



UnderStories

Winter 2013

Number 62

Promoting, preserving, protecting and rehabilitating native vegetation

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Visit our website and Plant Propagation
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www.understorey-network.org.au

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Coordinator's Report

Writing this, I am still wondering when we are going to get a decent bit of rain. Around the Hobart area at least it seems we are still much needing the so-called autumn rains that we rely on for giving our plants moist ground to be planted into. And we do have a lot of planting to do this year!

At the Tolosa Nursery, over the past 6 months more than 24,000 tubestock plants have been propagated. Half of these are for Glenorchy City Council, including a major water sensitive urban design project in Windermere Bay. Other major projects, for which the Understorey Network will also be coordinating the planting of the tubestock, include the NRM South project working with farmers on North Bruny Island to replant threatened species habitat, and the Southern Midlands Council "Bushlinks" project that involves planting copses of woodland within areas converted to native grassland.

Organising these major revegetation projects is taking up a large part of my time as well as the usual grant applications, reports, etc. It has been great to have had Sam working lately to share the workload, and some of you I'm sure will have now met the cheery fellow at workshops or other events.

You will find in this edition the annual membership subscription form as well as the growers scheme registration forms. If you are a new member and have joined since January this year you do not have to renew, otherwise please send back your form at your convenience (even if you are paying via eft). For the growers scheme we have some great projects to grow for, including bushfire recovery, and we will also welcome people registering to receive plants through the scheme. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any of this (I know all the forms can sometimes make it seem complicated). I look forward to hearing about all your planned planting projects and how the USN can help.

Oliver Strutt

President's Winter and Annual Report 2013

With the long dry summer behind us and a cooler autumn heralding the winter, I hope most of last year's plants are safely in the ground waiting for warmer spring weather so they can really take off. Hopefully there has been good ground preparation before planting, which will help the small plants a lot, but if the plants are mulched it will help them establish through next summer and will save a little on watering too. Most plants grown in the open will need some protection from wild life.

If you grew plants last year, we hope you will consider doing the same again this year as we will be propagating plants for the fire affected areas of southern Tasmania (Bushfire Recovery –forms included in this newsletter), as we did three years ago when we grew for the bushfire ravaged areas of Victoria. Thank you to those growers who have returned their **feed-back forms**. I would like to remind those who have not returned them to do so soon so that the years' results can be collated.

We have had a wonderful year in our nursery at Tolosa thanks to our volunteers who have grown so many strong healthy plants. Our 5th autumn plant sale has been brilliant. Remember that plants can be bought from the nursery on Mondays during the year with the exception of some school holiday Mondays.

The USN has been promoting itself recently, principally at the Love Living Local event in Kingborough, the Treadlightly festival at the RTBG, the Bream Creek Market and at Agfest at Carrick. We have been able to 'man' a site at these events but new volunteers to help us continue to do so would be most welcome. We support new volunteers – we won't just 'leave you to it' – a regular event volunteer would be there too to show you the ropes so if you are interested in helping our regular volunteers please contact Oliver or Sam at the USN office.

We would love to hear from any members who would be interested in coming to our meetings held once a month in Hobart. Committee members don't have to travel around the state which is good. Our meetings usually go for about 2 hours, starting at 5.15 with a ¼ of an hour break for quiche and a cuppa which makes it quite a social occasion. Please contact our office so that we can cater for you.

Warner Wait

Tolosa Native Plant Nursery and Community Garden – Update

The USN has recently updated its strategic plan for the Tolosa Nursery and Garden. There are some interesting new actions that have been proposed, most of which rely on the on-going support of volunteers.

Ian has recently joined our volunteer team and with his support many of our buildings have received their first ever coat of paint and they look impressive.

New guttering, plumbing, bagging of the block wall, deck painting and interior renovations to the meal room make the centre a more welcoming place for Life Without Barriers clients and the volunteers, thanks to Bill, Michael and Ian.

That leaves Susan, Bridget, Margaret, Sue, Anna, Craig, Jenny and I to concentrate on propagating plants, which we have done with much success. Our autumn plant sale was very successful, bringing \$1700+ into the kitty to help fund some of the works that are in the pipeline. We hope to be able to build benches for the outdoor plant areas so that all our boxes of plants can be off the ground. Better for the plants (no roots growing through the boxes into the gravel, making it difficult to extract plants from tubes) and better for our backs. We hope to rebuild a part of the old hothouse and add a purpose built pot washing facility at the same time. Guttering will help overcome some drainage issues.

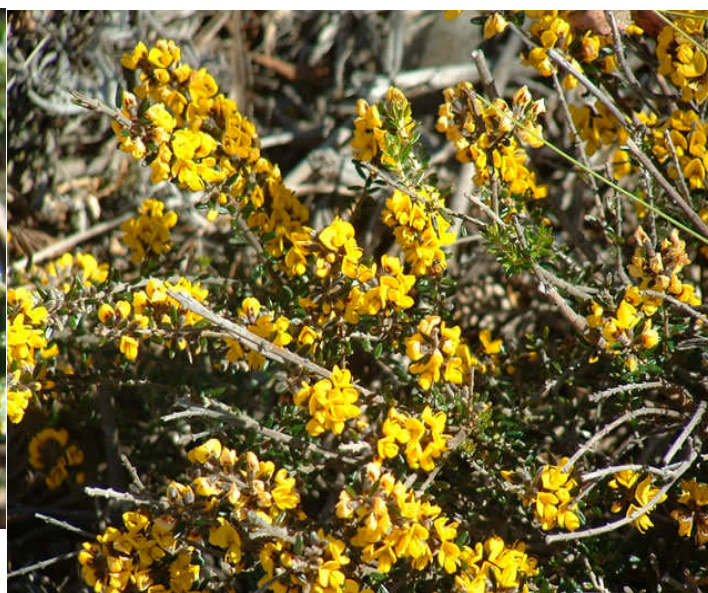
Our astute readers will have already tallied the number of volunteers who 'work' at the nursery and some may have decided that we don't need any more. This is not the case I can assure you. We still don't have time to work consistently in the garden and some months not even at all. Families, work, travel, and a myriad of other reasons mean we rarely have all the volunteers on deck each week. So if you would like to volunteer some of your time we will welcome you with open arms.

Amanda Cole

Propagation Pointers

Family Name FABACEAE	
Species Name <i>Aotus ericoides</i>	
Common Name Golden Pea	
<p>This is one of the pea flowering plants and is quite wide spread especially on the coast and when in flower it is very pretty. The foliage is a nice dark green colour.</p> <p>It will grow in most soils, but needs good drainage, however it will tolerate dry conditions once established. I have seen it growing in hard gravel in very coastal conditions. It is very susceptible to root disease.</p>	
Seed treatment	<p>Being a pea flowering plant the seed does have a hard coating but responds well to the hot water treatment never-the-less, but use hot water not boiling water.</p> <p>If working to imitate nature, sow the seed during December through to February and there will probably be a good germination rate happening through the winter / spring season. This is the time when the seed drops naturally</p>
Propagation notes	This plant responds well to propagation by cuttings and cuttings taken during February to April and with the use of a little rooting hormone there should be a good success rate.
Seed sowing months	As explained above any time from Dec through to September but if the hot water treatment is used the best time to sow would be September and October. Germination could be achieved with in 6 weeks.
<p><i>Growers, if you have propagated this species and can further add to the information provided we would very much appreciate hearing from you.</i></p>	

Warner Wait



A Member's Visit to the Royal Botanic Garden's Australian Garden, Cranbourne, Victoria

Where do I start? What adjectives do I use? Overwhelming, sensational, breathtaking, amazing and if I was a Gen Y awesome!

Upon entering the 15 hectare Australian Garden in the 363 hectare Royal Botanic Garden, Cranbourne complex, any of these adjectives will immediately come to mind and yet on their own will not do justice in trying to describe what awaits the visitor.

I was there in heavy rain on a warm and slightly humid day and the experience was still wonderful.

This garden, easily traversable by walking or by the garden explorer (train), is overpowering in its presentation of native Australian plants. Great thought, not to mention expense, has combined to produce a world class garden attraction on the scale of the gardens at Versailles or perhaps even Babylon.

Complementing the contemporary landscaped space are artistic and design works, which add another dimension to the site, from the Diversity and Future Gardens to the Escarpment Wall Sculpture and from the Rockpool Pavilion to the Ephemeral Lake Sculpture.

The second stage of the garden opened late last year following the initial establishment of the Australia Garden in 2006 following twenty years of planning, construction and planting. There are now some 1400 plant varieties and more than 170,000 individual plants.

The Red Sand Garden, representing the red centre of Australia, greets the visitors as they step through the doors of the visitor centre. The astonishing redness of what is certainly one of the showpieces of the gardens would make any visitor believe they were in central Australia.

From here the garden design follows the journey of water in Australia along the Dry River Bed precinct to the west and the Rockpool Waterway through to River Bend and Melaleuca Spits to the east.

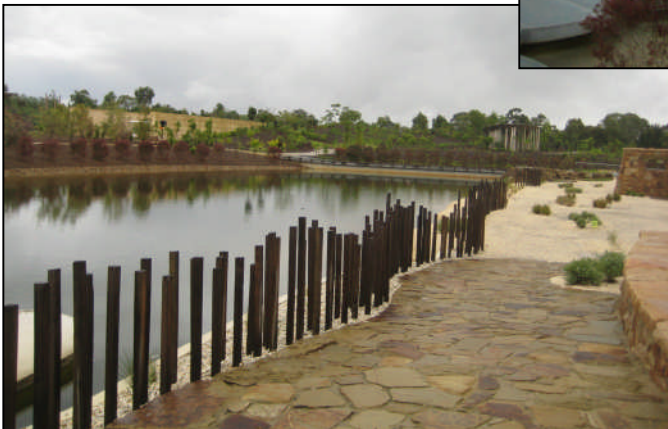


The western side of the garden takes the visitor through the natural landscapes of Australia. Here is the Eucalypt Walk, a fascinating journey through ironbarks, boxes peppermint, bloodwood and stringybarks with their diversity of form, smells, bark and foliage, finishing at the Scribbly Path, a wonderful piece of landscape design.

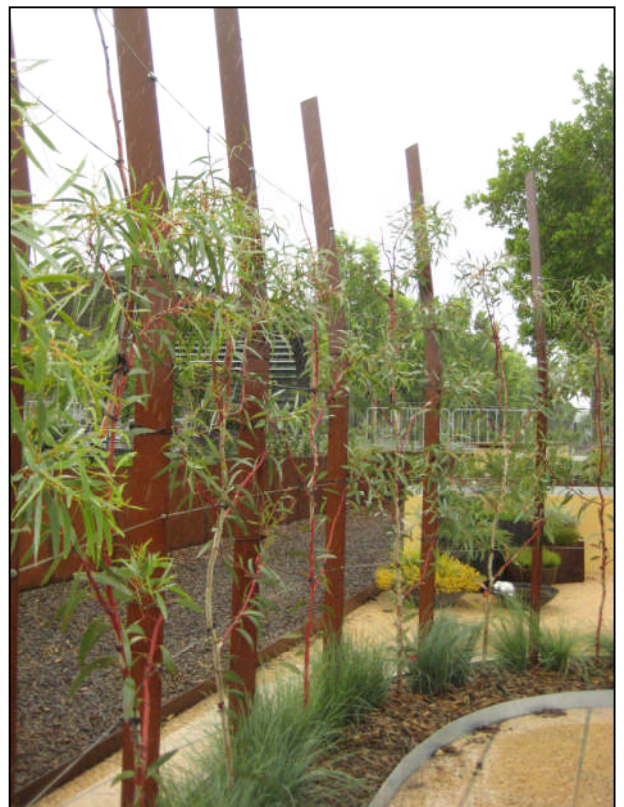
The indigenous people called the largest sand hill in the Cranbourne area Towbeet. This hill is gone now since sandmining began in the 1920's but the gardens have recreated a 'Towbeet' in Gibson Hill. From the top of this small hill (wheelchair accessible) there are views over the Ian Potter Lake with its Lily Pad Bridge, River Bend, Elizabeth Murdoch Promenade, Seaside Garden and Melaleuca Spits.



Melaleuca Spits is representative of Australia's coastal topography where rivers flow to meet the sea. This area is planted with bands of Melaleucas. To the east is the Arbour Garden, featuring climbing plants and to the west the Seaside Garden with its representative jetty poles stretching along the shoreline. Evidence of attention to detail is found in pathways where timeless leaf impressions are imbedded in the sand coloured concrete.



The northern end of the garden offers display gardens including How to Garden, Promenade Plaza, the Backyard Garden, the Lifestyle Garden, and the Greening Cities Garden. If only my garden could be half as pleasing as the lifestyle garden. Stunning plants, formally and informally arranged, espaliered snow gums, climbing billiardiera on tall steel rods, creatively displayed tubs and pots with beautiful specimens of native plants made this a favourite area of mine.



The landscaped designs in the garden range from a sandy river bank, tablelands with angled rocks hinting at mysterious locations, to rock pools, inland rivers and sandy spits of coastal Australia. Certainly water and the lack of it is a continuing theme throughout the Australian Garden.



Children are well catered for with the Kids' Backyard and an area in the Rockpool Waterway where they can 'wade between the flags'. Next time you're in Victoria, put a visit to the Australian Garden on your 'to do' list. It is only 45 kilometres south east of Melbourne, an hour's drive and it's free.



Amanda Cole

Zipper Tree

"I'm happy that you would like to see my zipper tree, also I'm attaching an explanation of what I wanted to achieve.

I love Snow gums, they are survival experts and a shining example was this tree.

Wonderful, how it wrapped itself around the diseased part of the trunk and keeps growing anew.

Looking at it I had vision of a colourful, open jacket over the old shabby jumper, all it needed was to add the zipper....."



Anna Holan

USN with PlantAid at Bream Creek Market

"I have 128 acres, 127 of them were burned." "I jumped into the water and the fire ball went over the top of me...it burned my hair but I was OK". "I couldn't get home by road so I went round by boat and swam ashore...got to the house in time to put out spot fires but then the fire forced me back into the water." "We lost everything except the clothes we were wearing...the fire came so fast."

These were some of the comments I heard on Sunday from some of the survivors of the horrific fires on January 4th on the Forestier Peninsula.

We (the USN) were at the Bream Creek market, along with other groups which make up PlantAid, giving away plants to those wishing to revegetate their devastated land. We gave out 700 plants, ranging from ground covers, through shrubs to tall trees, though not surprisingly many people were a bit wary about the latter.



Grateful purchasers at Bream Creek market



Annie & Jenny at Bream Creek market

PlantAid is ongoing and we will be asking USN members to grow plants for this project this spring through our Growers' Scheme. These plants will be distributed the following autumn to those land-holders who have registered with PlantAid, so if you would like to grow for this please let us know by registering as a grower for the 2013 Growers' Scheme when the forms are sent out with the newsletter.

It was very heartening to be able to provide plants for really very grateful people.

Annie Griffiths

Sustainable Living in Kingborough Expo

On Sunday the 7th of April I travelled to the Kingston Civic Centre to run an Understorey Network stall at the Sustainable Living in Kingborough Expo. A wide variety of stalls and entertainment were present, historical groups, commercial nurseries, food, crafts, art and music. The event was well attended by a broad demographic, partly due to the beautiful sunny weather; and many Kingborough residents were interested in finding out from us which particular native plants would grow and look best in their situation. Many thanks to Amanda and De for helping out on the day, keeping me company, introducing me to people, being good salespeople and knowing answers to questions from the public. A number of new members signed up to USN (welcome!), helpful advice on revegetation and weed control was given, many native plants were sold, contacts were made and a fine day was had by all.

Sam Beattie

USN members recognised at Glenorchy Volunteer Awards

At the annual Glenorchy Volunteer Awards the Mayor of Glenorchy, Alderman Stuart Slade, recognised the massive contribution that volunteers make to the community and indeed that their efforts are what makes it a community.

Volunteers were recognised in different categories for their hours of service ranging from 500+ to 10,000+ hours. Amongst the recipients were five Understorey Network members who volunteer on a regular basis at the Tolosa Community Nursery.



To Amanda Cole, Susan Friend, Bill Hills, Bridget Hutchison and Michael Jones, congratulations on your awards and thank you for your work and the contribution you are making to the Glenorchy community and the Understorey Network.

Oliver Strutt

Understorey Network at Seafest 2013

On Friday the 22nd of March Oliver and I trucked up to Triabunna for the second annual Seafest School's day. Along with the Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania (SCAT) and a dozen other marine and coastal educators, we conducted a rotating series of five workshops with one hundred young people from Triabunna, Swansea, Orford and Levensdale primary schools. We discussed coastal ecology, revegetation and led a hands-on demonstration of native plant propagation, both by seed sowing and the taking of cuttings.

Since Seafest I have reconnected with teachers involved to organise a number of planting activities, revegetating coastal areas near each school using some of the plant species the students helped to produce at Seafest. This will form part of the Coastal re-vegetation and schools engagement for a SCAT Caring for our Country project.

So, if you are wondering who took the numerous *Atriplex cinerea* cuttings that will show up in the nursery the answer is: the Understorey Networkers of tomorrow! (Undies for short?)

Sam Beattie

What's Happening

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