

Growing our Future: The Cross-border Community Nursery & Seed Collections Project.

Nature Glenelg Trust is a locally based environmental organisation which has secured funding through the Australian Government's Clean Energy Futures Biodiversity Fund for an exciting new initiative.

The Cross-border Community Nursery Project is all about working with and supporting our local native plant growers, direct seeding contractors and seed collectors in the region to improve the diversity of plants available to local revegetation projects. It will do this by filling knowledge gaps, sharing information, being practical, not reinventing the wheel and, most importantly, working together.

Project Objective: Develop a reliable source of native seed and seedlings (otherwise not available) for large scale biodiverse plantings and create a community hub for developing revegetation skills and techniques.

Project aims and outcomes:

- 1) Regional "Community Seed Bank":** Collect/source seed focussing on hard to collect (otherwise uneconomical) species from across the cross-border region.
- 2) Regional "Community Nursery":** Work with hard-to-propagate or uneconomical species required for regional revegetation projects, gather knowledge and trial techniques to share with growers.



Leafy Templetonia (*Templetonia stenophylla*) - Vulnerable in SA

The nursery will specialise in growing species that are currently unavailable or not viable for commercial growers, or are required for specialised projects, such as rare or threatened species and wetland plants.

- 3) Regional "Community Education":** The key to the project's success is partnerships and high levels of community and industry involvement. This includes:
 - Developing a growers network, and providing learning opportunities for current and potential growers;
 - Establishing a "Friends of the Community Nursery" volunteer group and offer meaningful volunteering opportunities for regional residents;
 - Running hands-on workshops, including seed collection, propagation techniques and revegetation; and;
 - Working with local schools and councils in partnering Local Government area to establish local species "display gardens", and include information of how and where the wider community can source plants.

Project area: The project will be truly regional, working with local communities to learn together, grow plants and collect seed for projects across South East South Australia and Victoria's South West.

The City of Mount Gambier has generously made a location at Vansittart Park available for establishing our main nursery site.



Not in competition: The Community Nursery Project has come about to create access to a greater diversity of plants for regional revegetation projects. Where existing commercial growers and collectors can be supported to collect and grow a wider range of local species, this will remain our first priority. This means that the community nursery will only grow plants that are not currently grown or available commercially.

Reasons for species not being grown commercially at the moment include the length of time these species require to be ready, and difficulties in propagation or seed collection. Knowledge on growing these plants will be shared with growers as we learn about them, so every opportunity will be provided for these plants to be grown commercially, enabling the community nursery to tackle new species.

We are aiming for the cost structure of plants and seed the community nursery produces to be comparable with (not cheaper than) what people expect from commercial growers. Volunteers are critical in ensuring that we can produce these more labour intensive plants and seed at a feasible price for revegetation projects. All proceeds from plant and seed sales will go to help cover the running costs of the nursery.

We want your feedback! Here's your chance to get involved...

Help shape the Cross-border Community Nursery Project and let us know how we can be useful to you!

- **Do you manage/work on a revegetation project** and have been unable to source particular species for your plantings, or after something specific-rare and threatened species, wetland plants, etc?
- **Do you grow local native plants** and have issues growing particular species you want to sell or are being asked to supply for revegetation projects?
- **Are you a local native plant enthusiast** who has a passion for such plants, propagating them and/or restoring habitat, and would like to share information or be involved in some way?
- **What learning opportunities and workshops** would you like to see the Project run or promote in our region, what would be useful to you and where? We would love to link in with relevant events happening in your local area and increase cross-border networking opportunities too.
- **What's being done well, what's missing and knowledge gaps** do you think need addressing? We're after practical solutions and want to build on the great work that's being done, not reinvent it.
- **Let us know that you're out there.** In upcoming months Becky is planning to visit project managers, growers and interested people across South West Victoria and South East SA, and further afield to Melbourne and Adelaide to make sure the nursery is set-up in a way that will address gaps and best service our region.

If you, or someone you know, has feedback on the project, would be interested in meeting Becky or would like to find out more, contact her on 0409 842 471 or email becky.mccann@natureglenelg.org.au. Please provide any feedback to Becky by close of business **Friday 2 November 2012**.



Project Co-ordinator
Becky McCann

Nature Glenelg Trust will continue to make information available about how you can get involved through its website: www.natureglenelg.org.au. Subscribe to our blog and keep up to date with all the latest news on the project and other happenings.