



## WORKING BEE REPORT December 3-5, 2021

### FRIDAY, December 3

Our Friday site inspection was a little later starting this weekend. Carolyn had a trip to the Community nursery planned for the morning, to drop off some of our seedlings for nurturing, so it was early afternoon before we went to the lower loop. Before we left, Carolyn put Liz to work seed collecting from the deck railing. The birds had been leaving deposits of *Dianella* seed after eating the fruits from the many different plants around the house. Just scrape the seed into a bowl - limited cleaning required!



As always, we are always taken aback at how the site has changed in the past 9 years. Seeing how the land has gone from a degraded "pasture" of veldt grass and wild oats, to a showcase of local natives in that period of time always inspires us to keep going. We do lose a bit of that glow though when we go back to Sorata Street and the "Shady Grove" part. It is so dry there! And one of our insect pests was doing its bit to suck out all our enthusiasm. Look at these snails!!





They really are quite destructive. Our budget (or lack thereof) doesn't cover snail baits, so we just brush off, or crush, as many as we can when weeding in these areas. Pity rabbits don't like a diet of snails...that would be a win-win situation, because maybe then they would leave our plants alone!

Still, some of the plants are doing really well, setting seed, showing prodigious growth, flowering...



We found this interesting “growth” on a she-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*): The growth is known as “fasciation” and according to Wikipedia “...fasciation has several possible causes, including hormonal, genetic, bacterial, fungal, viral and environmental causes...” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasciation>).



One job for the afternoon was to locate the “bee hotel”. We have had an old doll's house for several years ready for this project, but have never had time to get it organized. However, Carolyn and Liz got it to the shady grove, and found a lovely location for it next to a very healthy boobialla. We tried to take into account sun direction, wind direction, overhanging bushes, etc etc. and think we covered all bases.





Carolyn did a good job of knocking star droppers in to keep the hotel in place.

## SATURDAY, December 4

Our routine is to begin the Saturday at the lower loop. So Carolyn and Liz were there with the working bee equipment, but just had to stop to admire some of the plants. Years ago, Corey Jackson let us know of a rare plant at CJ, *Calocephalus citreus*, or Lemon Beauty Heads. He had located just a couple on the bluff. A year or two later, Elly (one of our volunteers) found one on our site. We now propagate them on a regular basis from the seed we have collected there, and now have some lovely specimens in the display garden. Our Satin Everlasting Daisies were also looking pretty good, even if we do say so ourselves!



We had a couple of wildlife visitations that morning too: firstly, a wasp digging in the damp soil.





And then a bearded dragon. Volunteer Philippe managed to catch some great photos of it between his bouts of weeding out scabiosa. You can see Tom in the background also. Tom came prepared for watering; his car was loaded up with containers full of water, that he then distributed over the upper part of that site.



Carolyn got to work with the brushcutter, making sure the area around the picnic table was more inviting for any passers-by. She also had the hedgetrimmer on site and used this to prune a few of the larger shrubs that had become leggy (eg grey saltbush, *Atriplex cinerea*). Also trimmed was a wayward seaberry saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*) that was attempting to block the entire Heysen Trail path.



Morning tea was a chance for a cuppa and a chat at the picnic table. We got to it first so a couple of tourists had to use the log seat for their picnic.





Later in the morning, Suz and her girls joined us. Vince, also a regular, was laid low by a bad bout of hay fever so didn't make this Saturday. Everybody else sympathized...most of us get some form of hayfever, all to varying degrees, so we knew how he felt!

Lunchbreak saw our shoes lined up at Carolyn's. Even Camellia, at 5, has hiking boots to suit the terrain!



After lunch, Suz and her girls took over the job of furnishing the bee hotel with twigs and wood. They did a really neat job, with bigger bits in some "rooms" and twiggy bits in others. Camellia soon mastered the art of tying small groups of twigs into bundles, ready for Ginkgo to put in the house. Great job, girls!!



The trio then proceeded to collect all the used tubes off the site, and then transported everything back to waiting cars at the end of their "shift". What great workers to have around!!





Meanwhile, Philippe was doing more weeding along the Sorata St edge, Liz was hand weeding around the logs on the shady grove / new bee hotel, while Carolyn did more brushcutting. By the end of the day, the site was looking much better...and we now have a bee hotel!!



## SUNDAY, December 5

A 9am start, and Carolyn is busy with the hedgetrimmer, and Philippe and Liz are weeding. It wasn't long before we had a new volunteer though. We were pleased to welcome Jane Power, a Wirrina local with keen interest in the environment who is starting her own land care group. She is also a volunteer at the Yankalilla Community Nursery.





Introductions all round, and a short tour of the site, then everyone was back to work. One job Liz and Jane did was to load all the trimmings from Carolyn's loppings (another wayward native saltbush, *Rhagodia parabolica*, invading a path) into wool sacks for disposal by Philippe, then weeding out of brassicas and other pesky plants nearby. Carolyn meanwhile was back on the brushcutter. Liz had injured her shoulder so Carolyn "shouldered" all the brushcutting this weekend. She did a great job, with many hours spent on the power tools. Jeff Reid from COOTS group, and his grandson came along to help later in the morning.



Here's an interesting "thing" found in the middle of the saltbush while Carolyn was hedgetrimming (see next page). We assume it was the "nest" of some type of mud daubing wasp (with the eggs already hatched judging by the exit holes). What animal do you see when look at this mud sculpture?

It was placed in the bee hotel, and when Carolyn went back a few weeks later to see if anyone had checked in to the bee hotel, she was surprised to see that a spider had taken up a residence in the mud nest!



Thanks to everyone who came out to help. We really appreciate your efforts, and hope to see you again soon. Our next working bee will be the first weekend in February, weather permitting, so see you then. Watch our FB page for details, or contact Carolyn to get on the mailing list.