



# YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NEWS

Vol: 19 WINTER 2015

## FEATURES

Local Landcare Profile - Gus & Lyn Hughes  
True Blue Aussie Bushfoods  
Managing Dieback



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# EVENTS UPDATE

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

Newsletter production and design is driven by volunteers on behalf of the Landcare Community. We look forward to your input.

### Editorial Team

Melissa Ainsworth, Helga Binder, Sally-Ann Henderson, Samantha Monks, Dina Monks and Warren the Wise.

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### Deadlines

14 August 2015 is the deadline for the Spring issue contributions.

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### Cover photo

*Astonishing lights (a punch hole) photographed in the sky near Leongatha.*

*Photograph courtesy of Gabrielle Wold*

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### BINGI BIODIVERSITY PROJECT DAY

Our BBP days are about a slow walk in the bush to record what plant and animal life we see to enter onto a database.

**When:** 9.30am July 12, 2015

**Where:** Meet at Pretty's Road (off Tap Tap Rd, Binginwarri) - Kevin Heggen's property.

**RSVP:** Let Kaye know you're coming on 5185 1398 by this Friday July 10.

### BBQ LUNCH & MERRIMAN CREEK LANDCARE GROUP MEETING

**When:** 12 noon - July 19, 2015

**Where:** Jacque & Paul Harrison's property

**RSVP:** Melissa - 51468328 by July 17

### COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING DAY & BBQ

**When:** 10am - July 29

**Where:** Seaspray Road, Seaspray

**RSVP:** Melissa by July 24 for catering & site map

### WARM-BELLIED WINTER TALK

Sally-Ann Henderson speaking to the beautiful and most interesting slides from her Antarctic trip early last year.

This is simply a social day with a belly-warming casserole lunch. We invite each of those coming to bring a small casserole to share.

**When:** 11am - August 1

**Where:** Binginwarri Hall

**RSVP:** John 5185 1455 by Wed July 29

### SOIL TEST INTERPRETATION COURSE

**When:** 10am - August 4

**Where:** Stradbroke Hall

**RSVP:** Melissa ASAP as numbers are limited & for catering purposes

### WOODSIDE LG AGM

**When:** 8pm - August 26, 2015

**Where:** Woodside Hall

**RSVP:** All welcome!

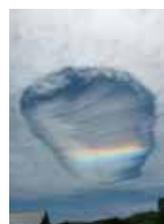
### YYLN AGM

**When:** 7pm - August 28

**Where:** TBA

**RSVP:** To Sally-Ann Henderson on 0427 581 152 or email: [Sally-AnnH@wgcm.vic.gov.au](mailto:Sally-AnnH@wgcm.vic.gov.au) August 14.

**See the winners of the Washed Up exhibition on page 9.**



A fallstreak hole, also known as a punch hole cloud, skypunch, canal cloud or cloud hole, is a large circular or elliptical gap that can appear in cirrocumulus or altocumulus clouds. Such holes are formed when the water temperature in the clouds is below freezing but the water has not frozen yet due to the lack of ice nucleation. When ice crystals form it will set off a domino effect, due to the Bergeron process, causing the water droplets around the crystals to evaporate: this leaves a large, often circular, hole in the cloud.



# FROM THE OFFICE

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Sally-Ann Henderson



### Sally-Ann Says:

*“The last couple of months I have had the privilege getting a feel for the breadth of work that Landcare and its partners have invested in.”*

The Board, the JARR committee and the Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group (CIBAG) have all held site inspection tours and I was lucky enough to visit the seagrass meadows of Corner

Inlet on a recent fisherman/farmer exchange day. It is a constant source of delight to see the variety of landscapes we have here in the YYLN. From the saltmarsh, banksias and grass trees on the coast to Redgum Plains and the towering gums and tree fern forests of the hill country, with so much in between.

John McClumpha has been working on the development of

the YYLN stand alone website which is soon to be launched. There is an opportunity to include some photographs which illustrate the beauty and diversity of the network. If you have any suitable images that you would like to share we would be most delighted. Of particular interest are before and after photos, which are always in demand by our funding bodies and for publicity and that warm fuzzy feeling.

Please email them to Sally-Ann or if they are hard copies we can arrange to scan them to a digital format. Many don't get a chance to see the network in all its glory and variety, so it has been great to see how much work has been done. It helps us appreciate the past and look to the future.

Speaking of the future, the board and staff are currently developing up an action plan for the last two years of the YYLN strategic plan. We would welcome your input if you have thoughts or priorities you would like to see included. Please feel free to call the office and talk to Samantha or myself or chat to one of the board members. An email with your ideas would also be most welcome.

Stay cosy, until next time. ■



THE YYLN BOARD TOURING THE PROJECTS

## Green Carpet Celebration

There is so much good Landcare work happening in the West Gippsland region. How could you choose whose work is the best? Why should you have to choose? This year the consensus from the Landcare networks within the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) was that a celebration event would be held rather than the more traditional awards. The CMA chose five categories, and invited each network to submit nominees.

Yarram Yarram Landcare Network submitted the winners

of our awards in the matching categories; Individual Landcarer – Helga Binder, Sustainable Farming – Damian Moore, Landcare Group – Woodside. As well as the addition of - Young Landcarer – Justin Foat of Woodside & Partner with Landcare – HVP Plantations.

More than 130 people gathered on April 24<sup>th</sup> at the Traralgon Vineyard. Attendees walked the green carpet and everyone was treated to an inspiring afternoon hearing of the great Landcare work that was occurring. Recipients were presented with

a framed photograph of their property and a short profile was read out about why they were

nominated. It was an honour to be amongst such legends of Landcare. ■



DAMIAN MOORE - WINNER OF THE SUSTAINABLE FARMING AWARD



# LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILES

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Helga Binder

*Newly arrived from UK, Lyn and Gus Hughes bought a 53 acre Madalya property in August 1981. This land was part of a subdivision created by landowner, Rod Jenkins. He didn't just want to sell his land, he wanted to create a rainforest residential park and bring people back into the Strzelecki's to counteract the widespread *Pinus radiata* plantations.*

Gus and Lyn, although still living and working in Melbourne with 4-year-old daughter Chloe, were the first to buy. They inherited a single fence along the road, blackberries the size of two-storey buildings, acres of ragwort and 1000 native trees donated by Rod - a fine initiative.

Every weekend for the first five years they camped and tried to create order from chaos. Fences were first, followed by sheep to deal with the ragwort. Gradually other blocks were sold and a small community of like-minded people formed in the hills of Madalya. All were from Melbourne and travelled down each weekend to work on their land. It was a labour of love.

The 1000 trees (blue gum, shining gum, messmate, yellow stringy bark, mountain ash) were planted in a badly eroded gully running through the center of Gus and Lyn's property and a rabbit proof fence was dug in around the new plantation. (See



**GUS AND LYN HUGHES WITH DOG DAISY IN FRONT OF THE FOREST THEY PLANTED OVER 35 YEARS AGO**

black and white photo). The plantation had a great survival rate, such that the Hughes' later used their home grown poles to build a woolshed. The second photo was taken in about the same place some thirty years later.

The Hughes later built a shed to replace the tent.

By 1985 their plans for a mud brick house were approved, so finally they and their now two daughters, Chloe and Polly, moved permanently into the shed and started building their house. Chloe started school at Devon North Primary School.

After twelve months, cooking and eating remained in the shed but sleeping moved to the upstairs section of their house. The mud walls gradually grew like a massive coil pot around them. The whole house was run on solar power and after a few years wind power was added. They still enjoy the luxury of their own power and delight in drinking pure rainwater straight from the tank.

In the late 80's they received a grant from the department of Conservation Forests and Lands to fence off a very steep and eroded patch of land and at the

same time decided to join the 'Land for Wildlife' movement.

In the early nineties they heard about the Woodside Landcare Group and sat in on a number of their meetings. After speaking to their neighbours to gauge interest, the Madalya Landcare group was formed in May 1995 to overwhelming support by the community. Gus was the inaugural president of the group, with Lyn Secretary/ treasurer for many years. Gus also went on to serve on the committee of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network with terms as both Treasurer and President.

*Continued on page 5...*



# LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILES

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Helga Binder

...continued from page 4



THE WAY THE HUGHES PROPERTY LOOKED WHEN THEY BOUGHT IT

Over the next twelve years the majority of landowners made big efforts to plant thousands of indigenous trees on their properties. Lyn and Gus estimate that they planted at least 10,000 trees on their property alone.

They also planted thousands of trees on neighbouring properties whose owners still lived in Melbourne. This work was in return for agisting the Hughes livestock.

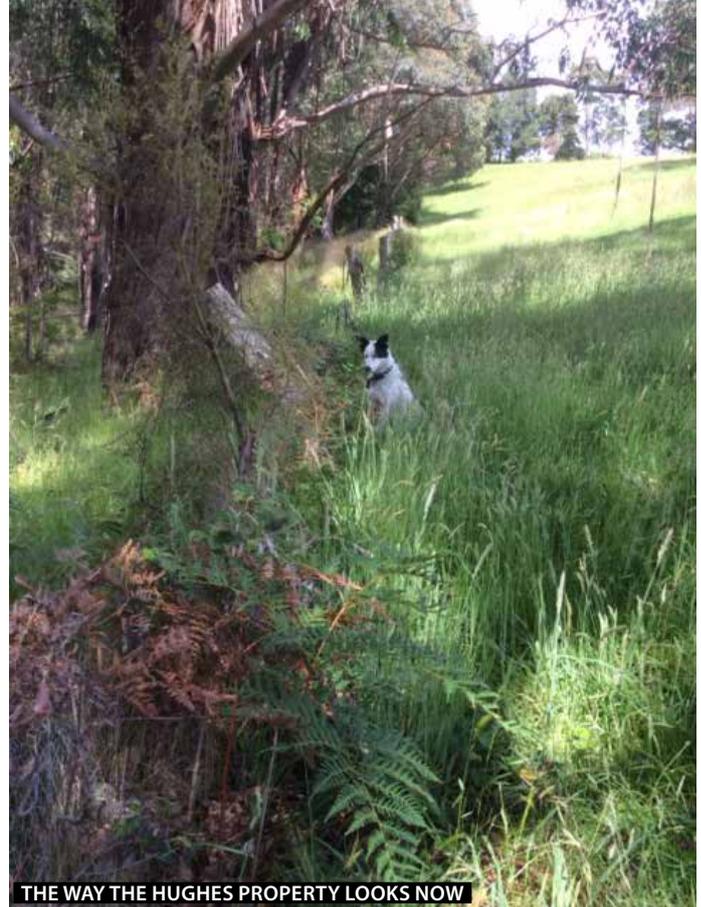
The Landcare Group organised willow removal from parts of the Jack River. This was followed by plantings of native flora on the riverbanks. Landowners also worked hard to beat the weed and pest problems in the area. Roadside spraying and fox baiting was carried out annually

with high cooperation between neighbours.

Gus and Lyn believe their biggest challenge was trying to persuade disinterested neighbours to participate in the Landcare work. They are proud of what they and some of their neighbours have achieved and love walking through their forests of trees and seeing the wildlife, birds and self-sown bushes all working together. In Lyn's words, "It is the best ever!!" There is little sign of erosion now.

They are, however, concerned for the future.

"We now have no Landcare group here in Madalya. The old community spirit which was so strong in Madalya, has gone as



THE WAY THE HUGHES PROPERTY LOOKS NOW

people have grown old, died or moved on. Although there are new and younger neighbours moving into the area, they don't appear to have the time nor inclination to start a new group. The weed problem is slowly creeping back on some properties and the roadside is looking a little neglected in parts." says Lyn.

"However, the trees that were planted by the Madalya community many years ago are still standing and give our fauna a great habitat as well as erosion control. We still love living here and feel extremely privileged to be able to enjoy such a beautiful area. We hope to eventually pass it on to somebody who will enjoy it and love it, as much as we do." ■

### PROJECT MAPPING

Interested in getting an online map of your project to share with your group, help monitor your progress and assist with the planning of your next project?

Check out this web site and see what other groups have been using.

<http://creeklink.org.au/>

If you have a look then send us your comments so that we can share them in the next newsletter.



# AROUND THE TRAPS

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By our Landcare Groups

### Wonyip

Wonyip landcare group recently held a meeting on May 16 to prepare for their upcoming Quoll project. They are also to receive some helpers in October when Cameron Stone and Shari become permanent members of the Wonyip community.

Werner and Turid got a big surprise recently in finding a Koala in their yard at Fish Creek - completely out of its environment. Left to find his/her own way home, it is disappointing there are not enough corridors for wildlife even in semi urban areas. ■



NOTHING LIKE WAKING UP TO A VISITOR AT THE BACK DOOR.

### CIBAG

Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group have been working really hard (well Helga, Dave and the contractors have) getting a major Communities for Nature project completed in the Agnes River and Dingo Creek.

Spraying of blackberries has been completed in 3 sections by 3 different contractors. This will knock the dreaded pest back from the streams by at least 20 metres. If the landholders that hold adjoining property work down to the river we can have a fairly large impact on controlling this weed in that area.

Exciting news came through regarding another project. Money for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Landcare grants project near the coast of Corner Inlet Ramsar site has landed in our account. The aim with this project is to remove blackberries from the Corner Inlet coast and streams adjacent to it thereby, and improving the habitat for migratory shore birds. Russel

has done a drive of the area checking to see where to focus our efforts. There has also been preliminary discussion on the use of a drone or radio controlled multicopter with camera to assess stream beds and prioritise works. Time will tell on this one.

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce project is all but complete for the season. It married in particularly well with C4N allowing us to finance our project officer via VBT and use more of the C4N funding to do the nitty gritty stuff on ground. The VBT final report is now being prepared and Helga has done a creditable job in recruiting ten more signatories who have agreed to tackle their own blackberries for the next 3 years. This along with the C4N has seen 400+ hectares cleared to be used for much more productive and environmentally friendly purposes, also reducing harbour for vermin. ■



CIBAG COMMITTEE MEMBERS INSPECTING DIEBACK ON CAMERON STONES' PROPERTY. FROM LEFT: DAVE SMITH, ARI BOSS, RAELENE BOND & JOHN KOSTA

Continued on page 9...



# AROUND THE TRAPS

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By our Landcare Groups ...continued from page 6



THE MEMBERS OF THE WOODSIDE LANDCARE GROUP WITH THEIR AWARD

## Woodside

Woodside members are all pleased with themselves after having received a YYLN award in the "Outstanding Community Group" category which now sees us going on to compete in the State Landcare Awards in Melbourne. Many thanks to Sally-Ann and Samantha for their wonderful support which has contributed greatly in allowing us to receive this award. A special thank you to Bronwyn for her role in coordinating the "Mullungdung to the Coast" project which was pivotal to us getting the

work done and the trees in the ground.

Our AGM will be held on the August 26 at the Woodside Hall. The heaters will be on and we extend a warm welcome to all. ■

## Merriman Creek

The Merriman Creek Landcare group is continuing the delivery of its "Communities for Nature" project by preparing for our upcoming community tree planting day. The date is scheduled for 10am on

Wednesday July 29. The venue is on the Seaspray Road near Seaspray and we need lots of helpers please! A barbecue lunch is provided and therefore an RSVP would be appreciated.

At our recent meeting we discussed issues that are of interest to members. Thank you to Sally-Ann who facilitated this brain storming session. As a result we have a workshop planned to help us learn about interpreting Soil test results. This workshop will be held at 10am on Tuesday August 4 at the Stradbroke Hall. Numbers are limited so RSVP ASAP. Lunch is provided. The workshop

presenter is Chris Alenson who is independent and not associated with any particular fertiliser company. Bring along a soil sample from your farm and a pen & paper please.

Our next meeting is scheduled for July 19 with a barbecue lunch at Harrison's property before a brief meeting. All welcome. Please call Melissa for details on 51468328. ■

## Binginwarri

Report to come next issue.

## Yarram Urban

Report to come next issue.



# ALL WASHED UP

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

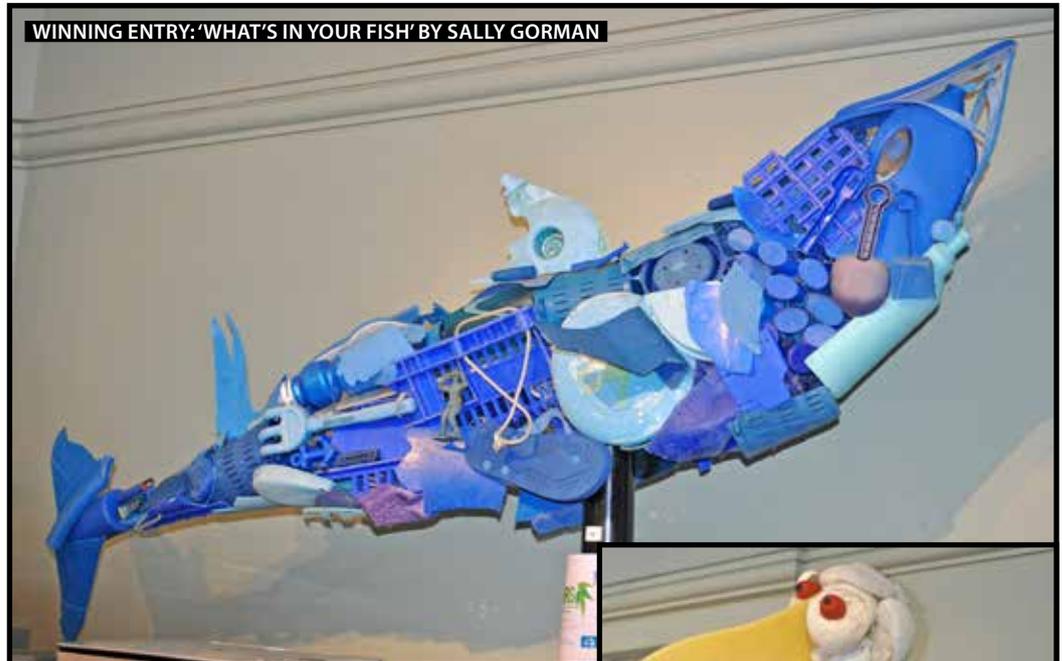
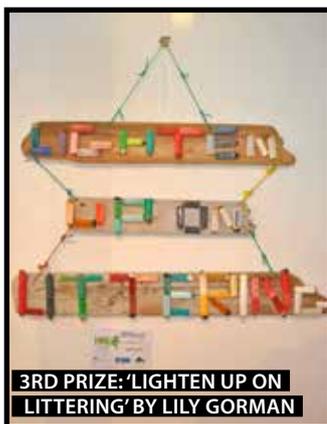
By Helga Binder

*The Washed Up exhibition, held from the 2nd to the 28th of April at the Yarram Courthouse Gallery was awash with talent.*

Sponsored by Hedley Range Services, the exhibition was a collaboration between Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, Coastcare and the Courthouse Gallery.

It saw a huge range of widely varied work that highlighted the depth and breadth of imagination alive in our artistic community, including sculptures, paintings, collages and strong messages galore.

*Congratulations to all who participated!* ■



Three honourable mentions were also given to Karen Rogers for 'Plastic Fantastic' (left), Ronnie Clarkson for 'Scottish Weave' (right) and 'Killer Fish' by Cate Remfry (not shown).

*Continued on page 09...*

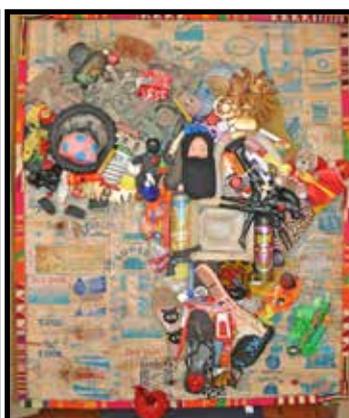


# ALL WASHED UP

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

...continued from page 08

*Examples  
of other  
inspiring  
work at the  
exhibition.*





# TRUE-BLUE AUSSIE BUSHFOODS

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Kaye Proudley

*If we want a real meal made of bush foods then we probably will have to accept that we should go out and trap a 'roo, pick up a road-killed snake, take a fishing line to the nearest lake, river or seaside to catch a good feed of fish, grab a Gippsland Cray from the nearest stream, or otherwise entice down from that Acacia tree a few kilo's of ripe seed to make a decent amount of flour to turn out some quality loaves of bread.*

Failing the above then about the best we can do currently is to flavour our traditional foods with herbs and spices from the Aussie bush or eat as nibbles and between-meal snacks.

**Please note though** - Not all native plants are edible and to be truthful, many are very poisonous. It is important to be 100% sure of species identification so only collect what you know. Err on the side of caution when tasting bush food and **always rub the fruit on your skin before putting in your mouth**. If your skin becomes itchy, don't eat it, as you may be allergic.

**Better still** – buy your plants from a reputable nursery and save the bush plants from extinction by growing your own food garden at home and to be sure of having the right species to eat from.

There are many plants that grow locally in our area that we can use to this end, and some we can purchase to grow in our gardens and I will describe some of them:

+ Anise or Aniseed Myrtle, *Backhousia anisata* (syn. *Syzygium anisatum*) - (see picture below) Mature leaves are dried and milled and used for food flavouring, only needing a very small amount. Also for colds/room deodorant/essential oil/and even attracting fish to your line! Harvest all year.



\*\* Bower Spinach, *Tetragonia implexicoma* - (see picture below) A scrambling ground cover with small yellow flowers, normally found in coastal areas. Young shoots and leaves are cooked as a vegetable. Harvest all year.



\*\* Coast Wattle, *Acacia sophorae* - (See picture at top of next column) A large, spreading shrub, usually coastal, with yellow flowers. Used by crushing the seeds and baking into cakes, breads and damper. Harvest ripe seed from late November to January. Other wattle seed – Blackwood, Black, and Golden Wattle seed can be

used or substituted.



\*\* Karkalla or Pigface or Ross' Noonflower, *Carpobrotus rossii* - (see picture below) A ground-covering plant, leaves are eaten raw or cooked and are of a light, sweet, salty flavour whilst the globular purplish-red fruit has a sweet-salty taste and can be eaten raw or dried. Combines well with eggs, mushrooms seafood and meat.



+ Lemon Myrtle, *Backhousia citriodora* - (see picture below) Harvest all year. Leaves used fresh as a tea, or added to fish for zesty flavour. Can also be dried, ground and added to meat dishes or scones and biscuits and sweets like ice cream and cheesecake.



+ Midyim or Midgem Berry, *Austromyrtus dulcis* - (see picture below) A small attractive shrub with white, starry flowers followed by sweet, tangy grey-spotted fruit often described as the very best bush food to eat in pies, jams, on your yoghurt, or straight from the bush, seeds and all! Harvest in two flushes in Jan. and April.



\*\* Mountain, Native or Tasmanian Pepper, *Tasmania lanceolata* - (see picture below) Grows in the higher country around here, a tall shrub to small tree, with male and female populations. Branchlets are reddish. The red berries, black when ripe, (stronger) and leaves (a little weaker) can be crushed for pepper flavouring.



\*\* Native Bluebell, *Wahlenbergia species* – (see picture at start of next page) Usually sparse stems on mostly a fairly small, straggly bush. The blue flower petals are edible and are most attractive when added to salads.

Continued on page 11...



# TRUE-BLUE AUSSIE BUSHFOODS

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Kaye Proudley

...continued from page 10



\*\* Native Currant, *Coprosma quadrifida* - (see picture below) A small, sparse, spiny bush. Harvest when small berries are orange to red and ripe, January to March.



\*\* Native Raspberry, *Rubus parvifolius* - (see picture below) A rambling small creeper or shrub with pink or red flowers in summer, liking damp places. Small red fruit similar to raspberries can be eaten raw, made into jam or wine and used in pastries, muffins and cakes.



\*\* River Mint, *Mentha australis* - (see picture top next column) Leaves are used as food flavouring, a tea, and as a decoction for coughs and colds. Can be used much the same as for our introduced mint. Found in wet or very damp places.

Harvest all year.



\*\* Saltbush, *Atriplex semibaccata* - (see picture below) An open, spreading, perennial, coastal shrub with grey leaves which can be dried and crushed and used as a seasoning. Salty.



\*\* Varnish Wattle, *Acacia verniciflua* - (see picture below) A small to medium shrub with pale yellow flowers. Green pods and seeds can be used. Harvest green pods from the end of summer.



\*\* Warrigal Greens or N.Z. Greens, *Tetragonia tetragonioides* - (see picture top next column) A small, succulent ground creeper with green flowers in leaf axils Nov to Feb. followed by green succulent fruit that harden and become pale brown. Harvest year round but make sure you always blanch the young leaves for about 10 -15

seconds then revive in cold water to refresh before cooking and eating, as they contain oxalates which are not good for human consumption in large quantities. They are high in fibre, have sedative qualities and are believed to be good for preventing ulcers.



### Other food plants not described but which you can research yourselves are -

\*\* Australian Millet, *Panicum decompositum* - Ground seed can be made into bread.

+ Davidson Plum, *Davidsonia pruriens* - A sour and acidic plum that makes fabulous jam, ice cream, sauces and wine.

\*\*Honey Pots, *Acrotriche serrulata* - The flowers can be infused in water for a drink or the drupes (fruits) sucked or eaten.

+ Muntries or Native Cranberry, *Kunzea pomifera* - Green fruit with reddish tinge with a spicy apple taste can be eaten fresh and is used to make fruit leathers, jams, relishes, wine, chocolate, pies, sauces and much more. Can be dried and stored.

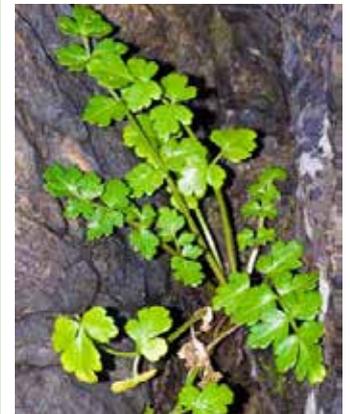
+Native Thyme, *Hot or Indian Basil*, *Ocimum tenuiflorum* - Small amount only needed with meat dishes. It is nothing like our sweet basil for Italian cooking.

\*\* Running Postman, *Kennedia*

*prostrata* - Suck flowers for nectar.

\*\* Saw-sedges, *Gahnia* species - Ground-up seed can be made into cakes.

\*\* Sea Celery, *Apium prostratum* - (see picture below) Leaves and stems can be used as a substitute for greengrocer's celery.



\*\* Spreading or Black-Anther Flax-lily, *Dianella revoluta* - Berries can be eaten and dies obtained. Leaves good for weaving.

\*\* Swamp Paperbark, *Melaleuca ericifolia* - Flowers make a sweet nectar drink and oil from crushed leaves used for colds treatment.

\*\* Water Ribbons, *Triglochin procera* - Tubers can be eaten roasted or raw.

### KEY:

\*\* Growing locally in bush or beach areas or available at indigenous nurseries.

+ Available through selected nurseries and should grow in gardens around this area.

**Available at the YYLN for \$15 - "Growing Australian Native Food Plants in South Gippsland" which will give you all the additional detail you need to grow these and many other bush food plants.**

Continued on page 12...



# TRUE-BLUE AUSSIE BUSHFOODS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Kaye Proudley

...continued from page 11

## Some recipes for you to try

### **Lemon Myrtle Cheesecake with Macadamia Crumble**



For base and crumble topping – 100g. plain flour, 1-cup castor sugar, 150g macadamia nuts, 100g cold butter, cut into chunks, ½ tspn dried, crushed lemon myrtle leaves.

Place flour sugar and nuts into processing bowl and mix briefly till nuts are ground into small bits but still visible in mixture. Add cold butter and process briefly till crumbly, not paste-like. Press ¾ of mix into 24cm spring-form pan base and refrigerate the remaining crumble mix.

For filling – 1-cup castor sugar, 750g softened cream cheese, 4 large room-temperature eggs, 300ml sour cream, 2 tspns pure vanilla essence, 1 ½ tspns dried crushed lemon myrtle leaf.

Preheat oven to 160C, add cheese and sugar to large bowl and mix until smooth (med. speed in electric blender.) Add eggs one at a time beating each for 20 seconds, then slowly add sour cream, vanilla and lemon myrtle whilst continuing to mix. Scrape into pan base and smooth top.

Bake 1 to 1 ½ hours without opening oven door till cheesecake top is a light golden brown. Turn oven off. Quickly sprinkle remaining crumble mix on top without removing from oven, close door and let stand 2 hours as oven cools to brown crumble mix. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature, then refrigerate to chill and serve on its own or with fresh fruit. ■

### **Fish Steamed in Parchment**

Combine in dish, 2 tbsps oil, 20 cherry tomatoes, sliced shallots, 3 tbsps lemon juice, 1 tspn sea celery, 1 tspn each of Aniseed Myrtle, Saltbush and Pepperberry. Mix well.

Place a fish fillet on a sheet of baking paper for each person. Spoon mixture on top. Fold and seal packages.

Bake at 205C for 12 to 15 minutes. ■

### **Aussie Dukkah**

This is a mix of herbs and spices from the Australian Bush with a taste YOU can decide on by using any of these ingredients in whatever quantity you desire - *Saltbush, Wattleseed, Bush Tomato, Mountain Pepperberry, Lemon Myrtle, Sesame Seeds, Macadamia Nuts, Garlic and Salt.*

Use sprinkled on meats, vegetables, or add to casseroles. ■



### **Oven-baked Dukkah, Corn & Saltbush Chips**

Preheat oven to 200C (180C fan forced oven).

Combine a cup of polenta, 2/3-cup plain flour, 1 tbspn saltbush and 1-teaspoon baking powder in a bowl and add ¼-cup macadamia oil and 1/2 cup of cold water. Mix well.

Divide the mixture in half and roll each half out separately between two sheets of baking paper until very thin (1mm).

Sprinkle the flat mixture with Aussie Bush Dukkah and again roll gently to infuse. Cut into triangles. Bake for 15 minutes or until crisp. ■

### **Wattleseed Damper**

65g roasted ground wattle seed, ¾ litre water, 2.4kg S.R. flour, 750 ml beer, 50g sugar, 50g salt.

Pour boiling water over wattle seed and leave to cool till lukewarm. Sieve flour, sugar and salt together into a large

mixing bowl. Mix on low speed for 5 to 8 minutes to form a smooth dough. Cover and allow to rest for 10 minutes. Form into 60g rolls or baguettes.

Bake at 180C for 20 minutes. Makes approx. 40 rolls. Excess can be frozen for re-use later. ■





# PROJECT UPDATE

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Samantha Monks



Samantha Monks, YYLN Project Officer

### Action on the Ground (AotG) – Gippsland plains soil carbon trials – productivity & climate change responses

It is hard to believe that we are entering the final stages of our soil carbon / drought pastures project! This four year project commenced in June 2012, but had to be delivered over a three year time frame...so technically we lost time from the start! Countless hours have been spent in the paddock taking soil carbon samples and monitoring pasture species persistence. Farmers and agency staff have all pushed very hard to deliver the on-ground works component for this project.

We are now at the final reporting stage with hard data results being interpreted by Lisa Warn, Mackinnon Project agronomist and Nick Dudley project consultant from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). Participating farmers and project partners headed off for an exciting pasture study tour across the Western and Central

Districts of Victoria. Once again we will meet up with farmers from the Perennial Pasture Systems Group (PPS) and also meet members of the Central Ranges Grassland Society Group. Look forward to reporting on our final report project findings and our group adventures in the next newsletter.

### Communities for Nature Grant: Round 1 - Jack and Albert River Restoration (JARR) Project

10,000 locally indigenous tubestock will be planted in winter/spring this year for 6 new wildlife corridor areas connecting remnant vegetation in the JARR area. This means all on ground project deliverables for Year 3 (2014-2015) are tracking well on time.

Expressions of Interest (Eoi) for Year 4 (2015-2016) are now open as this will be the final year of this landscape scale biodiversity project funded by the State Government. As in past years future projects sites will be prioritised in order of importance according to the following funding deed criteria:

Protect, enhance and/or connect remnant vegetation in priority Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVC's), which include Warm and Cool Temperate Rainforest, Lowland Forest and Damp Forest.

Reduce the impacts of Blackberry, a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) on biodiversity within the JARR area.

Protect, enhance or connect priority habitat for the South Gippsland Koala.

Funding is available for fencing and revegetation of remnants, wildlife corridors and blackberry suppression. All project sites must occur within areas of high priority for protecting remaining habitat under the "JARR Area EVC Bioregional Conservation Status" and are also part of the "Strzelecki Koala Linkage Strategy – South-East Strzelecki Corridor, Albert River Link". Priority is also given to projects mapped on the JARR Biodiversity Blueprint.

#### NOTE: YYLN's Blackberry Suppression Works for the JARR Catchment:

The Year 4 target area for our blackberry program will continue on private property adjoining the lower reaches of the Jack & Albert Rivers from Alberton across to Gellions Run. Areas not treated in Year 3 of our program will be visited. Once again there will be a focus on riparian links to existing remnant vegetation and shelterbelts.

#### Jack & Albert Rivers Discovery TOUR

*"How inspiring to see landscape change!"*

*When the JARR Blueprint was compiled five years ago it almost seemed a pipe dream - but the recent tour of the lower reaches of the JARR project area showed the benefit of having a vision*

*supported in its actions by partnerships.*

*Over the last twenty years there has been quite a shift in landholders' attitudes so many now see the benefits of linking up corridors as vital to the whole catchment. A great example of this was to see Gavin and Sue Egan's latest project but also the involvement of three of their neighbours all coming on board to deliver an even greater result for the rivers and land.*

*I was also so impressed with the corridors that are slowly making their way across the Tap Tap Plains linking forest habitats. Thank you every landholder for your time, work and dedication for the benefit of our Jack & Albert Rivers systems."*

By Jenny Davies - Albert River Landcare Group & JARR Committee member

[See the extract by from news article 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 written by Peter Hill – Editor, Gippsland Times found on the next two pages.](#)

[It gives a comprehensive overview of the work done from the perspective of an outsider who came along for the ride.](#)



# JARR TOUR 2015

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Peter Hill, as published in the Gippsland Times May 2015

### Restoring the catchments of the Jack and Albert Rivers

Restoration of the environment while retaining productive farms was highlighted in the Yarram district last week.

The Jack and Albert Rivers discovery tour on Wednesday, May 13 looked at a number of recent Landcare projects from the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges to the confluence of the two rivers at Alberton undertaken as part of the Jack and Albert Rivers Restoration project (JARR).

The JARR project was established in 2006 with the ultimate aim of improving the habitat for migratory wading bird populations, seagrass and marine life within the Ramsar listed wetlands of Corner Inlet and Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Parks while enhancing biodiversity within the Corner Inlet catchment ecosystem.

During the past nine years this landscape scale project has sought to prevent landslips, arrest soil erosion, improve stream quality, revegetate creek banks and provide corridors of indigenous native vegetation linking remaining forest areas.

Coordinated by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, with financial assistance from both state and federal governments and the Norman Wettenhall Foundation along with ongoing cooperation of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, HVP Plantations and Coastcare Victoria, the project has been overseen by a committee led by Wonyip Landcarer Helga Binder.

The tour group included new members of the YYLN board,



WHERE THE JACK MEETS THE ALBERT RIVER ON GAVIN EGAN'S PROPERTY

interested landholders and representatives of WGCMA, Coastcare, HVP and DEDJTR and looked first at Andrew and Lisa Dunkley's willow and poplar removal and revegetation of the Stony Creek, a tributary of the Jack River.

JARR project officer Samantha Monks described how the project was carefully planned with the landholders to ensure the continued productivity of the cattle grazing property and allow stock movement.

Ms Monks highlighted the positive linking of the creek and high quality remnant Mountain Grey gums to adjacent state forest and known South Gippsland or Strzelecki koala habitat.

The Strzelecki koala is considered significant for retaining genetic diversity in the koala population.

Property owners' father Jim Dunkley explained his hesitancy in allowing the creek to be fenced out, fearing possible weed infestation as the fencing would inhibit his successful spraying regime.

Ms Monks explained it was hoped the swift growth of locally indigenous plantings would restrict weed problems within a few years. A follow up weed maintenance program will also occur.

Further up the Jack River soil erosion works carried out on David and Sue MacAulay's Stacey's Bridge property was explained by DEDJTR Soil Erosion Management Plan catchment management officer Les Kewming and landowner David MacAulay.

The steep country is subject to tunnel erosion and landslips. Mr MacAulay explained the difficulties in preventing tunnel

erosion on the steep sloping country.

"It no doubt started as a rabbit warren or something like that, a wombat hole, anything that lets the water into the subsoil. The soil there is probably no deeper than (a metre or so) before you hit the rock. The water moves down the rock, creates a tunnel which eventually caves in on top," he said.

Apart from the loss of soil and pasture the tunnel erosion can cause stock injuries and losses for the farmer.

In consultation with Mr MacAulay and Ms Monks, Mr Kewming developed the management plans for the YYLN Erosion Control Project where seven hectares of gullies and slopes that have been fenced off and planted out with 13,000 tube-stock.

Large areas of the HVP



# JARR TOUR 2015

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

...continued from page 14



PART OF THE GROUP OUT TO INSPECT THE WORK DONE IN THE JARR AREA

plantation above the property were burnt in the February 2014 Egans Rd fire resulting in initial soil and debris run off into the river but subsequent plantings and natural regrowth has arrested the worst of the problem.

A project linking the Alberton West forest to wetlands at Binginwarri on Marie Pretty's and Kevin and Libby Heggen's properties was visited showing privately funded projects in the JARR area.

"What we've done is removed (the unsuccessful former planting), planted it out and then we've done linkage from this remnant down into this wetland down here, so we have connectivity from up there, down into the remnants along the roadside," Mr Heggen explained.

"There was a pine plantation in here, this was a row of pines. You don't just look at your successes, that's why they haven't grown it's just too . . . dry and depleted of nutrients, we'll plant this out

next year," he said.

He also emphasised he has found planting with tube stock much more successful than direct seeding.

A second stop along the Billy Creek Tap Tap Connection Rd highlighted a newly established Communities for Nature wildlife corridor, two kilometres long by 10 meters wide alternating across the sides of the boundary of adjoining properties across a flood plain connecting Jim MacAninly's bush to the state forest of the Hedley Range.

That measure preserved the existing boundary enabling future property sales without compromising the integrity of the corridor.

Roadside blackberry suppression carried out under year three of JARR's four year Communities for Nature project were viewed along with successful 12 metre wide revegetation corridors with improved pasture protection from wind and increased shade

for stock on Craig and Janine Moore's property on the Jack River.

Those plantings not only benefit the property's productivity but provide wildlife corridors from the Jack River toward the Albert River.

At the confluence of the rivers recent work by property owners Gavin and Sue Egan showed how successful riparian revegetation can be carried out on a working beef and dairy property.

Taking the opportunity to complement years of work on their Woodlands property between the Albert River and the South Gippsland Highway the Egans have undertaken fencing work on their recently acquired 40 hectares on the Alberton side of the river, including a 10 hectare pasture island formed at the junction of the two rivers.

Boxthorn and willow has been removed, extensive fencing has excluded stock from the river and the riverbanks have been planted with tube stock.

"In many ways fencing off the river began as pure farm economics. Stock getting stuck in the river and dying soon takes its toll," Mr Egan said.

A major benefit to the Egans has been the retention of soil on their property and the environment has benefited from the reduction of nutrient runoff into Corner Inlet, one of the JARR project's key aims.

View the project's website at <http://www.jarrproject.com/> ■



A PROMISE FROM THE HEAVENS OVER THE JARR COUNTRYSIDE



# BIRD MIGRATION

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

### Warren the Wise



Dear Warren,

*We had a lovely picnic day at Jack Smith's Lake recently and as we lazed in the sun there were lots of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flying overhead, like maybe 600 or more. Where were they going and why? Someone said they were emigrating. Would this be correct?*

*Birds-on-the-wing.*

Well yes this is sort of correct Birds-on-the-wing. They would have been migrating rather than emigrating. This means they were moving from one region of the country to another, rather than moving to another country.

Why are they migrating? Honeyeaters feed on the "honey" or nectar produced by flowers (maybe that is why they are called honeyeaters). They also feed on a diet of flies and insects. As the colder weather comes to our area the availability of nectar and insects diminishes and so the honeyeaters move to other areas where they can find their favoured foods.

This journey will take them along the east coast of Australia

to southern Queensland where they will spend the winter before returning in late winter when the spring flowers return to our bush along with the emergence of grubs and insects.

There are many other birds that migrate in and out of our area. Some birds only migrate short distances such as from the high mountain areas to the lower plains - these are called altitudinal migrants and are usually following the availability of food. Others migrate back and forth to Tasmania, whereas a lot of coastal birds migrate to and from overseas countries and they're called boat people. OOPS, sorry, getting my metaphors mixed there!!

The reasons for migration

are complex and even ornithologists - you know, those birdie people - don't even understand why. So it is well beyond the understanding of a wombat, as we don't migrate other than an occasional visit to our cousins on the other side of the hill.

Some move with the climate. A bit like what humans do when they leave Victoria in winter to go to sunny Queensland for their holidays.

The Ruddy Turnstone is an example of a bird that migrates overseas. Every year this small bird, about 24cm long, will leave our shores in large flocks in late April and fly all the way to northern Russia. This is a distance of approx 12,500 kilometres and takes about 5 weeks. They will make a few stops along the way to rest and feed. During the northern summer, in Russia, they mate, nest, lay eggs and raise their young. Then in mid October they pack their bags and fly south again arriving in Australia early December. That's a round

trip of about 25,000 kilometres. To fly this far requires about 6 million flaps of their wings! I get exhausted flapping my legs just 30 times!

It sounds like a very exhausting holiday to me. I'm quite happy to waddle over the other side of the gully to visit my cousins occasionally, but maybe one day I'll take a flight somewhere.



The average lifespan of a Ruddy Turnstone is about 9 years so how many kilometres do they fly and how many wing flaps does it take them? Too much for my tired brain to calculate but I'm sure you can work it out.

Why is a Turnstone called a Turnstone? Because they use their long bill to flick over stones to feed on the small creatures living below them! ■



LOVELY LITTLE HONEYEATER



# MANAGING DIEBACK

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Ray Thomas & Chris Cobern.

*The rural landscape is showing increasing signs of stress. Farm trees are dying steadily, often without replacements, and those that are alive look very sick in many districts. Clearly the status quo isn't working. We need to take action or bit by bit we will lose the trees that give our landscape its unique character.*

**Dieback is not the result of any single factor** like a disease organism or a long hot summer. Usually there are several effects working against a tree for years. When something extra adds to the burden, the tree is in such a weak state that it can't cope and dies. It's tempting to blame it on the drought or the mistletoe, but a deeper look may give us more control over the situation.

### Soil Compaction and Tree Stress

In a healthy forest environment with undisturbed soil, water and nutrients can easily percolate down through the topsoil to the root zone. Good soil structure and the layer of leaf litter ensure sufficient storage of water for the drier times, and the rotting organic matter provides recycled nutrients to feed the tree.

Farm trees which have been subject to cropping and grazing pressure for many decades will not have such healthy soil. Physical compaction by stock hooves, mechanical changes to soil structure, loss of friable topsoil, loss of protective leaf

litter, increased exposure to high temperatures and drying winds, all add up to more run off and less water retention in the root zone. The tree becomes stressed from lack of water and nutrients.

The extent of this change in soil quality can be seen in the number of living soil organisms that are lost after years of over use. Research in WA has shown that healthy soil in Jarrah forest supports a diverse array of microscopic insects - 93 species in all. These play an important role in nutrient cycling to assist tree growth and also create an open, porous soil which gives tree roots better access to water and oxygen. By contrast, soil in adjacent grazing land had only 20 species, and cropping land could only support 6. Paddock trees are doing it tough!

### Insect Attack and Tree Stress

**But perhaps the most common factor in dieback is stock manure under trees.** Sheep or cattle are basically harvesting nutrient from the whole paddock and concentrating it under the trees where they camp. The leaf growth gets richer in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium than trees in the bush, and therefore very attractive to insects like Christmas Beetles!

If the tree is loaded with extra nutrients from fertiliser spreading, it only exacerbates the problem, and insect numbers increase to the extent that natural predation cannot control them. In one experiment, dieback trees in a grazing paddock had 10 *times* the mass of insects that were found in healthy trees.

Run-off from grazing land



**CROPPING, STOMPING AND CHOMPING ALL HAVE THEIR EFFECT**



**TREES ADJACENT TO GRAZING LAND SUFFER FROM POOR SOIL**



**MANURE = NUTRIENT = GROWTH = INSECTS!**

can also shift the problem elsewhere, as extra nutrients flow to trees lower down the slopes. Where there is altered drainage and rising ground water, the trees are basically sitting in a nutrient rich "soup" which stimulates new leaf growth almost continuously, and invites chronic insect attack on the soft nutrient-rich foliage.

A vicious circle of defoliation and re-shooting is established,

and the tree never gets a chance to build up its food reserves. It's hanging on a knife edge, unable to cope with further stresses such as climate extremes, mistletoe or even wood boring insects like Longicorn Beetles. Balanced, healthy trees produce a thick red resin to seal off any damaged areas like borer holes, but this defence mechanism is energy intensive and stressed trees can't raise the effort. They are effectively ring-barked by

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# MANAGING DIEBACK

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Ray Thomas & Chris Cobern.

...continued from page 17

borer canals under the bark!

When the tree eventually succumbs, the culprit appears to be drought, mistletoe or borers, but these are really only tell-tale symptoms of long term prior stresses on the tree.

### Isolation and Tree Stress

Isolated trees are more exposed to climatic extremes, so effects of water stress and the ensuing cycle of reshooting and defoliation are inevitable. Surrounded by pasture, they are even more open to attack from defoliating insects like Scarab Beetles, which spend their larval stage eating roots of pasture grasses. The better nutrition available from the roots of fertilised pasture promotes higher larval populations in the soil, which in turn leads to greater tree defoliation when the adult beetles emerge.

The lack of nectar rich understorey shrubs adds to the problem because the host of insect eating birds, lizards, mammals, parasitic wasps, flies and spiders are not present to keep the defoliators in check. The wasps for example need a nearby source of sugary nectar to provide the energy to dig for Scarab Beetle larvae and lay their eggs. In a healthy forest situation wasps alone can parasitise over half of their available prey, and birds take a similar amount.

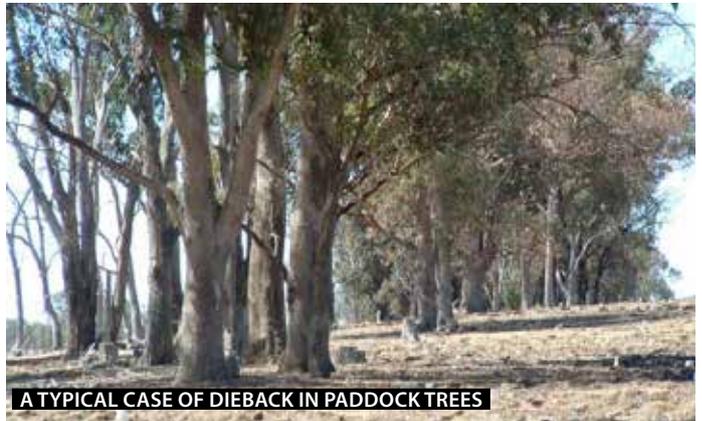
Finally, all these stresses have an adverse effect on the amount of seed that a tree can produce. This reduces the likelihood of natural regeneration and keeps the tree in isolation even longer! The situation clearly demands our active intervention.

### Curative Steps - Treating Causes not Symptoms

Remove stock to reduce nitrogen levels in the soil and fence out the area to prevent ongoing compaction. This will also allow the build up of leaf litter, which is important for moisture retention and the long-term establishment of nutrient cycling. It is important to fence a large enough area to protect the entire root zone of the tree and to allow for natural regeneration of tree seedlings which normally develop only out beyond the root zone where there is less competition with the parent tree.

Plant a variety of indigenous shrubs as habitat for insect-eating birds, mammals, lizards, parasitic wasps, flies and spiders. This will provide natural long-term pest control for the trees and even the pastures out beyond. The concept works best when several trees are fenced together, it's cheaper than fencing trees individually, and provides much better stock shelter than isolated single trees.

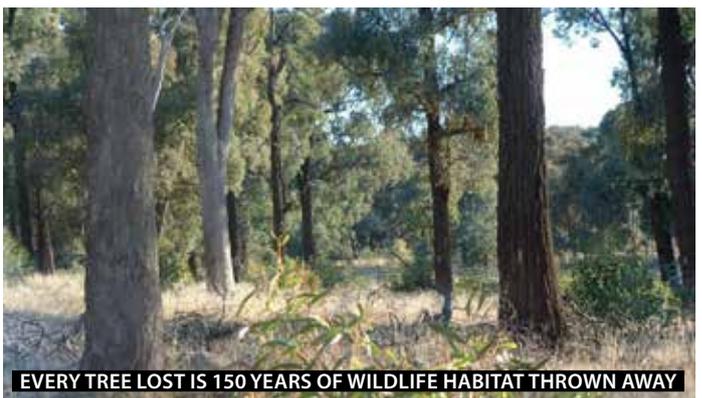
In obvious stock camping areas, it may be necessary to remove the layers of nitrogen-rich surface soil. It has been shown that soil in stock camps has *four* times as much ammonium and *forty* times as much nitrate as soil under healthy trees. After removal of stock manure, a light scarification of the surface would allow better water penetration and uptake by the trees. Where the soil is severely compacted, ripping to about 15 cm depth may be required, preferably in radial lines out from the trunk to avoid damaging the tree roots.



A TYPICAL CASE OF DIEBACK IN PADDOCK TREES



REPLANTING UNDERSTOREY HELPS TREES SURVIVIE



EVERY TREE LOST IS 150 YEARS OF WILDLIFE HABITAT THROWN AWAY

A typical case of dieback in paddock trees. Notice the dead branches from chronic insect attack on the leaves.

Replanting the understorey shrubs will attract birds etc to keep the insects under control and restore the trees to health.

Understorey shrubs growing well only 2 years after planting. The extra protection provided by the shrubs allows our

shyer and rarer birds to get established, so the process helps threatened wildlife as well as the trees.

And is it really so important? Sure is!! In fact saving these old paddock trees is top priority in restoring wildlife habitat!

It will be 150 years before the seedlings we plant today can produce so much nectar or hollows for nesting! ■



# PARTNER ACTIVITY

## YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Sally-Ann Henderson and Kate Williams

### See how the other half live. - Farmers and fishers of Corner Inlet visit each other's work place.

*A collaborative meeting between farmers of the sea and farmers of the land was held at Corner Inlet on Friday, 8 May. Over forty people, including commercial fishermen, farmers and researchers, came together to discuss the problem of declining seagrass meadows within Corner Inlet.*

Dr John Ford of Melbourne University explained that just as farmers rely on good quality pasture to feed their stock, Corner Inlet's fishermen rely on good quality seagrass to produce their catch.

Representatives of Corner Inlet's commercial fishing industry based at Port Franklin (PF) took participants on a tour of the western part of the Inlet and spoke of the impact that declining seagrass cover is having on their livelihoods. Dr. Ford explained the vital role that seagrass plays in providing nutrients, habitat and protection for marine life, and the fishermen talked of their own efforts to create a sustainable fishing industry.

After a seafood lunch, the group visited a local dairy farm managed by Dan and Cindy Knee. The Knee's have implemented best management practices to keep nutrients and sediment on-farm and out of the Inlet. Nutrient and sediment run-off are regarded as the two greatest threats to seagrass



ONE OF THE GROUPS INSPECTING SEAGRASS BEDS AT CORNER INLET.

meadows around the world, and there is genuine concern about seagrass levels in the Inlet.

Changed land use has contributed to sediment and nutrient loads entering the Inlet. This includes farming, forestry and urban development. Because the waterways at the western end of CI are smaller, steeper, have erodible soils and are in a high rainfall area they are more susceptible to the impacts of these land uses than the YYLN end of CI. The fishermen reported a significant difference between fishing off Port Albert (PA) compared to PF. Rock Flathead is still being caught off PA but has been almost non-existent in PF this season. Rock Flathead is very dependent on healthy seagrass.

Works to reduce nutrient run off and erosion are being done across the CI catchment. These include vegetating and fencing off creeks and drainage lines, siting laneways to avoid run-off, maximizing ground cover to reduce soil loss and following

best management practices when applying fertiliser. Ashley Walpole of the Woodside Landcare Group talked about the progress YYLN is making to protect and fence the saltmarsh. It is another vital tool in the protection of coastal plants as well as seagrass.

Many farmers expressed disappointment that their efforts over the past 10-20 years did not yet seem to be arresting the decline in seagrass. Dr. Ford explained that there may be many reasons for that, such as the cumulative buildup of effects creating a vicious circle or possibly natural systems have a long lag time before the benefits are shown.

The day raised awareness of the measures that the Corner Inlet fishermen and Dairy Australia are taking to ensure their industries are sustainable. Fishermen have a self-imposed Code of Practice that, alongside government regulation, restricts fishing to weekdays only, caps the number of fishing licences,

sets net and mesh sizes, and allows only two net shots a day to prevent over-fishing.

Similarly, Dairy Australia encourages dairy farmers to adopt best management practices to protect their natural resources such as recycling effluent, soil nutrient budgeting and fertiliser planning and preventing erosion with pasture management. Both groups are trying to work with nature to earn a living and ensure there is plenty for future generations. They had more in common than they perhaps realised.

The day was funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and was delivered by representatives of Melbourne University, GippsDairy and the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

The day was limited in numbers of attendees because of the capacity of the boats and all who came, felt it was a privilege to have the opportunity to walk a mile in the others shoes. ■



**WILDLIFE CORRIDOR PLANTED AS PART OF THE WONYP LANDCARE QUOLL PROJECT COMES TO LIFE**

### Contacts for Individual Active Landcare Groups

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**BLACKBERRY INFESTATION ALONG THE AGNES RIVER TARGETTED BY THE CORNER INLET BLACKBERRY ACTION GROUP**