



Hey Folks,

We missed spring but here is SOLN's Summer Newsletter! After a reasonably restrictive winter where we spent more time cancelling and rescheduling events than anything else, we finally got permission to get out and get busy. Over the rainy days of spring our extended SOLN community has been busily working and learning. Despite the busy festive season, we hope you have time to read this newsletter and join us for some interesting and enjoyable activities, we're always looking for new volunteers and ideas 😊

## The Shrub Club Community Nursery

The Shrub Club Community Nursery has been doing incredibly well selling over 5000 plants for revegetation projects and to the community this year. Our weekly turnout has been growing as well with 15-20 volunteers coming along most weeks and sticking around for lunch and a chat. The nursery is now open for plant sales from 9am-3pm on Wednesdays or by appointment. Contact Oliver for more details or to go on the mailing list 0412 313 216 or [oliver.landcare@soln.org](mailto:oliver.landcare@soln.org)



Thankfully the weather was a bit warmer this time. We followed this up with another stall at the foreshore on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of December. The weather was gorgeous and we had another great day. It's nice to see the community starting to buy local native plants for their gardens and a number of people expressed interest in coming down to the nursery on a Wednesday to collect more plants which is exciting. Going into the new year we hope to make market stalls a monthly occurrence but despite the success they are a lot of work so if you're interested in helping out please contact Rima for more details on [rima@elca.com.au](mailto:rima@elca.com.au) or 0431 816 028.



### Farmers market stall

We had our second market stall (first at the farmer's market) in October and it was a roaring success. Over 600 plants were sold as well as t-shirts and flora, fauna and fungi brochures. An impressive team of volunteers was there and luckily so as the customers kept on coming.

### Weekly plant walks

Inspired by our summer seed collecting forays and group plant walks we have started heading out every week to collect material and brush up our knowledge. Meeting at the office 5pm Tuesdays (unless you hear otherwise) we go to a different location each week and look for seed to collect



and a couple of plants to trim for cuttings or our photographic project.



## Shed/hut refurbishment grants

Having received three grants last year to do some major works at the nursery we have been busy packing, demolishing, building and renovating. The old poly tunnel was emptied and gently dismantled and the cypress trees which had grown a bit too big and were shading the nursery had a little haircut. Next the slab was laid and a beautiful new shed erected.



Our last grant was to refurbish the kitchen shed and so we set to trucking out years of accumulated equipment and managed to find places to store it all in the work shed. The second kitchen was rescued from its journey to heaven and walls have been removed ready for its' installation. Once the kitchen shed is finished, we can then concentrate on building some storage

bays for our potting mix and rearranging so that the shade house can be accessed ready to start growing ferns. We have also started looking at grants to replace and expand our benches and irrigation which have begun to rot out of the ground and are starting to get ahead of our attempts at repair. If you'd like to help organise a project or help in grant writing, please let Olly know. Big thanks to the Foundation For Rural & Regional Renewal, Colac Otway Shire and the Stronger Communities Program for their financial assistance with these projects.



## 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 followed up by a tree planting day with staff and SOLN volunteers. We were excited to get the funding again this year and have started the next generation of year sevens on their journey.





In late November we met out at Marengo Nature Conservation Reserve and armed our group of 20 students with buckets, bags and secateurs. Wandering out through the bush each group of four was given two plants, one to collect for cuttings and the other for seed. We wove our way through the park, snipping and getting pricked in a tit for tat with nature. Thankfully the weather was perfect and the students were able to enjoy the wildflowers and being out in nature. At the end students were challenged to remember the names of the two plants each group had been assigned and did impressively well, most groups even getting a good approximation of the botanical names!



The next day the students returned and met us down at the nursery. We set up three stations and the students rotated through. The first station they learnt about different seeds and how they grow naturally and how we can mimic this. They

then sowed a couple of trays of seeds each, ready for next years plantings. The second station was run by Hugh who taught the group how to prick out and pot up seedlings that had been sown a few months earlier. Lastly Kim showed them how to chop up the cuttings they had taken the day before and turn them into a host of new plants. We look forward to next winter when the students can plant out some of the tubestock they helped grow.



## National tree day

After postponing this event for the second time we saw an opportunity for the day and rushed ahead. Thankfully the weather was nice and despite the short notice and constant rescheduling we still managed to get a good turnout with almost thirty volunteers. This section of Milford Creek was handed over to the council as part of a development project and following an early attempt at revegetation little has been done aside from slashing and spraying. We were thankful to receive funding for 500 local native plants from the Colac Otway Shire which was bolstered with another 500 from Barwon Water. Counting the 500 from Junior Landcare we have now planted a further 1500 plants in the reserve which should significantly increase species diversity and boost biodiversity. We intend to keep working with the Apollo Bay P-12 School and Colac Otway Shire to manage weeds and do more



revegetation along the creek. These kind of projects need to be a long term commitment as restoration is slow work. Thanks to everyone who helped out on the day.



## The Southern Otway Beekeepers (SOBee)

The Spring Season for SOBees has seen many of our hives overwinter well and the colonies are now busily collecting pollen for building their populations, as well as delicious nectar.

Our group continues to meet once a month with a focus on the seasonal demands that face the bees. Each session brings new beekeepers to our club meetings, some new bees and others with many, many years of experience.

At our last meeting we shared tips and tricks for building confidence in doing inspections. We plan to meet next on Sunday 9th January, at 3pm. Contact Kel Needham to confirm attendance. Equipment, books and other beekeeping resources are also available to members. Contact Kel for more details [kel.needham@bigpond.com](mailto:kel.needham@bigpond.com) or 0409 989 885.

*Isla Woods, Vice Chair, SOBee*



## Landcare Groups

### Hordern Vale Glenaire Landcare Group

We had 12 volunteers planting 1200 seedlings at our planting day on September 23rd as part of the Wild Otways CCMA grant , “Connecting the Fragments”. The planting was in a wet forest area in Johanna connecting on one side the Ford river, another side a small stream and on the third side remanent native forest. It was a lovely sunny day although the track in was boggy in parts from previous heavy rains. Thanks to all our volunteers who came from our local Landcare group as well as from other groups in SOLN.

We had our AGM on Sunday October the 10th at Wildlife Wonders. There was a presentation on the wild pig and deer management program from the Conservation Ecology Centre as well as an update from Oliver Kerr on what’s happening in the SOLN group. We then did the guided walking tour of wildlife wonders, thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We’d like to send a big welcome to our new members: Harry and Sue Harris and Joy Whitton and Peter Newnham from Johanna and Nicholas Burns from Evan’s track. Harry has volunteered to be treasurer for the group and Joy has agreed to be on the SOLN Committee of Management. Our





most recent new member, Nicholas, attended the “cool” burn at David and Sandra’s place and that made the connection with Landcare.

As we head into summer, we’re planning to recommence monthly working bees at member properties. So please let us know if you have a project or need a hand to get going on a daunting environmental job.

*Kel Needham (President HVGLCG)*



## Otway Barham Landcare Group

The Barham River Road had a good run of working bees over the last two months. Firstly, in October, in the midst of one of Victoria’s lockdowns, a group of about 10 hardy souls descended on a property at 600 Barham River Road to tackle the removal of some rampant Tree Dahlia. There was one especially huge clump of Tree Dahlia removed from beside the pristine river. The Tree Dahlia was piled into a heap to be burned at a later date, once it had dried out. It was quite a team effort with experienced people on chain saws, people dragging the Tree Dahlia to a pile and a small group of people painting the stumps with Vigilant so as to prevent regrowth.

Next up was a working bee at 400 Barham River Road where approx. 500 metres of a 750-metre-

long barbed wire fence was pulled down. The fence, alongside the road, had been erected over 20 years ago and was in total disrepair. It was a beautiful day and everyone was in a great mood so the time went quickly and all the volunteers were justifiably pleased with the fabulous result of so much fence being dismantled.

As usual, a delicious spread of food was provided by both property owners for the volunteers. The AGM was held at the end of the Tree Dahlia working bee. The weather was unbelievably good, considering all the rain we had previously experienced. We were able to hold the AGM outdoors in the sunshine, thereby following all Covid related requirements. We were happy to welcome a few new members and Liz Gliszczynski as our third representative on the SOLN COM.

*Bernadette Marriner, Vice President OBLCG*



## Apollo Bay Landcare Group

Well, what a year we have all experienced in the varied and many ways of continued living with COVID19. Over the past 12 months we have had to hold all our COM and AGM meetings via Zoom. While we can do the normal day to day paperwork and organisational things, it does make it difficult and sometimes impossible to get together for working bees and social activities, especially when we have so many of our group who live outside of the Otways, half in Melbourne with the resultant COVID19 health orders placed



on us all. The membership of the group has grown to 32 landholdings, an increase of 5 landholdings. I trust they all enjoy their involvement in the activities that ABLCG and SOLN have to offer. New members are always welcome.

Our Spring Newsletter is again another great publication and a big thank you goes to all those who have contributed articles and photos and to Mark Gordon for his excellent editing and production.

Mark Gordon has organised a team consisting of Sue, Jane, Bill, Ken, Kevin and himself to conduct a walking audit of weeds on Wild Dog Creek roadside and Busty Road, with the intention to submit for a grant to assist in the removal of said weeds.

Judi and Kim are volunteers participating in an Australian wide survey, with their focus on the Wild Dog Ck, to monitor platypus populations. The Great Australian Platypus Search involves taking water samples and sending them to be analysed to see if any platypus DNA is present. We look forward to more projects and involvement in the new year.

*Ted van der Veer (President ABLCG)*



## Wye to Wongarra Landcare Group

Like other landcare groups, Wye to Wongarra Landcare activities have been substantially impacted by covid since the August SOLN

Newsletter. The lengthy Melbourne lockdown and travel restrictions have meant that most of us haven't been able to be on the coast, so we are now doing a bit of a catch up! Members have been preoccupied with preparing properties for the fire season, but we are also making up for lost time with our grant activity.

We are awaiting a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to be completed so that we can start work on Sea Spurge Removal at Kennett River as part of our CoastCare Victoria Grant. We have also been engaging with our community about Tawny Frogmouth habitat, as our project to restore habitat in the Wye Gully moves along, funded by the federal government under the Wild Otway's Initiative.

We had some office bearer changes at our AGM: Our executive is Joanne Tyler, Maree Salanowski is secretary; Sam Dixon and Linda Day are vice presidents and Bryan James is treasurer. Watch out for our coming Instagram Page!

We had an informal meeting and end of year get together recently - some of us are pictured... Happy holidays!

*Joanne Tyler (President W2WLCG)*





## Fernery visit

Tony drove and knew the way. Past the organic farm, the mass of hidden coral fern, a beautiful red breasted robin and stories of past heavy rains and landslides. Summer chatted then slept in the back. Tony's dad's book on ferns kept me busy. Olly had the pen and note pad. We all had questions and Ray had all the answers. Spores outsourced or collected in brown paper bags, spread on wet coir mats. Tweezers meticulously pinch out tiny green specks, sewn into small cell trays. Misted, checked for moulds. Orders taken and dispatched by Ray's one man show. New Guinea giants, local hidden gems, rare beauties and some a dime a dozen. All beautiful and amazing, a brilliant day.

*Christine Raymant, SOLN volunteer*



## Otway (Apollo Bay) Ocean Care

Apollo Bay Ocean Care is a newly established group following community interest in marine education, conservation and citizen science across Marengo and Apollo Bay. We've recently decided to expand our range and change our name to Otway Ocean Care. We have also recently been accepted to receive funding towards educational and conservation coastal initiatives. The educational programs will consist of Fish, seashell and seaweed identification in February, March and April of 2022. These will be guided by qualified specialists, including an educational component as well as a hands-on component foraging and exploring along the coast of Marengo. The grant will also allow for the creation of an underwater snorkel guide consisting of the most common underwater creatures right here in Apollo Bay. This guide will be available within the community for purchase and the profits from this will allow for continued printing of these guides into the future. Our funding will also allow for revegetation and weed control across the coastline of Marengo. We are also hoping to connect with local Indigenous elders to educate the community of the Indigenous history throughout Apollo Bay and Marengo, teaching on the uses of coastal plants and animals within their communities. Members



of the Otway's community are encouraged to get involved and join our Facebook page Otway Ocean Care. We have also recently been venturing out into the ocean by night to see what creatures we can find, if you'd like to join please get in touch with Olly.

*Sara Vorlicek, Ocean Care Project Coordinator*



## Sea Slug Tutorial

We're excited to finally announce dates for our Sea Slug Extravaganza. Kade and Nicole from the Victorian National Parks Association had been booked in TWICE last year but had to cancel both times because they couldn't escape Melbourne. However, this time we're hopeful, so some rough dates and times for the calendar with events (free) to be advertised in early January.

### Thursday 27 Jan

- Rockpool Ramble/Sea Slug Search (low tide @12:21) (~20 People)
- Sea Slug Presentation 6pm at the Senior Citizen's Centre (unlimited)

### Friday 28 Jan

- Rockpool Ramble/Sea Slug Search at Marengo kicking off at 11:00 AM (~20 People)

### Saturday 29 Jan

- ReefWatch led snorkel at Marengo kick off at 11:00 AM (~20 People)



## Puerulus Monitoring

Puerulus are a developmental stage of the Southern Rock Lobster, around 2 years after hatching, when they begin to settle in inshore waters. Puerulus grow from a clear shrimp-like larva (~ 10 mm long) to a post puerulus juvenile resembling a small adult lobster (~25mm long).

Population numbers and stages of these larvae have been monitored in Apollo Bay Harbour, and along Australia's southern coasts, for around 25 years as a measure of the health of the lobster population. Until recently, fixed traps under the pier have been inspected every full moon by experienced divers, however, this is expensive and relies on availability of suitably equipped people and favourable weather.

Several months ago, a new approach was implemented of placing moveable cages besides the boat pontoons inside the harbour. These can be lifted quite easily from the water each month and the puerulus tipped out into a fish bin, measured, counted, and returned to the sea unharmed. There are 4 strings of 3 mesh





collection bags, suspended in mid-water from the pontoons, and these will be checked monthly at the full.

Collectors will measure the carapace length of any puerulus and juvenile lobster in the traps and record these individually on a sheet (including details of the bag position). Other trapped gobies, shrimp, crabs etc are also recorded, as well as any pertinent information about conditions or fouling of the collecting bags. Bags are then cleaned and returned to their position for another month, and collection sheets forwarded to the Victorian Fisheries Association (VFA) in Queenscliff to contribute to state-wide monitoring. Otway Ocean Care volunteers were recently trained in the procedure and will take over monitoring with our first inspection on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December.

I look forward to being involved with such a collaborative group of people from different organisations, all working to ensure the health of our southern oceans. If you would like to help with monitoring please contact Oliver on 0412 313 216.

*Vicky Thursfield, Otway Ocean Care volunteer*



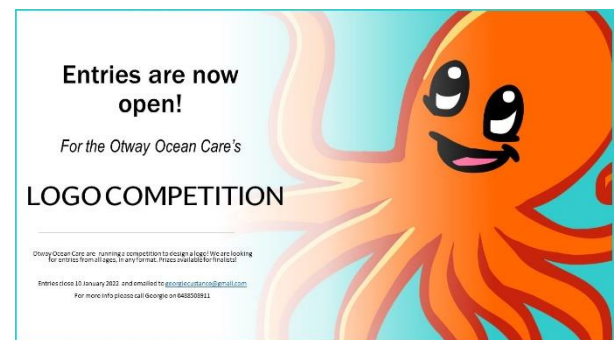
## New Logo competition

Want to be involved in designing the face of Otway Ocean Care? We are calling all creative people to put on their thinking/design caps this festive season! 🧠💡🌲

In preparation for some fun activities coming in 2022, we are running a logo design competition! We would love any entries from all ages, formats and styles. The only request is that it encompasses the theme of caring for our lovely Southern Ocean and/or Otway coastline. Think seaweed, sea slugs, crayfish, cuttlefish, crabs, cliffs or any other coastal critters and features you fancy 🐠🐡🐙🐟🦀🐚🌊🌿🌸🦋🐙🦀🐟🌊💙

Please email [georgiecustance@gmail.com](mailto:georgiecustance@gmail.com) for any entries or general queries. There will be an ocean-themed prize for finalists and the winner! Entries close 10th January 2022. Can't wait to see what you all come up with!

*Georgie Custance, Ocean Care Volunteer*



## Christmas Party

To send off the year and thank all our hardworking volunteers we had a lovely Christmas party last week. The weather was delightful, the food was exceptional and everyone had a great time. We continued our tradition of bringing a home made/grown/recycled/second hand Secret Santa and some fun and practical presents were handed around. The new shed was up so it was nice to christen that but with the kitchen not yet done and the odd trench being dug amongst other things we should be able to have a whole new site to send off next year. Big Thanks to Kim for all her delicious cooking and Kel for organising the event as well as to all those who brought



scrumptious desserts and helped prepare the night.



## Fungi Workshops

Alison Pouliot will be back in the Bay on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of April and Saturday the 30<sup>st</sup> with more of her famous workshops. Keep an eye out in the new year for ticket sales and keep the date free.



## Email register

SOLN are continuing to refine our communications and have put together a survey to find out what people would like to hear about. If you haven't yet done so, please click on the link below and you can elect to find out more about beekeeping, sustainable agriculture, working bees, plant propagation and more. If you're reading a hard copy, then go onto our website

[www.soln.org](http://www.soln.org) to fill in the form or contact Oliver to register your interest on 0412 313 216. [Fill out our survey here](#)

Thanks for reading,

Oliver Kerr

Landcare Facilitator

Southern Otway Landcare Network

69 Nelson Street, Apollo Bay, 3233, Gadabanud Country

M: 0412 313 216

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