



YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NEWS

Vol: 010 AUTUMN March 2013

FEATURES

Annual BBQ

New Group Aims for Action

Plague Soldier Beetles

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Cover photo by Helga Binder



EVENTS UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

FROM THE OFFICE

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

All contributions for the Autumn edition must be received before 17th May, 2013

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BIRDWATCHING WITH BIRDLIFE EAST GIPPSLAND

Where: Jack Smith Lake, Pt Albert, McLoughlin's & Woodside Beaches, Hiawatha & Agnes Falls, Toora, Corner Inlet, Tarra-Bulga Park

When: 18th ~ 21st of March

Contact: John and Pam Hutchison 5156 8226 or 0417 568 222

Email - eastgippsland@birdlife.org.au

WALK, TALK 'N GAWK

Richard Appleton will talk about the HVP Koala Corridors Project

Where: Mack's Creek, Balook

When: Sunday 24th March

Contact: Dallas on 5688 1030 to book and arrange carpooling

BIRDWATCHING, BYO PICNIC LUNCH & MEETING

Where: White Woman's Waterhole

When: 9am - Sunday 14th April

Contact Call Kaye 5185 1398

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK ANNUAL BBQ

Where: Alberton West Recreation Reserve, Lanes Road, Alberton West

When: 12 pm - Sunday 28th April
We have speakers from both sides of the Coal Seam Gas Mining debate (Ignite Energy and Wellington Awareness Group) so expect an energetic information session.

We will also have Harry Hof arriving after lunch to assist us in our quest to eradicate Indian Mynahs by sharing his extensive knowledge on trapping.

The Annual BBQ is our chance to touch base with each other, broaden our understanding of current issues and, most importantly, celebrate our achievements over the previous twelve months.

We look forward to seeing you there. Contact: Sally-Ann to RSVP by 23rd of April 2013

GIPPSLAND BEEF SCHOOL

"BetterBeef - from paddock to processor to plate"

Where: Lardner Park Warragul,

When: Industry dinner: Thursday 9th May

Conference: Friday 10th May

Contact: Claire Geri (DPI) 0356 62 9908 by 30th April

Email: claire.geri@dpi.vic.gov.au

FUNGI FORAY

Come looking for mushrooms and toadstools

Where: Alberton West State Forest

When: 10am - Sunday 12th May

Contact: Call Kaye 5185 1398



Can anyone identify these little lovelies? Together with a swarm of bees they were feasting on a Buddleia in a rainforest garden.



By Sally-Ann Henderson



Sally-Ann Says:

Hi Everyone,

Don't time fly? It seems like only weeks ago I was moving to Yarram, coming to grips with the freezing (for me) spring weather and wondering if summer would ever come. Well I guess we all know how that has turned out. However, despite the dry, I have been making the most of my first Gippsland Summer. It has been great to get to the various events and meetings of the Landcare groups in the Network. **I have now had the chance to meet up with all the groups and I can see how diverse and passionate everyone is.** It has been great to slowly start putting faces to names. We certainly have a lot of

diversity in both landscape and talented people in our Network.

The start of the New Year sees us looking pretty healthy from a project point of view. We have had a range of projects to continue on for another year of activity, these include the Coastal Saltmarsh, Mullungdung to Coast, Erosion Control and a range of weed control projects.

There are also a range of funding opportunities in the wind with grants having opened or about to be released anytime now. **Please give consideration to having a time of planning or brainstorming at one of your groups future meetings.** It is always really useful to have a range of projects and even proposals sitting on the shelf ready to go for when funding opportunities come along. I would love to assist you in running some planning sessions for your group.

Many of you may have been trying to get through to us here at the office and had no success. **We have had many I.T. hassles over the past 6 months.** Hopefully most of that has been sorted out now, but we are still having issues with the Yarram

Office direct line 5182 5078. We are trying to solve the problem but if you have no luck with an answer on that phone, please call us directly or email and we can call you back. On a positive note, the CMA has provided us with a new fax machine and it is working beautifully - 5182 6094

In my previous job I supported many community groups to get involved with the "**Keep Australia Beautiful**" - Tidy Town Awards. These are a terrific way for communities to celebrate their success. I would be very pleased to assist you in applying for one of the many awards, as I know there are a multitude of brilliant Landcare and community projects that do not receive the attention they deserve. Entry is straight forward and free. Award categories include Protecting the Environment; Clean Beaches; Community Action; Litter Prevention; Cultural Heritage; and Community Leadership. There are also two junior categories. Just about anything that Landcare does will fit within one of these categories. I have seen firsthand, just how much pleasure the awards bring to people who

work so hard for so little recognition. It is a wonderful community celebration. Check it out at <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/2893-tidy-towns-sustainable-communities-awards.asp>

I can greatly commend the YYLN Board, Sam & Bron for their patience and assistance in showing me the ropes, explaining things and being generally useful as I settle in. On a personal note, thanks to everyone who has offered me friendship as I settle in. I am making the most of Gippsland's coastline, taking up Sailing and enjoying exploring the beaches from Waratah Bay to Seaspray. My veggie garden is providing a bountiful supply of fresh produce and I don't even have to water every day. It is so unique to be able to spend a day enjoying good music in the rainforest at Tarra Bulga, and spend the evening sailing at Port Albert. You couldn't do that in the Mallee!

Thanks Everyone.

Sally-Ann Henderson ■



The race was at Port Albert Yacht Club Twilight race last Saturday evening. Winners were Ian Nicol (skipper) and our very own Sally-Ann (crew) sailing Corsair "David Finlay". Sally-Ann has progressed from her novice status to "chief baler" in this race. Strong winds and plenty of choppy waves meant she baled the boat out of trouble fairly constantly! Winners are grinners - Sally-Ann below enjoying after race fish'n'chips with Rob Davies and Ian Nicol.





LOCAL LANDCARE LEGENDS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Melissa Ainsworth

ANN COULSON IS ALSO PROUD OF HER DAHLIAS



If I was asked to use one word to sum up this edition's "Local Landcare Legend", it would be "determined". She is a woman determined to go it alone in her quest to farm her Seaspray property. And "she" is, Ann Coulson.

Ann grew up on her parents mixed Beef and Merino property located in Giffard. After graduating as a school teacher Ann taught in schools in Melbourne for fifteen years before returning to her father's farm. "It wasn't until I moved back that I got really interested with the farming" said Ann.

Ann purchased her farm, "Hillside" of 400 acres back in 1995 after the death of her father. Having inherited part of his merino and short-horn herd, she continued to run short-

horn Angus cross cows and converted to cross bred sheep.

There was no shortage of weed control work to be addressed with Boxthorn hedges standing 2 ~ 3 metres high, scattered throughout the property.

Only two native trees existed on the farm with the remainder made up of Cypress and Pine.

Farming in Seaspray is no easy feat. "The biggest problem is with salinity, salt laden winds and rabbits", Ann explained. Salinity effectively reduces overall farm productivity by suppressing plant growth. This makes it difficult to establish pasture and shelter belts which actually help to alleviate salinity.

Ann was successful in attracting "Rabbit Buster" funding and has got on top of the rabbit population that inhabited about 25 acres of the property when she purchased it.

Ann said "I got involved with Landcare about twenty years

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PLAGUE SOLDIER BEETLES: *Chauliognathus lugubris*

By Kaye Proudley



Have you seen these 14mm long, soft-bodied beetles flying like mini-helicopters around your garden of late?

If you have, there's no need to be worried – they neither bring the plague (just come in plague proportions!) and neither are they soldier-like, so no biting, stinging, or other war-like behaviour. In fact they are related to the harmless firefly family of 'glowing' fame.

In fact, I'd be calling them 'Love Beetles' because this is what they are mostly doing when they become so obvious! Yep they're mating, en masse! In fact scientists counted (I always

find it incredible when scientists count things like this!!) and found 92% of one beetle-y clump were mating.

They appear in flushes quite often, starting in spring and going through to summer in South-eastern and South-western Australia, which can sometimes be seen as one long occupation of "our space" - our gardens, our vehicles, our houses and sometimes the clothes we are wearing - even ourselves! These mass swarms

are either mating flights where they mate, lay eggs in the soil, starting the cycle all over again the next year with more adults hatching after several lonely months underground as larvae from all those copious eggs laid the previous year; or they are dispersal flights.

Both the grubs and adult beetles eat butterfly eggs and larvae, with the adults and also eating aphids, other herbivorous pests and suck greedily on nectar from flowering plants -

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LOCAL LANDCARE LEGENDS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Melissa Ainsworth

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ago". Since then she has fenced and planted about 4000 trees to create shelter for her cattle from the coastal winds.

"In 2008 I got involved with the Salinity Project run by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network. The area affected by salinity was mapped and fenced with approximately 7400 salt tolerant tree species planted", explained Ann.

Ann also participated in the

Gippsland Plains Drought Tolerant Pastures Demonstration, also run by the Network. Over the three year program, a total of 30 hectares were sown down, mainly to Fescue. Ann has also battled to spray out one particular paddock of Pig face. The site continues to require lots of maintenance and after being attacked by snails post sowing, it still hasn't stopped this determined lady from giving up!

Ann is known for her eagle eye when it comes to spotting weeds. She discovered an isolated Serrated Tussock infestation near Seaspray over a decade ago. Thanks to Ann's significant finding, Serrated Tussock has remained isolated and has not spread across the surrounding farmlands.

Having retired from teaching just 18 months ago, Ann has plans for the future that include

excluding 100 acres of salt marsh from her operation. "I would love to fence the unproductive area out". "I also want to fill up the shelter belts to create more shelter", said Ann.

For the past two years Ann has been the President of the Merriman Creek Landcare sub group and previous to this was Secretary for two years. ■



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BUT THE ADULT BEETLES DON'T SEEM TO EAT THE PLANTS THEY SETTLE ON so there is no need to use chemical sprays which harm more than they help. They are more a crop pest, eating the leaves of some crop species like soybeans. The worst they can do to your plants is to break any fine stems with the sheer weight of their numbers.

One interesting aspect is the white-coloured fluid the beetle uses as a defense mechanism against predation by birds and

which it also coats its eggs with to protect them – scientists have found that it has anti-microbial and anti-cancer properties which they've been able to replicate synthetically and may lead to the development of two new streams of drugs.

A Singapore-registered ship was detained last November after carrying a load of logs to Wellington N.Z. after it was found to be "crawling with these beetles."

So sit these little beasties



out - it seems to be unknown why they're in such plague proportions this year – anywhere from a few days to

about six weeks seems to be the most they hang around. ■



AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Trevor Colvin

New Group Plans for Action....

The members of Yarram Urban Landcare Group have identified a number of projects worthy of their consideration and each project idea is being evaluated regarding effectiveness, degree of difficulty, timing and cost, but above all how effectively they increase the awareness of Landcare among the general populace.

Some of these ideas will certainly get up and run and others may not and any member of any Landcare group is welcome to become involved. If you have ideas about any of these possible projects and would like to get involved, please do so.

For the first time, Landcare will be involved in the **Tarra Easter Parade** on Easter Saturday. The group will be manning two floats and the idea is to spread the Landcare message on behalf of all Landcare groups in the region. We will be handing out lots of things for adults and kids, so come along and give us a cheer.

Envirofest. This is a repeat of a successful day which was run by the Network in 2005. It was focused on young people and attracted 600 primary and secondary kids on the day with all sorts of activities and environmental messages. Kids are our future life-blood so this project is seen as very important and is pencilled in for early 2014.

Yarram's **Botanic Gardens** have been sadly neglected for many years. Yarram Urban will investigate whether it can assist existing bodies to restore the gardens to some semblance of their intended glory. Other local groups have expressed interest in bringing these gardens back to life, so we will help if interest and enthusiasm is high enough.

We plan to run a series of **informative talks** and workshops in Yarram which will look at environmental issues on the minds of most of us, such as Global Warming, Coal Seam Gas and similar. We will draw experts to explain the issues clearly and provide possible solutions.

The new **Grand Strzelecki Track** is receiving accolades and recently won a National Award of some significance. It is a world-class facility which currently stops at Mack's Creek on our side of the mountains. The plan is to extend it to Yarram via Devon North, which would see a lot of quality Landcare activity along public and private land.

Islands Exploration. We have many islands off Port Albert which are an unknown to most of us. What are they, what do they harbour, what do they protect? Do they need Landcare and CoastCare help? Can they become tourist attractions? More questions than answers at the moment, but that is a healthy beginning.

We have stunning environments in our part of the world containing amazing fauna, some of which are nocturnal and rarely seen. We will investigate hosting **Night Spotlight Tours** and the possibilities they offer.

The **Tarra Walking Trail** is a

terrific asset and well used, but it doesn't contain any rest areas. We intend to work with the trail committee, The Men's Shed, Council and other bodies to build shaded rest areas, with water, tables, seating and so on.

Tarra, Jack and Albert Rivers. These are a Yarram asset which have had varying degrees of work done on them over the last 20 years, especially the Tarra. What more can be done? Do they offer leisure and tourist possibilities? What unique flora and fauna do they contain? How accessible are they? Again, many questions which we will answer.

We have members willing to help other YYLN groups who may need physical help on occasions. Provided we have sufficient notice and provided there is a social aspect associated with the work, we would be delighted to see if we can muster some help. Your contact for the Yarram Urban Landcare Group is Trevor Colvin who can be contacted on 0417 307 098. ■



AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



By our Landcare Groups

Wonyip

The Wonyip group has appointed member John Kosta as their representative on the newly formed Corner Inlet Blackberry Taskforce. Other representatives include the South Gippsland Shire and Parks Victoria. John is on the Steering Committee covering three Landcare groups; Wonyip (Yarram Network) and Agnes River and Franklin River (South Gippsland Network). A project officer has been appointed to work with land managers tackling a conservative estimate of **3000 acres of blackberry infestation!**

As well as that, the Webb's were up on their top 8 pulling out blackberries and hollies. The non-eucalypts they planted are doing well. Seed bank is busy sprouting wattles, kangaroo apple, musk daisy, bidgie, dogwood, gorse bush, clematis, as well as grasses and some unidentified ground cover. The blackberries are coming up amongst all the others so spot spraying is not an option. Quite a few eucalypts have survived so far but as John Kosta said, many

Ruth from Wonyip hard at work



have been eaten to the ground or pulled out. nevertheless, progress is very good in many areas. ■

Woodside

To celebrate Christmas a wonderful evening was enjoyed in December by the Woodside group at the Wildfish Restaurant in Port Albert.

At our last meeting on February 27, our guest speaker Bob Wilson (DPI) spoke about DPI's Rabbit Compliance Program which is currently operating in the Woodside area. Our next meeting is April 17, 8pm Woodside Hall. All welcome to hop along! ■

Albert River

In December our group held a meeting and Christmas **barbecue** at the home of Geoff and Pam Charman. We welcomed new Coordinator Sally-Ann Henderson and it was also nice to have Gavin Egan attend. Our next meeting has had to be postponed due to illness. ■

Hedley

In November, Hedley members enjoyed a short walk around the Atkin property, with a short history of the family and the farm dating back to 1920's. Seven years ago two small areas of Paperbark and Coastal Manna gum were fenced off. Members were pleased to see evidence of regeneration.

We have a proposed farm walk visit coming up later this month at the property of Joan and Gary Wallis. Please contact Maree for details. ■



Yarram Urban

We want to hear from groups who need a hand with working bees and providing you can give us sufficient notice, we will attempt to provide some extra hands to help you.

Our Indian Myna trapping program is going well with 89 trapped (up to end January) along with 81 Starlings.

We are meeting monthly on the second Tuesday. For more details contact Trevor Colvin on 0417 307 098 or the YYLN Office. See main article on our plans. ■

Binginwarri

The Binginwarri group have held 3 activities so far this year, looking at plants, birdwatching, and a Wildlife Wander with a meeting following. All have been pleasant, educational and successful - and WE can help YOU to learn about plants and birds!

Some other things we are planning for the year include; a Wine 'n Cheese-tasting evening,

visiting a Wildlife Shelter, Tree Planting and a Trust For Nature/Land for Wildlife Information and Education Day. Everyone is welcome! If you'd like to receive our Activities Calendar for 2013 please call John on 5185 1455. Also, see the Events Update on Page 2 for our upcoming activities. ■

Merriman Creek

Our recent meeting was well attended with Network Coordinator Sally-Ann Henderson in attendance.

Our group continues to focus on pest plant and pest animal control, both on roadsides and along Merriman Creek. We are also keen to learn more about Coal Seam Gas mining and Carbon Capture and Storage.

Many of our members are also involved with Indian Myna trapping programs with our group having purchased several traps.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 2nd at 2pm at the Stradbroke Hall. ■



TOURING THE PROJECTS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Helga Binder

On December 10, 2012 a busload of Board and Committee volunteers, ably led by Samantha Monks and chauffeured by Kevin Hegglin, went visiting some of YYLN's major projects. You would need a week to see it all, but what we did see made us proud.

We began with a site visit to Len & Alice Mayo in Devon North. As part of the Recycling for Recovery program that followed the 2009 bushfires, Len and Alice had much to recover, with only their house left standing. Their property is now fenced, revegetated and the local flora and fauna are returning, as have their smiles.

From there we drove to Billy Creek via Church Rd and Staceys Bridge.

If you go for a Sunday drive down any of these roads you may notice something is missing. It's those pesky invasive weeds that have been whittled down during the four year Invasive Plants and Animals (IPA) program.

Now you see beautiful vistas of pasture land, shelter-belts and waterways with only the occasional intrusion of African Love Grass, Blue Periwinkle, Boxthorn, Boneseed, Broom, Gorse, Ragwort, Spanish Heath.... need we go on?

Sadly, the rain over the last year or so after such prolonged drought has encouraged the pests to return. The work of a Landcarer is never done. Sigh.



CHAUFFUER - KEVIN HEGGIN

Back on the bus and on to the Hedley Range Rd and a panoramic vista of the JARR region. Picture 4 gives an idea of the extent of the land covered by a whole range of projects including erosion control, wildlife corridors, IPA, shelter-belt and riparian fencing and revegetation.

Next we saw some gorse projects along route to Manns Beach via Meadows Lane, Alberton. We give thanks for the strong inter-agency partnership between YYLN, VGT, WGCMA, DPI, WSC, Vic Roads and DSE that has seen the treatment of over 700Ha of gorse since 2009.

At Manns Beach we met with Ray & Colleen Jenkins and wandered through their Saltmarsh project. What an unbelievable feat! What was a flat and barren saltpan has been turned into a lush and vibrant saltmarsh. The years of hard work have paid off!

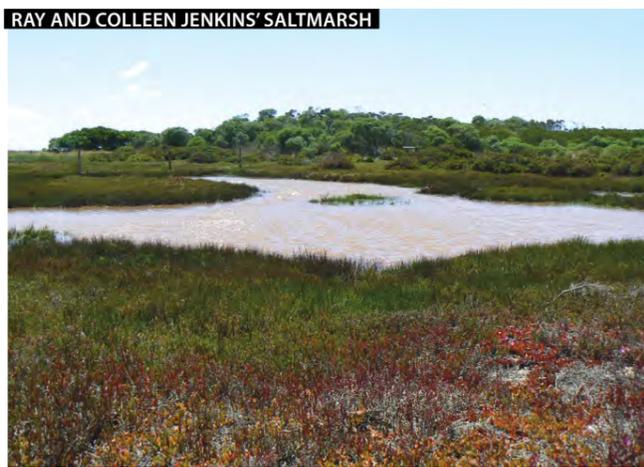
Tired and thirsty, we trekked on through the backroads of Woodside and Merriman Creek checking the Gippsland Plain Drought Tolerant Pastures and Mullundung to Coast projects.



EVERYONE IS SMILING WITH LEN MAYO



NO WEEDS ON THIS LANDSCAPE



RAY AND COLLEEN JENKINS' SALTMARSH

...continued on next page



BOARD PROFILE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Sally-Ann Henderson

Welcome to new Board member, David MacAulay

"My greatest ambition in life was at 50 years old, to still be of such value to the cricket team that I was denying a place to a young fellow."

Alas David was never to realise that particular dream. Other more important things came along, like his charming wife Sue, who he met at the Show Society Dance. They now have two adult children - a daughter and a son.

Although new to the Yarram Yarram Landcare Board for 2012/13, David MacAulay is by no means new to Natural Resource Management Committees. In fact David started his involvement around 40 years ago when he joined the Local Advisory Committee for the Lands Department. Then in 1977 he was appointed to the South Gippsland Soil Advisory Committee and later elected to the Gippsland Advisory

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We dropped in on Don Belcher and discovered a whole other arm of Landcare: understanding and improving pasture. One cannot help but be moved by the dedication and commitment by people like Don and Kay Belcher to sustainable farming and the environment. Why are we so lucky to have so many of these people in our Network?

Personally I would like to pay tribute to all of you that have



DAVID MACAULY AT HOME ON HIS BONITO BOAT, VECTIS

Committee. So he brings with him a long and illustrious career in serving the local farming community.

David attended Melbourne University whilst studying Agriculture. Originally a beef and sheep farmer, he became a dairy farmer after he bought a dairy farm, share farmed it for a while and then he and Sue decided to milk the cows themselves. They did that for 14 years and it is now back to share farming. Roast beef is David's favourite meal so he must still

have that connection to his early days as a beef farmer.

His Stacey's Bridge property is located on the site originally selected by his grandfather in 1882. His grandfather migrated from Scotland, first heading to the Bendigo area, where after 10 years he was driven out by drought and headed south to Gippsland to join his brother. David still values his Scottish heritage and has maintained the links though attendance at Highland games and his enjoyment of Scottish music.

hung in there for the last 25 years and made our region one of the best in Victoria. Congratulations.

Now.

How many birds do you think you could spot on one trip? Bird watcher, Kaye Proudley, was given this task and here is what she came up with:

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo x 2; Common Bronzewing x 1; Galah

x 12; Eastern Rosella x 8; Magpie x 48; Magpie-lark x 6; *Common Mynah x 14; Australian Raven x 111; Red Wattlebird x 2; White-faced Heron x 3; *Goldfinch x 2; Dusky Woodswallow x 6; Wood Duck x 10; Wedge-tailed Eagle x 4; Blue-winged Parrot; 1x *Blackbird x 2; Masked Lapwing x 2; *Common Starling; 16x Chestnut Teal x 21; *Pipit x 1; Welcome Swallow x 4; Superb Blue Wren x 2; Clamorous Reed

His daughter even plays the Bagpipes.

The Catchment and Land Protection Board was the precursor to the Catchment Management Authority. David served on its Board for 7 years. He was instrumental in establishing the YYLN, working with others to develop the Constitution and start the Network. Throughout his long commitment to Natural Resource Management, David has continued to also serve in various community organisations. This has included indulging his interest in Sailing. He and Sue are active members of the Port Albert Yacht Club and have a sailboat which unfortunately spends more time in their shed than they would like. He also enjoys travelling and good music, including classical, folk and the music of Gilbert and Sullivan.

David also finds time to be the Treasurer/Secretary of the Albert River Landcare Group. ■

Warbler x 1; Silvereye x 5; Brown Thornbill x 3; Pacific Gull x 3; White Ibis x 23; Straw-necked Ibis x 2; Grey Shrike Thrush x 1; Willy Wagtail x 1; *House Sparrow x 3; Tree Martin x 1; White-eyed Duck x 2; Black Duck x 3; Jacky Winter x 1; Aust Coot x 1; Crimson Rosella x 2; Sulphur-crested Cockatoo x 30; Grey Butcherbird x 1 (*denotes introduced species) ■



PROJECT UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Samantha Monks

Invasive Plants & Animals (IPA) Program

Blackberry, African Boxthorn, Gorse, Ragwort & Serrated Tussock: these five noxious weeds are high priority for our IPA program this year across the YYLN area. Even after a long dry summer, there have been new infestations of these weeds along our roadsides and properties. Fortunately YYLN has funding incentives available to help with community extension education and management programs to help tackle outbreaks of these species.

Through the State Government's, "Communities for Nature Grant: Jack and Albert Rivers Restoration (JARR) Project", Blackberry is being treated on over 30 properties in the Bingenwarri/Albert River and Wonyip areas. Over summer, more than 3,500 ha of private property is being followed up for Blackberry regrowth and new infestations. Individual landholder agreements are a vital part of this program, committing landholders to ongoing responsibility in Blackberry control.

Gorse remains a key focus of our IPA program as we run into the fourth year of funding from the



RAGWORT (SCENICO JACOBAEA)

Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT). This enables us to provide landholders with long term support across the Gippsland coastal area from Port Albert to Seaspray.

There is also new funding available to assist with the removal of African Boxthorn in the coastal saltmarsh areas that fringe the Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park.

In the Seaspray area, we are nearing the end of a three year Serrated Tussock (ST) program funded by the Federal Government. A follow up community survey was conducted recently to help gauge community awareness of this highly invasive grass species. ST trial sites have been established on local properties to demonstrate different management strategies to treat and control ST.

Expressions of Interest are open for the Gorse, Boxthorn and JARR Blackberry programs.

Communities for Nature Grant: JARR Project

On-ground works are well under way for the Communities for Nature Grants for Round 1 (2012-'13). Major components of this four year DSE funded project are to:

- 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

Due to the large number of EOI's for this project, a planning workshop will be held in March/April (date to be announced), to help prioritise 2013 -2015 project areas. A Blackberry Control Workshop is also planned for June. Community volunteers are also required for tree planting on project sites in late autumn this year. Please contact me or your local Landcare group if you can help!

YYLN Saltmarsh Protection Project

In the ongoing spirit of partnership between YYLN and WGCMA, I am pleased to announce a fourth year of funding for our Saltmarsh Protection Project. Since 2009, through the Corner Inlet Connections (CIC) partnership, this project has given landowners the opportunity to protect coastal saltmarsh in the Nooramunga area, between the



EROSION CONTROL SITE NEAR ALBERT RIVER



Samantha Monks, YYLN Project Officer

Albert River and Reeves Beach.

Expressions of Interest are invited from landowners in this area to fence off coastal saltmarsh from stock access. Weed control and targeted revegetation activities can also be considered.

YYLN/WGCMA/CIC Erosion Control Program 2012-'13

This landscape-scale project forms the start of a vital biolink connecting Hedley Range and Hiawatha, in the JARR area. Now in its final year, on-ground works for the Erosion Control Program are well underway. Almost 3km of fencing has been erected on the actively eroding steep hills of the Albert River valley, protecting several hectares of wet and damp forest from stock. 10,000 locally indigenous tubestock will be planted out this autumn. ■

For further information on any of these projects or Invasive Plants & Animals matters please contact: Samantha Monks, YYLN Project Officer - Ph. 03 5175 7895, Mob. 0419 371 497 or Email samantham@wgcm.vic.gov.au



PROJECT UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Samantha Monks

Carbon Action on the Ground

Gippsland Plains soil carbon trials – productivity and climate change response



NOORAMUNGA SALTMARSH PROTECTION SITE

Nearly one tonne of soil collected from Woodside to Seaspray has been sent off to the DPI Laboratories McLeod for testing and analysis. Fresh soil samples are weighed, then dried at 40 degrees Celsius, weighed again, then ground so the total carbon content can be measured.

All soil samples are then stored away until June 2015 with an option to undertake further analysis. This data will provide us with a snapshot of soil carbon levels across the Giffard Plain and will help determine how soil carbon is influenced by agricultural management, climate and soil type.



BRIAN NICHOLLS AND BANJO AT DROUGHT PASTURE PROJECT SITE

Through this project three trial sites will be established on properties with the lowest soil carbon levels. These sites will trial and demonstrate innovative on-farm practices to increase the sequestration of carbon in soils.

A series of field days and

workshops are planned over the next three years to raise community awareness and understanding of increasing soil carbon. A field day will be held at Stradbroke in May this year, date to be announced shortly. ■

Farm Plan 21 *Whole Farm Planning for the Twenty-first Century*

YYLN will host a Farmplan21 workshop, run by the Department of Primary Industries, at the Yarram Pelican Room of the Old Shire Offices on Wednesdays, for 6 sessions starting on May 1st. Day or night sessions will run based on what the majority prefer. The course costs \$180 per property and is credited towards a Diploma of Agriculture. All who participate in the decisions for the property are very welcome.

Participants of the program receive an aerial photo and easy to use software which enables the user to draw in fence lines, drainage, pipeline and proposed works making it easy to calculate areas and distances.



There will be training in the computer mapping, planning in soil management, pastures and grazing strategies, water budgeting, weed and pest programs, biodiversity and shelter improvements and more. If this is for you? You MUST

REGISTER BY Monday April 8th to allow time for your aerial photo to be printed. Contact Sally-Ann Henderson on 0427 581 152 at the YYLN or Joan Wallis on 0429 007 240 (DPI) with your property and contact details.

WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN IN?

"It was an effective way to view the family farm as a single enterprise - planning for grass, soil, water and layout combined," said Jacque Harrison.

"The guest speakers brought the huge amount of information into good focus," said Ray East.

Dallas Wyatt said "I found multiple benefits. It gave me an overview of all aspects of the land. The computer mapping meant I could easily calculate paddock sizes for pasture and fertilizer requirements. And in conservation works I could work out patch sizes for fencing and so on, plus the best long-term way of connecting them." ■



PROJECT UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Bronwyn Johnson



Bronwyn Johnson, Seedbank and Mullungdung to Coast Project Officer.

Oh Heck! Oh Heck! It's up to my neck!

When things don't go to plan, it turns out to be a learning opportunity.

I recently conducted a site visit for a project participant, Lynette Missen. Last year we planted over 2500 tubes on her property in a corridor designed to connect the roadside vegetation to remnants on hers and neighbouring properties.

Originally, because parts of the site were subject to occasional waterlogging, Lynette was planning to mound the rows. However, last year was too wet to get a tractor on site. Weed control seemed hampered by the wet conditions, until we realised the waterlogging had drowned nearly all the weeds. It was October before the ground was dry enough to plant. Typically we plant in winter to provide seedlings the best chance to establish in the milder conditions, preparing them for the tougher summer months ahead.

Mullungdung to Coast



The photo shows how well these plants are growing. Less than 10% have perished. We expected some losses and planted more tubes initially to account for this. Approximately 20% are being subjected to ongoing rabbit attack. Lynette is tackling this problem with a baiting program. Where plants have been browsed, she has double guarded with tree guards saved from a previous tree planting. This seems to be doing the trick with plants beginning to reshoot and showing no signs of further attack. Instead the rabbits have moved along the planting to less protected tubes and seem particularly fond of *Allocasuarina*. These will be targeted for extra protection before they are browsed, and

others protected as necessary.

A couple of days after the visit, Lynette rang me, very excited. She had found a couple of *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* volunteers in between the rows whilst out tackling Kikuyu and Canadian Fleabane. She promptly guarded these little treasures to give them a better chance of surviving.

For both of us, this project has provided many lessons. Whilst proper planning, preparation and dedication are vital for success in these projects; willingness and capacity to adapt to individual or changing conditions and to learn from our experiences is proving equally important.

There are 11 landholders



engaged and 20 sites being prepared for the final year of this project. I'm looking forward to learning even more from them and with them.

This project is supported by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country. ■

For further information on Mullungdung to Coast or Seedbank please contact: Bronwyn Johnson, YYLN Project Officer - Ph. 03 5175 7895, Mob. 0429 808 130 or Email bronwynj@wgma.vic.gov.au



PROJECT UPDATE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Bronwyn Johnson

Seedbank

WE SELL SEED!

Just thought I'd remind you of this.

We can sell you a small amount of one species or prepare locally provenanced, ethically sourced mixes for direct seeding. All you have to do is ask.

One group of plants I'm becoming particularly interested in lately are the legumes. And the more I learn about them the more I ask the question -Why don't we plant more? Not that we don't plant them quite prolifically but I think we can broaden the number of species we use.

This family of plants, known

as the Fabaceae, comprises over 19,000 species found throughout the world. Some major food crops, such as green peas, beans, peanuts, soya and lentils, all come from this family. As do gorse and brooms, but you can't have everything! In Australia this family is most notable for the acacias and the peas.

Most members of this family are considered 'nitrogen fixers'. Technically, their roots form symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationships with nitrogen fixing bacteria. These bacteria already exist in the soil. When the roots of these plants come into contact with the bacteria an association is formed. The bacteria form nodules with the

roots and use sugars supplied to them by the plant to capture atmospheric nitrogen and convert it into ammonia, an organic form of nitrogen the plants can use. *And everybody's happy.*

Except of course the plants that can't fix nitrogen via friendly bacterial boarders (like the eucalypts). These plants could get their nitrogen from farmers flicking fertilizer around, which is not such a reliable source out in the bush; or they could wait for one of the nitrogen fixers to die. The decomposition of the root nodules releases stored organic nitrogen into the soil where it can be used by neighbouring plants. Plants also tend to root prune when they

are grazed or lose a limb.

Australian soils are generally quite low in nitrogen, so the presence of legumes in an ecosystem is obviously quite important, not only to the legume but to all the other plants as well. It makes sense to include as many acacia and pea plants as is appropriate to a site and that we can get seed for. Plus they add a brilliant splash of colour. ■



Carbon Farming Futures Extension & Outreach Program

YYLN is currently being funded to support the distribution of information about the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and how to participate. The CFI is a \$64 million program. A range of PowerPoint presentations on agricultural emissions which can be obtained from YYLN if you or your group would like to view them.

THE PRESENTATIONS INCLUDE:

- Introduction to the science of agricultural emissions and sinks
- The carbon cycle in animal production systems and the various pools of carbon
- The nitrogen cycle in agricultural production systems and the various pools of nitrogen
- Sinks of carbon and sources of methane and nitrous oxide

- emissions in agricultural systems
- Options to increase carbon storage in land management systems
- Options to reduce methane and nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural systems
- Case studies: simplified examples of how offsets can be generated through on-farm actions.

There are also a range of pamphlets and factsheets including:

- Carbon Farming Initiative Handbook
- Australia's Farming Future-Soil Carbon
- Australia's Farming Future-Livestock emissions
- Australia's Farming Future-Biochar
- Australia's Farming Future-Adapting to a changing

climate

- Creating opportunities for farmers and land managers
- CFI Methodology Factsheet - Environmental plantings
- Making cent\$ of carbon and emissions on farm (DPI Vic)

CFI METHODOLOGY WEBINAR

An easy way to get up to speed with the Carbon Farming Initiative is to download the December Webinar. The webinar was held by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) and if you would like to view it check out the following link:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/events.aspx>

Come and visit Victoria's first Carbon Farming Initiative

Peter Newgreen - the West Gippsland Regional Landcare Facilitator is currently helping to put together a visit to Peter & Christine Forster's "Bullock Hills Direct Seeding 2010 and 2012" environmental planting project. This is the first project in Victoria to be approved for eligible offsets using the Reforestation modelling tool.

The property is located near Ararat in Western Victoria and the trip would involve an overnight stay. If you are interested in coming on the bus contact Peter Newgreen by email; peternewgreen@wgma.vic.gov.au or mobile 0409 944 114 ■





...AND ANOTHER THING

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Warren the Wise

Warren the Wise



Dear Warren,
Now that the rain is over and we seem to be going back into drought I am very worried about getting enough water to all of my newly planted shelter belts. Can you offer any suggestions to help them get through the summer in one piece please?

Signed: Water-poor farmer.

Dear Water-poor Farmer,

This is a hard one because there is not a lot one can do except to accept the harsh realities of living in a hot and fiery summer type of environment.

I can only think that doing things the correct and accepted way is the best bet but of course even this does not guarantee survival of your trees.

I could try to get my friends the Black Wallabies and the Eastern Grey Kangaroos to stop nibbling on your delectable trees which I know would help but then I keep thinking "if your forebears had not cut down so much of our bush, and later generations had not bred so prolifically and taken over so much of the land that remained, we'd have more trees, which make more water

and food and we wouldn't need to eat your trees." But sorry, my mind wandered a little there.... back to water....

If you use forestry tubes and they're planted in the wet season here it maximises their chances of getting their roots down deeper before summer hits, and if they were planted with a few water-holding crystals in the hole before the plant went in that helps extend the benefits of any rain they get. Then if they were mulched as well, even better. But we're talking here of large amounts of plants – an expensive and impractical exercise. If you have direct-seeded, I can't offer any suggestions apart from incorporating water crystals at the time – once again expensive. So, go with nature.... it's really all you can do, and if you lose shelter belts or get holes in them, try growing your own replacements, it is quite easy to do.

I guess it might be worth an ask of your local fire brigade, if when they are practising their guys with hose-use, they might be able to come water your shelter-belts if access is easy but I don't think they'll come too often!!

May the rain be with you! ■

November 18th 2012

Dear Fellow Members of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network

I just wanted to say a thank you for the very generous words written by Dan Garlick and Helga Binder in the Spring Landcare News. It was a great honour to represent our area, along with Belinda Brennan from South Gippsland and the WGCMA, at the National Landcare Conference and Awards Night – a fascinating and stimulating couple of days, and a truly "Gala" Awards Night!

I felt very humbled and quite embarrassed by the whole Awards Process – there are so many landholders in our Network area, and beyond, doing so many great things – and many of them have inspired and taught me along the way.

So thank you again to all those who have encouraged and supported us with our Landcare work at Warrigal Creek over the years – especially the terrific Network staff who really make things happen "on ground" – without them facilitating and driving the various programs the pace would undoubtedly be much slower! And I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the various local businesses and organisations that sponsor and promote so many Landcare activities, including the Landcare Awards (in the case of the Primary Producer Award locally: Brown Wigg, Murray Goulburn and Retravision).

Landcare spirit, and kind regards to all,

Libby Balderstone

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Darriman VIC 3851
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PARTNER ACTIVITY

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Bruce Atkin

"Summer by the Sea", the holiday activities program jointly run by DSE's Coastcare program and Parks Victoria was run throughout January. Over 100 activities were offered along the Gippsland coast, from Mallacoota to Phillip Island, and over 200 elsewhere.

Coastcare facilitator Bruce Atkin says the activities provided are not just entertainment for holiday-makers (although they are all enjoyable!), but are also designed to teach participants a little more about the marine and coastal environment and what we can all do to help look after it.

A wide range of presenters are involved, including Parks Victoria staff from Foster, Orbost and Mallacoota, volunteer groups from Inverloch, Port Welshpool and Lake Tyers, DSE and DPI staff, Fishcare volunteers, and a number of commercial organisations.

A new on-line booking system trialled this year seems to have resulted in even greater demand than usual for activities such as



Rockpool Rambles, Dinosaur and Geology walks and a South Gippsland specialty: Dipnetting for the amazing marine life in our seagrass meadows.

The program wound up on the Australia Day weekend with a "Life's a Beach" Activities day at Venus Bay. ■



What to do for light in a power outage.....?

If you are ever in a situation where you are without electricity for a period of time, here's a little trick. Take charged up solar lights, set them in 20 oz or 1 litre plastic bottles and weigh them down with colorful marbles, sand, aquarium gravel, etc. Bring them into your house and set them around where you need light. They provide a nice, bright, safe, light for free and eliminate the need for batteries, which saves you money! You just bring them in at night and set

them back out in the sunlight each day to recharge. Bring a solar light into your house one night and see for yourself. Put one in each room and see your whole house light up. They are a perfect source of light and will stay lit all night long if you need it. The cost is no more than the effort it takes to bring them in and set them out each day. (Oh yeah... plus the cost of the lights!) As long as you continue to

recharge them, they'll be ready for use any time there is a need. Perfect for power outages, hurricanes, and saving electricity... these work beautifully! ■ Taken from a post by the Starfire, Universal Energy Grid, USA



.....Use Solar Lights from the garden!



Contacts for Individual Active Landcare Groups

Albert River Landcare Group

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Carrajung and District LG

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Yarram Urban Landcare Group

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