



WORKING BEE REPORT November 30-December 2, 2018

FRIDAY, November 30

It was a great start to the weekend to see Shaun Hadley and his team (Wirra Bush Regeneration) hard at work when we all arrived late morning. They had slashed the shady grove area, continuing on from our October efforts. The brassica had been done before it set seed, and now hopefully we have reduced the seed set on the scabiosa, euphorbias, etc with this latest work. What a difference it has made! You can now see where you are putting your feet, for a start, but the greatest result was how our plantings from the last two years just stand out, rather than being hidden in the undergrowth!! Thanks, Shaun.



What a glorious afternoon at Cape Jervis...blue skies, gentle breeze, warm but not too warm. It was a good thing we were able to take advantage of that lovely weather because it sure turned foul the next two days!

So, how did we make use of it? Well, as part of our current grant, we had planned several nature play activities. One of these, you might recall, was a game of Tic Tac Toe, with our lady bird and blue banded bee painted rocks. So Friday afternoon, Carolyn and Liz were on site, setting out the pavers for the game. First step: remove compost and soil from the chosen site. Second step: level. Third step: apply a thick layer of dolomite, and level again....etc. Of course, we didn't have a level with us, but a long, strong piece of lumber was just as good, especially with a bottle of water to check it was flat! What is that saying about necessity being the mother of invention???

The lumber also acted as a decent spacer. We had been lucky enough to score some small logs from the Waite. Some of the short, thick ones were embedded deeply in the ground near our Tic Tac Toe, to become seats.



Were we ever pleased with the result! Of course, a bit further down the track we plan to get a bit of greenery growing between the pavers and around the edges, so it won't look as barren.. Chris joined us for the last hour and found a home for the remainder of our logs. These were longer, thinner ones, so these became a boundary for our primary corner near the *Xanthorrhoea*. Looks fantastic with her artistic flair.

Our inspection of the lower loop produced some joy as well. Doesn't it look good?



Our Satin Everlastings have set seed, so maybe there will be more next year! And the lemon beauty heads are starting to flower.



When we did the direct seeding back in June, we roped off the area using wooden stakes and orange bunting. Unfortunately, the bunting did not prove to be UV-stabilised, or resistant to the CJ winds. The flags were disintegrating and ripping, so to stop the spread of plastic, we ripped each flag from the bunting, (which turned out to be surprisingly easy, leaving the rope intact), and collected all the bits of orange plastic from the ground. We felt much better after that. One lesson learned.



By the time we returned to base camp for the evening, Shaun and his crew had left. Here is one view of the end result of their efforts, and a shot of a pile of debris collected, that we plan to use for habitat for birds and lizards.



The day ended with a roast dinner (thanks, Chris!) and discussions of the group's activities, both over the last two months, and for the working bee that weekend... even plans for the next grant application. Whew!

SATURDAY, December 1

So this is when the weather turned foul. Hot and windy....50 kph winds! That IS windy!! We opted to start early, thinking that we would finish earlier if the temperature climbed too high. We have a weather policy that precludes working if the temperature is 32 degrees or higher, because there is little (as in no) shade on the site.

So by 9 am, there were 5 of us already at work: Chris, Peter, Julie, Carolyn and Liz. Activities were varied, but basically covered seed collecting, weeding, and watering.

Tom from COOTS soon joined us, to collect seed and to weed. He did a great job on the perimeter of the seeding area.



Scabiosa is a huge pest plant for us, so a lot of the weeding on the lower loop this weekend was aimed at removing the scabiosa around our plantings and in the direct seeding area. It was good to see the first of our seeds there germinating...three different varieties of *Atriplex* have been spotted and a *Maireana*! Hurrah! Not as much as we were hoping for, but given the lack of rain in autumn, forcing a winter sowing – we were pretty chuffed.



To finish off the morning's activities, the TicTac Toe was given a try out, by Julie and Carolyn. Thankfully, the game was a draw, so no tantrums from the players!! Some German tourists stopped to watch, but they said they didn't know the game, and were too shy to try it!



Liz was testing out the stability of the logs. Tick! all good. And check out the weather on the horizon. Ready for the next game, but not a day for lots of passers-by.



After lunch, weeding resumed. Some were planning to go the shady grove, but never quite made it. Liz, keen to get back to work, went to the lower loop to finish attacking the scabiosa from the direct-seeded area. Bad move on her part!! A thunderstorm hit suddenly at about 3.15. Those heading to the shady grove – well they never made it and got to watch from the comfort of Carolyn’s living room...Liz didn’t!



Liz ended up soaked, at the ferry terminal, and watched the rain pelt down.

You can see how the rain was driving down from the sheets blowing across the road. The wind was so fierce it drove the rain to the furthest corners of that covered area.

Still at the house, it was a white out. Can you spot the ferry?



That’s CJ: wind buffeting one minute, rain bucketing the next!

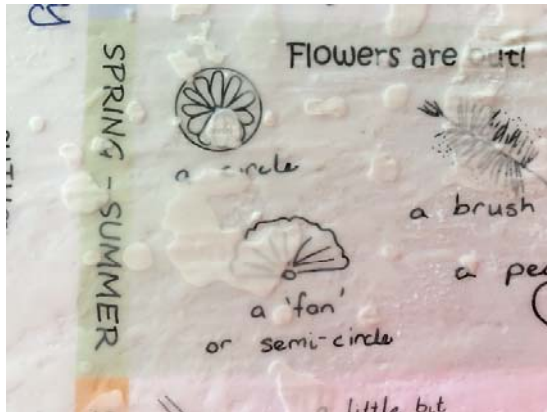
Of course, half an hour later, the rain had stopped. Carolyn and Pedro went back to the shady grove to continue weeding, removing tree guards and watering, while the others called it a day.



Carolyn got a shock when this large, handsome huntsman moved near her head. Tree guards do make good habitat. Hopefully s/he found a new home

As if the bad weather wasn't enough. The realisation that the "waterproof" coating on the tic-tac-toe rocks was NOT waterproof, was a real downer. What a nasty surprise when our lovely shiny rocks were wet and turned blotchy white. Thankfully they dried clear and Liz has been able to rescue them with a light sand and a few coats of a different sealer. Phew!!! Here's a "re-creation" on one of the Nature Play boards, where an activity sheet is glued onto a old wooden/cork backed placemat, then "waterproofed".

WITH A FEW DROPS OF WATER



CLEAR AGAIN AFTER DRYING (≈ 1 hr)



Sunday, December 2

No storm, blue sky...and the weather had changed direction by 180 degrees. At least in the shady grove we were a bit more protected from it than we had been the day before. A lot was achieved this morning. Peter had almost crippled himself the day before, watering plants from the 10 L containers of water he carried from car to plant. And he almost repeated that on Sunday. Luckily he stopped a bit earlier, while he could still walk!

We all thoroughly enjoyed working in the shady grove that day. With the slashing having been finished on the Friday, it was more comfortable to move around. We were able to remove stakes and tree guards where appropriate, cleaning up the site even more.



By the end of the morning, Carolyn's car was stuffed with bags of tree guards, buckets of stakes, and bags of weeds. Good thing she has a big car and can take it on site!!



There are several issues associated with leaving plants in tree guards too long. One is that the plants get weak and can't support themselves when the guards are removed. You can see this beautiful *Leucophyta brownii* is very floppy.



Another problem is that snails LOVE the home provided by the guards. Look at the snail cemetery inside one tree guard.



Of course, there were some of the usual hazards:



But at least it was easy to see if any snakes were around (thankfully, no). We also photographed a cicada on another stake on Saturday



And some successes in the shady grove. The *Lotus australis* in the photo below was about 1 m wide, and about 90 cm tall! And had some seed to share with us.



Another highlight was to see how tall one of the *Allocasuarina verticillata* had grown taller than Chris in less that 2 years! Here is how the site looked after many of the tree guards were removed. We were chuffed! What a difference the slashing and tree guard removal made!!



Volunteer's favorite plants

This time we have Liz with her favorite plant. *Leucophyta brownii*, or cushion bush. This one doesn't have the neat cushion look that really appeals to Liz. But give it a year or 2 out of it's tree guard and it will be looking great.

And check out the blue sky!



You can see how good *Leucophyta brownii* can look, even in a front line coastal position. Looks even more stunning, with the new log border that Chris arranged on Friday afternoon, when the weather was perfect!





And to finish off, here is a photo of our intrepid leader, Carolyn, sporting the latest in ornamentation for high viz vests!

The pegs are used on site to mark this years plantings or other plants that need a bit of extra TLC, normally a bit of extra water over summer or prolonged dry periods. Carolyn had been collecting them from the removed tree guards...and where else can you store them as you move around???

Thank you everyone who helped on the weekend. It was a successful and fun time.

See you in 2019!!