

ARMIDALE TREE GROUP NEWSLETTER

Number 108 Summer Edition

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Planting Preparation Guidelines

by Dan Davies



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Cover Photo: Good preparation makes for a happy ATG planting team. Photo: Dan Davies

Editor's note: 2017 Summer Edition

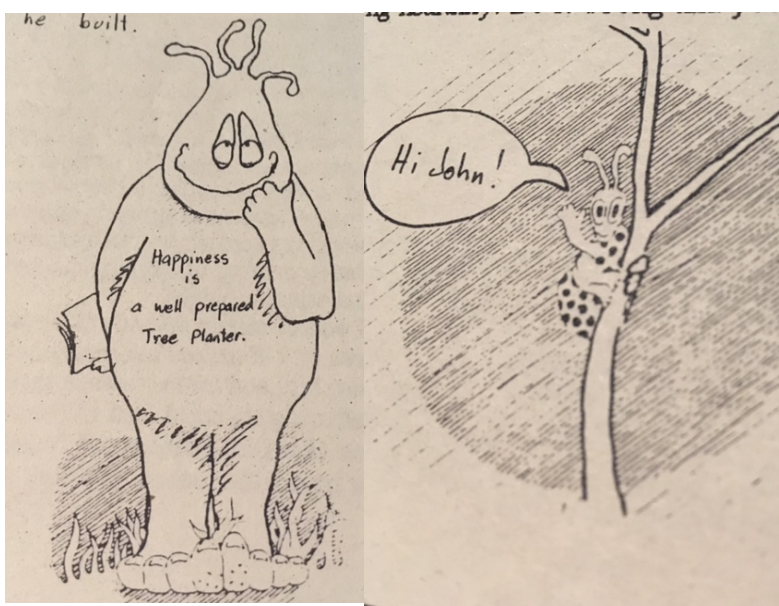
Dear ATG Members and Friends

Welcome to the 2017 Summer edition of the ATG Newsletter. Dan Davies, our Nursery Manager, who has spent many years in Environmental Services with the ATG has written our feature article on Planting Preparation Guidelines as now is the time to get organised with preparation for your next Spring or Autumn plantings.

We last published a Newsletter entitled 'Preparing for Tree Planting' in 1993 with input from three 'seasoned tree planters' – Gordon Williams from 'Eastlake, Uralla, John Taylor from 'The Hill' Kentucky and John Lynne from 'Blairmore', Glencoe. The newsletter editor Mike O'Keefe stated that "The one thing they all agree on is the need to plan and prepare well ahead". I have included a couple of cartoons accompanying these 1993 articles. I hope these 2017 Site Preparation Guidelines help to inspire you to plan and prepare for an amazing planting for future generations to be proud of.

Look at ATG's new initiative EVERY TREE COUNTS. You will be hearing a lot more about our plans to get trees in the ground. We need funds for this and your may be able to help this project or know individuals, organisations or businesses to contribute to the revegetation of our region. We need to act now for the future! Come to the launch on 1,2,3,4 March at the Urban Forest. See Dave Carr's article for details.

Kerry Steller (editor)



Cartoons from the 1993 Newsletter 'Preparing for Tree Planting'.

A few words from Dan.....

Successful native planting on a large scale is dependent on the following;

1. Suitable site and species selection and healthy seedlings.
2. Weed control and ground preparation.
4. Maintenance as required.

Regarding site preparation you must consider fencing to exclude stock, adequate soil cultivation, and effective weed control.

Weed control is about reducing competition for moisture and nutrient from non native grasses and weeds. Begin weed control as early as possible and eradicate weeds before they set seed. This may need to be done several times before planting occurs. Cultivation will stimulate weed growth so allow time for weed control between cultivation and planting. Remember it is much harder to spray weeds once trees are planted. Reduce the weed seed bank as much as possible prior to planting. This will save you time and money post-planting and give the trees a much better start.

Maintenance is about controlling weeds before they start to compete with plants. Watering may be necessary during hot or dry spells. Check sub-surface moisture regularly and water as required. Once roots are well established plantings should not require watering.

Ground preparation techniques will vary according to site specifics but as a general rule deep ripping is required. See Site Preparation Guidelines for more information.

Dan Davies

Thanks for all those who attended our AGM last November and had some input into our future plans.

Our current ATG committee is:

Dave Carr (President), Kerry Steller (Vice President), Tim Collins (Treasurer), Struan Ferguson (Secretary), John Lemon, Chris Nadolny, Alicia Cooper, Mike Patterson, Jane Patterson, Patti La Manno, Helen Schwarz, Peter Metcalf, Kate Boyd and Ray South.



Staff changes and new Opening Hours

Hello all,

We are well into 2017 and the new year brings a few changes here at the Armidale Tree Group.

I have temporarily taken on the role of Acting Manager while Dan Davies, our General Manager, is away on well-deserved long service leave. Dan has done an incredible job of steering the ATG ship out of some rocky waters and, with the help of our dedicated Management Committee, I will strive to keep a steady course until his return.

I have been involved with the ATG since 2013, covering various roles in the Nursery and Environmental Services departments, including retail duties, tree planting and working on the Grassy Bits project. The Tree Group is a unique and

wonderful entity, and I count myself extremely lucky to be able to work with such dedicated and genuine individuals.

As some of you already know, we are trialling new opening hours for the first half of 2017. We will be open 7 days a week. Our weekend staff will primarily be Jane Pickard and Ruth Tremont; both of whom bring a wealth of knowledge and we would like to welcome them to the Tree Group fold.

Alicia Cooper (ATG Acting Manager)

New Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm,

Saturday – Sunday, 9:00am – 1:00pm.

A summary of the articles in this ATG Summer Newsletter

- *Planting Preparation Guidelines* by Dan Davies
- *Every Tree Counts* by David Carr
- *Farewell and thanks to Kath Wray*
- *Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate Public Forum* Wed 8th February
- *Dazed by Dieback Comic Launch* by David Curtis at Mike O'Keeffe Woodland Centre Friday 3rd February
- *Summer in our Garden* by Warren Sheather
- *Plant of the Month* by Alicia Cooper

Site Preparation Guidelines by Dan Davies

Establishing seedlings successfully is all about good site preparation. The more effort that is put in at preparation time, the better results you will get. Site preparation is all about loosening up the soil, storing soil moisture and controlling competition from weeds. If we can store as much soil moisture as possible, we have a very high chance of establishing seedlings successfully.

1. Controlling competition – weeds and in particular exotic grasses are one of the biggest reasons why seedlings do not establish properly. Weeds directly compete with seedlings for available moisture and nutrient. By controlling weeds and grasses, we allow seedlings to access all the available moisture when they are at their most vulnerable (less than 1m tall).
- Control weeds and grasses by spraying with Glyphosate 1.5-2m wide along each row (rows should be a minimum of 2m between centres and 1.5m from fences). This should be completed as early as possible so that moisture can start accumulating. The rows may need to be sprayed several times to ensure that competition is always under control and weeds are not allowed to set seed. **Weed control is crucial before ripping.**



Good deep and broken apart rip lines result in successful plantings

2. Ripping – ripping will ensure that any rainfall is immediately stored in the soil profile. It also provides a good environment for seedling roots by aerating the soil. Ripping is an absolute necessity when planting seedlings.
- Ripping should be done to a depth of around 600mm. Depending on the soil type, initially, each row may need to be ripped up to 3 times 10-20cm apart. The end result should be a fine soil that is well broken apart without

any large clods – it should resemble a well prepared vegetable garden, loose enough to push your hand easily into the top 10cm and with no large gaps or air pockets! A final shallow rip pre-planting is often necessary to loosen soil that has been sitting for an extended period.

- Avoid ripping clay soils when they are too wet as this will prevent crumbling and can cause polishing of the soil which can prevent root establishment.
- Low, wet sites and sites with hard setting soil may need to be mounded to raise the soil profile and provide a loose, friable medium in which to plant

into.

ATG and LLS have a ripper and moulder available for hire, or ATG can provide an experienced contractor to undertake the preparation. We also provide contract spraying and planting services.

Before ripping or mounding consider the following;

1. Locate and clearly mark any underground services on site, **make operator aware of any such.**
2. Have proposed rip lines sprayed out at least 2 weeks before ripping. If they are not clearly visible you will need to mark start and finish point of **each line** with a marker.



Weed control is essential to avoid competition. Spray two weeks before you rip.

3. Ensure that all obstacles are removed from the rows so the tractor operator can move freely while ripping/mounding.
4. Stock **must** be excluded from the site after preparation as they will compact the soil. Rather than grazing, control weeds with Glyphosate. **Do not compact rip lines.**
5. Most often on the Tablelands, Autumn/Spring is the best time to plant. Ideally, preparation of a site should begin at least 12 months before the seedlings are to be planted.

Contact Zac Grows (Environmental Services Officer) on 0474555100 or zac@armidaletreegroup.org.au for more information.

Every Tree Counts

Dave Carr

In the last newsletter, we announced that Armidale Tree Group would be launching a landscape-scale revegetation project. After 34 years of supplying and planting trees in New England, its time to step things up a notch. Over the last five years, public funding has been increasingly hard to find for environmental projects. While we have never directly depended on grants to survive, a reduction in public environmental funding indirectly affects our business. With less funding, our members and customers plant fewer trees, which means we sell and plant fewer trees. What funding there is, is subject to tighter controls on how it is used, meaning it is often not available to landholders in this region.

Meanwhile, the environmental problems that the Tree Group was established to address, continue to get bigger. Climate change is directly affecting tree and ecosystem health on the Northern Tablelands. The last three years have been the hottest on record. We have seen an increase in severe weather conditions – primarily severe storms and heatwaves.

In our winter 2016 newsletter (#106) Chris Nadolny wrote: *“My key message is that if climate change is tackled in the most effective manner, then stopping deforestation plus restoring tree cover, in a way that enhances landscape function and minimises the impacts of climate change, needs to be a key element. The interesting thing about considering restoring tree cover from a climate change adaptation perspective is that the things we always advocated remain the same. It is still important to provide shade and shelter for people and livestock, protect waterways and connect and expand habitat for wildlife.”*

Eucalypt dieback, or ‘rural tree decline’ continues to be a problem. ATG was initially set up to do something about the severe dieback events of the 1970’s and early 80’s. Dieback continues to be a problem in some areas. A recent survey, supported by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, showed that while dieback is not a problem everywhere on the Northern Tablelands, it is severe in patches and may be more severe in some years than others. We continue to lose many thousands of trees each year to dieback.

Over the last 10 years there has been a substantial increase in conversion of native pasture to exotic pasture, partly driven by a move from sheep to cattle. While this increases productivity, it also reduces biodiversity, limits tree regeneration and increases nutrient runoff into streams.



Figure 1: Dieback in New England Peppermints

Time for action

Armidale Tree Group is a rare beast in Australia. We are a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that has lasted over 30 years. I see four main reasons for our success:

1. We do not rely on government funding. The business side of ATG – the nursery, tree planting, seed collection, consultancy – provides the resources to run community programs and operate the Woodland Centre.
2. We are focussed on action. Tree planting, bushland management and education are our primary interests and we get on and do them.
3. We have great people in our organisation. We employ skilled staff who are loyal to the organisation. We have a solid membership base. We have great volunteers, from the Management Committee to our regular nursery volunteers.
4. We have a clear focus on what the problems are and what we can do about them. Our objectives reflect this:
 - a) To protect and conserve the New England environment by: the raising and planting of native plants; managing threats to natural ecosystems; and managing habitats for wildlife in the region.
 - b) To promote public awareness of the role played by trees and other native plants and the value ecosystems have in improving the ecological balance of the New England Landscape and sustaining biodiversity.

For the last five years ATG has been focussed on getting our house in order to ensure a sustainable income and management base for the organisation. We have tightened up our management systems, reviewed and restructured our staffing and developed new areas of business. Now it is time to turn our attention outwards again with a project designed to fulfil our stated goals.

Every Tree Counts is the name of our new landscape-scale project. The aim of the project is to raise funds and build partnerships to address landscape-scale environmental issues in New England. We intend that this project will guide the Tree Group's work for the next 30 years.

Every Tree Counts will concentrate on four themes:

1. Dieback – New England Dieback caused the loss of millions of trees in the 70's and 80's. Dieback is not a disease as such; it is when trees are hit by multiple stresses (insects, soil compaction, mistletoe, drought) and use up all of their resources before they can recover. Major changes in microclimate, fertiliser making trees more palatable to insects, loss of predators and parasites of insects and lack of regeneration are all factors contributing to dieback. One of the best things we can do is replace the trees that are lost, reconnect patches of trees and increase plant diversity by planting shrubs and understorey species. Maintaining and improving existing trees is equally important.
2. Connectivity – As the landscape has been cleared and fragmented, it has become harder for animals and plants to move through the landscape. Animal populations in small remnants are very vulnerable to fire, drought and storms if they can't easily move to other patches. Increasing connectivity means planting new vegetation to make it easier for animals and plants (as seeds or pollen) to move through the landscape. Improving connectivity is one of the main things we can do to help our wildlife adapt to climate change.



3. Koalas – Koalas are located throughout the Northern Tablelands, but in low numbers. It is important that koalas can move through the landscape to seek food and water, particularly in times of drought and heatwaves. Plantings of food trees in strategic locations can help them move around the landscape. Looking after their forests and woodlands ensures they have

somewhere to live.

4. Carbon – Trees are almost 50% carbon, taken directly from the atmosphere as carbon dioxide in exchange for oxygen. Planting

trees can help reduce greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere by storing carbon in wood, litter and soil. For local individuals and businesses seeking a genuine and tangible means to offset their carbon, contributing to *Every Tree Counts* is the best way.

To address these themes, we will do what we do best: plant trees, look after bushland and educate the community. We will be guided by the best science available to make sure our actions address the themes effectively. The design, location and species selection will be tailored to the theme that any individual project is addressing. Where possible, projects will address multiple themes.

Over the life of the project we intend to work on multiple sites across the Tablelands, but we will initially focus on three areas:

1. Saumarez Creek, from Saumarez Ponds to Dangar's Falls. This project will work with willing landholders to increase connectivity for wildlife from the western side of the Tablelands to the eastern fall. Saumarez Creek provides a natural corridor and is one of the shortest east-west links across the largely-cleared plateau. The eastern and western slopes of the Tablelands are still well-vegetated and this corridor will make it easier for animals to cross the Tablelands as climate change pushes them towards cooler and wetter environments. Our first plantings in this corridor will take place this year in the Saumarez TSR (in partnership with NTLLS and with funding from "Do Something – One Tree Per Child") and at Banded Bee Farm in partnership with Earth Funerals.

We will be guided by current connectivity science, which recommends increasing vegetation cover so there are no gaps greater than about 100m, with larger habitat patches every 1.5 to 2km (Doerr et. al., 2010). At the farm scale a 'wildlife corridor' should be a continuous corridor of vegetation with trees, shrubs and other plants and between 25 and 100m wide. At the landscape scale however, a 'corridor' can be made up of patches or blocks of vegetation, linear plantings (such as shelterbelts), roadside vegetation, woodlots and even gardens, providing the gaps of open country are less than 100m wide. While many species, such as galahs and magpies can cross large expanses of open country, many declining or threatened species (such as Speckled Warblers and Hooded Robins) can only cross small gaps.

The name *Saumarez Creek Wildlife Corridor* for this project reflects our recent merger with Citizens Wildlife Corridors and honours the work and methods of Kath Wray, our longstanding member. We intend that this project will provide opportunities for landholders along the creek to be part of a big project and we will use Kath's method of discussing the project with individual landholders to find ways for them to be involved.

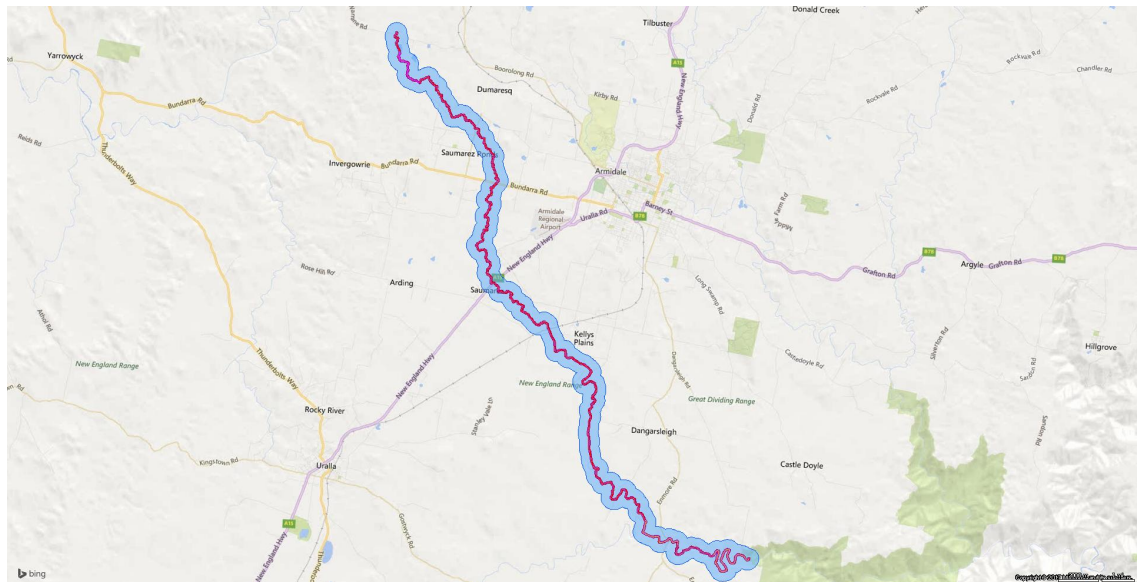


Figure 2: Map of Saumarez Creek (courtesy of Spatial Solutions)

2. Armidale Urban Forest – We have already started work on a large planting on the floodplain of Dumaresq Creek in Armidale. This forest will be planted just west of Cookes Rd and will eventually cover about 3ha. The area will use local species and be designed for wildlife as well as passive recreation. This site will enable Armidale residents to actively participate in ***Every Tree Counts*** by volunteering to help plant and maintain the site. This site has initially been funded by the “Do Something – One Tree Per Child” program and is developed in partnership with Armidale Urban Rivercare Group and Southern New England Landcare.
3. Over 5000 trees and shrubs will be initially planted in the Urban Forest in early March. We are inviting school and community groups to participate in planting activities from 1st to 4th March this year. We will have a public planting day and launch of ***Every Tree Counts*** on Saturday 4th March – keep an eye out for more details in February.



Figure 3: A well-connected landscape allows wildlife to move to avoid drought or fires.

4. The Gara River – Imbota area. We have been working in this area for the past 10 years, helping landholders to find funding and design and plant shelterbelts and tree corridors. This work has been led by Peter Metcalfe with funding provided by Northern Rivers CMA and Greengrid. Many landholders in this region have planted trees that help address dieback and increase wildlife connectivity. We aim to continue to support this work in this area.

Funding and community involvement

Every Tree Counts provides a cohesive, targetted project to channel multiple funding sources into landscape repair. We are not looking for a single source of funding to cover the costs of the project. Rather, we will be looking to a number of sources to provide a pool of funds to be directed to different sites. These sources include:

1. Donations from individuals, businesses and philanthropic trusts – ATG has a charitable fund that is able to accept tax-deductible donations.
2. Partnerships with other organisations – we welcome partnerships that contribute funds, trees, labour or services to the overall aims of *Every Tree Counts*.
3. Grants – we will seek grants that can contribute to the project. These grants may be for planning, implementation, research or monitoring. We will seek grants that match one or more of our four themes.

The funds we raise will be directed to our project sites, with a small amount retained for educational activities, communication and project management. Some of the funds will be used to provide materials and trees for volunteer plantings; some will be used to pay for ATG planters to prepare and plant sites and some will be provided as subsidies for landholders to plant on their own land.

The final ingredient – You!

Our members are the key to making this project work. There are many ways you can be involved:

- Volunteer your time. We will need volunteers for planting days, starting with the Urban Forest planting in March. You could also volunteer to help with mapping or planning. We will also need volunteers who are willing to go and talk to landholders in the project areas.
- Donate money or make a bequest. You can donate directly to the Armidale Tree Group Fund and request a receipt to claim a tax deduction. Talk to Alicia or a committee member if you would like your donation to be used in a specific way. We will soon be able to accept donations by Pay Pal through the website, but for large donations we suggest you talk to us first.
- Look for partnership opportunities. We will look to work with local businesses, events or organisations seeking a partner for environmental outcomes. We can help with carbon offsetting, staff-giving programs, triple bottom line outcomes and volunteering

opportunities. If you know anyone who might be interested, refer them to us.

- If you live in one of the initial project areas let us know if you would like to have trees planted on your property. You can fill out an expression of interest form (available from the nursery) and we can send someone to talk to you and develop a project.
- Encourage others to become members of Armidale Tree Group and get involved in *Every Tree Counts*.

When it comes to retaining and improving the bushland of New England and protecting and enhancing our wildlife every tree counts. Armidale Tree Group, with 34 years of experience behind us will ensure that every tree we plant really does make a difference. We invite you to join us in our new venture: *Every Tree Counts*.

Doerr, V.A.J., Doerr, E.D., and Davies, M.J. 2010. Does structural connectivity facilitate dispersal of native species in Australia's fragmented terrestrial landscapes? CEE review 08-007 (SR44). Collaboration for Environmental Evidence:
www.environmentalevidence.org/SR44.html.



Figure 4: Isolated trees can be connected by planting new trees and shrubs

Thank you Kath Wray

Kath Wray was farewelled from the Armidale Tree Group Committee last December after 33 years of volunteer work as a member of the ATG committee. At 88 years of age, this dedicated lady who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 2016 for over three decades of conservation work with the Armidale Tree Group and Citizens Wildlife Corridors, has pulled up stumps. Kath shares her experiences with the ATG and CWC and shares some of her highs and lows with us in this article.



Kath Wray *photo courtesy of Armidale Express*

Kath joined the Armidale Tree Group in 1983. She was one of the original members and regularly participated in activities including sowing and caring for trees in the nursery. In the early days the Tree Group had a nursery site in Ampol Lane that was open one day per week when volunteers would gather to work and farmers would come in to collect trees.

Once Kath retired from her job as a departmental secretary at the Armidale CAE she took over the management of the nursery from the previous manager, Steve Faulkner who had left to lead the Trees on Farms team. In a voluntary capacity Kath opened the nursery from Monday to Saturday from 10am-4pm, weeding, watering and selling stock. Kath relates this steep learning curve. “I didn’t know anything about running nurseries so I bought a book on the subject and read up on it. I have given it to the nursery in the hope that others might read it. It is still there.”

The nursery moved to the Show Ground site opposite O’Connor High School. Kath recalls, “This site was larger than in Ampol Lane but it had no shelter and no toilet. One of the men at the CAE found us working in all weathers without any shelter and was very helpful in finding an old shed lying in pieces at the CAE and suggested we acquire it. We were able to erect the shed on a makeshift brick foundation and were able to lock it up to keep our equipment and money in it. We still use this shed at the nursery today.”

Kath needed practical help to prick out seedlings and had volunteers like Monica Flint and others sitting around a kitchen table chatting as they worked. Kath relates her experience. “Some men on Community Service learned to prick out seedlings and they listened and joined in our conversations. Some of them told me they would never

be the same again and didn't reoffend because they were treated so well for the first time in their lives. I think this was one very positive thing that came out of their involvement with the ATG quite apart from all their good and useful work".



Kath was having many conversations with farmers who would ask her what they could do on their farms to get more trees. These farmers were feeling isolated and alone in the work they were doing and sought advice.

A potting up day by members at the Ampol Lane nursery in 1988

Kath started to visit people on farms and give them this advice and soon realised that many neighbours were talking to her separately. She worked with one woman and visited her property. During this visit, they marked all of the areas of conservation significance on the property onto a paper map. These areas included wildlife corridors, blocks of bushland and existing tree planting sites. At the woman's recommendation, Kath then visited six neighbours who were very keen to add their own works to the maps because they could see how they fitted in to a network of people doing positive things for the environment. From these early meetings the Citizens Wildlife Corridors (CWC) network was formed.

As CWC developed, Kath continued her involvement in the nursery but found it "a heavy job for a 60 year old woman who had been tied to a desk typing for 15 years". She relates "But I persisted with it because of its relevance in the region." In 1990 a permanent nursery manager, Mike O'Keeffe was employed. Kath says of Mike that he "arrived to save the nursery and put it on the map. He was not only strong but had a vision and has left a great legacy behind". Kath later returned as a volunteer and she took charge of collecting and processing milk cartons to be used as tree guards for many years. She estimates that in this time she has saved and reused nearly 30,000 milk cartons. Kath is pleased to see the fruits of her labour. "I am amazed and delighted to know that this small nursery adventure has become so successful that it can now employ a number of people permanently and can provide native plants to offset the disastrous tree decline on the Northern Tablelands with the means to plant them where necessary".

Kath was the person responsible for the success of CWC, which has continued since her retirement from this organisation in 2012. She visited, at her own expense, many hundreds of farmers in the New England region, having quiet conversations over a cup of tea, about tree planting and conservation. This simple approach was probably more effective than the many paid extension staff who have worked in the area over the years. In her non-threatening, non-confrontational way she educated many people, who came to trust her as a friend. She added their properties to the growing collection



of maps and showed them that they were not acting alone. The maps became a powerful tool for empowering people to take action. These maps are now on display at the Botany Department at the UNE and are being digitised for future reference.

As a result of the motivation people felt, they needed assistance to do conservation works, such as fencing off bushland and planting trees. Kath applied for many grants on behalf of CWC members and was often successful. She would then manage the grants herself, visiting sites to discuss where to fence, how to prepare for tree planting and what species to use. In recent years this role has been taken over by other members.

As a result of these efforts, CWC members have:

- Fenced and planted 20km of wildlife corridors, 20-30m wide;
- Fenced and planted 20km of riparian areas up to 150m wide;
- Fenced many thousands of hectares of bushland to manage grazing and allow natural regeneration.

CWC now covers an area of 300 x 150km, mostly on the Northern Tablelands and North West Slopes of NSW from Stanthorpe in Queensland to Werris Creek in the south and from the escarpment in the east to 150 km west. These achievements are impressive from an environmental perspective, but CWC has also had an important social role to play. The organisation itself has been a community group bringing people together to meet and discuss conservation, but Kath's work talking to landholders has created greater social cohesion and brought otherwise isolated neighbours together to work on shared projects.

It is Kath's personality, dedication and persistence that has been the main reason behind the success of CWC over the years. Kath is pleased that CWC will be associated with ATG in the future and that she hopes its 1,000 members can be used to benefit the Tree Group. "If it does, then the 23 years that I ran the CWC will be worth it".

Kath's has now retired from active involvement with the Armidale Tree Group due to her 'suffering from the tiredness of old age and it does weary me' but she says "I will never lose my interest in the ATG".

We would all like to say "Thank You Kath Wray" for all you have done in your pioneering work and dedication to the cause of native revegetation in the Northern Tablelands over so many years. You have certainly made a difference!



Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate Public Forum

On the evening of the 8th February, the RRR conference will hold a (free) public forum in the Armidale Town Hall to bring some of the speakers and messages of the conference to the broader community. Presented in association with the New England and North West Regional Science Hub and Armidale Tree Group, the event will feature three speakers, a panel discussion and a live music and visual performance from Dave Eddy's Festival of Delusion – Nova – anglica.

A bar will be available on the night and finger food will be served before the event and during intermission.

The presenters:

- Paul Gibson-Roy will speak about the restoration of grassy understorey, the importance of whole-of-ecosystem restoration and the challenges of collecting, growing and establishing grasses and forbs. Paul is Greening Australia's lead scientist and has been the pioneer of work in Australia to re-establish diverse native grasslands.
- Veronica Doerr will speak about research into landscape connectivity, including how to design effective corridor and connectivity projects from farm to regional scale. Veronica is the leader of the Climate Risks and resilience program in CSIRO Land and Water. Her research includes Landscape Ecology and Wildlife and Habitat Management, particularly in relation to birds.
- Richard Thackway will speak about *Doing R&R&R well on public and private lands. Lessons from leading individuals who are transforming our world*. Richard Thackway is landscape ecologist and a former Armidale boy. He works with several universities and is based in Canberra. His research has focussed on vegetation description, mapping and monitoring.

Who should attend?

Anyone involved in restoration or revegetation projects will learn from this presentation by some of the leaders in the field. If you plant a few trees or thousands there will be something for you here.

Conference delegates are welcome to attend, perhaps after dinner in town. The evening will give you a chance to grab a drink and socialise with colleagues and locals, while listening to a unique eco-arts performance by Dave Eddy.

Program

630pm	Arrive at the Town Hall for a drink and finger food.
7pm	Speakers and discussion
830pm	Intermission for drinks and food
845pm	Festival of Delusion performance
10pm	Event ends.

Festival of Delusion — Nova-anglica is a new music and digital art project from Armidale musician and composer, Dave Eddy. Nova Anglica is inspired by thinking about the rural, urban and wilderness landscapes and ecologies of New England and how they map out the pre and post settlement histories of habitation and landuse: from agriculture, grazing, mining, settlement and habitation as well as some of the negative consequences like contamination, degradation through to the positive — restoration and rehabilitation. Another dimension to the project is local community input, providing most of the the photos and video used in the show. Contributions have come from Southern New England Landcare, Laszlo Szabo and Sue Fell, Starfish Initiatives Network, Michael Taylor of “The Hill”, Kentucky (NSW), Beth O’Loughlan and David Waugh.



This event is part of *Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate: A conference on restoring ecological processes, ecosystems and landscapes in a changing world* presented by UNE. It is presented by Armidale Tree Group and the New England and North West Regional Science Hub with support from Inspiring Australia and Eco Arts Australis.



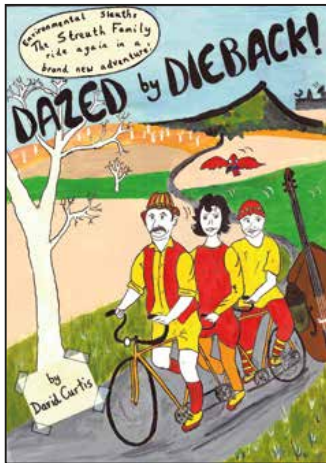
DAZED BY DIEBACK COMIC LAUNCH

This comic book by ecologist, artist and musician, Dr David Curtis, explores the causes of rural dieback and the solutions through ecological restoration and revegetation.

The comic and exhibition of the original artworks will be launched by acclaimed New England artist Angus Nivison at the Armidale Tree Group Michael O’Keeffe Woodland Education Centre in 80 Mann Street, Friday 3 February at 6.00pm. The exhibition will be in place until 3 March.

Dazed by Dieback tells the story of New England Dieback and the efforts of scientists and farmers to reverse it. It is a humorous tale charting the explorations of its unlikely heroes Barry, Fay and Warren Streuth, as they uncover the causes of dieback and what can be done to reverse it. Whilst set in the New England, it has relevance to all agricultural regions of Australia where rural dieback is prevalent.

It will have a scientific launch by Professor Nick Reid at the Restore, Regenerate Revegetate Conference on Monday 6th February at the conference barbeque.



You are invited to the launch of **DAZED BY DIEBACK**

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Summer in our Garden 2017

By Warren Sheather

Above average rainfall from June to October built up the soil moisture, filled our dams and triggered the best spring flowering seen for years. Since then the weather has warmed considerably and rainfall has diminished. Even so there is still a range of summer-flowering natives in bloom. This time we will concentrate on species, growing in our garden, that occur on the tablelands.

Firstly we have the strangest looking plant that we have in the garden. *Eryngium ovinum*, the Blue Devil, is a perennial herb reaching a height of 60 centimetres. The leaves are very spiny and blue. Flowers are



Eryngium ovinum, the Blue Devil

held in dome-shaped umbels and are an unusual steely-blue colour. Flower heads are surrounded by spiny bracts.

The Blue Devil is widely distributed and is found in the Northern Tablelands as well as most of eastern NSW, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and the

Northern Territory.

We find the Blue Devil dies down in winter and bounces back in spring. *Eryngium*

ovinum is a member of the Apiaceae family in company with celery, carrot and parsley although our plant appears to have no relationship with these edible varieties.

Sannantha crassa is a medium shrub reaching a height of two metres. The branches are pendulous and the leaves are lanceolate to elliptic and aromatic. Flowers are usually carried in clusters of from seven to nine. Blooms are white and about six millimetres in diameter. Flowering extends from December to January. Insects are attracted to the nectar-rich flowers. Prune after flowering to maintain the density of the foliage and increase flowering.

Sannatha crassa has proved to be a hardy free flowering shrub in our garden.



Sannatha crassa is found on the Northern Tablelands and North Coast. Oxley Wild Rivers National Park is one of the strongholds of the species.

Propagates from cuttings readily.

The species has had a number of name changes. Initially it was included in the *Baeckea virgata* complex and then known as *Babingtonia crassa* until the present name was adopted in 2007.

Sannatha crassa

Ozothamnus diosmifolius, the Rice Flower, and is a multi-branched shrub that has reached a height of two metres in our garden. The leaves are linear, about 15 millimetres long, two millimetres wide, a green upper surface and a white-woolly lower surface.



Ozothamnus diosmifolius, the Rice Flower

Virtually even stem is crowned by small flowers in dense clusters of from 20 to 100. Buds appear in late winter and are held for some time until flowers open in spring and are carried through summer. Our cultivar is called “Royal Flush” with purplish buds opening to pink, daisy flowers. This is a “double barrelled” plant because both buds and flowers are eye-catching features.

O. diosmifolius is widespread and occurs in eastern NSW as well as Queensland. The Rice Flower is widely grown for the cut flower trade. *O. diosmifolius* was previously known as *Helichrysum diosmifolium*. We propagate this species from cuttings. In common with most members of the daisy family cuttings take root rapidly.

ATG Feature Plant of the Month - *Veronica perfoliata*



Veronica perfoliata
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Commonly called Digger's Speedwell, *Veronica perfoliata* is a graceful little plant with whorled blue-grey leaves on arching stems. The botanical name refers to the perfoliate nature of the leaves that, in this case, are joined pairs that clasp the stem. Its foliage bears a resemblance to the ornamental Eucalypts that florists are so fond of. In spring it is graced with nodding sprays of blue flowers that dance in the breeze.

The graceful beauty of the plant belies its tough nature. Not only is this little gem drought hardy, but it will cope with being planted under Eucalypt trees, and will handle most well drained soils. The foliage can be cut back quite hard in winter, as it will re-shoot from the roots in spring. Growing to between 30cm and 1m in height, it should be planted at the front of the border or in pots, where it won't be lost among the larger shrubs.

That's all from me for this month, hopefully the hot weather hasn't been too tough on your gardens!

Alicia Cooper (ATG Acting Manager)

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