



UnderStories

Promoting, preserving,
protecting &
rehabilitating native
vegetation

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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: 148 Elizabeth
Street. HOBART

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 Rebecca Taylor

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

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Coordinator's Report

Welcome to a new edition of *Understories*. I would like to thank long-serving volunteer editor, Sue Sagewood, for her hard work (and at times perseverance) over the past three years, and I would also like to welcome, and thank, our new editor, Rebecca Taylor. We are always keen to keep this newsletter interesting, so if you have any ideas for articles or feel like contributing in any way (stories, with photos, of your adventures with Tasmanian plants are always welcome) please contact us.

Well, summer is nearly upon us, and with the fairly wet spring we have had, hopefully all your plants are doing well. If you are participating in this year's growers scheme, thank you for making it our biggest one for some time. This year we have nearly 90 volunteer growers, many of whom have signed up specifically to help provide plants to people whose properties were burnt in last summer's bushfires. To all receivers, please make contact with your grower if you haven't done so already and also start thinking about preparing your site for next year's plantings.

To growers, I hope your seedlings are germinating and growing well. All but some of the slower species should have germinated by now. Don't forget that if you have had patchy germination across a box, you can transplant from pots with multiple seedlings to ones with none – just be careful not to damage their fragile roots. If you have any concerns about the progress of your seedlings please don't hesitate to contact me. Also, don't forget to fill in your growers scheme feedback form that was given to you with your seeds.

The growers scheme this year has been supported by a grant from the previous Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund, that was part of the Clean Energy Future program.

Propagation at the nursery is going full steam ahead and soon all of the plants will be up off the ground on benches, so that will save the backs of our hardworking volunteers there.

Summer of course is also the best time of year for seed collecting. Recently some work experience students from TAFE's Conservation and Land

Management Course did a thorough audit of the Understorey Network seed bank and it is certainly running low in many areas and for many important species. If you are able to collect seed from any native species when you are out and about this summer and send it in to us it would be most appreciated. Please record

the species, date collected and location. If you are unsure of the exact species, please include a sample of leaves and flowers also if available. I will also be doing some seed collecting walks around the state in the coming months, so hopefully see you at one of those.

Oliver Strutt

Propagation Pointers

Family Name: Tremandraceae

An under shrub in dry Eucalypt forest and woodlands. It is wide spread in heaths from sea level to the mountain foothills.

When in flower it has a lovely mauve coloured flower but is a difficult plant to grow from seed.

Species Name: Tetratheca labillardierei

Common Name: Black-eyed Susan

Seed treatment	Difficult to grow from seed but best results have been from smoke treatments. They say that seed raising media with some soil from around parent plants will assist with germination. Seed drops immediately on maturity and is best collected just before that and allowed to dry in a warm place to allow it to open.
Propagation notes	I have had great success in cuttings taken during March-April
Seed sowing months	This can vary depending on the method used, but try autumn sowing and wait till spring for germination but with smoke treatment try spring sowing.



From the President

I would like to start by welcoming everyone to a new year in the history of the Understorey Network and also thank all continuing and new committee members for the time that they are prepared to devote to the organisation. The 2013-14 year is going to be memorable year for a number of different reasons.

For a start we will be celebrating our 20th birthday by meeting at Oatlands in April. The location was chosen because it is conveniently situated between the north and south of the state and was the site of some early USN plantings. More details of the programme will be provided nearer to the date but we plan to inspect the site of that early planting (yes many of the plants have survived) and meet with people who have been important in the history of the organisation. Please put a note in your calendar to be in Oatlands on 12 April 2014.

2014 is also a time when we need to try to grow the organisation and review its future developments. At the moment we have 190 members with 90 growing for themselves or projects, including plants for bushfire victims. We also have a few thousand plants being grown by a wonderful band of volunteers at the nursery for projects and for sale, with the income being used to support various USN activities. Given the size of our membership and taking into account recent successes in the delivery of projects it is reasonable to claim that as an organisation the USN is "punching above its weight". Think what we could achieve if we could double our membership, which could be an important aim as we do not know what the future holds for us.

A change of government is always stressful for organisations that rely on government funding to support projects. The USN was written into a number of grant applications in the 2013 funding round but none of those applications were successful. We now wait to see how the new government will approach funding environmental projects and hope that we can continue to provide the type of service that they want to fund. Meanwhile we need to review the activities that our organisation undertakes to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our members and the community groups that we support with plants.

So I think that 2013-14 will be an exciting year for us and I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at various events but particularly our birthday party.

Joan Rodrigues

What's in a Name? - *Grevillea*

Some generic (adjective of genus) names recognise a person but others are descriptive of features of the plant.

Robert Brown (1773-1858) accompanied Matthew Flinders on an expedition to try and prove whether New Holland was one land mass or two. Joseph Banks offered Brown the position of naturalist. Brown was responsible for describing and naming many plants during his time in New Holland especially a prolonged stay in the colonies of NSW and Van Diemen's Land.

Brown recognised Charles Francis Greville (1749 – 1809) a British MP and one of the founders of the Horticultural Society of London, a vice-president of the Royal Society and a fellow of the Linnean society when he named the genus *Grevillea*. Brown was grateful that Greville had supported the proposed Flinders voyage to Australia.

Of Boots and Botany – What's out there in the bush just now?

I'd like to share with you some of the lovely images from a recent bushwalk which began along Whitewater Creek, Kingston and took us on a 17km circuit on local tracks including the Peter Murrell Reserve. It was a pleasure to note the extensive mixed plantings of native shrubs along the Creek banks courtesy of the Kingborough Bushcare Group. They were thriving and transforming the area along the track.

Next I was delighted to see the *Eucalyptus viminalis* plantings done by volunteers and USN members a couple of years ago to enhance habitat for the 40-spotted pardalote along the banks of Coffee Creek in the Peter Murrell Reserve. They, too, appeared to be thriving.



Other highlights of the walk were the Flying duck orchids (*Caleana major*) and Red beard orchids (*Calochilus robertsonii*) two of the 35 species of orchids reputed to thrive in the Reserve. Some fine specimens were spotted in the vicinity of the Howden Fire Trail (Pictured below)



These two 'stars of the show' had a wonderful supporting cast of colourful characters too numerous to mention. At ground level they included vivid patches of the golden *Hibbertia procumbens*, contrasting blue of *Patersonia glauca*, pinks/lilac of the *Tetrapetras* and the intricate patterns of the cream blooms of *Pimelea humilis*. (see pic at right)



Several species of pea flowers, including the delicate butter-coloured petals with grey background of *Gompholobium huegelli* (common wedge pea), *Baeckea*, several yellow everlasting and many more contributed to the ever-changing tapestry. Wherever the eye landed there was something of interest. As we returned on the opposite side of Coffee Creek, the *Melaleuca squarrosa* stretched away on either side of us with its lemon bottle-brush-like blooms brightening up the dull cloudy day.



My photography was a delightful diversion but caused me to spend half the day running to catch up with the group as the other inveterate walkers maintained their relentless pace regardless. On reflection, they were, in fact, very forgiving of my meanderings!!

Mary Jolly (keen bushwalker and USN Secretary Ed.)

SUMMER 2013/14 WHAT'S HAPPENING

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.

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.

Tolosa Street Nursery Report The 'Besser Brick' Wall

As anyone would know if they have worked in an environment with a Besser brick wall - it 'has to go'. Well it has taken us seven years along with a great number of suggestions of how it could be camouflaged, as ridding the site completely of the 'grey blocks' (yes they aren't even bricks) was not an option.

The ideas came from various sources over the last seven years from let's do something about this wall; let's paint it; let's paint a frieze; we need the wall bagged (thanks Oliver); let's do some art work; to let everyone do their bit and that could be some mosaics. Finally it was all coming together. We had the 'bagged' wall, we had six interested mosaicers (is that even a word?) and a little expertise gathered the previous winter.

But we needed a person to coordinate it all.

That's where Anna Holan fit in. Anna is a volunteer at the nursery, but as well as having an interest in learning about our Tasmanian plants, as she hails from Queensland, she is also a sculptor.

So our volunteer 'artist in residence', aka Anna, was just the person to coordinate it all. So began the task of developing the grey Besser brick wall at the nursery complex into something spectacular. The transformation began; first with a little girl watering her garden flowers and developed with the painting of the background. With the help of her nursery volunteer friends, the winter months were put to good use creating mosaic native flowers. Anna then had the task of pulling this 'public art project' together.

"Have you finished your flower yet?" we were all asked each Monday morning. Finally the flowers were transposed onto Anna's 'tablet' and we could see what it all might look like.

Volunteer Ian was asked to assist in securing the flowers to the wall with screws while the glue dried. Anna began placing the mosaic native flowers with lots of advice from the sidelines. Leaf



shapes were added to the flowers and many hours of paintwork followed. The spider's web, complete with spider and little lady bugs added to the scene.

Hours of creative work later and the finished product is fantastic. Gone is the grey!!!

<The 'little girl' is secured to the wall and painted



Background painting>



<Ian was asked to secure the flowers to the wall while the glue dried.



Sassafras, Wahlenbergia and Carprobrotus rossii flowers are featured, please feel welcome to come by and have a look.

DERWENT ESTUARY PROGRAM

The Derwent Estuary Program (DEP) has a long running relationship with the Understory Network through the 'Derwent Estuary Program Penguin Project'. Funded through a number of Commonwealth government initiatives (most recently a 3 year 'Caring for our Country' Grant) the DEP source hundreds of native plants from Understory Network growers each year. Grasses, groundcovers, shrubs, and trees are grown and provided to Hobart and Kingborough Councils to revegetate breeding colonies of the little penguin *Eudyptula minor*.

Historically little penguin breeding colonies occurred in many locations along the Derwent estuary foreshore. Unfortunately, due to habitat loss, human disturbance, feral animal predation, and other impacts some colonies have been lost. Examples of extinct colonies include Sullivans Cove, Cornelian Bay, Morilla Estate, and Gellibrand Point. Surprisingly, little penguins continue to return to some small colonies in highly urbanised areas of the Derwent estuary. Survival of these colonies has been aided by extensive council led protection and restoration programs. Hobart City Council is close to completing a five year program to restore native vegetation to a colony. Restoration works have involved the gradual removal of exotic vegetation and replacement with native coastal plants as well as terracing to stabilise the area. Similarly, Kingborough Council have conducted extensive revegetation of a colony to return exposed grassy areas to dense vegetation. Planting days often involve community members and occur in April – June when most penguins have finished breeding and left the colony to fatten up at sea.

Several plant species are essential in the restoration of little penguin colonies. *Poa poiformis*, *Poa labillardierei* and *Lomandra longifolia* are a favourite as they establish quickly in low nutrient sandy soils to provide good cover, and also stabilise the soil for the formation of burrows. *Tetragonia tetragonoides* and *Rhagodia candolleana* provides a dense layer of sprawling vegetation over boulder areas or on steep banks. Ground cover is essential for little penguins as it provides shelter from the sun as well as stormy weather, and provides concealment from predators, and humans. *Carpobrotus rossii* also grows well in low nutrient soils and is particularly good at stabilising steep banks. Coastal trees common to the Derwent estuary include *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Acacia verticillata*, and *Allocasuarina verticillata*. These trees are planted at penguin colonies to provide overhead shade for penguins, and to promote the growth of understory plants. The deep roots of trees also help to stabilise the soil in steep areas of the foreshore. Annual weed control is often also necessary to maximise the success of revegetation efforts, and maintain native sites.

Restoring native vegetation at penguin colonies will provide opportunities for penguins to create natural nests under dense bushes and logs and among sheltered boulders. However, habitat restoration is a slow process that may take decades. In the mean time, custom built wooden boxes and concrete igloos have been installed at a number of colonies in the Derwent to provide nesting sites for little penguins. Breeding pairs regularly use these artificial structures and healthy chicks are often produced.



Thank you to the private growers, schools, and volunteers at the Tolosa Community Nursery who have grown plants in past years.

Restoring Our Landscape

A basic revegetation guide for fire-affected areas of Tasmania has been produced by the Tasman Landcare group and the Tasman Council. Copies of the Booklet are available from the USN office or Tasman Council.

Understorey Network is 20 next year

On April 12th 2014
the USN will be celebrating its
20th birthday

We are planning to visit Oatlands, the shores of Lake Dulverton to be precise, where the USN was involved in one of its first projects, planting Tasmanian native plants.

We plan to meet at Oatlands at 10.00 for a seed collection / plant ID walk between Parattah and Oatlands.

Lunch will be provided and a cake to mark the occasion will be cut to accompany tea and coffee.

Previous coordinators will be asked to mark the occasion with an official planting ceremony on Lake Dulverton's shoreline.

Mark this date in your diary as we would love you to be able to help us celebrate this special anniversary.

If you think you will be able to attend please let us know asap so we are able to continue our planning with some idea of the numbers involved.

Ph 62344286 or email understorey@gmail.com

