



WORKING BEE REPORT June 4-6, 2021

FRIDAY, June 4

Only the start of June and we have already put heaps of plants in the ground. The April/May working bee, and the Rapid Bay School planting day meant we were well ahead in our plans for the year. Who would have thought that by the time we got to early June, we would be having our 3rd working bee dedicated to planting in the year!! It felt a little like “been there, done that” because there had only been a couple of weeks between each event, rather than the months we normally have. It turned out to be a great weekend though, for all involved.

Carolyn spent ages sorting plants into relevant trays for the various sites we would be planting on over the weekend. Normally, we plant larger plants in groups of 3, smaller plants in groups of 5, some climbers near bigger plants, some grasses in the same hole as some of the shrubs, etc. Carolyn generates a huge spreadsheet that she uses to then sort the seedlings so that these aims can be achieved on each section... with a few deviations “just for interest” or we change our minds! Everyone else stays out of her way at this time...definitely not a job for two people!! Normally we get white plastic labels preprinted, one for each seedling. This is attached to the stake when the seedling is planted, to remind us what is in there when weeding later on. This year, we didn’t have time to put the labels in the tubes before plants were sent to CJ for the early May planting, but Carolyn came up with a good way to sort them so she could easily find them when needed. She lined them all up alphabetically in a flat (see photo below) so all were easily seen at a glance. Nifty!! Thanks to the Yankalilla Community Nursery for the trays.



There had been some holes dug on site that we hadn't used a fortnight earlier, and so our first task on the Friday was to make a heap more short tree guards with stakes, transport them to the lower loop, and make sure each of the pre-dug holes had a tree guard and stake ready for early Saturday. We have it making the half-guards down pat now: each wool bale sack holds 30 half-guard-and-stake combinations, and is just the right size bundle to fit in Carolyn's car. 30 guards don't go far though when you are planting hundreds of seedlings, so this means multiple sacks, multiple fillings. But we get there! Chrissy took over the job of making the guards while Liz and Carolyn were on the site. We filled all the holes with water, giving them all a good soaking, since the weather hadn't been as wet as we would have liked from the time they were dug.



In order to reduce the early morning tasks on Saturday, we make sure the water crystals are soaking, the seaweed solution is made up in our big tubs ready for soaking the plant trays, and whatever tools etc we will need for Saturday are sorted and possibly packed.

SATURDAY, June 5

The routine kicked in again early in the morning...we are all used to early starts on these days. Carolyn and Liz soaked plants, packed remaining items in cars, and went to the site to drop stuff off. Carolyn left to get another load, while Liz planned on starting the auger to dig more holes. Chrissy and Pedro were hard at work in the shed making inroads into the number of tree guards we would need. By the advertised start time of 10am we had several volunteers there ready to start. Quick induction for the crew and we were off and running.

It was nice to welcome two newbies to our site Ash and Cas, from Deep Creek. New to our site, but not new to planting, as they have been revegging a property nearby for several years. We also had locals Philippe and Julie, and Adelaideans Simon, Tom, Vince, Suz, Camellia and Ginkgo along for the day.



The morning was spent on the lower loop, at the display garden, and then we moved to the “shady grove” for the afternoon. The morning went very quickly, with morning tea delivered by Chrissy and Pedro part way through. They also delivered loads of tree guards to keep up with the demand. When Philippe tried to take a little break on the log seat, he was quickly joined by Camellia and Gingko, who had adopted him that day as their buddy.

Several hundred plants were in by lunch time, and a similar number were planted in the afternoon. Our task in the afternoon was to infill sections we had tackled in past years, so we stayed fairly close to Sorata St. Carolyn went crazy with the auger. She had hundreds of holes dug in no time flat! A few of us filled the holes with water and distributed tree guards, then the others followed behind doing the actual planting. Ginkgo and Camellia kept everyone supplied with plants, carrying them from the trays to the planters, saving us all time in the process. What a production line!



We had just run out of plants (but still had plenty of holes) when Corey Jackson showed up. True to form he had more plants in his ute that he offered us!! Corey had been at a planting day organized nearby by Conservation Volunteers Australia.



Plants were watered in, tools were packed up, deep breaths were taken... and we quit for the day.

SUNDAY, June 6

It was a smaller group that gathered on the upper site on the Sunday morning. We didn't have huge numbers of plants to get in the ground...the team were so effective on the Saturday that some of the plants that had been allotted to this area had been reassigned to the shady grove on Saturday afternoon. However, there were still a few to go in. Carolyn had been given some malva seed (native hollyhock) from a friend's property up on the ridge at CJ, from which we had grown many malva seedlings. These like damper locations so we decided the "drain" near the corner of Fleurieu Ave and Flinders Drive was a good spot for them. Firstly we had to remove valerian and some other weeds, but Liz and Philippe got together and tackled that area and those plants. Meanwhile Carolyn and Lillah sorted out the small pretties area nearby, planting some littler seedlings. A quick morning tea delivered by Chrissy and Pedro again, and then we finished off the planting for the month.

Chrissy and Pedro had been cutting more tree guards ready for the next working bee – there always seems to be more plants to plant.



By the time we packed everything into the cars, unpacked it all at Carolyn's, cleaned it all up, then packed it into the shed it was afternoon, time to knock off. Just as well, because a couple of friends of Carolyn's out on a Sunday drive, happened to notice her slaving away at the working bee, then called in to chat.

Despite the fact this was our third full working bee for planting, it was great fun with great company. Lots of new little plants in the ground, done with lots of good cheer. Thank you everyone for your efforts!