as a new member after the 1st of April, your membership carries through for the 2011/2012 year, so no need to renew yet. If you have any membership enquires, do not hesitate to contact the office.

I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the winter edition of our newsletter. I hope that by now you have all managed to take advantage of the recent rains and have planted out the plants that grew during the last Growers Season. I also sincerely hope that you do not have too many furry "friends" interested in sampling them. We have had some problems with that at home and have spread copious amounts of blood and bone around the new plantings in the hope that the smell will keep the browsers away. The problem with that as a technique is that the smell soon disappears, especially when it rains! If anyone has any other suggestions for protection, other than bagging every plant, you might like to send it to Ollie for inclusion in a future newsletter.

Your Committee has decided that it is time to improve the public face of the USN and we were lucky enough to obtain a small grant that is being used to update and re-print the Growers Guide and to employ a graphic designer to improve the website. We are also planning to enter the technology age by setting up a Facebook site, so those of you already on Facebook, please keep an eye out for us and tell your friends about the USN!

The AGM is going to be held in August this year, 13th August being the preferred date. We hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend. For anyone who has not attended a previous AGM, I can assure you it is not a long drawn out affair. We usually have a fairly short business section followed by refreshments and an interesting speaker. Do come along and join us, meet other members, the current and future committee and express your views about the future direction of the USN. And we promise not to force anyone to join the Committee if they do not want to!

Finally, in the last newsletter I mentioned a need to consider fund raising and the establishment of a sum of money as protection against possible funding cuts. This was discussed at the last Committee meeting where it was agreed that we should consider raising funds from the things we do best. Running workshops and growing plants are two things that we do well and we agreed to ask members in the Growers' Scheme to consider growing an additional 50 plants each for sale at the Nursery. Of course anyone who would like to grow more than 50 is welcome to do so. Please think about this and note the Growers' Scheme form if you are able to grow the additional plants.

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at the AGM, please note it on your calendar now.

Joan Rodrigues

FIRE VICTIMS— thank volunteer growers

The Tasmanian Understorey Network was quick to offer assistance following the Black Saturday Bushfires that ravaged parts of the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network in Victoria during February 2009. Their offer was gratefully accepted and seed suitable for Understorey restoration work was sent from collectors at Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seedbank to volunteer growers in Tasmania for propagation.

Almost a year ago Janet and Justus Hagen travelled to Tasmania to collect approximately 4,000 groundcover and understorey plants from Oliver Strutt and his committee at the Network Nursery in Hobart and Bob Sievers at Launceston.

These volunteer grown plants were in high demand by landholders wishing to restore their waterways and gardens.

The corporate world also supported our project. Major banks and businesses run volunteer days where each employee elects to work for one day per year on a community project. Fortunately we recruited many volunteer tree planters through this generous initiative. The Tasmanian grown plants are now flourishing in Buxton, Taggerty, Kinglake and Marysville and Narbethong. A total of 27,000 plants were planted by 820 volunteers across 138 properties in the Murrindindi Shire last season.

The fire stimulated bush has regenerated amazingly well during the excellent growing season this year. The mature trees are missed most, but spirits have lifted and nature is repairing itself.

So dear Tasmanian friends thanks for your support, we owe you a helping hand whenever you need it.

Janet Hagen, Landcare Coordinator, Bushfire Recovery Project. Upper Goulburn Landcare Network.

For those interested please refer to our blog site: <http://landcarefirerecovery.blogspot.com/>



ANZ Volunteer planting at Buxton



Glenburn. Native grasses on the new dam



Environment Protection Agency

RESTORING HABITAT FOR THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED FORTY-SPOTTED PARDALOTE

Bird enthusiasts will be aware of the plight of the endangered Forty-Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus quadragintus*). A small passerine bird endemic to coastlines and islands of eastern Tasmania, the bird's population has declined by fifty percent over the past two decades and is now estimated at 1500 breeding birds. The sharp drop in population has been attributed to deteriorating condition of the bird's preferred habitat tree - White Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*). Feeding solely off White Gum for manna and lerps during breeding season, the Forty-Spotted Pardalote will be sensitive to any change in White Gum health and abundance. Although clearing of White Gum has all but abated, and White Gum remnants have largely remained under the same land use, persistent drought compounded by continual grazing will have severely water stressed White Gums. This is clearly seen on North Bruny Island where the largest decline in Forty-Spotted Pardalote population has occurred and 45% of identified habitat is undergoing widespread decline.



The Understorey Network received funding from the Commonwealth Government under the Caring For Our Country program to restore critical habitat of the Forty-Spotted Pardalote. As part of this project, the Understorey Network will restore 50 ha of Forty-Spotted Pardalote habitat, engage with local community groups to help in restoration works and encourage farmers to adopt management practices that will support the Forty-Spotted Pardalote.

The initial phase of this project will be to produce a habitat management plan which identifies priority areas and provides guidelines on what restoration techniques should be used based on habitat condition. Priorities for restoration works begin with connecting isolated patches and rise in priority to remnants where colonies have become extinct, with large remnants with established colonies given the highest priority. These priorities are based on greatest reward for the species from least input. Restoration works in high quality remnants will be most efficient in securing habitat for the species, whilst large scale revegetation will be expensive and has a lower chance of being utilised. Highest priority areas are on North Bruny Island and the Tinderbox region. A draft of the habitat management plan has been completed and will be circulated to the Understorey Network committee as well as other stakeholders including NRM South, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, DPIWE, Royal Botanic Gardens and UTas.



Key to Forty Spotted Pardalote map
of Bruny Island and Tinderbox

Red = colony with >20 birds
White = colony with 10 to 20 birds
Yellow = colony with <10 birds

Where possible, restoration works will be focussed on encouraging natural regeneration of White Gums. This is the cheapest way to restore habitat and is also highly successful as seed produced on site will be adapted to the conditions. However it is not well understood what factors control natural regeneration. For instance 68% of Forty-Spotted Pardalote habitat has been identified as having insufficient natural regeneration, even in high quality remnants. It may be the case that microhabitat needs to be modified through increasing soil moisture or providing a cleared seed bed through biomass removal, in order to encourage regeneration. Similarly, grazing of seedlings by stock and native marsupials could be an issue. To identify which factors are critical to White Gum regeneration, and which techniques are most efficient and practical at encouraging regeneration, the Understorey Network in conjunction with NRM South is undertaking a long term regeneration trial. There will also be a study measuring seed viability and dispersal of White Gum paddock trees. Any members who are interested in the trial and would like to lend assistance should contact myself or Oliver.

Finally, we are also targeting residences in the Tinderbox region or on Bruny Island who live on bush blocks and are interested in planting White Gums on their property, or people wanting to add White Gums to their garden (<20 seedlings). The Understorey Network will provide seedlings and advice on planting for success. Of course members are more than welcome to receive seedlings and are encouraged to inform friends who live in the target region about the availability of seedlings.

Thomas Wright

Poimena Reserve - a sad story.

Poimena Reserve is located in Austins Ferry. It is basically a section of a Jurassic dolerite hill, sandwiched between Main Road and Hilton Road / Brooker Highway. The highest point is a little under 120 meters. It is under the control of the Glenorchy City Council and is classified as being a natural area reserve, although a large proportion has been converted to parkland, with some other being a very weedy regrowth. It was designated as *Land for Wildlife* in 2002.

The history

With development of the ferry service across the Derwent in the early 1800s by James Austin and others, the region became attractive for grazing. Later on several orchards were established in the district.

The post World War Two history of the Poimena area can be traced on successive aerial photographs. In the 1947 photograph we can see the start of residential development along Sunshine Road on the eastern boundary. In the mid 1970s the then Housing Commission established a development in Mason Street, alongside the Roseneath Rivulet on the Current reserve's southern boundary. In the mid 1990s the Poimena subdivision was started, on the western boundary, and more recently the northern boundary is seeing residential development.

The consequences are that Poimena Reserve has several threats associated with this development. These include cats, dogs, trail bikes, illegal firewood removal, vandalism (including arson) invasive weeds and pesticide drift, etc. As an example, several adjacent properties have severe Boneseed infestations, despite Landcare volunteers and council contractors working to control this weed in the Reserve.

In 1967 the Roseneath Development Association was formed, under the stewardship of the late John Harrison and others. The Association took an interest in several areas around Austins Ferry, including what was then known as the Hilltop reserve. At that stage the area was only about 17 acres, compared with the current area of about 72 acres (29 hectares).

The Association worked diligently to lobby the Glenorchy Council to develop the area as a reserve. Having read the minutes of their meetings, it is clear that the relationship was not always smooth going. At one stage there was a comment that several hundred recently planted trees had been mown by the Council staff! The Association also set about obtaining native plants for revegetation work. Unfortunately this was at a time when 'native' was accepted as being any species growing in Australia, not just Tasmania and of course *local provenance* does not appear to have been thought of! Several of what appear to be *Grevillea speciosa* bushes are testimony to those days.

Another saga was that of coming up with a suitable name for the newly developed reserve. The minutes reveal a sort of ping pong correspondence. The Association would propose a name, which Council would not accept. The Council would then make its own proposal, only to have this rejected by the Association. They eventually agreed upon *Poimena* as an appropriate name, meaning *Little Hill* in the Aboriginal language.

The current situation

As it currently exists, Poimena Reserve is virtually surrounded by residential housing. There is an access road (Wakehurst Road) to a car park / BBQ area with public toilets near a large concrete reservoir sited just below the top of the hill. Unfortunately the BBQs are mostly wood fired. At one time the Council used to supply the wood, but because the locals used to acquire it for their home fires, this was stopped. The result is that many visitors simply resort to removing material – dead or alive – from the only remnant bush area in the reserve.

Fortunately the road was not extended through the reserve in order to permit through traffic, as suggested by some members of the Roseneath Development Association. However, there are several other official and unofficial access points, which makes control of trail bikes and off-leash dog walking difficult.

Vegetation

There appears to have been little attempt to systematically catalogue vegetation, apart from a brief visit by Louise Gilfedder.

An August 1994 report by Acer Wargon Chapman for the Glenorchy Council stated that; “A proportion of the land within the reserve includes the only remaining block of uncleared bush of this system on the western side of the River Derwent other than the Queens Domain in Hobart. ... Most of the vegetation is composed of grassy communities which are considered the rarest vegetation type in the country ...”

The southern slope, overlooking the Roseneath Rivulet, is relatively undisturbed, although walking tracks / fire trails pass through it. The dominant canopy trees are Blue gums, which occasionally attract Swift parrots. The understorey is comprised of blanket leaf (*Bedfordia salicina*), native hops (*Dodonaea viscosa*), prickly box (*Bursaria spinosa*), twiggy daisy bush (*Olareia ramulosa*), dogwood (*Pomaderris apetala*) and heathy daisybush (*Olearia ericoides*). Ground cover includes Sagg (*Lomandra longifolia*), Wallaby grass (*Austrodanthonia* spp.), Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) native cranberry (*Astroloma humifusum*). Native cherry (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*) and Silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) are also present, particularly near the edge of the remnant vegetation and the BBQ area.

Unfortunately cotoneaster spp., blackberry and boneseed have invaded this section. However, the boneseed is being controlled by cut and paste.

(Thanks to Alan Gray at Tas. Herbarium and the Land for Wildlife assessment prepared by Andrew Welling for plant identification.)

The rest of the reserve is covered by:

- * Open parkland, which Council mows two or three times per year, around the BBQ/picnic area;
- * A couple of open paddock areas, one at the top of the reserve overlooking Goulds Lagoon, and the other running parallel to Wakehurst Road, down to Roseneath Park; and
- * An area of weedy regrowth, which includes Drooping she oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and Silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) is located through the boom gates at the top of Poimena, next to the two upper reservoir tanks. The weeds include blackberry, hawthorn, boneseed, African boxthorn and cotoneaster.

In 2007 the Austins Ferry-Granton Community Precinct Committee of the Glenorchy City Council obtained an Envirofund grant for just over \$8,000 to cover revegetation of about 12 stone rockeries originally installed by the Roseneath Development Association, some weed control and planting Blue gums. The stone rockeries, located in the open parkland area, were planted with a mix of native grasses and understorey shrubs. Some came from the Understorey Network, with others supplied by the Glenorchy Council.

Fifty Blue gums were planted as part of Tree Day in 2009 at the top of the paddock on the eastern slope down to Roseneath Park. Despite the attention of vandals, who regularly removed stakes and protective plastic, a number have survived, and a few have actually thrived. We can thank the particularly wet winter following the planting!

More recently we have obtained an NRM grant for just over \$2,000 for fencing around two mature *Eucalyptus viminalis* habitat trees in order to encourage natural understorey regeneration under these two trees, which are isolated in a mown paddock at the top of the reserve. If there is no natural regeneration, we will sow with local provenance understorey plant seeds. These trees are particularly important, as they are a couple of the few old enough to have developed suitable nesting holes in Poimena.



Oblique aerial view of Poimena and surrounds, Sept. 2009

The Brooker Highway is in the left. The southern slope of Poimena is the patch of bush, with the open paddock on the right forming a part of the eastern flank. The fifty Blue gums were planted at the top of the paddock.

Roseneath Rivulet runs along the southern boundary. The housing development in the foreground was built in the 1960s.

The housing area to the left of the reserve is the Poimena subdivision, developed from good agricultural land since the mid 1990s.

The large round structure is the main reservoir, where the car park, BBQ/picnic area and toilets are located. The more open area above and to the right of the reservoir is the parkland where the revegetated stone rockeries exist..

To the left of the parkland is privately owned land, with the more weedy area of the reserve, and a paddock beyond (just visible against the background of the housing development on the northern boundary). The two habitat trees which will have fencing installed to promote natural understorey regeneration are in the middle of this paddock.



Rockery area before revegetation



Poimena Reserve – view of natural area bushland on southern slope, taken from end of Erskine Street.



Some of the 50 Blue Gums planted for National Tree Day 2009, with an Envirofund Grant

Article and Photos: Bob Holderness-Roddam

Irrigation Controller Repairs Needed

Does any USN member have the skills to repair the computerised components of an irrigation controller? The irrigation controller at the USN's nursery has been replaced due to a failure of the original controller's computerised system. The USN would like to have the original controller repaired and kept as a back up system, but current repair costs make it prohibitive to do this. Is there any member who would like to attempt to repair the system for us? Please contact Oliver Strutt on 62 344286 or email understorey@gmail.com

Attention Growers Left Over Plants

Do you have any spare plants left over from the last growing season?

The USN's nursery would gladly take these plants if they are still in reasonable condition.

Please contact Oliver Strutt on 62 344286 or email understorey@gmail.com

Understorey Network Seed Sorting – North East Coast Branch

The North East Coast branch of the Understorey Network met at Lower Germantown Road on Thursday 31st March, to sort through native seeds that had been collected earlier along the Scamander foreshore and in other locations. A small group gathered, sorted, bagged and labelled all the seeds to send to the Hobart seed bank for distribution to growers who are rehabilitating land with understorey plants, the Understorey Network works to match up growers and those needing plants as well as private land owners who grow for themselves. After a few hours of sieving and sorting a morning tea was shared and enjoyed by the members who chatted about possible future activities in the area. The Understorey Network is always looking for new members in the area and we do host a number of activities through the year which are open to members and non members.

If you would like to learn more about the Understorey Network contact either Alison Hugo (6376 8388) or Janet Drummond (6372 2851)



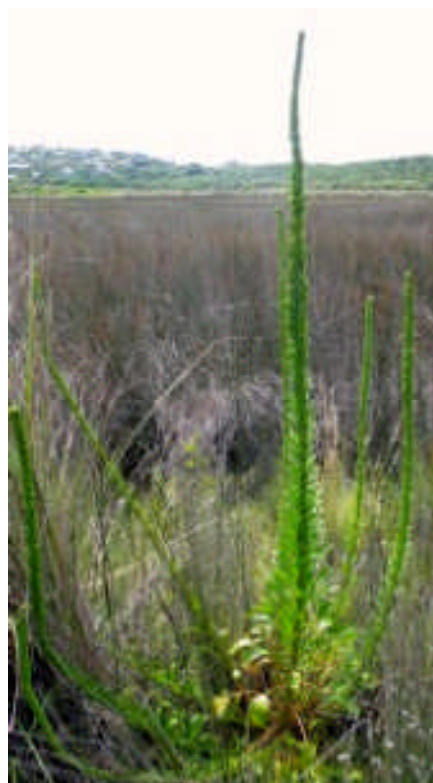
Janet Drummond with seed sorting helpers Susan Probert and Francis Lehrmayer



Seed sorting (above) and bagged seed (left)

Janet Drummond

Propagation Pointers	
Family Name	Malvaceae
Genus Name	<i>Lawrencia</i>
Species Name	<i>spicata</i>
Common Name Salt Lawrencia	
Perennial herb up to 1 metre Flowers green-yellow in dense terminal spikes Grows in moist to waterlogged brackish areas along the coast in most states	
Seed treatment	No treatment should be required and would germinate under normal conditions
Propagation notes	Can be grown from cuttings or plant division
Seed sowing months	Sow September to October One seed remains in each nutlet
Growers, if you have propagated this species and can further add to the information provided we would very much appreciate hearing from you. Please email understorey@gmail.com	
Warner Wait	



WHAT'S HAPPENING

The Understorey Network organises many of its workshops with support from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program and other organisations.

Please call the office on 6234 4286 or email oliver@understorey-network.org.au for more information or to RSVP for any of the workshops.

Also check the website for the latest Calendar of Events.

Forty-Spotted Pardalote Habitat Planting Working Bee (South)

When: Sunday 26th June, 10am to 12:30pm, morning tea and lunch provided

Where: Alonnah, South Bruny Island

Threatened Eucalyptus morrisbyi planting working bee (South)

When: Saturday 2nd July, 10am to 12:30pm, morning tea and lunch provided

Where: Calverts Hill, Sandford

Aurora Grow Wild Project Launch and Planting Working Bee (South)

When: Wednesday 13th July 10am to 12:30pm, Barbeque lunch provided

Where: Seven Mile Beach

Forty-Spotted Pardalote Habitat Planting Working Bee (South)

When: Saturday 16th July, 10am to 12:30pm, morning tea and lunch provided

Where: Dennes Point, North Bruny Island

Understorey Network Annual General Meeting with Guest Speaker Sally Bryant

When: Saturday 13th August, 10am to 11:30am, morning tea provided

Where: Riverview Room, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart

Planning Ahead

Native Plant Workshops – propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

Devonport – Friday 7th October

Wynyard – Saturday 8th October

Launceston – Saturday 22nd October

St Helens – Sunday 23rd October

Sorell – Saturday 12th November

Kingston – Sunday 13th November

Bruny Island Bird Festival (South)

When: October 25th to 28th

Where: Bruny Island

Understorey Network Committee Meetings

When: The second Monday of every month, 5:15pm

Where: USN office, Level 1, 148 Elizabeth Street Hobart

All members are welcome to come to our regular meetings – please RSVP for catering purposes

Thank You Gill

The committee of the USN would like to thank, most sincerely, Gillian Shannon, our editor for the past two years, for her mastery at editing our newsletter. We thank her for the time and effort she has put into her volunteer work with the USN. Much appreciated Gill.

We wish her well in her future travels and endeavours.

Wanted — Editor

If you have some spare time, 4 times a year, and can use 'publisher' or 'word' we have the position for you!!! Editing our newsletter does not require you to source articles, remind people to send in their contributions or contact printers etc. It requires someone with computer skills to organise reports, dates, photos and articles ready for printing. Please contact Oliver if you would like more information.