

12 Community involvement in tuart health

Katinka Ruthrof, Paul Barber, Tracey Bell, Peter Scott, Giles Hardy

Across the Swan Coastal Plain *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* (tuart) woodlands are in decline (Bulletin 1). This is of great concern to Natural Resource Management groups, researchers, local councils, state government agencies and private landholders.

An often-asked question of the Tuart Health Research Group members is: what can I do to help? There are various ways in which concerned people have helped, including: attending workshops, assisting researchers and joining their local Friends Group.



Dr Paul Barber speaking to the workshop group regarding the injection trial.

Workshops

Workshops provide opportunities to learn about the latest research and find out what you can do in your own backyard to protect and manage native trees.

Native tree recovery project

This project was developed to raise awareness of major iconic species affected by native tree decline and provide landholders with information and skills to prevent and manage the decline of trees on private land.

The project is an initiative of Green Skills, the Wandie Landcare Group and Serpentine Jarrahdale Inc., supported by LotteryWest, Landcare Australia, the Tuart Health Research Group, and Alcoa.

So far, over 150 landholders have attended four field days based at local properties. Landholders who attended the Mandurah field day are



Planting seedlings as part of restoration trials in the Ludlow Tuart Forest with Murdoch University staff, the Busselton Naturalists Club and the Friends of Island Point.

also taking part in a 12 month trial to test efficacy of various treatments for sick Tuart trees. The results of the trial will be used to further refine treatment methods in the future.

A brochure has been produced called "Preventing and Managing Native Tree Decline" to provide information of management techniques (Green Skills 2008). Contact Green Skills for more information: (08) 9360 6667.



Dr Ian Colquhoun from Alcoa demonstrates the use of tree injector syringes to Chris Scott and Kathy Anset from Ravenswood.



Assisting researchers

Volunteers have been assisting with restoration activities in Tuart woodlands over the past few years. Activities include:

- Seed collection. Due to the declining populations of Tuart in Yalgorup National park, seed is being collected and stored to protect this precious genetic resource. In addition, the seed is being used to grow seedlings to use in restoration trials (see also Bulletin 10).
- Helping set up research trials. This can include building fences to protect restoration trials from herbivores such as kangaroos.
- Planting of seedlings used in restoration trials. Volunteers help plant seedlings, as well as learn about restoration techniques and novel soil and plant treatments used to increase seedling survival and growth in harsh environments (Bulletin 11).
- Maintenance of restoration trials is required, and includes controlling weeds to protect seedlings from high levels of competition.

Volunteers from various groups and agencies have assisted with restoration trials. Including:

- Ralph Sarich property staff;
- Friends of Island Point;
- Busselton Naturalists Club;
- Department of Environment and Conservation Fairbridge Trainees; and
- City of Mandurah.

Joining a Friends Group

Friends Groups are actively involved in various activities to help conserve and protect the natural environment. Activities that Friends groups are involved with include:

- sourcing funding;
- planting days;
- seed collecting; and
- organizing workshops.



Monitoring seedlings for survival, growth and responses to soil and plant treatments in the Ludlow Tuart Forest with Friends of Island Point members Lyn O'Brien (on left) and Gill Dixon (on right)



Building fences to protect restoration trials from kangaroos in Yalgorup National Park. From left: Amanda Hewison from Murdoch University, Lisa Wray from the City of Mandurah and Lyn O'Brien from the Friends of Island Point.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank:

- Landcare Australia;
- LotteryWest;
- Friends of Island Point members, particularly Lyn O'Brien;
- City of Mandurah staff members, especially Lisa Wray;
- Busselton Naturalists Club, particularly Bernie Masters; and
- Department of Environment and Conservation Fairbridge Trainees.

References

Bulletin 1: Why are the tuarts dying? Barber, P & Haswell, D. (2006). Tuart Health Research Group

Bulletin 10: Collecting a precious resource. Ruthrof, K. X., Barber, P. & Haswell, D. Tuart Health Research Group.

Bulletin 11: Restoring degraded woodlands. Ruthrof, K. X., Douglas, T., So Thea, Dell, B. Tuart Health Research Group.

Green Skills (2008) Preventing and Managing Native Tree Decline. A guide for urban and rural landholders.