



Hello Landcarers,

Welcome to SOLN's Winter Newsletter! Over the rainy days of winter our community of dedicated volunteers have been working through many interesting and educational activities. If you've been stuck at home in front of the fire, we hope this newsletter will motivate you to venture out and come along to one of our activities, we're always looking for new volunteers 😊.

The Shrub Club Community Nursery



The Shrub Club Community Nursery has been powering along and is going from strength to strength. We have 10-15 volunteers come along each week to the nursery on Piggery Lane from 9 to 12 and stick around for lunch and a chat afterwards. The nursery is now open for plant sales from 9am-3pm on Wednesdays or by appointment. Contact Rima for more details on rima@elca.com.au or 0431 816 028

Our brilliantly successful market stall

We have been building up for months to have a market stall but due to a number of difficulties we were constantly postponing



until we were finally able to get out on Saturday the 3rd of July. The weather looked atrocious, but we had been looking forward to it for so long that we went down for the day and figured we'd have a practice run. However, despite it being the coldest day of the year, it didn't rain a drop and being school holidays, we had a steady stream of people all day. We managed to sell around 300 of our beautiful local native plants as well as signing



a few folk up to landcare and having a lovely day (aside from the frostbite). Tony Webber, one of our dedicated volunteers, runs the Saturday morning show on Apollo Bay Radio so we went in for an interview and had a fantastic, live on air, performance by David (another dedicated volunteer) who then (as his fingers had defrosted) serenaded us for the rest of the day with beautiful tunes on his guitar. Next time he has promised (or we have



promised for him) to bring along a hat and busk to raise a few extra dollars for landcare so keep your ears tuned. If you'd like to help on market stall days or are keen to buy some plants, please contact Rima for more details on rima@elca.com.au or 0431 816 028.

Beech Forest walk

Inspired by our summer seed collecting forays we are running monthly plant walks to explore new areas, look for prospective specimens and improve or share our plant knowledge. Tony had informed us that up in the hills certain roadsides came up with myrtle beech (*Nothofagus Cunninghamii*) seedlings that could be easily removed and potted up. On closer investigation he hadn't seen them himself, but his parents had, in the



early 1980's. Hoping that this phenomenon was an annual occurrence we ventured forth to Youngs Creek Track to see what we could find. A carnivorous Otway black snail was discovered, which was beautiful, not to mention the gorgeous cool temperate rainforest and knowledgeable company. After a visit to a local alpaca property to search for some more beech trees and a quick stop at the Aire River Crossing, we retired to Kel and Kim's place and were treated to a delicious feed and some home-made wine (courtesy of Doug). These sojourns will be a regular occurrence so keep your ear tuned or join the Shrub Club mailing list if you're interested.

Shed/hut refurbishment grants

We have been lucky enough to receive three grants over the past year and work is about to get started. Through the Foundation for Regional Renewal we received \$10,000 to cover some of the costs of replacing the old polytunnel with a new shed. Colac Otway Shire have also been kind enough to give us \$10,000 towards putting in a cement floor which will make for a more secure and hygienic facility. And lastly, Libby Coker MP has granted us \$4,800 to refurbish the kitchen hut. This will involve updating our kitchen facility and building a tool shed. We look forward to storing the tools and chemicals away and having somewhere warm and cosy for our shrub club lunches and landcare meetings.

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 SOLN volunteers. The last part of this was to do a planting day on the school grounds and give the students some plants to take home and plant themselves. This planting was joined onto National Tree Day and has been postponed until Monday the 23rd of August. Excitingly, we have recently found out that we have been awarded the junior landcare grant again this year. We are looking forward to running a similar successful program for 2021.





National tree day coming up

We have had to postpone National Tree Day until the 22nd of August due to COVID restrictions, however, we are still very excited and are hoping for a great turnout. The Colac Otway Shire has been kind enough to donate 500 plants which will be matched by another 500 from SOLN. These will be planted along the Milford Creek off Seeberg Court. Meet at 10am and when we're done (around 12) we'll head down to the Senior Citizens Centre on Whelan St for a complimentary lunch. For more details or to register please go to <https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10025408> or RSVP to rima@elca.com.au

The Southern Otway Beekeepers (SOBee)

The winter months are traditionally much quieter for beekeepers. Our honeybees are all packed down and we eagerly await the return of Spring when the bees get back to regular foraging and the hive populations grow once more.



During the Winter season our bee club SOBees has continued to gather new members and meet monthly. We have focussed our discussions recently on winter bee health and helping the colonies successfully over-winter.

We were excited to unwrap the club's new extraction equipment, purchased with funds donated by Bendigo Bank. This equipment,

books and other beekeeping resources will be made available to members. Contact Kel or to make a booking kel.needham@bigpond.com or 0409 989 885.

Working Bees

Golf club



SOLN teamed up with the Apollo Bay Golf Club on Tuesday the 22nd of June to tackle some of the mirror bush (*Coprosma repens*) that was growing around the course. We removed an enormous clump and it was very rewarding to see it gone. Furthermore, the golf club purchased 50 sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillate*) seedlings from the Shrub Club which we helped plant to replace the plants we'd removed. The golf club very kindly put on a great feed of homemade sausage rolls and we look forward to coming back again in the near future.

Otway Barham

After receiving an exciting sum of \$92,000 from the Wild Otway Initiative to control weeds along the Barham River, we were eager to continue our working bees. Bernadette Marriner kindly put up her hand to help organise a few and so away we went. Arthur Goud has been chipping away at his blackberries but was keen for a helping hand and with 15 people we gave the blackberries something to think about. Arthur put on enough lunch to feed an army, although



everyone found room for some delicious sponge and slice from Annette!



Pampas Grass

Big, sharp and fluffy on top, pampas grass can be rather impressive in a garden but sadly this South American import is not content with stopping there. Each seed head contains up to 100,000 little baby pampas which can float on the wind up to 25km away. Pampas is starting to pop up all over the place and so we headed down to the Barham River Estuary to remove some seed heads and tackle a few plants. This was of course followed by a lovely barbecue by the river. Another patch of pampas near Marengo was laughing in our faces so a fortnight later we headed out again to show them who was boss. The rain lifted beautifully for us to work but sent us scurrying inside for a bowl of hot soup afterwards.

Spiny Rush

Spiny rush is another noxious import from Europe and Africa. This wetland weed was



spotted by our local grass identification expert Ian Clarke and so we headed down one Saturday to tackle the clump before it found its way into the local creek. If you'd like to be involved in helping control environmental weeds through one of our working bees or have something growing on your property that needs removal sooner rather than later then join our [register](#) or contact Oliver (0412323216) for more information.



Upcoming working bees

Apollo Bay Landcare Group working bee

Apollo Bay LCG were responsible for the original plantings along Skene's creek some years ago and now that the plants are well established there is need for some maintenance work and maybe some more planting. We were looking at an August date for our working bee but this has been postponed till later in the year because of COVID restrictions. Please wear sturdy boots and bring a raincoat! Please also bring any tools you have eg spade, fork, mattock, wheelbarrow brushcutter, chainsaw, safety equipment etc and gloves if you like to wear them.

Steff's working bee

This has been postponed because of COVID as well but soon we'll be heading to Steff's place in Marengo to help out with some sweet pittosporum and other weeds.



Fishbone fern control



Fishbone fern is a popular garden plant and a terrible environmental weed. Like many popular garden plants this particular patch has been dumped by some unknowing individual near Johanna, where it became somewhat less popular. The plant spreads by sending out rhizomes and has little tubers that we'll have to dig out. We'll be heading out in the next couple of months to tackle this outbreak so if you're keen to help send an email to oliver.landcare@soln.org to join our working bee email list.

Kel's revegetation

Hordern Vale Glenaire Landcare Group were lucky enough to receive funding as part of the Wild Otways Initiative (WOI) to undertake extensive revegetation works on a couple of members properties. As part of this we will be planting around 1000 local natives into a paddock at Kim and Kel Needham's place in September. If you'd like to help please email



Kel at kel.needham@bigpond.com or email oliver.landcare@soln.org to go on our working bee register.

Chainsaw Day

More grateful recipients of the WOI Funding are Margie and Colin Jevons. A historic landcare project on their property resulted in too many eucalyptus trees being planted with not enough understorey plants. This means that the property is unable to meet its biodiversity potential. As a result we will be thinning out a number of the eucalyptus trees and replacing them with a diverse range of understorey species suitable to the area. If you have experience in chainsaw use or would like to learn please feel free to get in touch with Oliver.

Pig and deer

We are pleased to announce that the Conservation Ecology Centre (CEC) has been tasked with delivering a feral pig and deer management program, across the Otway region, over the next two and a half years.



This project will critically assess populations of pigs and deer and identify regions where management is necessary to preserve EPBC (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation) listed flora, fauna and other vital assets. Armed with this information and supported by rigorous applied research, they will develop a strategy to mitigate the impact of pigs and deer across the Otways. CEC ecologists will work together with local



stakeholders and highly experienced pig and deer control contractors to implement a strategic and effective pig and deer control program.

As experts in the community, SOLN is partnering with CEC to disseminate and deliver valuable learning opportunities and critical information to their networks and assist CEC in changing the economics of deer management across private properties. In working together, we can build a successful pest management program that will benefit our region now and well into the future.

Our first information session was held at the Senior Citizens Centre on the 28th of April and was a great success. If you are interested in learning more please contact Tim Wilson from CEC on 0448249822 or tim@conservationecologycentre.org

This (and other WOI projects) is supported by the Corangamite CMA, through funding from the Australian Government's Wild Otway Initiative.

Apollo Bay Ocean Care

Rockpool Ramble

Ocean Care met up for a rockpool ramble and a dinosaur print hunt and had a really great time. Over 20 people turned up and local



marine biologist and palaeontologist Tim Godfrey had a wealth of knowledge to share. Meeting at Brown's creek we had a wander through the beautiful intertidal reefs and Tim taught us about the local giant surf barnacle (*Balanus nigrescens*) which is actually a crustacean not a mollusc (more closely related to crabs than oysters for instance) We then wandered further down the beach and Tim dug around and uncovered some incredible dinosaur footprints. Local geologist Doug McConnell then gave us a brief summary of the geological history of the area and how the fossilised prints had come to be. If you would like to learn more about ocean care visit the [Apollo Bay Ocean Care facebook page](#) or fill in the email survey below

Sea Slug Tutorial

In early June a few of us came together at the conference room in Apollo Bay to tune in to the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) Sea Slug Tutorial. With exclamations



of delight we sat through a very informative hour learning about the incredible diversity of sea slugs in our area and how best to find them. Sadly, the Sea slug Census scheduled for July got cancelled because of a lockdown, however, another is scheduled for November when the water should be a touch warmer. If you would like to watch the webinar it can be viewed [here](#) for those reading online or through the VNPA website.



Coast Care Grant

One of our keenest members Sara Vorlicek has stepped up and put in a big grant application through Coast Care Victoria to super charge the group. If successful we will be running workshops on shell, seaweed and fish identification, undertaking some coastal revegetation and weed control, creating a waterproof snorkel guide for Marengo Reef and purchasing some books and equipment for members to use. If you're interested in helping run these events or would like to get involved, please contact Sara on 0466 573 598 or sara.vorlicek@hotmail.com.

Fungi Workshops

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.

Once again, Alison Pouliot ran a series of winter workshops to help enrich people's knowledge of the magnificent range of fungi we have in the Otways. In addition to the general Seminar and Fungus Discovery Workshops, Alison also ran a day on Dirt Matters – A Journey Through the Biome



This workshop provided 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. Alison stressed that 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.



More details regarding Alison's work is available on her website www.alisonpouliot.com

Email register

SOLN have decided to try and refine our communications and have put together a survey to find out what people would like to hear about. 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 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, Victoria, 3233

M: 0412 313 216

www.soln.org www.facebook.com/soln.org