

Hello and welcome to the 2011-2012 version of the Otway Greening annual newsletter (affectionately known as the OG!). We put out an OG once a year to give you an update on what's been happening at OG, to discuss new innovations in the native plant field, and to remind you that plant ordering time is fast approaching. Please read on for all the nursery goss, reveg information and last but not least, the latest version of our plant list. First a big thankyou to our many dedicated customers (that's you!).

Without you and your annual orders we would find it very difficult to propagate the wide variety of plants we do. Because of the pre-orders, we can take a few risks on some of the rarer, hard to grow, hard to collect species. Our customership is very varied- from the traditional Landcare customers (natural resource mgt, willow removal programs, on-farm multipurpose plantings) to the Landscaped back garden which focuses on indigenous grasses, shrubs and groundhuggers. By supplying these plants in cells/ tubes rather than larger, more expensive pots our prices are kept to a minimum and you can afford to do that mass planting that suits your project. Please read on...

SPRING '11 NEWSLETTER AND PLANT CATALOGUE



Purple Beard Orchid- growing in local Lowland Forest of which only 23% remains

A LEAF PROJECT COMING YOUR WAY. Due to past land clearing many of our Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) are depleted, if not endangered. Many of our natural areas are now isolated remnants cut off from other natural areas by large tracts of cleared land. The term 'wildlife corridor' is used when these remnants are joined up by revegetating creeks, rail lines, roadsides and other areas. This type of reveg work is vital in maintaining healthy, genetically diverse plants and animals, as well as helping to buffer these areas against future climate change processes. In our region two land management groups have joined forces to begin the long process of encouraging landowners to assist in corridor reveg works. These two groups (Upper Barwon Landcare Network, Otway Agroforestry Network) have coined it the LEAF Project (Linking Environment and Farms) and is funded by the Wettenhall Foundation. The project is unique because landowners who take part are able to combine indigenous non harvestable plantings with productive commercial trees and shrubs in the corridors. With careful placement of the productive species (for sawlog, firewood, seed collection, bush foods etc), harvesting could happen without diminishing the importance of the corridor as a whole. The ability to selectively harvest a well managed high value timber plot will encourage some landowners to fence off vital corridors that they might not have otherwise done so. Contact Neil McInnes at the Upper Barwon Landcare Office in Birregurra if you want more information on the LEAF project or www.ubln.org.au.

THE DIRT FROM THE NURSERY

TUBES AIN'T TUBES! The nursery industry has been growing plants in forestry tubes for many, many years, Otway Greening included. They grow a strong robust plant, they provide root ridges inside to train roots to grow straight down instead of circling, they are easy to handle and there are many types of crates produced to hold tubes. For those of you with small orders but require more advanced plants we still grow, and will always grow, our plants in the traditional 12cm x 5cm forestry tube. A smaller square pot (7cm x 3.6cm) is now marketed as a forestry tube. I'm sure they have their place, however if you want a 'tube' make sure you ask what size they are and you might even want to enquire about their price...



PREDATORY MITES, BACTERIAS, AND NEMATODES-all in a days work. Growing plants in a nursery situation can attract bad bugs as well as good bugs. Added to the list of "interesting" critters this past growing season is the fungus gnat. A common enough fly in nature but can cause some serious damage in a warm moist situation of a nursery. The microscopic juvenile maggot can chew, and spread harmful root rotting diseases to significant numbers of small seedlings in the nursery. Because of their small stature, you hardly see the damage happening. At times you just assume its natural attrition until you do some tests only to find that you have a problem. But it only took one Upper Barwon Landcare Network training day to learn that science is an amazing thing! Mail order predatory mites and nematodes that only predate on fungus gnat can be purchased. In our first year of using these predators we have decreased premature seedling death by 4%. It may seem like small beer, but when 160,000 plants are grown, the numbers add up considerably.



Discovering the number of fungus gnat adults using sticky paper traps



Sambucus gaudichaudiana- white elderberry, a sweet tasting Otway perennial bush food and important bird habitat plant

...AND THEN COMES 140MM RAIN FOR 5 DAYS IN JANUARY. Just when you thought everything was going fine and dandy. We've got some good orders, we've got the fungus gnats under control, it's been a great seed collecting season, and then it rains...and doesn't stop. Imagine if you can about 50 seed trays side by side on a nursery bench with newly sown native seed in each. Then imagine what happens to the seed when the trays fill up with that much rain. They flood into the tray next door, and then the next one, and the next! Then when it came prick out time, well it was a bit like guesswork really. (A little issue when you grow everything outdoors). Ahh Mother Nature...

ATTACK! Those of you living in certain districts will have noticed the bush ‘dying’. Well, at least that’s what it looks like. The gum trees around Anglesea- Winchelsea- Bambra (and other isolated areas) are being defoliated by painted cup moth larvae (damage by spitfires and psyllids has also been noticed). It is a serious outbreak and some trees in the district may not recover, especially those that are already stressed through age, drought and fire. Most healthy trees will recover unless the cup moth returns in numbers next year. The larvae carry stinging spines which can cause severe skin irritation (like an ant bite) when handled. Natural enemies include predatory wasps, flies (tachinid) and shield bugs. Birds and bats will eat adults. Unless you are watching your trees very carefully, outbreaks may go unnoticed until the damage is done thus chemical control is usually too late and probably does more harm than good by killing the predators due to the lag period between the larval outbreak and the build up in predators.



Painted cup moth larvae on manna gum leaf at Wurdale

Sorry to be the bringer of a second bit of bad news, but if you haven’t heard of Myrtle Rust then you might want to begin to read up about it because it’s soon to be in a gum tree near you. This rust originates from Brazil and showed up in Australia in April 2010. It has spread widely in NSW and SE Qld and currently is only 80km from the Vic border. Its spores are spread by wind and it will be impossible to stop it entering Victoria. The rust doesn’t like cold weather however temperate forests near the coast (incl Otways) will probably be affected. How badly is uncertain at the moment. The rust affects young shoots and growing tips of all myrtaceae plants (gums, melaleuca, tea tree, callistemon, lily pilly, etc). There are no natural enemies in Australia. DPI suggest that like outbreaks of other exotic pests (European wasps, serrated tussock, etc), the rust may cause serious damage in places while others remain virtually untouched. The tea tree oil industry is seriously worried as the entire crop is based on one clone of *Melaleuca alternifolia* which if it turns out that this clone is susceptible to the rust, the industry could be decimated. If rust is suspected we must contact the DPI Forest Biosecurity Unit immediately. (david.smith@dpi.vic.gov.au)



WHAT'S COMING UP FOR 2012. There are always experiments going on here at Otway Greening. The winter germinants have germinated really well. We'll have large numbers of *Lomandra longifolia* (spiny matrush), *Dianella tasmanica* (Otway flax lily- the agapanthus replacement plant), *Bursaria spinosa* (sweet bursaria- the most important predatory insect attracting plant), *Spyridium parvifolium* (dusty miller), both *Clematis* species, Milkmaids, Balm Mint and White Elderberry- just to name a few. Don't forget, if you want certain 'weird' species in your order and/or you want large numbers, please order soon. We certainly want your order but we can't pull the plants out of a hat. Our 2012 catalogue/price list is enclosed.

And of course, we won't forget our bread and butter plants. The blackwoods, red gums, manna gums and woolly tea tree, etc., are grown in large numbers but we still need the orders in advance of sowing. There's nothing worse than getting a late enquiry for say, Thompson's Creek provenance of Woolly tea tree only to respond saying, "if only you had ordered earlier when we were sowing seed I would have put some of that provenance in". We grow our plants using seed that has been collected by us or our customers from all over the region. We can be very site specific to your project but it will only work if the orders come early.

MOST POPULAR SPECIES FOR 2010:

- **MANNA GUM** (such a diverse species, many provenances grown including replanting in Gellibrand River willow removal program.
- **SPOTTED GUM** (seed orchard provenance for agroforestry)
- **HOP GOODENIA** (seedlings for reveg and landscaping)
- **TALL SEDGE** (for septic/grey water runoff areas)
- **RUNNING POSTMAN** (nitrogen fixing ground hugger for the garden. (See photo)



FREE MOUNTAIN PEPPER PLANTS!

Become a member of the Otway Agroforestry Network (\$44 year) and receive a "test kit" of pepper plants. The OAN is asking members to grow pepper plants on their properties to see what growing conditions they need outside their natural range. Otway Greening has been contracted to grow these plants. Feel free to talk to us about membership of the OAN and

other fantastic groups like Landcare.

Thanks again for your valued custom. Look forward to hearing from you in the coming weeks.

Regards,

Mike and Wendy Robinson-Koss

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