



WORKING BEE REPORT August 6-8, 2021

FRIDAY, August 6

August, and only 120+ plants to go in! So different to past years! Consequently, we planned on weeding as well.

The weather prediction for this weekend looked good for the three consecutive days, not something we are often blessed with at the Cape. Extremely low wind speeds, no rain, not too cold... what more could we ask for a winter working bee? Well, it would have been nice if the wind speed HAD been as low as expected, because on the basis of those predictions, we had planned to do some broad-scale spraying of weedicide. This is something we only rarely get a chance to do on this site, because much of it is so exposed to the salty coastal winds. Also, we try not to spray if other volunteers are around. So Friday afternoon, Carolyn and Liz were down at the lower loop – coastal display garden, with all their paraphernalia: the spraying backpacks, water, glyphosate, red dye, surfactant, PPE...everything we needed to get started. The target weed was Scabiosa. We had tackled it earlier in the year by hand weeding, but we still wanted to remove a lot more before the flowering season. The wind, although not great, was a bit higher than we had expected. So it was a good thing our sprayers have a nozzle that we could control the spray pattern with, and a long wand, meaning we had a lot of control over where the poison was directed. Scabiosa forms rosettes close to the ground, and so the nozzle could be put almost on the rosette, meaning no off-target spraying. Of course, even though we covered quite a bit of the lower loop, it was nowhere near as much as we had hoped. Still, there was Saturday and Sunday still to come!



SATURDAY, August 7



Gear is all loaded, plants are sorted and soaked, sign is out, and we are go, go, go!

More poisoning was planned, but with a different approach today! Our Sorata Street plantings were being hidden in a sea of soursobs. How come natives are slow to take off, but soursobs can flourish, looking so healthy and lush, every year???

Take a look at the area we began in this Saturday.



Carolyn had been busy a few weeks earlier, halo spraying around some of the tree guards. This was very effective, leaving a weed free ring around the guards. However, the soursobs INSIDE the tree guards are untouched by this method, unfortunately. So, our first order of business for Saturday was to get them! Of course, just pulling the soursobs out by hand might slow them down, but it doesn't kill the bulbs left underground. Our method below was slow, but hopefully effective.



Step 1: Lift the tree guard up a bit. Then locate the new little native plant in that tree guard, in amongst those soursobs. The plant tags really help so we know what plant we are looking for.

Notice in the photo the effective halo spraying done previously around the tree guard!



Step 2: Tease all the weeds to outside the tree guard, and away from the new native seedling.

Then make sure the tree guard is returned fully to ground level.



Step 3: Spray those weeds carefully around the base of the tree guard, low down (ensuring the poison stays outside the guard!).

The poison has a dye added to it so that you can easily see where you have sprayed.



Step 4: Wait. Come back 3 weeks later.

Yeah! The spraying seems to have done it's magic. Hopefully next year, there will be fewer soursobs germinating under these plants allowing them to thrive

Fingers crossed, In 2-3 years we will have 'closed the weedy gap' along Sorata street, achieving a continuous block of native vegetation, providing more habitat for the local birds, reptiles and insects.

With Julie, Liz and Carolyn working hard, the Sorata St plantings worst hit by soursofs were tackled by late morning. There are still huge swathes of the weed, but hopefully they have been pushed back a bit from the new natives. Removing the competition of the weeds makes such a different to our new seedlings. More light, less moisture for snails and less competition for the limited rainfall we have had this season.

Volunteers changed at noon: Julie left for home, just as Suz, Vince and their girls arrived. The two girls come with their own PPE: colourful little gardening gloves, miniature trowels and a cute gardening bag! These young volunteers are a lot more fashionable than Liz and Carolyn in their baggy op shop jeans!!!



The tasks changed for the afternoon to hand weeding and planting. Suz, Camellia and Ginkgo set to work pulling out young lupins. These are easily identified by their pale colour, their furry texture and the distinctive shape of the leaves. So this was a good job for the youngsters, given the damp soil meant no tools were needed (other than those pretty gloves).

Meanwhile, Vince and Carolyn started planting and Liz made tree guard combinations. After lunch, everyone was in on the act! Philippe came along to replace Julie, so we were up to 7 in number. This meant the planting went along pretty quickly.





Last working bee, 5 year old Camellia took on the role of distributing plants. She took that role on again this weekend, carefully putting one plant out with each of the tree guards that Carolyn had dotted around the planting area. In fact, she carefully put them inside the tree guard in some cases, confusing Carolyn who couldn't see where all the plants had gone! You did a good job, Camellia!



One last job for Vince: pull the fully laden trolley back up the hill to the storage shed. This is all the gear that didn't fit in the two cars in the morning. You can laugh, Suz ... you weren't the one pulling it!



SUNDAY, June 6

A 9am start, down on the lower loop again where we began the working bee on the Friday. However, we decided to give the sprayers a miss, and just plant our few remaining plants, then hand weed. We had reserved 20 *Carpobrotus* (pigface, karkalla) for this area, so had a fun time deciding where to put them.

We often have fewer volleys of a Sunday, but even with just 4 of us we were pleased with what we accomplished. First job was getting the *Carpobrotus* in, which was quickly done with 3 pairs of hands.



Then Philippe tried out a weeding tool, and was soon converted to it! This is normally used by Chrissy, but she and Pedro were absentees this working bee, off travelling in NT. The weeding tool is great for popping out scabiosa, roots and all, when the soil is damp. Thanks to Moira Knight for the suggestion. No bending required! Julie wasn't convinced, enjoying the speed of the pick. However they took the weeder home with them at the end of the day so they could give it a further "trial" at home, haha!



Philippe and Julie tackled the scabiosa on the Heysen Trail section along our site, to great effect. All those dots on the path in the photo below are some of the scabiosa plants that they took out. We also cleaned up the scabiosa around the picnic table, the log seat, etc., so hopefully in Spring it will look more inviting in those areas.



One of the plants to benefit from less competition from scabiosa is the 'scarlet' mint bush, *Prostanthera aspalathoides*. An amazingly tough plant – the 'local' form is purple not scarlet (go figure!) and all the plants we have are grown from cuttings from a single plant found on a cliff face at Rapid Bay. Easy to grow from cuttings, so it is a wonder this plant is not found in the local nurseries! Lush green all year round and drought tolerant! Growing just off the Heysen trail - we really must plant more closer to the trail. A task for 2022!



Take a look at these interesting galls on the leaves of one of our gums, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*. We think they are galls rather than lerps because they are not made of a sugary coating that rubs off and can be eaten. We are happy to be corrected! A quick Google search showed similar images but not much information. Galls can be made by larvae of insects such as wasps, midges, scale insects (coccids) or psyllids. Biodiversity in action! One tree providing habitat for two insect species that are then food for many, many more? Birds, lizards, and spiders!!!



A few more happy snaps

We always find spiders when we are weeding in the tree guards. They seem to love the shelter! The second photo is one of last years' "small pretties" flowering. Twining glycine (*Glycine rubiginosa*) – we had a good success rate with these in 2020. Pity we can't take the tree guards off yet because of the rabbit problem (grrr...).



Funding Success!

We are pleased to announce that we are funded again with a project titled

“Expand and protect high-biodiversity coastal heathland through weed control and revegetation”

This project is supported by the **Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board’s Grassroots Grants Program**, and is funded by the landscape levy.



Thanks to the board, and all landholders who contribute to the levy.

Thanks also to everyone who helped us put our application together. Even though most aspects of grant were NOT funded (we got less than 30% of what we asked for), we were thrilled to have the weeding component funded! This funding takes a lot of pressure off our volunteers. The grant money will fund contractors to do the bulk of our spring and summer slashing, freeing up more volunteer time for growing, planting and protecting rare and endangered plants.

We hope that in the near future we can get the other components funded, as we were so excited with the grant application. Our first to bring together so many new community partners: the Cape Jervis Community Club, the Cape Jervis Progress Association, the Yankalilla Area School, Rapid Bay Primary School and the Yankalilla and District Historical Society, as well as long term partners, the District Council of Yankalilla and the Department of Environment and Water.

And last but definitely not least

Thanks to Corey Jackson, and the Yankalilla Community Nursery for our latest plants, and a big thank you to all our vollies. We love to see you come out and watching the difference we are making!