



Hello Landcarers,

Welcome to SOLN's Summer Newsletter! Over the holidays we, and the community have been beavering away at a few projects and getting ready for a bright 2021 ahead.

What's On

THE SHRUB CLUB

The Shrub Club are a group of members who have been helping us to resurrect the nursery at SOLN's Support Centre with the shared vision of growing Indigenous plants to assist in revegetating the Southern Otways back to its pre-colonial state whilst creating a community hub for members to enjoy.

Over summer, seeds have been popping up all along the coast and so each Wednesday we have been venturing into the outdoors to collect indigenous seed to propagate back at the nursery. Meanwhile, with this wet and warm weather, the tiny seedlings at our nursery have undergone a mass growth spurt! We have been madly pricking out these seedlings into larger and larger pots ready for this year's planting season.



At the Shrub Club it's been all hands-on deck, as these seedlings can't prick themselves and so we would love some extra hands to help. If you find yourself free on Wednesday mornings and ready to give a helping hand email rima@ecla.com.au to join the mailing list and stay in the loop with what the club is up to each week.





THE AIRE VALLEY BIOLINK

One of our most recent project success stories, the Aire Valley Biolink was completed last year.



The Aire Valley is a diverse and unique ecosystem which takes in the Aire Estuary, wetlands, low lying agricultural land, surrounded by the Otway Ranges to the north and elevated limestone grasslands to the south. The purpose of this project is to improve connectivity across the landscape on a private farm located between the Great Otway Coastal National Park and the Aire Valley Wildlife Reserve. The farm 'Saint Aire,' has achieved a large-scale revegetation works which will provide habitat connectivity across the Aire landscape. This project adds to actions already taken for these works. This Biolink has been strategically placed on a 120 acre section of the farm with almost no trees. The Biolink can now reinstate vulnerable and depleted coastal habitat to stabilise the dune system, whilst also providing public benefit for its ability to provide enhancement to the ecological linkage restoration in Parks Victoria priority habitats. The Aire Valley bio-link will now greatly enhance habitat for the endangered bird species the Rufous Bristlebird and listed vulnerable species such as Sea Eagles. It is a well designed bio-link that is 15metres wide in one section opening to 18 and 25meters wide, a width that provides habitat for nesting birds to take up residence. The landowner now has plans for this central bio-link to be extended in the future to the Sand Road in the north, and the coast in the south, therefore reducing wind erosion for

soil and grassland preservation in line with regenerative farming principles.

For those reading this newsletter digitally, use the following link to watch a short documentary on the Aire Valley Biolink, via YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NwgrIGJoSg&t=68snBMJ6SxG7eDECMsDMmWD69PA6R_9NSk

THE SOUTHERN OTWAY BEEKEEPERS

The SOBee beekeeping club has had great involvement at monthly meetings commencing November last year with a membership of nearly 30 spanning from experienced beekeepers to those interested in learning more and perhaps getting a hive of their own. Thanks to a grant from Bendigo bank of over \$3000, the club has been able to set up hives of various types and these are now out being hosted with members, some being mentored by other members. There is a monthly meeting with a number of the training sessions run by Isla Woods who has passed on much valuable knowledge in the basics of beekeeping. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 7th at 3pm at the SOLN support centre. Anybody interested in joining the group is welcome and can learn more by making contact with Kel Needham at kel.needham@bigpond.com or on 0409 989 885.





JUNIOR LANDCARE PROGRAM

In late 2020 SOLN were lucky enough to receive some funding from Landcare Victoria to run a propagation program with Apollo Bay R-12. As part of their Indigenous studies the year 7 students attended two workshops on seed collection and propagation with staff and volunteers from SOLN. The first event involved a tour of Marengo Conservation Reserve with Ken Forrester, where students learnt about plant ID, seed collection and seed extraction. For the second workshop the students came down to our nursery and helped us out with some propagation.



Breaking into three groups students got to try their hand at sowing various local native seeds, pricking out local native seedlings and potting them up into forestry tubes and taking cuttings from a range of local native plants. We have had a great success rate with a lot of these plants and we look forward to our final workshop doing some tree planting later this year.



WORKING BEES

Like they say, many hands make light work, and so SOLN's Landcare groups have been helping each other out with working bees. Members have been invited to each other's properties to assist with weed management and revegetation and are often thanked with morning tea or lunch. This has been a great way not only to tackle those property management jobs that always seem far too overwhelming, but also to get to know each other and strengthen that community spirit. If you're feeling a little overwhelmed with your property upkeep, get in touch with your local Landcare Group and let's make some magic happen!

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS



Archaeologists Mike Cleeland and Simona Grippi ventured all the way from Phillip Island this January to meet with us at Marengo. Here the pair taught us about the geology of Marengo point's intertidal zone and even showed us where we could find dinosaur bones! It was great to see so many kids getting involved with our outing and we cannot thank Mike and Simona enough for taking the time to share their fantastic knowledge and passion.



LEOPOLD FOOTY CLUB

Early this year we received a call out of the blue, the Leopold Football Club were coming to town in a couple of days for a training camp and were wondering if they could do some volunteering for us. The club has a strong focus on community and hoped to get involved so we put our heads together and thought up some activities. One group were snatched up by the Conservation Ecology Centre while another group headed down to our Support Centre and got their hands dirty giving the site an impressive make over. Another group ventured up the Barham River



to tackle a giant clump of our favourite garden escapee the tree dahlia, slipping and sliding their way up the bank and revealing an enormous fallen tree. We were incredibly thankful for all their work and hope they have many more training camps in the years to come.

MANAGING WYE'S WEEDS

We have been chipping away at the war on weeds down in Wye River, where we have had hardworking contractors work on the roadsides and gullies to treat many of those pesky weeds. Target species include (but were not exclusive to) Sweet Pittosporum, Pampas Grass, Asparagus Fern, Blackberry and Onion Weed.

APOLLO BAY OCEAN CARE

Ocean Care met up for a beach clean and intertidal walk late last year. Starting down on the rocks at Marengo we were quickly entangled in a large piece of fishing line which had entangled a mass of seaweed, hook, line and sinker. We then explored through some rockpools finding all manner of interesting creatures including a juvenile eel and a tiny little nudibranch





What we can Look

Forward to:

There is plenty to look forward to in the new year ahead as well continue with Shrub Club, working bees and all the rest. Keep an eye out for our upcoming community workshops and events which will pop up from time to time.

ALISON POULIOT' S FUNGI WORKSHOPS

Join us on our most popular workshops for the year, Alison Pouliot' s fungi workshops. These will be held at the Senior Citizen's centre in Apollo Bay.



SEMINAR – WILD MUSHROOMING

2:00pm Thursday 22nd April 2021

Fungi are diverse, delicious and sometimes deadly. With interest in foraging for wild food on the rise, learning to accurately identify fungi reduces both poisoning risk to humans and harm to the environment.

We welcome you to join Alison to hear some anecdotes about the research and writing of the book.

Alison's books, *The Allure of Fungi* and *Wild Mushrooming* will also be available for purchase.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/141760191549>



FUNGUS DISCOVERY WORKSHOP

10:00am Friday 23rd April 2021

How do we differentiate one mushroom from another? Come along to this workshop and learn how to find your way around a mushroom. Participants will learn the basic features used to identify fungi using the senses including sight, touch and smell. We will begin with an overview of the major morpho groups such as agarics, boletes and puffballs and then examine some of the more common fungi of the region and their important diagnostic features.

Following an interactive indoor identification session around a specimen table we will then head to the field to find fungi of interest. This includes being able to recognise the particular plants, substrates and habitats with which certain fungi associate.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/139994923585>

DIRT MATTERS – A JOURNEY IN THE MICROBIOME

10:00am Saturday 24th April 2021

This workshop provides an overview of the vital significance of fungi in soils and the important roles they play in providing soil architecture, retaining water, increasing nutrient availability, and maximising ecosystem resilience. Greater attention to fungal-plant relationships can help us move beyond current expensive and unsustainable farming practices. This is especially pertinent in the context of a changing climate and water scarcity.

The workshop includes an interactive and illustrated seminar on the major fungal groups, the basics of fungus identification, fungal ecology, and the natural and cultural history of fungi. Fungus specimens from the local area will be displayed, discussed and examined during the workshop.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/139992482283>

Email sophie.landcare@soln.org for booking assistance.