



TreeProject

October 2013

Malleefowl Project Grows
Hope for the Spiny Rice-flower
African Reforestation Movement
Working Bee Dates for 2013-2014



Sowing the seeds for a sustainable future

Movie Fundraiser

Thursday 14th November

Cinema Nova

Opening night of

'Enough Said'

Staring James Gandolfini and Julia Louis-Dreyfus

Tag November 14th in your diary, see a great movie and help TreeProject

Sow the Seed

Newsletter contributions welcome

Our newsletter is the main medium through which we communicate to our members and supporters. If you have suggestions for news topics or research that would be of value to landholders or growers, or if you'd like to send a letter or photograph to be published please email info@treeproject.asn.au with Newsletter in the subject.

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Thank you to TreeProject supporters and donors

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Cover photo by Geelong Coordinator
Wilma Trew.

Eucalyptus polyanthemus (Red Box)

Thank you Impact Digital for sponsorship in the printing of this Newsletter

Corporate Donations

Shelley Brown obtains NAB Support for TreeProject

A generous donation was received from the National Australia Bank Employee Community Grants Program in recognition of the work of staff member Shelley Brown, who is also TreeProject's hard working Secretary.

NAB encourages its employees to give back to the community by granting staff 16 hours of leave to volunteer with a not-for-profit organisation. Staff members whose contribution exceeds 16 hours are also eligible to apply for the NAB Employee Grants Program.

TreeProject's links with NAB now also include its Volunteering Program, which may in future supply additional volunteers for tree plantings and other work at the depot and nursery.

Shelley has done an amazing job in linking our organisations. We are so lucky to have her on our team and look forward to further collaborations with NAB.

Raelene Olsen Delivers Exxon Mobil Grant

Raelene Olsen, a seedling grower for TreeProject, this year joined TreeProject's community of volunteer growers. Her workplace was impressed with her efforts and made a handsome donation under its Volunteer Involvement Program to TreeProject in recognition.

"I was thrilled to get the grant" Raelene said. "It's the first time I'd applied, even though I've been an employee for many years."

Exxon Mobil staff are encouraged to volunteer for 20 hours per year. The beneficiaries include lifesaving clubs, the Country Fire Authority, schools, youth groups, health, animal welfare and other non-profit organizations.

Raelene said the process for applying was quite formal, but there was very little fanfare about the winning entrants. She simply received an email saying she'd won, and a transfer was made to TreeProject.

Raelene found out about TreeProject after noticing how much her sister enjoys volunteering for Trees For Life in South Australia. She read in her local paper about a man from

Menzie's Creek who was looking for

people to join him in growing seedlings for TreeProject.

Raelene wasn't sure whether there would be enough sunshine for growing seedlings at her forested Upwey property, but decided to give it a go.

She contacted TreeProject, and is now growing plants for landholder Anne Cunningham – and loving it!

Raelene feels supported by the training provided by TreeProject, and has since met others in her area who she talks to about growing techniques.



Raelene Olsen

Good Growing Season!



Allan Collard with his seedlings

As a grower for the second kit distribution – which was in January 2013 for a spring planting, it has been a good growing season.

All of my seed was sown by mid February and includes species of *Acacia*, *Eucalyptus*, *Goodenia* and *Gynatrix*.

Germination of all species was good, with first sightings within 6 days to 14 days of sowing. The Eucalypts were more than successful, with literally hundreds of seeds germinating. The *Goodenia* and *Gynatrix* were similar with oodles of surplus to requirements.

Stormy trouble

During the 6 or more weeks after germination, care had to be taken with the weather, relative to summer storms. The heavy rain and possible hailstones that were experienced could have wiped out my seedlings, so I moved them to shelter when the forecast was for rain or storms.

Toughening up seedlings for future resilience

The weather was consistently hot following the month after germination. In order to slow the growth and encourage root growth within the tube, all boxes were moved into the shade of my large veranda.

Each night I put them out into the open to get the advantage of the cool nights and moisture from the overnight dew, and returned them to the shade in the morning.

Watering was reduced also. All this was in an endeavor to grow strong seedlings that will best survive when planted out in later months.

Thinning and Transplanting

Late March arrived and it was time to start thinning out and transplanting.

The purpose of the thinning out and transplanting process is to end up with one healthy and strong plant in each tube. Transplanting additional plants can help make up for losses.

Eight extra boxes this year!

Over the following few weeks I transplanted seedlings from each species to make up an extra 8 boxes, in addition to the original kit of 7 boxes.

By mid-April, the hot weather had started to cool off, and all boxes were moved back into the open full time.

Watering was still limited to a maximum of every other day, or even longer, depending on the amount of

sunshine and wind.

Time to clean tubes & snip roots

Also as a part of my growing regime, every 3 - 4 weeks, I would take each tube out of each box to remove root growth through the bottom of the tube, and also take out any weeds that may have grown.

I then clean each box and replace the newspaper lining, which helps retain moisture in the box, and also prevents unwanted "bugs" entering from the holes in the bottom of the foam box.

All my boxes were kept off the ground and sitting on milk crates, which are supported by a wooden framework with castors to provide ease of maneuverability in shifting the boxes to and from the verandah.

Third round of photos at 4 month stage

The seedlings are now almost 4 months old, and time to take photos of the 16 week - 4 month - growth stage for the seedling database.

Then my coordinator advised me that my landholder wanted to collect the seedlings sooner than expected (in preparation for an early planting) I agreed to test a sample tube from each specie to ensure root structure was adequate to support future growth. This test was at TreeProject's request.

Each sample tube was emptied, and the soil did not fall apart upon removal from the tube, indicating sufficient root formation to support the seedling when planted out. They were ok to be collected.

Pest attack was minimal

This season has been relatively trouble free, with no "cut worm" pest experienced, but I had trouble with grubs "feasting" on the Hemp Bush seedlings. Constant daily inspection and removal was needed.

Reflections of a happy grower

I have been growing for over 20 years, and although being time consuming, it is a most enjoyable and rewarding activity to produce strong and healthy plants



Allan Collard using a Hamilton Tree Planter at Gobur for Home Creek Landcare 1999—Photo Colin McDonald

for a landholder and for the environment. It was particularly made worthwhile when Landholder Peter Westgate collected my 15 boxes recently and remarked that he had never seen such quality plants.

- Alan Collard

Big Thanks from Landholder to Seedling Growers

On behalf of the North Harcourt/Sedgwick Landcare Group I would like to thank you so very much for your help to keep our landscapes healthy and beautiful. The seedlings we have received this year look – again- very healthy and some of them will turn into magical, grand old trees.

People on the land are very busy with their properties (as is everybody else) and your efforts with providing the seedlings makes it so much easier for landholders to plant some indigenous trees.

Over the last 9 years we have distributed around 23,500 seedlings from the TreeProject to the local community. Of course, not all of them make it into grand old trees, but any tree planted helps nature. To this effect you are contributing to positive change on a landscape scale, slowly healing some wounds afflicted by human activities.

Feel free to drop around and see where the little “babies” have found a new home.

Our Landcare group will not hold a tree planting day this year, but if somebody requires help with planting, I will pass on their details.

Thank you very much again. Your efforts are deeply appreciated.
- Karoline Klein



From seed to seedling to grand old tree (we just have to wait for another 150 years or so) .

Malleefowl Project Grows

This year we used TreeProject to grow us 1000 Wallowa wattles which are renowned as wonderful staple food for the Malleefowl. Our growers were based in the Rosanna area and I borrowed a plant trailer from Wail Nursery and sallied forth last Friday week to pick up the seedlings. I picked up 28 boxes of between 45 and 48 plants! Added in with the regular and valued 'crop' produced by friend Ian Pratchett, we had around 1600 plants to get in the ground in our July planting day.

Other fantastic news is that the Malleefowl we have seen 'nesting' for the last two years have already gathered litter and are feeding it into their mound. We have also been keeping an eye on two other areas where birds are digging out mounds. AND, last week whilst fumigating near our western boundary, we have found another mound which was active last year (at least). Our management plan is getting lots of ticks.

The rain arrived the day after we got 6kg of seed in the ground at five higher priority areas. Sowing was shallower than last year when a 20ml dump in 20 mins buried the young emergents - fingers are crossed. Rain has seen other plantings 'boom' and the place is looking good.



Malleefowl at their nest. Photo: M. Thorpe

We are fortunate to participate in a joint VNPA/Hindmarsh Landcare monitoring program using cameras and a regime where observations are made in a revegetation area, in a remnant and in a cleared area where no restoration has occurred. It's early days still with Malleefowl strutting about. Unfortunately, feral rabbit, fox and cat also detected. Looking forward to what science shows us longer-term. It has been an added delight to have friend Ann Williamson involved at the Melbourne end given her work in monitoring our critters over

many years.

We had lots of visitors with the Melbourne Birdlife camp at Snape Reserve over Easter taking two day trips to our patch led by another old friend Keith Stockwell. Both groups managed around 45 species during the day - including our Malleefowl. The Mallee Bustard has also been visiting from time to time. The Mammal Survey Group of Victoria is due over Cup weekend and we are looking forward to what they detect. They have a challenge to match the Mallee Ningauai, Mitchell's Shot-tailed Snake and the, not so common, Common Dunnart detected since they last visited. Visitors are made welcome to join in.

- Bernie Fox and Sue Hayman-Fox,



Mali Dunes Common Dunnart.

Photo: H. Poussard



Clive, Peter, Bryce, Win, Sue, Bob, Horrie, Wendy, Menka, Geraldine and Mirinda. Photo: B. Fox

Cherry Creek Project: Hope for the Spiny Rice-Flower



Grassland wildflowers drawings from Doreen 's 1930s plant diary.

The Western Basalt Plains grasslands once covered 10% of Victoria, but today only 0.1% remains. Located between Melbourne and Portland and north of Colac to Beaufort, these isolated remnants are now threatened by climate change, farming practices, pests and urbanization.

To stop further reduction of the grasslands TreeProject, in partnership with Williamstown High School and local volunteers, is working to restore three hectares of critically endangered Basalt Plains Grasslands adjacent to



Cherry Creek in Williamstown. This site contains the Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *Spinescens*), which is listed as critically endangered at the national level. The area has already lost many of its common species, as attested by Doreen Eddison's Plant diary from the 1930's.

Project based on knowledge of ecology

The Spiny Rice-flower is susceptible to extinction because of its small gene pool, difficult breeding and germination requirements, and its dependence on other grassland species.

For all plants, but specially for *Pimelea spinescens*, the larger the population is, the larger the gene pool and the higher the plant survival rate. Because remnant populations of the Spiny Rice-flower are large distances apart, it is impossible for the species to increase its gene pool and thus increase its chances of survival.

The difficulty is further compounded by the fact that the plant is dioecious, where its reproductive system demands both a male and female plants for seed production. In small remnant populations of *Pimelea spinescens*, there is one dominant sex, male or female, which limits the amount of seeds generated.

Furthermore, research has shown that the Spiny Rice-flower seed germination rate is low and relies on smoke water treatment. In the wild, this treatment is realized through the combination of ashes and rainfall. In a revegetation program, this constraint is overcome through a management system aimed at biomass reduction, carried out whilst the plant is dormant in mid-autumn which increases its germination rate.

The Spiny Rice-flower also benefits from the proximity of other grassland species such as *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass), *Stipa spp.* (Spear Grasses), *Poa spp.* (Tussock Grasses) and *Danthonia spp.* (wallaby grasses) which provide environmental protection to the new plantlets from weeds, pests and soil disturbances. The plants need further protection from human activities, which disturb the soil and introduce weeds. A weed control program using "swiping" must be effectively and professionally implemented to reduce the weed seed bank over time.

Practical conservation

The Cherry Creek project will make use of this research knowledge of *Pimelea spinescens* as the foundation for the revegetation work.

Firstly a dedicated area will be fenced off and an adjacent walking path built around it to allow viewing of the area by visitors. The segregated area will be populated with grassland species-mainly *Themeda*, *Stipa* and *Poa spp.* to provide protection to the existing remnant populations of *Pimelea spinescens*. Once the grassland species are established, collected seeds from other *Pimelea spinescens* populations will be dispersed in the protected area in order to increase the seed production and germination rate and thus the species population at that location. Burning off of the controlled area will take place each mid-autumn with the aim of controlling weeds and increasing germination rate through the production of smoke water. For the successful re-establishment of *Pimelea spinescens* at the site, a professional weed control program using "swiping" will be implemented.

Important work

Conservation of biologically significant grassland is critical. These areas offer protection to threatened species, provide habitat for predators of agricultural pests and provide genetic resources. They reduce erosion and salinity, and help control bushfires by maintaining green growth throughout summer when introduced species have died off. These grasslands help maintain a unique and special part of Australia's rural landscape and provide a resource for research and education with benefits for the conservation of history and cultural heritage.



Spiny Rice-Flower. Photos by Colleen Miller

Ultimately the survival of *Pimelea spinescens* is reliant on the establishment of corridors which link the remnant populations together to even out plant sex dispersion over a larger area which in turn will increase the gene pool. The re-introduction and maintenance of *Pimelea spinescens* within corridors in Melbourne peri-urban regions is a long term commitment which requires Government funding for research and the involvement of non-profit organizations such as TreeProject and its volunteer plant growers. - Brigitte Maillot



African Movement for Reforestation Tackles Poverty

Silvia Wan, TreeProject volunteer writer, will soon be travelling to South Africa to study. She is excited to share some recent research about an inspiring revegetation movement in Africa with TreeProject supporters.

The late Professor Wangari Maathai established a non-governmental organization known as the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1977. This organization addresses environmental degradation to further community development goals through the establishment of community run tree nurseries and revegetation projects conducted at the water catchment scale. Over 3,987 GBM supported nurseries were identified and mapped in Kenya in 2011, with eight million indigenous seedlings grown.

Trees grown at the nurseries are planted in critical watershed areas where surface water converges to a single point, to encourage water harvesting. As there is a high mortality rate, the trees' growth and progress are closely monitored for a minimum of three years using global positioning systems (GPS) and computer based mapping programs.

Deforestation is a significant problem in Kenya and contributes to food and fuel shortages, drought, erosion. The aim of the Green Belt Movement is to combat these problems by planting trees to restore or maintain healthy ecosystems, and increasing the resources with which local communities can generate a livelihood. The organization and its vast network of supporters and volunteers has played a large role in advocating for empowerment for women, for eco-tourism and economic development.

The Green Belt Movement is now an international organization and is supported by tree nursery groups where indigenous seedlings and trees are raised by the local nurseries. Professor Maathai's work became so renowned it inspired a US corporate group to plant a million trees, to which she replied, "That's great, but what we really need is a billion trees."

The United Nations Billion Tree Campaign was created with this in mind in 2006, with Professor Maathai as a patron. Their goal of planting one billion trees to address climate change, water shortages and loss of biodiversity has long since been surpassed and their current goal is to plant 14,000,000,000 trees per country.

To participate in the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign, you can register as an individual or a group, pledge to nurse and plant a certain amount of trees, and take care of them until maturity. Many people have done so and delighted in the experience. Frédéric Clerc from France states, "The Billion Tree Campaign means a lot to me as I really enjoy planting trees and caring for them. Planting a tree is the easiest way to contribute to the well-being of humanity and the beauty of the landscape."

Those words may resonate with many of us because it reflects our values and our goals here at TreeProject. We are contributing to a great cause and we should be extremely proud of the work we have achieved so far.

For more information visit www.greenbeltmovement.org

- Silvia Wan



Green Belt Movement tree nursery in Tumutumu Hills, Kenya Photo: Ariel Poster

Winter Tips for Seedling Growers

In winter seedlings won't need much care will they?



Too much water can cause cells to burst

Wrong!!! Victoria has had a lot of wind and several frosts so far but no consistent rain.

Seedling maintenance and watering during winter can be very challenging.

Growth slows down considerably but it is vital to monitor the seedlings daily.

The plants must still be kept moist but not wet. **Do not** let plants sit wet for any period of time (overnight or when raining) because they will rot very quickly in the cold. The rate of evaporation during winter is much lower so never assume they will dry out unattended.

Are the seedlings receiving plenty of sun? Watch the daily passage of the sun to work this out. Direct sunlight is important for growth during the winter months.

Make sure seedlings are sheltered from drying winds unless they are sodden and need to be dried out. Airflow is still important.

Gentle watering, not drowning, is important.

Remember it is the potting mix that needs to be kept moist not the leaves. It is the roots that take in the moisture to feed plants.

Watch for frost.

Where a frost is predicted cover the plants, ensuring there is no contact with the foliage. A frame is easy to make using a cardboard box covered in shade cloth or material so light still gets in.

A glass cover may be used but make sure it is removed as soon as the danger has passed or the condensation and magnified sun may cause just as much harm.

Once plants are burnt by frost they will wilt and be attacked by fungus very quickly. They will never recover fully, remaining stunted because the leader shoots do not regrow. Damaged plants can not be supplied to the landowners. Winter can be a thrilling time of year. Enjoy the invigorating weather while helping TreeProject to achieve the best results yet.

Wendy Proebstl

Working Bees 2013-2014

Come Join us



In preparation for the distribution of seedling grower kits, TreeProject has working bees at the historic stockyards Kensington Depot where tubes are sterilised for reuse, growing materials are measured and packaged and kits assembled. The working bees are a great place to network and meet some of the lovely TreeProject people Melbourne. We'd love to have

you along. The 1st Sat. in Nov. is Derby Day, there's no working bee.

Lunch provided

Working bee and Grower Kit Distribution

Kensington Stockyards: Cnr. Smithfield Road & Bluestone Street (cnr Racecourse & Smithfield Rds) Mel. Ref Map 42 J1

Grower Kit Distribution

Bendigo – Council Nursery Mackenzie St. West, Golden Square

Geelong – 4 Lomond Street, East Geelong

OCTOBER 2013			
SAT 5 th	10am - 3pm	Getting organised	Kensington
SUN 13 th	10am - 3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SAT 19 th	10am - 3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SUN 27 th	10am - 3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
NOVEMBER 2013			
SAT 9 th	10am - 3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SUN 17 th	10am - 3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SAT 23 rd	10am - 3pm	Kit preparation	Kensington
SUN 24 th	10am - 3pm	1st Distribution	Kensington
MON 25 th	9am - 12pm	1st Distribution	Bendigo
WED 27 th	3.30pm - 6.30pm	1st Distribution	Kensington
SAT 30 th	10am - 12pm	1st Distribution	Kensington
DECEMBER 2013			
SAT 7 th	11am - 3pm	1st Distribution	Geelong
JANUARY 2014			
SUN 12 th	10am-3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SAT 18 th	10am-3pm	Tube washing	Kensington
SAT 25 th	10am-3pm	Kit preparation	Kensington
SUN 26 th	10am-3pm	2nd Distribution	Kensington
WED 29 th	3.30pm-6.30pm	2nd Distribution	Kensington
FEBRUARY 2014			
SAT 1 st	10am-12pm	2nd Distribution	Kensington
SAT 8 th	11am-3pm	2nd Distribution	Geelong



TreeProject

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