



Spring 2011 No 55

.....***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: 148B Elizabeth Street. HOBART 7001

Committee Members

President: Warner Wait
Vice-President: Joan Rodrigues
Secretary: Camilla Hughes
Treasurer: Rupert Manners
Committee members:
Anne Griffiths
Amanda Cole
Natalie Holman
De Deegan
Mary Jolly
Margaret Downie
Editor: Sue Sagewood

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

Coordinator’s Report

It has been another action packed year for the Understorey Network with many different projects on the go and exciting developments. It has been especially exciting for me as coordinator working with many great people, so enthusiastic about Tasmania’s natural environment, and also having the opportunity to travel around this wonderful island for workshops and working bees. I have certainly had a busy schedule fitting in all of the events and activities. Of course it has been a team effort and thanks go to Tom Wright who has been working for the past three months on the pardalote project as well as all of the volunteers.

During 2010/11 the Understorey Network had approximately 175 members. Thirty-nine members grew plants as part of the volunteer growers’ scheme and eight members received plants though the scheme. In addition to the eight receiving members, volunteers also grew plants for projects, including the Derwent Estuary Program’s Little Penguin Project, the Caring for our Country Pardalote Project and the Friend’s of Calverts Hill Morrisby’s Gum Project. The seed bank is fairly well stocked after the summer seed collecting workshops and opportunistic stops whilst travelling the state, so it promises to be another great growing season.

Through the Caring for our Country “Community Action Grants” program, the Understorey Network was successful in obtaining funds for a project titled “Increasing skills and knowledge in protecting and rehabilitating Tasmania’s native vegetation”. The project involves updating our resources and communication products, including redesigning and printing our brochure and the “Guide to Growing Tasmanian Native Plants” and also designing a range of other communication products, including business

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cards, letterheads and event flyer templates. There will also be an update of the website and online plant propagation database. The database has been updated with the newest census changes and photographs for more species being added. The text of all pages on the website will also be reviewed and updated.

The other major component of this project is the delivery of six workshops around the state on plant propagation. Apart from demonstrating the hands-on techniques of the Understorey method, the workshops will also launch the updated website and show people how to use the online database. Workshops will be conducted in October and November this year in Forthside, Launceston, Scamander, Glenorchy and Huonville.

The Understorey Network has continued to maintain active working relationships with each of the three NRM bodies and over the past two years has received funding from each of them to deliver programs of workshops. This year saw the completion of a major partnership agreement with NRM South that involved delivering 17 workshops, covering plant identification, seed collecting, propagation and garden design across the region as well as support for the growers scheme and general Understorey Network activities. Another workshops program was a series of 5 workshops in coastal areas within the NRM North region.

With several of the major projects having wound up, the coming year may be a little less hectic than the previous one. Of course new projects will likely commence and we have funding applications in with Caring for our Country and will keep looking for other opportunities as well. We are hoping to develop stage 2 of the native plant display garden at the Tolosa nursery. We are also determined to serve our membership across the state and will be organising activities and developing projects to do that.

Oliver Strutt

Propagation Pointers

Family Name	MALVACEAE
Genus	Asterotrichion
Species	discolor
Common Name	Currajong
One species endemic to Tasmania. A tall shrub or small tree with creamy white flowers in terminal clusters. Grows in moist shady places in the south of Tasmania and is a fast growing plant.	
Seed treatment	Should germinate under standard conditions without any treatment
Propagation notes	Will grow from cuttings taken during the autumn
Seed sowing months	Collect seed March through to August. The fruit remains enclosed in a persistent calyx Sow March-April or September-October



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

Pots wanted

If you have spare pots (especially the two inch forestry tubes used in the growers scheme) we would be very grateful if you could drop them off to the office or the Tolosa nursery for re-use.

Of course, if you are growing as part of the next growers scheme hang on to them and notify the helpers on depot day that you do not require pots.
Thank you.

President's Address to AGM, 13 August 2011

The Understorey Network has had a successful year in with relation to our major projects work and with respect to the staff that we have employed. The major projects for 2010-2011 were;

- Linking Farm management to Biodiversity, on Bruny Island, please see the DVD on the USN Website for an update.
- KidsCare. Now completed.
- Enhancing critical habitat of the endangered 40 spotted pardalote, continuing into 2012.
- Aurora Grow Wild, continuing into 2012.

During the year we were lucky to have the services of three excellent project staff. We began with Ollie and Natalie job sharing. When Natalie left to have another baby Ollie took over her time and now works four days a week. Then we employed Tom for a couple of months to help with the 40 Spotted Pardalote project. Unfortunately, we did not have sufficient funds to retain his services beyond the end of July but were pleased to learn that he has now obtained a consulting position in Victoria. Our loss is their gain.

During the year we were successful in obtaining a number of small grants, which have allowed us to substantially revise the Grower's Guide, still a work in progress and review and revise a number of other documents, including the membership application pamphlet and templates that are used to advertise events.

Those of you who have web access will be able to see some improvements that we have made to the USN website. Hopefully in a few months there will be a more substantial improvement which is being funded by a Community Action grant. Those of you who are also familiar with and happy to use Facebook will hopefully have been to the USN Site on and will have registered that you "Like" it. If you haven't been there yet please do so as we would like to have a huge number of "friends" registered, which you do by simply saying that you like us. We have Annie and Tom to thank for getting us into the 21st Century in this respect.

There have been a number of developments at the nursery, including the provision of an access toilet which, when completed, will be particularly useful for our partner organisation Life without Barriers which provides services to people with disabilities. There has also been an upgrade of the nursery landscaping and we are planning to show this off to members when we hold depot day there this year.

Although we have had a financially stable year your committee is aware that falling government revenue, changing policies or other unexpected risks may impact on our ability to raise sufficient funds to pay our coordinator's salary and the organisation really does need a co-ordinator to remain viable. This was one reason why we have given some thought to possible fund raising activities that could help us to have a buffer in the bank. Many members generously make a donation when they pay their annual membership fee and that is very helpful. We have also found the people are very willing to purchase surplus plants and for this reason we asked the 2011 growers if they would be willing to grow an additional box or two or three for the nursery. Many have responded positively and for that we thank them. The Committee is also thinking about other ways to generate some additional income. A calendar springs to mind but we have not followed up on that for 2012, perhaps it would be a good idea for 2013. If anyone has any fund raising ideas, no matter how simple they seem we would like to hear them. Actually the simpler the better!

At various times during the year the USN is invited to participate in displays and events around the state. We like to be involved if it is at all possible because it is a very good way to publicise what we do and to increase our membership. However, there are many events that we cannot attend because we hear about them too late for anyone to volunteer to look after the stall. To counteract that we are putting together a timetable of annual events where we would like to see the USN represented and will then ask members if they would be able to volunteer to provide some support on the day. Hopefully members who live near to the event will be able to commit to provide a few hours of support, it is a very good way to get to know people and to promote the USN.

Before I conclude my remarks I would like to thank all of the members of the committee who have been a very hard working and supportive group. Without their enthusiasm it would not be possible to be providing such a positive report. Also I would like to give special thanks to Mary who has been a very hard working secretary to the Committee for as long as I have been a member. We have really appreciated the time that she has put into meetings and the knowledge about how things are done that she has brought to the meetings. She has been trying to find someone to take over from her and this year she has succeeded and we have a nomination from Camilla. I feel sure that everyone will support Camilla's nomination and, in anticipation of the elections, will thank Mary for her unfailing support.

Joan Rodrigues

Salt Water Creek

Salt Water Creek restoration is a small project that illustrates persistence combined with someone dedicated to the task will eventually triumph. Small has relative meanings. In this case for those involved the effort has at times seemed enormous. The stretch of creek attended to is very small being only one tiny part of the whole but what has been achieved points the way for future work and demonstrates what is possible.

Swansea is a small country town with a permanent population of about 500. The town serves extensive agricultural holdings including sheep farming, olives, grapes and walnuts. There are many larger rural residential properties within the town, many of which have absentee land holders or land holders who may be new to having a rural property. The management of natural resources (the soil, vegetation and all the critters) is critical but not everyone knows how and what to do – the control of weeds being one element that overwhelms many. For the rehabilitation of Saltwater Creek, infested with gorse, willows and briar rose to name a few of the major weeds, only a few enthusiasts from the township put their hands up to volunteer to undertake the task. The annual working bees at the site have since come under the banner of the Swansea Tidy Towns committee (a sub committee of the Swansea Chamber of Commerce).

Saltwater Creek rises in the hills behind Swansea and makes its way through various private properties to the outskirts of the township and then through the Duck Park Esplanade to the sea. That is, it does that when there is water in it. For a number of years, many parts were no more than a collection of dry beds, degraded and full of weeds. Gorse proliferated. Recent heavy rains have seen it flooding and bringing down large boulders so that some properties are now cut by what is a deepish albeit small ravine however the section that is the subject of this article is the small section that lies within a Crown road reserve (between Dove Lane and River Road). The landholders on either side are very supportive of the work with one family having done much weed control and revegetation on 'their' side of the creek. This area of the creek is visible from the township (have a look from the top of Noyes Street for a great aerial view) and the progressive changes to the site encouraged more and varied groups of locals to become involved in the project and to consider the practical components of Natural Resource Management. The visibility and regular reports on progress made, and of the people involved, have probably done more to make locals aware of the benefits of attending to weeds and what can be achieved at relatively little cost than any amount of talking could do. The section of the creek that is at the mouth of



the Duck Park, a popular picnic spot, has been cleared of willow by council workers. The fact that native rushes have been left demonstrates the usefulness of some plants (in this case to slow down and soak up water and nutrients). At least it does when people ask, 'Why have those 'weeds' been left?'

The long time neglect had resulted from the lack of a dedicated officer to identify this area as a problem and to put a program in place to improve the creek bed. It was no body's responsibility (as many areas of Crown land are). In 2006 Mel Kelly, NRM Officer for Council listed Salt Water Creek in her long-term plan for rehabilitation after Council removed a section of dense gorse infestation. At this time Swansea was in the middle of a drought. There was no water in the creek. The task was to remove the weeds and at the same time to plant so that no gap was left to encourage further degradation. Each year during National Tree Day, local volunteers worked along side International Student Volunteers (who had been working all week long out at Long Point with the staff from the Tasmanian Land Conservancy). It was difficult and uncomfortable work but the volunteers were supported in various ways to ensure that they felt that the task was both doable and as far as possible pleasurable. This was an important aspect of the project because the task became one that was both long term and beset by failures at different times throughout. Each year from 2006 to 2010 working bees have gathered to clear and plant. Locals have been encouraged by the support from those

from overseas especially since they were not going to gain anything from the improvement. All enjoyed morning teas and barbeques together and made the effort something of an occasion.

The first demon to cope with was the drought. Although a neighbour allowed access to his property to gain water for the trees that had been planted, it was a task that required considerable time and trouble. Working Bees can achieve a great deal but then regular follow up is critical and after the first extensive planting most of the trees died despite intermittent attention by both local volunteers and the NRM Officer. The second planting fared a little better with improved techniques to keep the plants watered but the constant dry weather meant the challenge was too great. One good thing was that the drought also held the gorse in abeyance so that the second planting was that much easier by the third planting workers were struggling in the mud.. At this point it is necessary to note the support in terms of plants given to the project by Pulchella nursery.



The picture shows Mel supervising a planting and clearing. She had broken her ankle but still turned up to wave her walking stick and to encourage both local and CVA volunteers to do their best. The picture is amusing but is also important as it demonstrates a dedication and a determination to make such events fun. Volunteers are more likely to put in sustained effort if this aspect is somehow included. The picture also shows the awful condition of the ground being cleared.

It is hoped that the improvement will encourage landowners further up the creek to follow the pattern set and certainly some others are trying but without an enthusiastic and dedicated NRM Officer nothing would have happened. It is a tribute to Mel Kelly's efforts that she now manages a small band of paid workers for the GSB Council. This is a considerable achievement for a community who had largely never heard of NRM and despite published articles seemed determined to remain in ignorance. "What's this NRM mean? This question continued to be asked even after numerous articles were published in the local newsletter. I would think that even the Councillors would admit that they were loath to take the matter seriously. No doubt Federal funding was very persuasive in the change but it is always necessary to show that change can be or has been achieved.

The 2011 pictures show an expanse of planting that shows that the trees are growing. A council worker is now allocated to maintain the area. The heavy rains have encouraged the trees to grow and hopefully they will be sufficiently established to survive less salubrious conditions. It is now a pleasure to look at and a healthy spot as the gorse if not gone completely is under control, the trees and shrubs are able to provide belt to support birds and insects and to help control what is sometimes a very damp area. In the future it is planned to develop a walking track through the area as part of a longer Swansea walking loop.



National Tree Day 2010 – Saltwater Creek, Swansea

**Article by
Elizabeth Hodson**

Velvet Worm Award Winners

Congratulations go to the North East Understorey Network who have received the Velvet Worm Award in recognition of their outstanding achievement in the protection and enhancement of the environment in the Break O'Day region.

Understorey Network North-East Branch President, Janet Drummond, said it was an honour to accept the award and \$500 on behalf of the group. "The prize money will be used to further the work of the network in promoting the protection of existing native vegetation and the use of locally sourced, native understorey in revegetation projects throughout the State."

The Velvet Worm Award for Natural Resource Management was named after two species of rare and threatened velvet worms that are unique to Break O'Day.

The NRM Break O'Day Facilitator, Alison Hugo, said "The criteria for the Velvet Worm Award focuses on biodiversity and the importance of the many species of plants and animals we share the planet with."



Clinton Downing, Frances Lehrmayer, Bob McIntyre, Joan Bradley, Pam Bretz and Jane Mcann

An Invitation to the 2011 Tasmanian Landcare Conference and Awards

The Tasmanian Landcare Association (TLCA) is holding its biennial **2011 Tasmanian Landcare Conference and Awards** in Stanley on Sunday 9 and Monday 10 October. The theme will be 'From the Ground Up'.

The great achievements of community landcare in Tasmania will be celebrated on Tasmania's beautiful North West coast. The conference and awards will be a great opportunity for information to be shared, projects showcased, ideas exchanged, and friendships formed and renewed. The conference program features varied and vast topics from local food and sustainable farming, to community engagement and on-ground landcare projects – in Tasmania and beyond. An electronic registration form is also on the website at www.taslandcare.org.au/Contact.html

The 2011 Tasmanian Landcare Awards Ceremony and Dinner will be held in Stanley on Sunday October 9th. For bookings contact: 03 6234 7117 or info@taslandcare.org.au

The three NRM regions are generously supporting Tasmanian landcare volunteers to attend the Conference. For more information and to apply for funding support contact your regional NRM office:

- Cradle Coast NRM p: 6431 6285 contact Alice Ryder e: aryder@cradlecoast.com
- NRM North p: 6333 7777 contact Melissa Lewarn, e: admin@nrmnorth.org.au
- NRM South p: 6221 6111 e: admin@nrmsouth.org.au

We are committed that the 2011 Tasmanian Landcare Conference and Awards are inclusive, accessible and affordable to the entire landcare community. If there is anything further we can do to ensure you can attend the event please contact us to discuss on 6234 7117 or e: info@taslandcare.org.au.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Margie Jenkin

on behalf of the Conference and Awards Steering Committee

Combined efforts on Calverts Hill, Cremorne

The weather was kind on Saturday 2nd of July for The Friends of Calverts Hill working bee which was supported by volunteers from the Understorey Network and the Pipe Clay Coastcare Group. With a crew of 14 plus 4 kids the work was quickly done. It was also great to have a few new faces along. There was much work before and after by many, however, as shown in the photos.



Seedlings in box

Around 200 *E. Morrisbyi* and understorey species were planted as part of the Federal Government's Caring for our Country Community Action Grant project.

This latest working bee is one of the many actions that have been occurring on Calverts Hill in the last couple of years to help protect the threatened species *E. Morrisbyi* through revegetation and serrated tussock control. Tasmanian Landcare has also funded the Pipe Clay Coastcare group for similar coordinated work. This includes a grant from the recent Tasmanian Landcare Fund and in 2010 a Tasmanian Landcaring Grant (funded by Caring for our Country), whilst Clarence Council has provided assistance for weed control on the reserve leading up to Calverts Hill.



Getting ready to work



Eathworks

One of the great successes of the various projects has been the coordination and efforts of various organisations and individuals including the great work of the weed contractors, LMRS revegetation specialists, Seven Mile Beach Parks and Wildlife Services, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, advice and support from Southern Tasmanian Council Authority/ NRM South project weed manager and Southern Regional Weed Management Officer DPIPWE, local landholders for weed control as well as the DPIPWE Threatened Species Unit for supporting this project.



Team work



Taking a break



Fencing



Tussock control



All done

Article and photos
Jodie Presnell

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.

Depot Day for Growers Scheme (South)

When: Saturday 1st October (Times to be advised in separate letter to growers)

Where: Tolosa Nursery, Tolosa Park, Glenorchy

Native Plant Workshop (South)

Propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

When: Saturday 1st October, 10:30am to 12:30pm

Where: Tolosa Nursery, Tolosa Park, Glenorchy

Depot Day for Growers Scheme (North West)

When: Saturday 8th October (Times to be advised in separate letter to growers)

Where: Central North Wildlife Care and Rescue, Forthside

Native Plant Workshop (North West)

Propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

When: Saturday 8th October, 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Central North Wildlife Care and Rescue, Forthside

Propagation working bee (South)

Sowing white gums and other understorey species for forty-spotted pardalote habitat

When: Tuesday 18th October, 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Barnes Bay CWA Hall, Bruny Island

Propagation working bee (South)

Sowing white gums and other understorey species for forty-spotted pardalote habitat

When: Wednesday 19th October, 10:00am to 12:00pm (RSVP Essential)

Where: Kingborough Council Nursery, Kingston

Depot Day for Growers Scheme (North)

When: Saturday 22nd October (Times to be advised in separate letter to growers)

Where: Trevallyn Primary School, Launceston

Native Plant Workshop (North)

Propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

When: Saturday 22nd October, 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Trevallyn Primary School, Launceston

Depot Day for Growers Scheme (North East)

When: Sunday 23rd October (Times to be advised in separate letter to growers)

Where: Sports Complex, Scamander

Native Plant Workshop (North East)

Propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

When: Sunday 23rd October, 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Where: Scamander Sports Complex

Native Plant Workshop (South)

Propagating native plants from seed + launch of updated website and native plant database and how to use it.

When: Saturday 5th November, 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Benders Road, Huonville

Seed Collecting Workshop (South)

Collecting seed to grow plants for Forty-spotted pardalote habitat

When: Sunday 12th February 2012

Where: Peter Murrell Reserve, Kingston

Seed Collecting Workshop (South)

Collecting seed to grow plants for Forty-spotted pardalote habitat

When: Saturday 17th March 2012

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

Growers' Scheme—Spring 2011

If you want to grow or receive plants as part of this year's growers' scheme and haven't yet returned your form, it may not be too late!

Please send your Growers Scheme Registration Form to the office by Friday the 16th of September at the latest. If you do not have one, please contact Oliver in the office.

Happy Growing!