

“WCHL News” will be mailed out as usual and is also available from our Facebook group page and on the Brunswick Valley Landcare website. Once in a while, we hope to do a hard copy letterbox drop.

To be sure you don't miss out on events and news from a broader area, please refer to the Byron Shire Landcare and Dunecare newsletter. <http://brunswickvalleylandcare.org.au/newsletters/> to subscribe or to look up current and archived editions.

NEW!!!! Property walks and talks

Covid restrictions have forced postponements and re-thinks of our planned events and field days. So we are organizing some small group property visits as an alternative way to share landcare information and foster community connections.

Our first visit will be themed around our NSW Environmental Trust-funded “Linkages in the Headwaters” project and will be invitation only. Look out for a report soon.

We will continue the series so that many small groups can be hosted to see a range of environments and landcare works and meet some valley neighbours. Some landcarers are super-enthusiastic about sharing their land and experiences, others are reclusive and many are somewhere in between. No pressure at all, but please let us know if you would like to host a group visit. We would love to see the results of landcare works and your forest and creek environments. It's also great to look at weed problems and anything that hasn't gone to plan. Plenty of scope for discussion. WCHL volunteer insurance will cover these events.

Easy ways to protect our environment

NEVER dump garden refuse in the bush, especially in the flood zone (likely to contain weed propagules).

NEVER empty pond or aquarium contents into the creek (aquatic plants and exotic fish may establish and compete with our natives).

More from “Linkages in the Headwaters”

(Peter Hall)

After the Covid-19 Lockdown, we thought that it was too late in the year to plant but good rain in May and early June told us otherwise. In preparation, we had cleared 1 ha of lantana, molasses grass and loblolly pines, adjacent to our ‘Linkages in the Headwaters’ project site and decided to go ahead in conjunction with Conservation Volunteers Australia. CVA have been working closely with NRMA in planting koala food trees in the Northern Rivers. Although the ‘V’ in CVA stands for volunteers, we couldn’t get any! Due to the pandemic, CVA weren’t allowed to get groups together so along with Project Coordinators Shae and Kelly from CVA we recruited some friends and family and over two days in mid June planted 1000 rainforest [80%] and mixed koala food trees [20%] on the site.



The rain had brought beautiful planting conditions and the job was done in good time. Lovely follow up rain has removed the necessity for carrying buckets (so far at least!). The site is looking fantastic as we wait for the trees to grow and look to integrate our two project sites. Having the two projects going simultaneously has allowed us to consider wildlife corridors, weed control plans and species mix over a wider area. We understand the importance of follow up for the success of both these projects so weed control and monitoring over the next few years will be crucial. The follow up will be done by us and by the professional team working on the Landcare Linkages project.

We’re very grateful that NRMA decided to sponsor Koala food tree plantings in the area and working with CVA has been wonderful due

to their professionalism, dedication and passion. Likewise the bush regenerator team on the Landcare project, led by Stu McDonald who get through a mountain of work and still maintain a grin at day’s end!

The combined results should be amazing.

Proudly supported by the NSW
Government through its
Environmental Trust



Regeneration and connection in our burnt forests



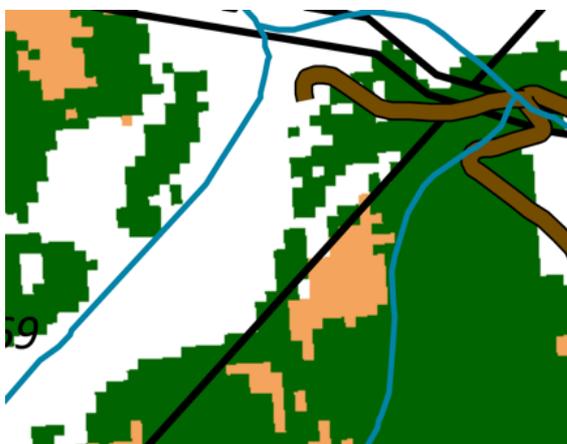
Works enabled by our Landcare Australia Bushfire Recovery Grant are proceeding. We've also been lucky to benefit from the Australian Association for Bush Regeneration's scheme for linking volunteers with landholders who need help to manage the weeds and smothering native vines that are hindering regeneration of fire-affected vegetation. Our funds have also enabled professional bush regenerators to be engaged, and many landholders have been doing great work of their own. It's been valuable to talk with National Parks officers about their mapping and monitoring, so that our activities can link in with theirs. And other landholders are eyeing their bamboo with concern as the next fire season approaches.



Volunteers Ben and Claudia handweeded amongst burnt bamboo, weeds and native regrowth at Wanganui. In the rain!



Bamboo is highly flammable and carried fire into native vegetation at several locations in our valleys.



Low - burnt understory with unburnt canopy
Medium -partial canopy scorch

Fire Extent and Intensity Mapping – from satellite.

[https://geo.seed.nsw.gov.au/Public_View/index.html?viewer=Public_View&locale=en-AU&runWorkflow=AppendLayerCatalog&CatalogLayer=SEED_Catalog.254.FESM%20Severity%20Classes%20\(Interim\)](https://geo.seed.nsw.gov.au/Public_View/index.html?viewer=Public_View&locale=en-AU&runWorkflow=AppendLayerCatalog&CatalogLayer=SEED_Catalog.254.FESM%20Severity%20Classes%20(Interim))

We have been ground-truthing the satellite mapping on some of our fire-affected properties.



Monitoring: plots are set up in burnt rainforest. Identification of burned vegetation can be a challenge.



Basal shoots of Crab Apple *Schizomeria ovata*

Nine months after the fire, many small stems in low intensity burns are dead, but new shoots are developing from the base of the stem.

Call for \$4bn stimulus that would create 50,000 jobs and care for the environment

You can read the Guardian's account of a proposal to stimulate our economy and care for the environment here.

Our group has followed up on this proposal, after a request for support from Landcare NSW. As a result, we had a brief meeting with our Greens MP Tamara Smith, though no responses from our letters to any of the other polities (local, State or Federal Governments).

As most in our valleys are aware, our small landcare group brings in substantial funding, with benefits for both the environment and local employment. Scale it up!

Black Taro

(Barbara Stewart)

Planning for the complete eradication of Black Taro (and possibly some other weeds such as White Ginger and Barner/Bana Grass) from Wilsons Creek is advancing. It will be a long term project and will require largely volunteer handweeding.



We are:

- Re-visiting the 2006 mapping, that shows Black Taro all the way downstream from the 12th crossing, plus a couple of tributaries
- Compiling case histories for other similar projects (context, planning, methods, disposal and success)
- Working on options for dealing with the weeded material
- How to mobilise a volunteer program
- Dividing the tasks into stages that can be funded separately
- Looking at options for streambank planting where required
- Thinking of ways to prevent Black Taro establishment in Huonbrook/Wanganui



The Saltwater Creek project (near the museum) required the removal of 13 trailer loads to the Resource Recovery Centre. How much Black Taro do we have along 15 km of creek? We hope to deal with it onsite (but out of the flood zone).

Pest animals

(John Wynberg)

Pet and feral cats together are killing over two billion reptiles, birds and mammals per year in Australia, and most of these animals are natives.

Responsible ownership of pet cats (microchipped, sterilised and registered), together with keeping them inside of a night and knowing where they are during the day, one hopes, will help preserve our native animals.

Feral cats on the other hand are a different problem and there is no easy fix. Unlike wild dogs, cats don't take baits, preferring to freshly kill their prey, so reading about a device (The Felixer) that uses lasers and poison gel to kill feral cats and foxes gives one optimism.

These high-tech machines use a series of lasers to identify a cat within 4 meters of the device. The trap exploits cats compulsive grooming behaviour and ejects poisonous gel onto their fur if they pass the trap.

It has been trialled in South Australia on Kangaroo Island and the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, but the most recent test site was Arid Recovery nature reserve, near the state's Roxby Downs.

"We put 20 Felixers out in an area where we had about 50 feral cats and we also had animals in there like bilbies and bettongs," said lead researcher Katherine Moseby, from the University of New South Wales.



"We looked at how the cats declined over a six-week period and what we found was about two-thirds of the cats were killed by the Felixers.

"We were able to show, quite convincingly, that the Felixers were successfully controlling cats in that area."

The study saw the devices set-up in a 24-square-kilometre enclosed part of Arid Recovery, where native animals lived with feral cats.

Dr Moseby said at no point during the study did the Felixer accidentally fire on a native animal — it only targeted feral cats.

The Felixer has not been tested in our environment, so it will be important to check that animals such as our native quolls cannot be mistaken for cats. But it certainly looks promising.

Find out more about the Felixer [here](#).

Book review

(Julie Gardner)

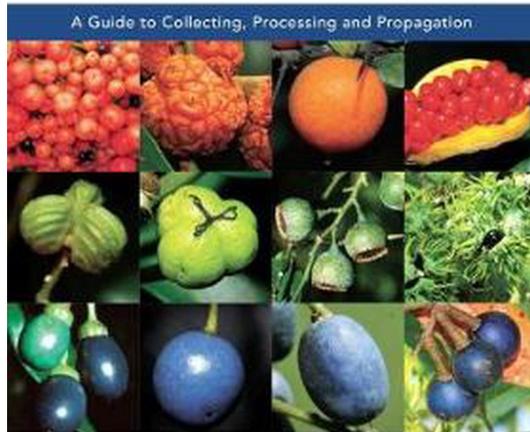
“AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST SEEDS: A GUIDE TO COLLECTING, PROCESSING AND PROPAGATION”

By Mark Dunphy, Steve McAlpin, Paul Nelson and Michelle Chapman
Photographs by Hugh Nicholson
CSIRO Publishing 2020

This is a well-organized and beautifully illustrated reference book which will be of great practical use to landcarers.

You may have plants on your property that you would like to propagate – or seen something gorgeous you would like to replicate but, like me, have been frustrated by seeds refusing to sprout. Now that Brad Green’s nursery is no longer available to us, this book takes on a greater importance for rainforest restoration in our valley.

AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST SEEDS



Mark Dunphy, Steve McAlpin, Paul Nelson and Michelle Chapman
Photographs by Hugh Nicholson

The greater part of this book is an A-Z species guide - 2 entries per page - with specific information on the collection and processing of rainforest seeds, with beautiful colour photos of the seeds of almost 300 species. The variety in appearance and dispersal mechanisms of the seeds is astounding. Often, once the tree is mature enough to flower and fruit, these “decorations” are difficult to see because they might be high in the canopy. Hugh Nicholson’s photos provide the close-ups you need.

Also included is a glossary of terms, references, and an index of common and of scientific names.

Chapter headings: Biology and ecology; What is the flower, the fruit and the seed?; Collecting; Processing; Storage; Propagation

I borrowed this book from the public library – they have several copies in the shire-wide system (but none in Mullum so you have to order it in – cost \$2).

The authors have a nursery of very long standing on Dorroughby Road in the Corndale locality.

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WCHL is on Facebook

To become a member of our Facebook group, go into Facebook, search for Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare and request to join. Any member can approve you. Alternatively you can go to the URL below: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/551428364915585/?ref=ts> Once accepted as a member, feel free to post photos and stories, ask and answer questions and check in regularly.