



# UnderStories

Autumn 2013

Number 61

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](mailto:Oliver@understorey-network.org.au)

PO Box 4535 Bathurst Street, HOBART 7000

Office: 148 Elizabeth Street. HOBART 7001

### Project Officer

Sam Beattie

### Committee

President: Warner Wait  
Vice-President: Anne Griffiths  
Secretary: Joan Rodrigues  
Treasurer: Rupert Manners

### Committee members

Amanda Cole  
De Deegan  
Jenny Warren  
Mary Jolly  
Margaret Downie

Editor Sue Sagewood

Visit our website and Plant Propagation  
Database:

[www.understorey-network.org.au](http://www.understorey-network.org.au)

## Inside this issue

- 2 President's report
- 3 Grant for Tolosa Nursery
- 4 Article by Phil Watson
- 5 Propagation pointers
- 6 DTNH Project
- 7 Plant Aid
- 8 What's Happening

## Coordinator's Report

What a hot dry summer it has been! How are your plants fairing? In a lot of the places I have visited around the state lately many young plants are really showing signs of stress, especially after some of those hot days we have had. That said, in most of the revegetation projects we have been involved with over the last year there has been a success rate close to one hundred per cent. I suspect using water crystals when planting them has been a contributing factor. The revegetation techniques field day this month will be an opportunity for people to share stories on what factors do contribute to successful plantings and we will share these with you in coming issues.

Of course fire is a major factor that has had a huge impact this summer on our vegetation. My condolences go to those who have lost property and suffered as a result of the recent fires. In some instances the hard work of many years of revegetation and native gardening has been lost. The Understorey Network respectfully wishes to support those who have been burnt out and who want to replant natives. See the article on Plant Aid in this issue for more information on this initiative.

As well as Plant Aid, there will be many worthwhile projects for members to grow for in this Spring's growers scheme (registration forms will be sent out in the next issue).

I would be very interested in receiving feedback about your experiences with the growers scheme this year (and/or in the past) so that we can find out what works well and doesn't and improve it in the future. Again, despite changing suppliers, I believe the potting mix this year in the South was sub-optimal so rest assured that next year we will ensure it is good.

If you are a receiver of plants or are growing your own to plant this year I would also be interested in hearing from you about how you are using the plants and what your plans are for planting them. The Understorey Network may be able to assist with advice and/or resources.

The Network is going very strongly at present and it is great to be involved in several significant projects around the state, including NRM South's major revegetation and restoration project on North Bruny Island. If you are interested in finding out more about any of the projects or getting involved send me an email or come along to one of our monthly meetings in Hobart.

Here's to some good autumn rains.

**Oliver Strutt**

## President's Report 2013

What a difficult year for growing plants with a wet spring and a long dry hot summer so don't feel guilty if you have lost some plants. That extreme hot day on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, hottest day on record, actually burnt off native plants on my block that have been growing there for years. If you have managed to save your plants then you have done well.

Our trials on Bruny Island have had a tough time also, with many small Eucalypts that germinated last spring 'burning off', but I guess that's nature. With my experience in the bush I have noticed that in some years everything germinates and in other years very little germinates so the more we can work with nature the better and this applies to what time of the year we should be sowing seeds.

This summer should have been quite good for seed collecting, but no doubt some seeds would have dropped on those hot days. Some can be sown now and others later in the year (check our website for more information).

From now until May is a good time to start putting in cuttings. A good soil mix for cuttings is 2 parts composted pine bark and 1 part coarse river sand with out any fertilizer. Keep the cuttings in a semi shaded place for this month while it is still warm and then put them into a hot house if you have one. They will be ready to pot on once they have developed roots. Look at the bottom of the tray/ container for the little white roots to appear. Keep them damp at all times.

With autumn upon us we should be able to look forward to planting out our spring germinated plants, at least all the ones we managed to save through the summer, but I would be waiting until we get some good rains before attempting any plantings.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new employee, Sam Beattie. Sam will work part time, two days a week for us for the next six months. Sam will have responsibility for coordinating all aspects at the nursery, including engaging new groups to utilise the nursery (see Westpac Grant article in this issue). He will also be working with schools, engaging students in seed collecting, propagating and planting, as well as assisting Oliver with the White Gum trials and the inevitable administration requirements.

**Warner Wait**

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## Welcome Sam Beattie

We would like to welcome Samuel Beattie to the role of Project Officer with the Understorey Network.

Sam will be a most welcome addition to the USN combining youth, energy and experience. He is very much an all-rounder as his accomplishments show.

He has qualifications in Conservation and Land Management, Horticulture (in progress) Contemporary Practical Music, Outdoor Recreation, Remote Area First Aid and has qualified in a Rafting Guides Course and Tourism Operation.

In the past he has worked as a contractor in bush regeneration, as a Field Officer for Redd Forests collecting data calculating carbon content and has been engaged in weed control, native planting and track construction for Tas. Flora.

But wait there's more!

Sam has worked as a Cradle Mountain Huts walking guide, leading groups for six days from Cradle Mt. to Lake St. Clair which of course requires a strong customer service focus. Just to prove his unquestioned fitness, he has guided groups down Mt. Wellington on mountain bikes and even has ridden people around Hobart in a pedal powered rickshaw.

To add to his all-rounder tag, Sam is a musician of note (forgive the pun) having played at Falls Festival and at weddings. Beware! Sam is also an exponent of kickboxing!

We welcome Sam and wish him all the best over the next six months.

Smiling Sam Beattie



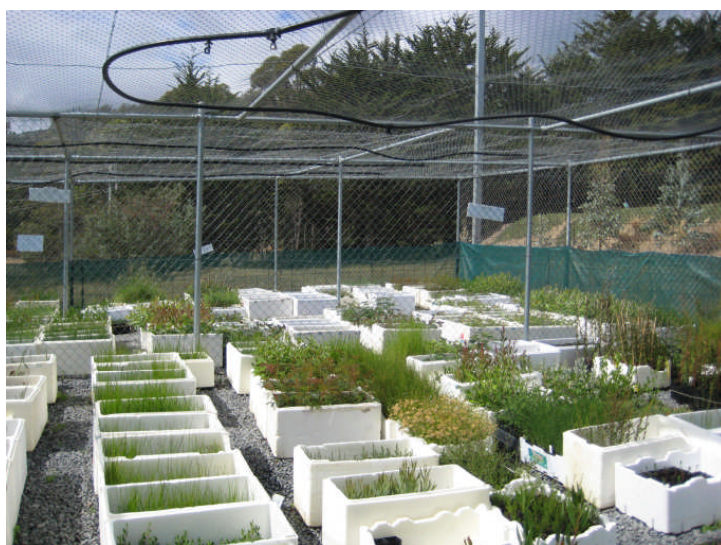
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### Sponsorship for Tolosa Street Community Nursery

Landcare Australia has recently been awarded a major grant from the Westpac Foundation's National Innovation Grant program. And we are very pleased to announce to our members that the Understorey's Tolosa Street Community Nursery will benefit from the funding grant's success.

The grant will be used by the recipients to contribute to the building of stronger, resilient and self-reliant regional communities through supporting nurseries in seven different locations across Australia. The USN's community nursery at Tolosa Street is one of these nurseries.

The support from Westpac Foundation and Landcare Australia will provide substantial funding over three years. We are very excited about the improvements we will be able to make to the site and infrastructure and these upgrades will allow us to grow more Tasmanian native plants for projects and increase the utilisation of the site by a greater number of community groups, who support marginalised youth and disadvantaged groups.





## It's All In The Timing

Viewed carefully, the roadside long paddocks around Tasmania can be seen as woodland refuges for many of our feathered and furry friends and to display a striking range of wildflowers and orchids.

Although our Mt Rumney region's roadsides are typical of the state-wide road reserves, they differ somewhat in that long lengths of roadside reserves are vegetated with local native grasses, groundcovers, shrubs and trees. Some of the later flowering summer wildflowers under the towering blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and white peppermint (*E. pulchella*) canopies, include the yellow leek lily (*Bulbine glauca*), the appealing tiger orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*), the yellow billy buttons and scaly buttons (*Craspedia glauca* and *Leptorhynchus squamatus*), the delightful blue bells (*Wahlenbergia stricta*), the blue daisy and white flowered hill daisy (*Brachyscome spathulata* and *B. aculeate*), the shrubby bushes adorned with daisy-like flowers, viscid daisy bush (*Olearia viscosa*) and the yellow everlastingbush (*Ozothamnus obcordatus*) to name just a few.

Of course there are also growing numbers of environmental weeds that have been introduced for their colourful flowers (such as agapanthus and mainland wattles) as well as few small patches of listed weeds of significance which represent the hidden weed threats on nearby landholdings; gorse, spanish heath, serrated tussock and canary broom to to be seen among the natives.



Pale Vanilla Lily (*Arthropodium millefolium*)



Hyacinth orchids  
(*Dipodium roseum*)

Additionally concealed amongst the roadside wallaby grasses (*Danthonia* sp.), tussock grasses (*Poa* sp.) and spear grasses (*Stipa* sp.) are a selection of threatened plant species that survive the challenges of their roadside existence to complete their annual cycle of growth, flowering and seeding. For example a delicate little mauve daisy blue pale vanilla lily and chocolate lilies (*Arthropodium millefolium* and *A. strictum*).

One early December Sunday morning a roadside slashing sign appeared on Cambridge Road signaling the intention that the annual slashing of Cambridge road side was imminent. Slashing is mainly aimed at reducing fire threats, limiting fretting of the road edges and producing a neat and tidy appearance.

These signs also heralded that very soon slashing along the first 300 meters on the left hand side Mt Rumney Rd. would eventuate. Having daily observed the leisurely growth of 16 stick like, cryptic roadside gems there was a genuine urgency to brief the contractor. Appealingly within a month's time it was anticipated that they would burst forth into a large spectacular cluster of tall rosy pink flower spikes. Limited time was available to save this iconic population of rosy hyacinth orchids *Dipodium roseum* before they suffered from decapitation like many others in this location over the last few years.

A chat with the tractor driver found he was very keen to avoid them. He indicated that over the years, he had a vivid memory as well as a diary note about their existence indicating that he never slashed them if they were clearly visible. From now on he undertook to closely look out for these brown, stick-like flower spikes. Given that they are commonly in full flower from late December to late February his earlier than normal slashing program would have decimated the population.

For the record these hyacinth orchids are leafless saprophytes (obtains food from decaying organic matter) relying on underground fungi to post nutrients and moisture to their fleshy deeply foraging roots (rhizomes). This ensures that they survive in the dry barren roadside location under moisture-sapping sheoaks. They boldly display showy spotted pink flowers on a tall spike (up to 30 cm) with a striped labellum (lip) which with the aid of female bee pheromone scent, attracts male native bees for pollination services.

Interestingly they disperse some of the smallest diameter seeds in the plant kingdom which must form a close bond with the underground fungi to ensure seedlings survive. For the numerous racing cyclists who are attracted to Mt Rumney, hopefully being greeted with this cheery colourful hyacinth orchid display, should provide momentary relief from the thought of another 4 km tortuous training cycle the summit.



Tiger Orchid

(*Diuris sulphurea*)

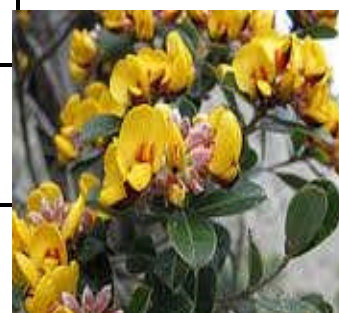
Phil Watson

## Propagation Pointers

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Family Name:</b> FABACEAE   |   |
| <b>Species Name:</b> Pultenaea daphnoides  |   |
| <b>Common Name:</b> Native Daphne  |   |
| Fabaceae has 57 known species. Daphnoides can grow in rather poor soil types as long as it is well drained. It is a fast grower and when in flower it is a mass of yellow to reddish coloured pea flowers and is very attractive. The seed is in a pod and like most pods when mature they open and drop very quickly. Keep a close watch on the pods when they are getting close to mature if you want to collect the seed. However, the seed must be mature before collecting. They flower from September through to November and the seed should be maturing from October to December |   |
| Seed treatment   | Being a hard coated seed it is probably better treated with hot water or if you're patient try sowing in December and waiting until maybe September or October for germination. |
| Propagation notes  | I have not grown this plant from cuttings but if you try just carry out the normal treatment taking your cuttings from March through to the end of April.                       |
| Seed sowing months   | As explained above seed sown during October after hot water treatment should germinate 10 to 30 days after sowing   |
| 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 <a href="mailto:understorey@gmail.com">understorey@gmail.com</a>   |   |



Warner Wait



Warner Wait



## Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House Revegetation and Garden Restoration Project

In the January Tasmanian bushfire disaster many in the community lost their much loved gardens, orchards, garden sheds and tools. In responding to community need the Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House (DTNH) Revegetation and Garden Restoration Program has been established to assist locals to get back in their gardens and reclaim their land.

Kerrie Brown has been appointed to coordinate the project, whereby local people affected by the fires can sign up and register their needs. Kerrie will then make an assessment of the garden along with the needs or specific requests of that community member and an individual plan is formulated.



The burnt out remains of a tool shed

Clearly, the needs of people in the community are diverse and may include anything from requesting help shovelling mulch or setting up a new irrigation system through to complete restoration of a vegetable garden. Many garden sheds and all the tools, hoses and compost heaps have been lost in the fires, not to mention the plants and trees and veggies that once grew.

The DTNH Project has received some funding through the Red Cross Appeal, but is largely dependent on financial donations from the community and on volunteers donating their time. Volunteers have been put to work on gardens participating in pruning, weeding, gathering up burnt plant material & spreading mulch. Many more volunteers will be needed in the coming months, spreading compost & mulch, removing opportunistic weeds and replanting.

The DTNH Program is also working closely with organisations such as The Understorey Network, Landcare & The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who have been impacted by the fire. A number of plant nurseries, individuals, and groups such as Plant Aid in conjunction with Landcare, are growing a wide range of plants that will be available for fire affected gardens.

All donations of tools, hoses, mulch, vouchers from garden centres and plants will be greatly received.

The Bream Creek Farmers Market on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May will host the first of the plant give-aways for those registered on the Revegetation and Garden Restoration Program. To donate plants for fire affected gardens please contact Kerrie Brown at the DTNH on 6253 5579.



Apple baked on a tree



## Plant Aid

PlantAid is a community project initiated by permaculture teacher Heather Thorpe and coordinated by Margie Jenkins of Landcare. . The project involves a collective of individuals and organisations, each contributing distinct skills and strengths to meet our shared goal of helping to restore and regenerate landscapes and gardens in Tasmania's fire-affected areas and through this, to support local residents and landowners. It is therefore an initiative to help communities re-grow!

Plant Aid will work together with the DTNH project, but will also include the other bushfire affected areas in Tasmania.

Naturally the Understorey Network is involved. We would like to provide local native plants to those whose land, large or small, has been affected by the fires, as we did following the Victorian fires. We will therefore be asking members who would like to grow plants as part of our 2013 spring growers' scheme, to grow either specifically for this project, or alongside growing plants for themselves, other members and/or other projects.

We will be able to offer advice to anyone who would like it but essentially it is the choice of the 'receivers', wherever possible, as to what plants are propagated...except for weeds!

This is a wonderful opportunity to help in a practical way. Next time it could be any of us needing help!



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### **Sustainable Living in Kingborough (SLIK) Love your local landscape expo (South)**

The Understorey Network will be having a display and propagation workshop

When: Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April

Where: Kingborough Council Chambers, Kingston

### **Native Plant Propagation Workshop and Coastcare Tree Planting Working Bee (North West)**

How to propagate Tasmanian native plants from seed or cuttings, followed by working bee helping Ulverstone Coast Care group to rehabilitate an important site.

Morning Tea provided.

When: Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 10am to 12:30pm

Where: Buttons Creek, Ulverstone

### **Native Plant Workshops (North West)**

Seed collecting and plant identification walk:

When: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 11am to 12pm

Where: Heybridge Hall, Blythe Heads

Propagation workshop covering seed and cuttings:

When: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 12:45pm to 2:30pm

Where: Reseed Centre, Penguin

Come to either or both sessions.

### **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

**Please call the office on 6234 4286 or email [oliver@understorey-network.org.au](mailto:oliver@understorey-network.org.au) for more information or to RSVP for any of the workshops.**

## Volunteer Opportunity

The Understorey Network requires someone to assist with processing our seed collections and entering them into our seed bank.

The work would be at our Hobart office and would be supported by USN staff.

If you are interested please contact Oliver.

## Autumn Plant Sale



We are holding our autumn plant sale at the Tolosa Street Nursery, Glenorchy  
(western end of the park)

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup> 10.30 - 2.00**

**Monday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 10.30 - 2.00**

We have a very good selection of Tasmanian Native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses.

*Tube stock and plants in 6"pots available by donation*

*Please bring your own carry bags &/or boxes*

