



Hello and welcome to the 2009-2010 version of the Otway Greening annual newsletter (affectionately known as the OG!). We put out an OG once a year to give you a behind the scenes look at the Nursery, to discuss new innovations in the native plant field, and to remind you that plant ordering time is fast approaching. Please read on for all the nursery goss, reveg information and last but not least, our new look plant lists. It's been a very busy year, full of interesting events, field days, record temps, terrible fires, and yet, most recently, a return to some normality in weather patterns. The rains have certainly added some confidence to successful tree planting especially for those out in the drier districts. It has been many years since we've had such a good start to spring. The increased subsoil moisture will be a great help for drought proofing our newly planted seedlings. However, be diligent, the rains can also assist the growth of weeds and grasses that will compete with your young trees. I have also noticed in my travels some young trees planted this year suffering in the cold, wet soils.

Ahh, whoever said weather was a boring subject!
Enjoy the OG!

SPRING '09 NEWSLETTER, DISCOUNT OFFER, PRICE LIST AND PLANT CATALOGUE



I might start off controversially: Is Landcare finished? Does it have a future? After twenty years of hard work, dedication and millions of dollars spent, all of a sudden, the brakes have been applied to what appeared to be a very successful community based program. I'm still not sure what happened! Some have said Landcare had it too good for too long and was resting on its laurels. It got too cushy with the Howard Government's "Telstra money" being spent on NRM (natural resource mgt) and when that was used up, we'd all forgotten what it was like before the Telstra sale. Regardless of the reasons, Landcare is in serious trouble with NRM funding (Caring for our Country) being channelled into other areas of conservation work.

Fortunately, many rural landowners and farmers continue to do all sorts of Landcare/ NRM on their properties regardless of government funding. However, there are catchment-wide projects that are too large and too expensive for landowners to be responsible for without outside assistance. The implications for the environment are great. Not to mention the implications for local businesses such as Otway Greening. But you know, you can never rest on your laurels. Challenges come and challenges go. As you will see in the diversity of our species list, diversifying your risks is a very important aspect in maintaining a successful business.

And speaking of Landcare, both Wen and I would like to acknowledge the great work of Robyn Giles, Landcare facilitator with the Upper Barwon Landcare Network, who left her job during the year. She was a great asset to the Network and the community in general and her organising skills and caring approach will be greatly missed. Good luck Robyn in your new fields of endeavour.

THE DIRT FROM THE NURSERY – TWO NEW SPECIES LISTS!

Yes that's right, we have expanded our current species list into two separate easy to read lists. One consists of mainly trees and tall shrubs for our rural customers- windbreaks, agroforestry, salinity control, carbon sinks, and biodiversity. The other has mostly understory species listed- grasses, groundcovers, shrubs and other special plants for landscaping, water wise gardens, colour, grey water systems and attracting birds. Feel free to choose plants from either list.



Australian plants are amazing really.

Many of our locals have evolved techniques to survive fire, drought, flood, insect attack and even depleted soils. Growing plants for our local conditions sometimes means mimicking nature to achieve what Mother Nature has done for millennia. The photo on the left shows rhizobial bacteria root nodules on a blackwood seedling. The bacteria lives in a symbiotic relationship with the blackwood where both the host and the bacteria gain something. The bacteria grabs nitrogen out of the air and collects it in the nodules which are attached to the roots of the tree. The tree uses the nitrogen to grow. When the tree roots eventually die, the nitrogen is released into the soil feeding other plants in the surrounding area.

However, in cleared areas where trees are missing, the rhizobial bacteria cannot survive without its host. Adding the bacteria to our plants in the nursery transfers the bacteria to these cleared areas ensuring strong growth of your wattles and other members of the Legume family. Another extremely important relationship exists between plants and soil fungi. The fungi "roots", called mycorrhizae, attach to the tree roots and spread their web well into the subsoil where the trees' roots cannot reach. This is how many plants growing in nutritionally poor soils obtain phosphorus and groundwater. We add these fungal spores to our potting mixes so our young seedlings can take advantage of this relationship straight away. This actually decreases the amount of fertiliser we have to add to our potting mix while maintaining strong tree seedlings.

Wallaby's can be a real pain! Wouldn't it be wonderful if, at the next macropod convention a vote would get up stating that all this tree planting we're doing would benefit them more in the long term if they didn't eat the trees in the short term. I reckon you and I would be a whole lot happier too! In the meantime we have to try and outsmart them by preventing them from nibbling the trees. Some tree planters go to great lengths by putting up wallaby proof fencing, some try wallaby proof tree guards, others plant lots of trees hoping that a majority will survive in the end, while still others try spraying the trees with a wallaby repellent called Sen-Tree. The photo at the right shows a seedling with Sen-Tree applied in the nursery prior to planting. A glue mixed with egg powder is sprayed on followed by an application of steel grit. We have customers who swear by it. If you would like to give it a try on your next order, feel free to enquire.



Narrow leaf peppermint



Not only is the balm mint bush one of the prettiest shrubs in the Otways, it is also widely used as a culinary herb. There's an ever increasing interest in the use of Australian edible plants. Many of these are grown at Otway Greening. Have you ever used any of these culinary delights: karkalla, murnong, white elderberry, prickly currants and mountain pepper. Please enquire.

Just two of the many beautiful indigenous plants suited for gardens. The Mint Bush needs some dappled shade and is suited to the higher rainfall districts. The Everlasting loves full sun and can handle most conditions except waterlogging. Please have a look in our Understorey list for more information about these and other interesting species.

Plant prices...

Many of you will discover our price increases for 2010. We have tried to hold our prices down for as long as we could, but our prices really need to reflect our business expenses which have been going up. Needless to say, the quality of our plants will always remain high, our seed will be collected from all over the region and your plant order will be as site specific as possible.



HAVE A LOOK AT OUR 15% DISCOUNT OFFER WHICH IS STILL UP FOR GRABS IF YOU ORDER BEFORE 1ST DECEMBER 2009. BE ASSURED OF PLANTS GROWN FROM APPROPRIATE SEED PROVENANCES.

The local common everlasting makes a great mass display in flower as well as its soft silver foliage. All of the indigenous daisy plants have long flowering seasons, make excellent cut flower arrangements, are water wise plants and will grow in soil/climatic conditions that exotics can only dream of.



Before we bid you adieu, we'd like to thank you for your past custom and we look forward to working with you in 2010. And please don't forget to return any Lannen trays you may have collecting dust out in the back shed. You can contact us at trees@otwaygreening.com.au or phone on 5236 3314.

Warm Regards,

Mike and Wendy Robinson-Koss

STOP PRESS! Head on over to: www.otwaygreening.com.au

Our website has been updated recently and will have our new plant lists, prices and also many, many photos showing off the different trees, shrubs, groundcovers etc that we grow. So if you are interested in placing an order but are unsure about some of the plants please have a look- I think it will be quite useful.