



WORKING BEE REPORT February 4-6, 2022

FRIDAY, February 4

It looked like being a cruiser weekend this time to our normal hectic time. No planting to do, no major weed threat to cope with ... just the normal brushcut, hand weed, water any struggling new plants, etc. Then you get on site and realise even the cruisy weeding and brushcutting is a monumentous load for a small number of volunteers. So many weedy bits, and so little time and labour to handle it all. Every time we begin to think we are getting on top of a weed explosion, another incursion by another culprit occurs. This time it was the discovery of a single caltrop plant near the picnic table that caused us some trepidation. Here is a photo of the leaf/stem, and a second photo, showing the growth habit. We rarely see this on site, so it has likely been carried in on a hiker's boots – one who may have sat on of one of our "habitat logs near the ferry terminal ☺. It's a declared weed with nasty thorns – and lucky for us was only just beginning to flower – so no seed yet. Let's hope we don't see more of it... we are still trying to cope with our usual suspects, veldt grass, scabiosa, etc.



Despite having a new weed on site, the site is still progressing well. When we began 9 ½ years ago, it was degraded grazing land, with wild oat and veldt grass as the two main plants in the area where the display garden is now.



Here is a view we often neglect to photograph: from near the upper track in the display garden, looking towards the ferry terminal. We have planted lots of grasses and shrubs on the hillside, and although none is likely to ever make it to tree size, at least many are now shoulder high. With the drying salt winds here, this is the best we can hope for.



Another sign of the hot dry winds... the *Goodenia amplexans* (Clasping goodenia) has burnt off along the edges of the trail. A very exposed position so hard work just staying alive, let alone looking lush and green by the end of summer. What a difference a tree guard makes, and the occasional drink of water our “current year” plants get. Looking happy and flowering! A great plant for your garden.

The satin everlastings were setting seeds, and the lemon beauty heads (*Calocephalus citreus*) were thriving! Another seeding plant was *Maireana rohrlachii*, a rare bluebush, with its seeds that look like flowers.



Some good news compared to last year. We are having less of a problem with the rabbits, thanks to control works done at the ferry terminal during last year (thanks Corey Jackson and DEW!). Good thing someone reported the potential biosecurity risk for Kangaroo Island after seeing bunnies running around the steep bank adjacent to the queuing lanes for the ferry. There are still a few bunnies around. Who knew they would really like to munch on the leaves and roots of one of our new plant species cotton fireweed (*Senecio quadridentatus*). Cotton fireweed usual grows to a meter tall, but here it has been clipped to guard height, with deep excavations at the roots (see next page).



Carolyn and Liz finished the Friday afternoon with a round of brush cutting, so that Saturday morning the area was available for hand weeding.

SATURDAY, February 5

Morning plan: remove as much scabiosa as possible from the display garden. Last year we tackled one patch by spraying, and it made an amazing difference. It was easy to see in the grasslands section how that concentrated effort had significantly reduced the amount of scabiosa present this year. Notice all the scabiosa flowers to the left of the photo below, compared to the right of the blue sign.

So... time to tackle the adjoining section! Each of our volunteers has his or her own method of hand weeding. Philippe prefers to use the Fiskar weeding tool, where he can stand upright, manoeuvre the tool over the root of the plant, then use leverage to pull the tap root out. This works great when the soil is even a little damp. He has become adept at it!



Carolyn prefers to kneel on the ground and cut below the root with secateurs, while Suz prefers to crouch. Liz bends over from the hips like a giraffe (she doesn't have back problems!) and Chrissy and Pedro prefer kneeling pads. Chrissy and Vince tried out the Fiskar too. We are starting to think we need to buy at least one of these! Whichever method folk use, we are happy... roots coming up, number of scabiosa decreasing!!



Even Camellia had a go with the Fiskar weeding tool. Vince had more success... but then he is a lot taller than his daughter!

Tom had joined us for the morning, bringing a car load of water with him. He took care of all those plants at the top of the slope needing a drink. He also took advantage of the opportunity to look for seeds for the COOTS group, who do a lot of work on a large site down the coast towards Fishery Beach.

Morning tea break saw everyone taking advantage of the picnic table, to gather for a good chat.



Those logs make great seats too for our breaks!

Note the distancing. We are looking forward to the end of covid restrictions on the sharing of food as well. Bring on the home-made cakes again!!!

Still, individually packaged chocolates, tiny teddy biscuits, BBQ shapes, etc, and some fruit gives us some sustenance for the pre-lunch session.

The big bags / wool bales you see in the previous snaps were filled with scabiosa seed heads by the time lunch rolled around. It's lucky we can park on site, otherwise removing all the weeds would be a HUGE problem. As it is, it is a case of in the car, up to Philippe and Julie's place then whoo hoo, they dispose of them for us locally. No, not dropped on a roadside, but rather in green bins at the local Community Club. A big thanks to Philippe and the Cape Jervis Community Club for this "service"!



Lunch break over, it was back to work... weeds again, of course! Following our usual pattern, the shady grove area and the Sorata St end received our loving attentions this afternoon. Liz and Suz spent time looking for cyclops and olive seedlings in the remnant patch, while others, including Carolyn, Chrissy, Pedro, Philippe and Vince, took on scabiosa and olives in the shady grove. We were pretty lucky with the weather...a bit warm, but not as windy as we expected. By the time we got to 4pm though, knock-off time, we were all ready to stop for the day. Tools down, then everyone gathered for a drink and a chat. We wouldn't want to end up like, Jack, being dull boys, now would we!



SUNDAY, February 6

There are always fewer people volunteering on Sunday. Most of our vollies live in Adelaide, and come down for the day. However, we did have two semi-locals helping us out this Sunday. Sally and Jane have formed a Friends of Wirrina group, and were keen to see how we did things. They pitched right in after a chat about group activities, and helped weed.

Carolyn took Jane for a tour of the remnant patch along the south-eastern edge of the reserve. Our early years of woody weed control (funded by past grants and DEW/DEWNR budget allocations) have paid off and we now only have to do maintenance weeding. We patrol this patch once or twice during summer, when the small pretties are mostly dormant, removing any *Acacia cyclops* and olive seedlings. There is always some flowering treasure, and today it was the locally rare (KAN02) mallee fringe lilies (*Thysanotus baueri*). The various remnant patches around Cape Jervis are where we source our seed from each year for sowing and planting.



Sally and Chrissie took on removing euphorbia and scabiosa and other weeds nearby. We finished the morning session with a scabiosa blitz near the shady grove. More wool sacks of weeds for Philippe to dispose of!!



Jane has already been doing a lot of weeding at Wirrinna, while Sally is getting grant information and other paperwork for their Friends group organized. We wish them well in their endeavours, and foresee lots of joint activities in future. Each of our groups is keen to run group workshops, for instance. With only 20 km between places, we have many common problems, many common plants, and similar weather conditions.

Thanks to the efforts of Dana Miles, Community and Engagement Coordinator, Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board, you don't have to wait long for such an event. The Board is hosting a **FREE** bus tour to look at Coastal sites on the South West Fleurieu on Wednesday, April 13th. Here's the details if you missed the email.

Join fellow volunteers on a community-group site bus tour visiting four Landcare groups sites. We'll be looking at some of the amazing conservation work volunteers have been doing at **Fleurieu Community Coast Nursery at Yankalilla, Friends of Wirrina, Cape Jervis Coastal Community Group** and **Friends of Banksia Park**.

Time: 9.00am – 2:30pm

Meet: Fleurieu Community Coast Nursery, 1 Kemmiss Hill Road, Yankalilla Council Depot

More details are at the eventbrite link.

[Coastal Bus tour for Landcare groups Tickets, Wed 13/04/2022 at 9:00 am | Eventbrite](#)

*** **Register on Eventbrite** at the link in blue (if it doesn't work immediately click and CTRL) ***
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About this event: Curious about other Friend's sites? What are they doing similarly or different to you? Their tricks, challenges and triumphs?

Look forward to plenty of interesting discussion and potential opportunities to get involved. This is a great chance to meet like-minded people, have fun and share your knowledge, skills and expertise!

Morning tea will be provided at the second site

Lunch will be provided by the Cape Jervis Coastal Community Cub.

Please let me know your dietary requirements.

Feel free to share this with your networks. We would love to see as many Landcare/volunteer groups represented on the day. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact **Dana Miles**, Dana.Miles@sa.gov.au. P (08) 8391 7500

Lastly we have some good and bad news about the bee hotel. The good news is that it was being used by native bees. The bad news is somebody, over several visits, has stolen all the drilled firewood, and some of the kindling. NOT HAPPY, but hoping that when we put up so notices around town the wood will be returned – time will tell! Soon we will restock the bee hotel and cover it with wire to prevent future theft.

Working bee Dec 2021. Our young volunteers working hard to stack the wood, and tie the kindling into bundles. Drilled logs added (different sized holes for different native bees)



13 Feb 2022. Native bees have moved in, but ore than half of the logs are missing! Note that the different sized holes are being used (3 mm - 8 mm, ≈10 cm deep).



27 Feb 2022

11 March 2022

