



## Life in the Cemetery

Ever wondered why botanists spend so much time wandering around in cemeteries? Whilst cemeteries may be great places for honouring the dead and finding out about local history, for botanists it's all about life – plant life.

Cemeteries, roadsides and lightly grazed private farmland are some of the last remaining places where remnants of Lowland Grassy Woodland occur on the Far South Coast. This is largely due to lower agricultural pressure than in surrounding areas. Lowland Grassy Woodland has been listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* due to its dramatic decline.

Since European settlement 80% of Lowland Grassy Woodland, dominated by Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), has been lost and continues to decline. There is virtually none included in national parks or other conservation reserves. Many species associated with this community have become severely depleted or locally extinct in the Bega and Towamba Valleys. Grazing by rabbits, cattle and sheep, the use of fertilisers, cultivation, invasion by weeds and disruption to natural fire regimes all impact on and continue to threaten this community.

Towamba Cemetery groundcover is closely related to Lowland Grassy Woodland. The cemetery may be a remnant from an original grassy woodland formation, or the result of the effects of clearing, burning or other management practices on Bega Wet Shrub Forest.

Although the tree layer has been largely removed, the grassland at



Photo: Kirstyn McDermott

Kangaroo Grass at Bega Cemetery

the cemetery is diverse and supports a number of species which are rare in the region. The cemetery has the only recorded occurrences of the Snake Orchid (*Diuris chryseopsis*) and Brittle Greenhood (*Pterostylis truncata*) in the region. The cemetery has at least a dozen other species associated with grassy woodland which are now uncommon in the region. These shrubs, lilies, daisies, peas and orchids provide an attractive flowering display in spring. Some of these species are only just holding on in the cemetery, and depend on sympathetic management for their continued survival.

For more information about the Towamba Cemetery and management of Lowland Grassy Woodland for biodiversity, see Paul McPherson's recently updated report *Life and Death in the Cemetery: Significant Vegetation in the Towamba Cemetery* available through the CMN website.



Photo: Paul McPherson

Snake Orchid

Supporting landholders with native vegetation

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## New Research



Photo by Leo Laporte

Philip Borchard & Ian Wright have recently published a paper on their research into wombats and fences called *Bulldozers and blueberries: managing fence damage by bare-nosed wombats at the agricultural-riparian interface*. You can find it on the CMN website.

## Contact the FSCCMN

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# Coordinator's column

Greetings to all you wonderful land managers. I hope you find something to inspire you in the Spring edition of the CMN newsletter. This is a good time for seed germination and new growth, helped along by even more rain.

What has happened on your property since winter? Have the weeds gone berserk? Have you found new varieties? Have you discovered any new natives germinating or species you hadn't noticed before? Have your new plantings taken off or plants you'd given up on sent out new shoots? Have the wildlife backed off your plantings now that there is more food in the surrounding landscape?

I'd love to hear from you about changes you are seeing on your property or in the bush. I'm enjoying the flowering eucalypts - *baueriana* (Bluebox) and *elata* (River peppermint)

In August the CMN ran a pest animal and weed control forum in Brogo (report on page 7) where local botanist Jackie Miles spoke about the weedy perils of gardening in the bush. Don't miss her article on this topic on page 4.



*Euc. Baueriana*

Photo: J. Miles

This spring we are offering a series of plant identification workshops which are filling fast. Whilst preparing for these I've particularly loved getting to know some of the grassland species which were once common on the Far South Coast. I'm also starting to develop a fascination with cemeteries! We are lucky to have such skilled botanists living here and sharing their knowledge with our community. Details of the field days are on the facing page.

I hope to see you at a field day this spring and am always happy to hear from you by email or phone. Ali

## What is the CMN?

The Far South Coast Conservation Management Network (CMN) supports landholders in the Bega Valley Shire to manage native vegetation on their property and caters to all land holders and vegetation types.

The CMN is funded and supported in various ways by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment and Climate Change and Bega Valley Shire Council.

These agencies are working with landholders to protect native vegetation on private as well as public land.

The CMN's role is to provide motivation, knowledge and skills support to landholders to ensure ongoing management and care is worthwhile for the landholder and the environment.



# CMN Events

## Native Veg ID Field Days in Spring

What plant is that? Why is it there? Do I have it on my property? Is it rare? How can I look after it?

Spring is a great time for identifying native vegetation and getting better acquainted with the plants on your property. Come along to one or more of the field days below, led by three local botanists, and be amazed at the diversity of plants and plant communities on the Far South Coast. Morning tea is provided. Book in with the CMN.

### Field Day 1:

#### Dry Grassy Woodlands of the Towamba Valley

with botanist Paul McPherson

Saturday 23 October 2010 9.30am – 12.30pm

The Towamba Cemetery contains a diverse Kangaroo Grass understorey with a number of plant species which are now very rare in the region. Spend a morning with local botanist Paul McPherson identifying the species of this community, improving your ability to recognise species on your property, enjoying the spring flowering display and talking about managing grasslands for biodiversity. If time permits, we'll also take a look at other local vegetation types such as Escarpment Dry Grass Forest and Bega Wet Shrub Forest.

### Field Day 2:

#### Brogo Bush Heritage Block Field Day

with botanist Jackie Miles

Saturday 13 November 2010 9.30am – 12.30pm

Brogo Wet Vine Forest, Bega Wet Shrub Forest, Dry Rainforest and Warm Temperate Rainforest are just some of the plant communities to be found at the Brogo Bush Heritage Block. Join local botanist Jackie Miles, learn how to identify different eucalypts, where they occur in the landscape, which vegetation communities they belong to and identify a diverse range of plants growing with them. This field day involves around 2-3km of walking on some moderately steep terrain.

### Field Day 3:

#### Coastal Plants of the Far South Coast

with botanist Stuart Cameron

Saturday 4 December 2010 9.30am – 12.30pm

Tathra is the perfect place to explore a number of coastal plant communities within close proximity of each other. Come on a guided walk with local botanist Stuart Cameron and get to know the species within the littoral rainforest, freshwater wetlands, warm temperate rainforest, coastal dry shrub forest, coastal dunes and rocky headlands.

# Seedbank

Spring has announced itself in style this year, with abundant and profuse flowering of many plants, which beforehand were probably not even noticed amongst the general greenery.

Just some of the things I've observed around the Valley include: glimpses of purple in *Hardenbergia violacea* (false sarsaparilla) and *Indigofera australis* (austral indigo), white cloaks of *Clematis* and *Pandorea pandorana* (wonga wonga



Photo: J. Miles

*Pandorea pandorana*

vine), and various hues of golden yellow and brown in the bush peas (*Daviesia's* & *Pultenea's*). Whilst admiring the show I was also reminded how much easier it is to discover and identify plants when they are flowering. Once you have noticed these plants, and possibly photographed or taken a specimen to dry and press, you may like to keep an informal journal of what occurs where and when, with the advantage of being able to return in 3-6 months to collect some seed from ripe fruits.

If you ever need advice or suggestions about how to collect or sow seed or know of good supplies of seed for harvesting or just want to identify a plant you have on your place, please don't hesitate to contact me on 6491 8224.



*Indigofera australis*

# How to Grow Weeds

by Jackie Miles

**Over the last 20 years managing my property in Brogo and working as a botanist, I've discovered ten great methods for introducing and spreading weeds. Follow these ten easy steps and you can, like me, guarantee yourself a fairly onerous weed control job for life!**

1. Weeds love bare ground, so create as much as you can. Pen or hand feed hard-footed livestock in small areas, especially when soil is wet. Overstock your paddocks and just hang in during droughts rather than destocking – it's bound to rain sooner or later and in the meantime you can buy feed in. When controlling weeds, use a non-selective herbicide, or cultivate the ground to create lots of bare areas. Burn piles of fallen timber all over the place. Spray herbicide along fence lines and around buildings to keep the place looking neat.

2. If hand-feeding livestock, use hay or grain, not pellets, and spread the stuff all over the property. Don't bother checking where it comes from or what weed seed it is likely to include. You are bound to get a few novel weeds well distributed around your block that way.

3. Increase soil fertility. We all know Australian soils are mostly pretty poor in nutrients, and richer has to be better, right? And with the odd exception like African Lovegrass, most weeds will do so much better with a bit of extra nutrition. It really gives them that crucial edge over the local natives. Apply lots of fertiliser in your house yard and then water like mad so most of it gets carried down-slope into other areas.

4. Don't bother learning what the local weeds look like or getting unfamiliar plants properly identified. If you don't like the look of something it is bound to

be a weed and deserves nuking. On the other hand if it has a pretty flower it is bound to be harmless.



5. Garden like there's no tomorrow. Acquire your plants indiscriminately from friends giving away surplus plants (bound to be the weediest species) and charity stalls. Don't bother asking at the nursery about the weed potential of plants; if you like the look of it, just buy it. Buy from mail-order companies that advertise their plants as likely to naturalise freely in your garden. Hell, why not go the whole hog and order seed from overseas on the Internet? Go for nice weedy mulching products like spoiled hay, in preference to clean ones like sugar cane mulch or rice hulls; it's likely to be heaps cheaper (at least in the short term). Better still, get a load of uncomposted manure from your nearest stable or dairy, dig it in and then don't bother removing anything that comes up.

6. Extend your gardening out of the house yard and into the bush. It'll look so much prettier with some nice big colourful flowers scattered through it. And while

you are at it, why not mow your bush too? Mowers and slashers are a great way of spreading weed seed, especially if you mow your weediest areas first, and then head into the bush.

7. Dump your garden waste over the fence, or better still, find a nice moist spot for it like a gully.

8. Wait till weeds have produced seed before you remove them, and don't bother collecting the seed for safe disposal. In fact why not spread it around a bit? Slash seeding plants, or carry weeds to another area for burning or burying. Or take them to the tip in an un-covered load on your trailer or ute.

9. Tackle new infestations on your place on an ad hoc basis. Don't bother doing a thorough search to find out the full extent of the infestation, just hit the plants you find first and hope for the best. You never know, that might be all there are.

10. Don't bother controlling weeds that appear on the road verge near your property. It's not your land, so they are not your problem (or not yet, anyway). Someone else will take care of them.

Just kidding folks! If you can avoid doing any or all of these things, it should greatly improve your chances of preventing new infestations and controlling the weeds you already have effectively. It's still going to be a job for life, but hopefully a less onerous one.

For more information on South Coast weeds and weed control, see the *Weeds of the South Coast* and *Grow Me Instead* booklets, available from Council or the Southern Rivers CMA. Other useful books and websites are listed in these.



Photo by Kristian Golding

**The Tanja/Wapengo area is home to one of the few remaining potoroo populations on the eastern coast of Australia. The long-nosed potoroo is a nationally threatened species that is rapidly disappearing from its former range.**

Potoroos inhabit the dense coastal forests of eastern Australia, from southern Queensland to the Victorian border. Their decline is due to predation by foxes, loss of suitable habitat due to land clearing, other human impacts and droughts.

Since 2009 the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA) has been monitoring potoroos in the Tanja area twice a year. Monitoring takes place in spring and autumn using infra-red cameras trained on bait stations, attracting potoroos with a mix of peanut butter and black truffle oil (Jamie Oliver eat your heart out!)

The latest survey results in autumn this year show that the population between Nelson's beach and Araganu appears to be stable. The Potoroos were found both in the National Park and on private land.

One reason for the stability of the local population is ongoing best practice fox control, carried out over the last 12 months. This involves baiting with 1080 poison once a month, 12 months of the year, with bait stations situated every kilometre in a four kilometre radius around known potoroo sites. Fox numbers are monitored using sand pads



Potoroo visiting bait station  
Wallaga Lake 14 July 2010

placed on tracks and checked for foot prints.

A key to the success of the program is the participation of local landholders in monitoring potoroos and baiting foxes. Around 20 landholders have been involved in the project start-up. The next step is to expand the project west of the Bermagui-Tathra Road.

To support private landholders, the Livestock Health and Pest Authority has begun a series of bait handling training sessions. The first was run at Tanja Hall to certify landholders to use 1080 and Pindone baits on their properties.

The efforts of private landholders are also being backed up by a number of land management agencies, including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forests NSW who have agreed to maintain best practice fox control in the Tanja/Wapengo area over the next five years. The project will then be evaluated and decisions made about future strategies.

The project may then be broadened to other areas known to have Potoroos and other species threatened by fox predation. Already, fox control has begun in our second study area, around the northern edge of Wallaga Lake.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project or want to become involved with either Potoroo monitoring or fox control on your property please contact Olivia Forge, Potoroo Project Officer with the SRCMA on 6491 8216, 0457 542 439 or [olivia.forge@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:olivia.forge@cma.nsw.gov.au).



## River Rehabilitation at Kanoona

**Ted Went is making a difference to the health of the Bega River and his property through stock control and riverbank planting.**

Ted has lived in the Candelo area all his life. He spent most of his working life in dairy farming and at Bega Cheese and now lives at 'Carolina', on the Bega River between Candelo and Bega, at Kanoona Rocks. Ted and his wife Gwen bought 'Carolina' in 1963 when it was subdivided from the larger dairy property 'Kanoona'. They moved to 'Carolina' with their family in 1975. Since then Ted has run a small scale beef cattle operation. Earlier this year Ted decided to undertake a river rehabilitation project along the one kilometre stretch of Bega River which runs the full length of his property.

Ted had watched the erosion of his river flats over successive flood events. The river banks were prone to erosion from stock movement and limited trees and shrubs holding banks in place.

Ted worked on a rehabilitation plan with Shannon Brennan, River Rehabilitation Officer for the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA). They agreed to fence off the riverbank to manage stock access, creating a two hectare planting site for 1200 native trees, shrubs and grasses. These were planted along the floodplain, including the bank face and the toe of the bank. Two stock watering points were designed at gently sloping parts of the bank where erosion risk was identified as minimal.

*"I'd like to be able to see some trees when I look down to the river..."*

The plants included species from the Bega Dry Grass Forest community, including Forest redgum, River peppermint, Ribbon gum, Apple gum, Swamp gum, four species of wattle, tea-trees, bottlebrush, native dogwood, sedges, rushes and grasses.

Biodiversity and bank stability will be improved over approximately 15 hectares as a result of Ted's

project. This includes not only the planting site but also 13 hectares of the Bega River channel where stock access in the river will be managed through occasional grazing to control weeds.

The project will also contribute to improved fish habitat through shading of the large remnant pools along this reach of the Bega River. These pools provide important areas of fish refuge during times of low flow.

For more information about the Bega River Rehabilitation Project, contact Shannon Brennan at the SRCMA on 02 6491 8200.



Shannon and Ted

# Pest Animal and Weed Control



**For forty fabulous folks who attended the Brogo Pest Animal and Weed Control Forum on 28 August 2010, highlights were the expertise of the panel, the access to clear information and the chance to meet with neighbours.**

Guest speakers were Matt Taylor and Mick Davis from the Livestock Health and Pest Authority, Steve Raczkowski from National Parks and Wildlife Service, Anne Herbert, Weeds Officer from Bega Valley Shire Council, Jackie Miles, botanist and Brogo resident, Hayden Kingston, District Agronomist and David Philp from the Rural Fire Service.

A key message about both pest animals & weeds was the importance of cooperation between neighbours. Without coordination of control activities, weeds and pest animals have a strong advantage.

Many participants were from the Brogo area and a number of these will undertake training from the LHPA to enable them to use fox and rabbit baits on their properties.

Contact the LHPA on 6492 1283 or email [admin.south.east@lhpa.org.au](mailto:admin.south.east@lhpa.org.au) for dates of the next training courses or to talk about pest animal control.

For weed control advice, call Ann Herbert at BVSC on 6499 2405 or email [aherbert@begavalley.gov.au](mailto:aherbert@begavalley.gov.au).



## Tura & Mirador Landcare

The Tura and Mirador Landcare Group formed in April this year. Local residents were aware that the Coastal Weeds Project report listed numerous environmental weed problems in our area. An infestation of Myrtle-leaf milkwort or 'polygala' (*Polygala myrtifolia*) in the Tea Tree forest near the Back Lake between Tura and Mirador was considered to be the highest priority. This aggressive weed had formed a

dense thicket at this site, in some places almost crowding out all other under-storey plants. The site was disturbed many years ago and also hosts populations of Agapanthus and African Daisy.

Our group has met on the last Saturday morning of each month since June to spend a couple of hours weeding. Our efforts have removed almost all of the adult plants in the main stand,



*Polygala myrtifolia*

ensuring that no more seed will be set this year. Re-treatment of this site will be needed as the weeding stimulates stored seed in the ground. We have also removed further pockets of polygala that had spread onto the dune at Tura Beach.

If you are interested in joining us, please email [petercollins2010@gmail.com](mailto:petercollins2010@gmail.com) or call Helen Davies on 6491 8203.



First meeting of the Tura and Mirador Landcare Group