



Hello to all our tree growing friends across the land,

Can anybody tell me what a normal rainfall season actually is? It's been so long since we've had one I seem to have forgotten what it is. We had a total of 66 mm of rain in September and so far only 45 mm for October. Needless to say, the ground is drying out very quickly with young seedlings struggling to get their roots into the surrounding soil moisture. This year (like last year) is proving to be another example of how important it is to be prepared early for your spring tree planting. October used to be a reliable tree planting month. In the current climatic vagaries, early October is still reliable but after that the risk increases. We at Otway Greening ask all customers to pick up their orders prior to October 15 of each year for this very reason. By the latter half of October soil moisture decreases and air temperature increases to the point of causing stresses on the seedlings without watering the plants in. We want satisfied customers. That will only happen if your trees survive!

OG is now online thanks to the skills of Mikala Robinson-Koss, graphic artiste' and computer wiz! There is lots of tree planting information, indigenous plant lists for your district, plant catalogue and price list plus a whole lot more. Please visit, you might be pleasantly surprised:

<http://users.gsat.net.au/otgreen/Ot.Green/pages>

Our contact details are: C/O Deans Marsh Post Office, 3235, Ph: 5236 3314, [otgreen@gsat.edu.au](mailto:otgreen@gsat.edu.au)

Otway Greening specialises in trees, shrubs and understorey plants indigenous to the Otways and Western Plains and this past year has been no exception. By growing these plants from seed, instead of cutting, we are:

- Keeping the costs down per plant. Cutting grown plants are very labour intensive and thus these extra costs get passed on to the consumer. Invariably, due to the higher costs, less plants get put into the ground slowing the rate of revegetation of our rural landscape.
- Genetically speaking, cuttings are exactly the same as their parent plant (inbreeding). The genetic makeup of a seedling comes from a whole population of plants (outbreeding) giving the seedling a strong and varied genetic background. When the seedling matures it is putting healthy genes back into the environment.

Some interesting statistics about our 2004 crop of plants (total of 150,000 plants grown):

- A total of 121 species grown and 175 provenances (same species, different seed source);
- Ground covers (grasses, sedges, herbaceous plants)- 18 species, totaling 5% of crop;
- Low understorey shrubs- 57 species, totaling 48% of crop;
- Tall shrubs to medium trees- 20 species, totaling 16% of crop;
- Tall trees- 28 species, totaling 30% of crop;
- Out of the total grown, 143,000 plants were indigenous to the region;
- 75% of stock was sold by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004;
- Average no. of species per landcare order: 30.



Part of our team "The Infamous Priquettes" Rose, Ann, and Liza hard at work in the hot house propagating all your trees.

**OUT AND ABOUT...** We get a number of requests each year by various organisations to visit the nursery or for Mike to speak to groups about various environmental/nursery topics. Extension in this relatively new field of “rural land revegetation” is vital if we, as a community, are going to be able to tackle land degradation head on and be able to win the battle in the years to come. We were very pleased to host the statewide launch of the Victorian Carbon Tender Program with Minister John Thwaites. This program is a trial encouraging land owners to plant indigenous species on their properties as carbon sinks. We were also treated with a very enthusiastic two day visit by the Anglesea Greencorp team. They spent one day hands on in the nursery and another day learning seed collecting and propagation techniques. Greencorp is a great way for young adults to gain skills in environmental restoration practices. They depend on those of us in the game to help train them. We enjoy assisting and participating with various community groups in our region. Hopefully small and important messages remain with visitors/participants about the importance of revegetation of our rural land and reinforcing the principles of which we grow by.

- The Deans Marsh community is a vibrant, active group of people. We were able to assist the primary school students and parents plant indigenous ground covers around the new playground at the oval.
- The Lorne Garden Club visited the nursery back in May where we took them through propagation techniques of local plant species as well as leading a discussion on controlling the environmental weeds that are rampaging through Lorne.
- Mike and Mikala lead a group of geophysicists on a bushwalk to the Pennyroyal Falls where environmental vegetation classes were the topic of the day.
- A very enjoyable and instructive day was had when a group of 50 participants walked for half a day down the Deans Marsh Creek during the Upper Barwon Landcare Network’s Landcare Celebration Weekend in May. Topics on the day included: willows (why are they bad), stream bank erosion, soil salinity, and the native vegetation and geology of the valley. A great day.
- The Deans Marsh Primary School had their annual Spring Bush Celebration at the old Bambra School site. Five hundred agroforestry trees were planted where the pines used to be. Mike talked to the kids about the relationship between fire and the native plants that depend on it.
- Just a few weeks ago Greening Australia ran a one day workshop at Bambra where I (hopefully!) taught 25 very enthusiastic students how to identify eucalypts and wattles.
- The Australian Forest Growers held their annual conference at Ballarat this year. As part of the conference the Otway Agroforestry Network took a bus load of delegates down the Yan Yan Gurt Catchment where we looked at various farming systems and timber growing on four different properties.
- A “provenance” workshop was held at the Corangamite Seed Bank this past winter. What is provenance and how does it affect seed collection for revegetation workers.
- Mike also participated in the “Living Landscapes” tour of the East Otway Landcare Group area in early November. This is a program to help local landholders prioritise conservation work on their farms and work with neighbours.



PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING BACK ALL LANNEN TRAYS FROM YOUR 2004 ORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE ARE WASHING AND STERILISING THEM AT THIS VERY MOMENT FOR USE IN NEXT YEAR’S CROP.

\*\*\*REUSING THESE TRAYS HELPS US KEEP COSTS DOWN FOR YOU.\*\*\*

**IN THE NURSERY...**As in past years we continue our propagation experiments with encouraging results from some of the more obscure species from around the region. Had some successes with grassland species from the Basalt Plains north of Birregurra. These include native lilies, everlastings, the yam daisy, scaly buttons and milky beauty heads to name a few. We were also able to grow commercial quantities of species from deep in the Otways as well as some elusive coastal plants. These include the trigger plant, coastal beard heath, native elderberry, privet mock olive, netted daisy bush, purple apple berry, and banyalla. In 2005, beside growing our usual comprehensive list of local plants, we will have available in limited numbers the following:

Bootlace bush	Rough coprosma	Coastal beard heath	Clematis aristata	Purple flax lily
Myrtle beech	Austral grass tree	Small grass tree	Hazel pomaderris	Prickly currant

You may notice some of these (and other) plants not on the enclosed plant list. We try very hard to maintain a one page plant list with all the important information on it to save paper and photocopying costs. If a plant you want to order is not on the list, feel free to enquire about it. We may be growing it already.

As a preventative to wallaby browsing, we have been experimenting with growing 2-3 species in one cell/tube. One species is prickly (and not as palatable) and the other is usually very tasty. By growing the two together, the prickly plant protects the edible plant ensuring a better chance of survival. Most of these plants have been planted down near Apollo Bay where wallabies are prevalent. At this early stage results are quite promising with the wallaby mix surviving (and in many cases, thriving) whilst tasty species planted on their own are being devoured. Growth rates are also surprisingly strong in both plants, however, I would suggest that some competition is occurring which may slow the growth down the track. Some of the prickly/inedible species are: prickly tea tree, prickly moses, snowy daisy and dogwood. The tasty species are: many gums, all wattles including blackwood, and all the she oaks. If you'd like to try some of the wallaby mix in next years' planting, please enquire. Cost is 25% higher than our base prices due to the double handling.

**Don't forget, by ordering your plants before the 1st of December gives us the chance to collect and/or sow the seed specific to your area. You also have a better chance of getting the plants you want instead of taking "whatever you can get". So please contact us very soon. Have a great spring and a peaceful holiday over Chrissie. Cheers, Mike, Wendy and Mikala**



The Deans Marsh Creek upper catchment where native forest meets pine plantation, where willow meets treefern, where erosion and salinity meet landcare.