

Summer 2010/11 No 52

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

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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
Gillian Shannon

Editor

Visit our website and Plant Propagation Database:

www.understorey-network.org.au

Coordinators' Report

The Understorey Network has a new president, Joan Rodrigues, who is already showing her strengths in this position. The Committee were very sad to farewell Annie from this role after many years of hard work and dedication. Fortunately she is staying on as a committee member so we can continue to pick her brains! A big welcome to new committee member, Camilla Hughes who brings fresh energy and ideas to the Network. Members are welcome to attend our monthly committee meetings, which are held at the Hobart office. We have been having a great time sorting through the seeds in the Understorey Networks Seed Bank, matching species to grower and project requirements. Hopefully most of you have found the time to get your seeds in the soil. Some of the quicker germinating species may even be starting to poke their cotyledons up. We try and provide species that are relatively easy to germinate and grow and are sourced from your local area. For more information on how to germinate different species and the time expected for seeds to germinate, check out the comprehensive Understorey Network plant database at www.understorey-network.org.au. If a particular species does not grow, please let us know and where possible we will provide an alternative. Speaking of germination, a big congratulations to Oliver and Jessie for the birth of baby Henry!

We will organise a number of seed collection workshops in the coming months to replenish our seedbank. Check out the 2011 Calendar section of our website for further details, or give us a call in the office if you know of a suitable site to organise a seed collection workshop.

Two new projects will be kicking off in 2011 with the Understorey Network being awarded two Australian Government Caring for Our Country grants – see inside for further details. We will keep you posted about workshops linked to these projects.

Natalie Holman and Oliver Strutt

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to a new year of the Understorey Network. This is my first Newsletter as President and I want to start by thanking all those members who were able to attend the AGM to support your Committee. Unfortunately, I was at home feeling terrible and it fell to Annie as immediate past President to take control of the meeting, for which I thank her. Not a good start to the year I know but I can assure everyone that your Committee will be working very hard to support the USN and its members.

De Deegan and Annie Griffiths have been hard at work over recent months processing membership renewals. I welcome all renewing members and the following new member, Camilla Hughes, who is also on the Committee, replacing Brian Griffiths, who has given us many years of dedicated volunteering work. I feel sure that we will all have a very productive and interesting year.

For 2010-2011 we will continue to meet at 5.15pm on the second Monday of each month and I remind everyone that it is an open meeting and all members are invited to attend. Those members who have previously accepted the invitation know that we have a limited number of seats in the office so I suggest that members wishing to attend let Ollie or Natalie know beforehand to allow us to collect spare seats from the other offices in the building before they are locked.

By now all growers should, hopefully, have their seeds planted and with luck, green fingers and skill should soon be seeing some young shoots. Please remember to note progress on the form provided as that helps us develop a better understanding of how the plants should be managed.

In recent weeks we have signed contracts for two grants, one with Aurora and the other under the Federal "Caring for our Country" programme to "Enhance the Habitat of the Forty Spotted Pardalote" in the Tinderbox and Bruny Island areas. In case anyone does not know, the Forty Spotted Pardalote is a small bird that relies on white gums, *Eucalyptus viminalis* for its survival. I am sure that Ollie and Natalie will provide regular updates on these projects in future Newsletters.

Those of you who have been to the USN website will see that we have updated the calendar of past events and are putting a copy of the Newsletter on the site after publication. We have plans to also list future events there to help all members forward plan to attend. I hope to see as many of you as possible in future months at our workshops and other activities.

Joan Rodrigues

GRANT NEWS

The Understorey Network was recently awarded a Caring for Our Country Community Action Grant to increase skills and knowledge in protecting and rehabilitating Tasmania's native vegetation. Funds from this grant will be used to review and update our online plant database to ensure it remains the most comprehensive and up to date information source about Tasmanian native vegetation, complete with propagation information (seed treatment methods, germination time, cutting notes) as well as information on plant communities, habitat value and site and soil tolerance. Once complete, workshops will be organised around the State on how to use the online database as well as planning rehabilitation projects. Materials will be provided to participants in order for them to propagate native plants for use in their own revegetation projects. In addition to this, the Guide to Growing Tasmanian Native Plants will be updated and printed.

The other project, also funded through the Caring for our Country grant programme, has a focus on increasing the critical habitat of the Forty Spotted Par-

dalote. This project aims to increase the area, connectivity and resilience of white gum forest habitat by engaging landholders and community groups in undertaking revegetation, fencing and activities that enhance natural regeneration. Workshops will be held on seed collection and plant propagation. If you have Forty Spotted Pardalote birds or habitat on your property and/or are interested in being involved in this exciting project, please contact the office.



Forty Spotted Pardalote

Natalie Holman

AURORA TEAM BUILDING DAY

Tolosa Community Garden & Native Plant Nursery—Tolosa Park

As part of the Understorey Networks sponsorship agreement with Aurora, 'Aurora Grows Wild', twenty eight Aurora staff members held a team building day at the nursery and gardens. The Aurora staff were involved in three activities during their half day with us. The activities were all carefully timed so that there were ample breaks for morning tea and a barbeque lunch before the group headed back to their offices and work stations.

In conjunction with the gun club, with whom we share a common boundary, it was decided we would help in planting their bare embankment, on our western boundary, with native plants. The steep bank was tricky to negotiate but the groups in rotation were able to plant, stake and water-in a huge number of plants.



The second activity undertaken involved planting *Eucalyptus pulchella*, which will grow to form a hedge to separate the community garden from the nursery buildings. This activity required some serious digging, the adding of composted material to the holes as well as planting and bagging. Natalie has since coppiced the plants to encourage them to hedge.



cont.

The third activity was a workshop with Oliver, using cuttings to propagate native plants. Many of these have produced roots and have been potted.



It was a great day and the USN were thrilled the Aurora team achieved so much in such a short time. We are now looking forward to seeing vegetation growing on the bank and our hedge plants popping up over the top of their protective bags.

Amanda Cole

"WANTED"

Photographs

We advertised in the last edition (51) for photographs and now that spring has 'sprung' we are hopeful that the photographers amongst you have been out and about snapping flowering natives and that we will soon be inundated with jpeg files.

The database (www.understorey-network.org.au) is one of the most comprehensive databases of Tasmanian native plants in use in the State, with over 1900 plants listed. However, there are only slightly more than 300 that have an accompanying photograph. We would like to be able to complement the information already on the database by including photographs for those plants where one is not available.

The Understorey Network invites its members to begin taking photographs of Tasmanian native plants, send them to us and we will begin uploading them onto our database.

Please send your digital photographs as jpeg files. The photographs best suited to this purpose are those showing the plant is in flower. Please include the name of the plant photographed and send your name so we are able to acknowledge you as the photographer. Start photographing now and continue through summer and autumn, so capturing the full range of our beautiful Tasmanian plants.

Email your photographs to secretary@understorey-network.org.au



Bearded Orchid

UNDERSTOREY NETWORK PROJECTS

Linking Farm Management and Biodiversity

This project focuses on practical solutions to increase farm sustainability and enhance biodiversity on several private properties on Bruny Island.

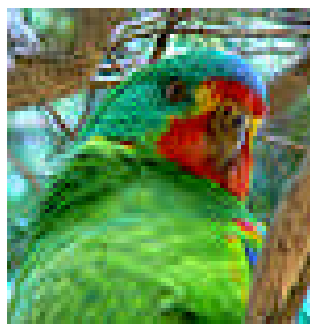
Island ecological communities often have high conservation values, however this needs to be balanced with the requirements of landholders to earn a living through primary production. It is often beyond the capabilities of individual landholders to manage the conflicting demands of balancing biodiversity with farm sustainability, because of lack of resources, motivation and manpower. The aim of this project is to provide Bruny Island landholders with decision making tools through property mapping to prioritise onground works. It also brings together landholders and the broader community to work cooperatively on land management problems, by providing the resources, advice and motivation to tackle common issues.

Bruny Island lies off the South East coast of Tasmania and has considerable variation in rainfall, topography and climate. North Bruny is drier, and has a mix of shack owners, new settlers and retirees as well as smaller landholdings and larger farms primarily grazing sheep. South Bruny is more mountainous, has higher rainfall and a mix of traditional and lifestyle agricultural pursuits including cattle, berries, grapes and sheep. There is a permanent population of about 620, with a large temporary population of visitors and shack owners. The island has high value remnant vegetation that offers habitat for threatened species, in particular the Swift Parrot and Forty Spotted Pardalote.

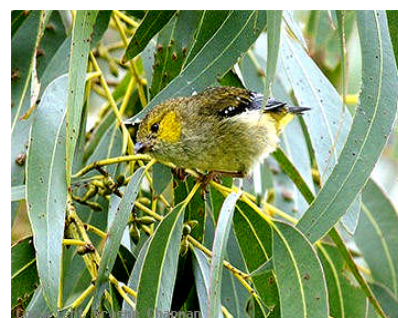
Bruny Island is a picturesque holiday destination and this project offers volunteers an opportunity to assist landholders with tree planting and seed collection and experience sustainable farm management practices. Organisations involved in the project include the Bruny Island Environment Network, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), Kingborough Council, the Bookend Trust, NRM South, the Understorey Network and Natural Resource Planning Pty Ltd (NRP).

On four demonstration properties, NRP has undertaken an analysis of natural and productivity values and threats from which management actions have been prioritised. CVA are then able to assist the landowners to undertake those actions that contribute to biodiversity conservation, such as fencing off riparian bush from stock, tree planting and weed control. The Understorey Network is coordinating seed collecting and propagation workshops as well as on-farm working bees to increase broader community involvement in the project.

A short documentary is also being produced about the project that will be released early next year. Its aim is to promote the methods used in this project to achieve similar outcomes for balancing sustainable farming with biodiversity conservation elsewhere in Australia.



Swift Parrot



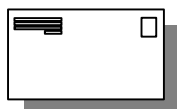
*Forty Spotted
Pardalote*

Oliver Strutt

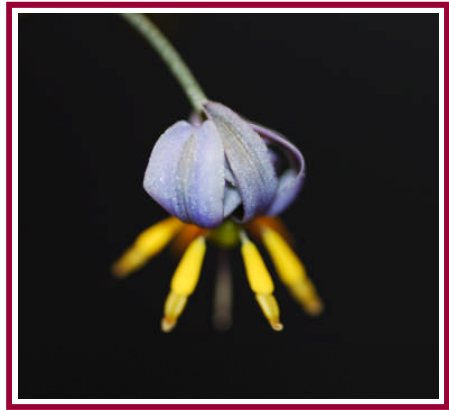
WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR NEWSLETTER IN AN ELECTRONIC FORMAT?

If you are interested in receiving your Newsletter by email, instead of a posted hard copy, please let the office know by emailing us at:

Natalie@understorey-network.org.au



Propagation Pointers	
Family Name	LILIACEAE
Species Name	<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>
Common Name	Blue berry or Tasman flax-lily
<p>There are about 30 species of <i>Dianella</i> including sub-species growing in South Africa, Asia, New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific Islands.</p> <p>They are a herbaceous rhizomatous perennial and Tasmania has three: <i>Dianella revolute</i>, <i>Dianella tasmanica</i>, and <i>Dianella longifolia</i> as well as several sub-species.</p> <p>They grow in a wide range of soil types and conditions. <i>Dianella tasmanica</i> will grow in almost full shade while the other two require a sunnier situation.</p> <p>They flower from May through to December with a lovely blue flower which has a yellow centre. The fruit or drupe is a blue berry with dark brown to black seed inside when mature.</p> <p>The seed is best collected mid to late autumn and stored inside the fruit over winter.</p>	
Seed treatment	Store the fruit on a cloth in a cool damp area and let the seed ferment inside the fruit over winter.
	About September, wash the seed out from the fruit and sow in tubes with normal sowing mix - germination could take some time.
	Smoke treatment is another method of seed scarification, but I think it important that whatever treatment you use, the seed needs the winter stratification. Just let the seeds ferment in the fruit for a couple of months.
Propagation notes	Division of the plant roots is quite successful but it would be difficult to do this on a large scale. Cuttings can best be taken in April or May.
Seed sowing months	Follow the treatments as explained above. You could try fermenting the seed in the fruit for a shorter time and then sow during the autumn, say April/May but germination may not happen until spring and sometimes even later - it depends a little as to where the seed boxes are as soil temperature also has an effect.
<p>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</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Warner Wait</p>	



“SANAGREE” FIELD DAY

The North East Understorey Network combined their depot day with a field day at “Sanagree”. Sanagree is a 12.5 hectare property, of which 11.8ha is protected by a conservation covenant. The property is owned and managed by Girl Guides Tasmania who engaged Bushways Environmental Services Tasmania to develop a Property Action Guide, with funding from a NRM North Community Grant.

The field day was an activity identified in the Action Guide as a way to highlight to the community what a fantastic property and facility Sanagree is and how it can be utilised by a wide range groups. The day was well attended by over thirty people from as many as five different community groups.

A local historian, John Holley gave an overview of the history of the property. He was followed by a local conservationist, Todd Dudley, who gave a summary of the natural values and history of the area. The local Bird Observers North East Group led by Liz Znidersic took us on walk through the property identifying local bird inhabitants. North East Understorey Network members took the opportunity to identify an array of spring wildflowers, including the Spurred Helmet-Orchid

The group then enjoyed a BBQ lunch followed by some serious weed removal activities. Heads down and bottoms up for a frenzy of juvenile Canary Broom removal.

The North East members were also involved in holding a Native Propagation Workshop with the local St Helens Youth Group. The group first learnt about the fascinating lives and forms of native seeds. They then got busy propagating up to 200 species of natives. The survivors will be planted out at the Sanagree site next Autumn.

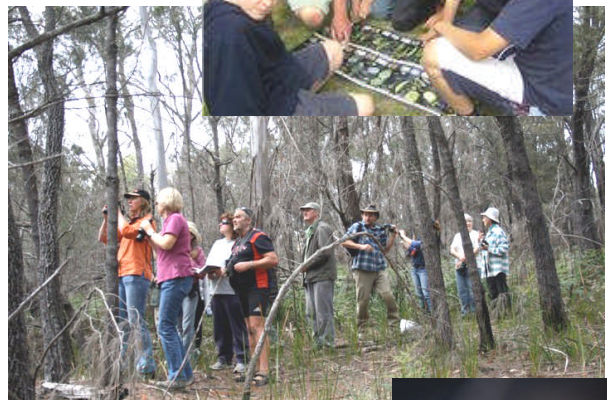
Janet Drummond attended a local Saturday market at St Marys to help promote Understorey Network membership. As the group received a grant from NRM North to purchase all our propagating material including pots, bags and stakes we have been able to encourage membership for growers at a reduced cost.

Finally another propagating workshop was held at the Fingal Primary School as part of a project (funded by an NRM North Grant) to restore and rehabilitate a bushland remnant. A series of outdoor lessons were held throughout the year by Paul Frater and Todd Dudley to teach the students about bushland management techniques, including weed identification and removal, habitat values and seed collection. The seeds were cleaned and sorted by the students and then propagated.

Alison Hugo



**Fingal
Students**



Twitchers

**Wax-lip
Orchid
*Glossodia
major***



The day attracted people of all ages

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The Understorey Network organises many of its workshops in partnership with other organisations and has received funding from the Federal Government's Caring for our Country program, NRM South, NRM North, Cradle Coast NRM and Glenorchy City Council.

Feel free to give us a call at the office for more information about any of the workshops below. We will be organising more in the coming weeks so check the website for the latest Calendar of Events.

The Bay of Fires Celebration—Activity Day

When: Saturday 18th December
Where: Binalong Bay Village Green.
Contact: Alison Hugo 0448 384 681

Seed Collection

When: Monday 20th Dec, 10:15am
Where: Waterview Property, Bruny Is

Seed Collection

When: Tuesday 21st Dec, 9:00am
Where: Coningham

Seed Collection and Propagation

When: Sunday 9th Jan, 10:00am (TBC)
Where: Lunawanna Hall, Bruny Is

Seed Collection

When: Monday 17th Jan, 10:30am
Where: Lime Bay, Tasman Peninsula

Plant Identification Walk

When: Saturday 22nd Jan
Where: Cockle Creek
(bus from Kingston and Huonville)

Seed Collection

When: Monday 24th Jan, 10:00am
Where: Cranbrook / Swansea

From Seed to Tree

Museum Holiday Program Event (17th – 28th Jan)
When: Thursday 27th Jan,
drop in between 11:00am – 2:00pm
Where: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
No bookings required, free event, all ages

Coastal Gardening Workshop

When: Sunday 30th Jan, 10:00am
Where: Dodges Ferry

Seed Collection and Propagation

When: Friday 4th February, 2:00pm-4:00pm (TBC)
Where: Greens Beach (Tamar)

Grasslands appreciation and grass identification

When: Sunday 6th Feb, 2:00pm-4:00pm
Where: Queens Domain, Hobart

Chancy Vale Open Day and Seed Collection

When: Sunday 6th Feb 12:00pm-4:00pm
Where: Chancy Vale Wildlife Sanctuary, Bagdad
Family Fun Day—No RSVP required

Coastal Gardening Workshop

When: Sunday 13th Feb, 10:00am
Where: Pawleena (Sorell) (TBC)

Seed Collection and Plant Identification

When: Tuesday 15th Feb, 10:00am-12:00pm
Where: Ouse School, Ouse

Grasslands appreciation and grass identification

When: Wednesday 16th Feb, 10am
Where: Queens Domain, Hobart

Seed Collection and Plant Identification

When: Sunday 20th Feb, 10:00am-12:00pm
Where: Poimena Reserve, Austins Ferry

Biodiversity on Farms Film Screening Premiere

When: Saturday 26th February, 6:30pm (TBC)
Where: Adventure Bay Hall, Bruny Is

Seed Collection and Propagation

When: Thursday 3rd March, 4:00pm-6:00pm (TBC)
Where: North East Park, Scottsdale

Seed Collection and Propagation

When: Saturday 5th March, 10:00am (TBC)
Where: Lower Wilmot

Propagating Coastal Plants

When: Sunday 27th March, 10:00am
Where: Okines Community Centre, Dodges Ferry

On the horizon:

Tasman Peninsula Coastal Gardens, seed collection and propagation workshops

Central Highlands plant identification, seed collection and plant propagation

St Johns Ambulance Workplace Level One Training for Natural Resource Community Groups (NE), Contact: Alison Hugo : 0488 384 681

***** Please RSVP for all workshops *****

Phone: 6234 4286

Email: secretary@understorey-network.org.au