

Winter 2001

ISSUE 20

Victorian Landcare & CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



A carbon sink for
Korumburra



Growing a seed orchard



Glenelg-Hopkins feature

WEEDMAN to the rescue



Growing a



Direct seeding has proven to be the most economical method for successfully establishing native vegetation in many parts of Victoria. As the demand for seed increases, Greening Australia's Alcoa Portland Regional Seedbank is working hard to make sure seed is available for landholders.

One of the Seedbank's challenges is to match farmer demand for understorey species' seed. The Friends of Pallister's Reserve have established one of the first seed orchards for understorey seed in Victoria.

Peter Carrucan, a Pallisters group member of the Understorey Seed Orchard Project which is supported by the Alcoa Landcare Program and Greening Australia, has provided a focal point for their efforts, and has helped supply seed to larger regional projects such as the Greater Glenelg Biolink Project.

"The idea of starting a seed orchard arose because of the success people were having with direct seeding," said Peter.

"Most of the understorey species in the district had been cleared, and seed sources for many species was limited."

Left: Peter Carrucan in the prickly tea tree plot.



Signage plays an important educational role.

Filling the seed gap

In 1995, the Pallisters group met Libby Fisher, the Greening Australia Alcoa Portland Regional Seedbank Manager, and discussed the seed orchard concept.

"At the time, Greening Western Australia had seed orchard sites up and running, and it was thought that such a facility in the south west would fill the gap in the supply of understorey plants' seed," Peter said.

The group set out a plan for a small area in the reserve and sought assistance from the Alcoa Landcare Project to fence the site to keep rabbits and hares away.

"After fencing, a bobcat scalped the top few inches of soil away to remove any weed seed (the area had once been under pasture species) and to remove some of the soil nutrients."

Many species of native grasses cannot cope with high nutrient loads, and removing some of the topsoil would resolve this problem.

"We set up various veggie garden sized plots and sowed different understorey species in each plot," Peter said.

The seed was sown very heavily to avoid weed establishment and to ensure a good germination of native seeds.

"The seed is harvested in the summer months and sent to the Portland Seedbank where it is treated, viability tested and stored correctly to ensure there can be no insect attack, and to minimise temperature fluctuations that could destroy or denature the seed," Peter said.

All of the seed is stored at the seedbank, and lists of available species are circulated to local Landcare groups. Most of the seed is on-sold to the wider community for direct seeding programs.

An educational resource

Peter sees the seed orchard project as an important educational resource for local schools and Landcare groups.

seed orchard

By Paul Crock

“The aim of the exercise certainly is to provide seed for different direct seeding projects and take the seed-collecting pressure off native stands of the species in question. However it is also to draw attention to the concern about degradation of understorey plants in remnant vegetation areas.”

Interpretive signs and display boards will be erected to help visitors to the site learn about the species and provide a sample to assist with teaching plant identification.

“The seed orchard has been a great success, and members of the Friends of Pallister’s Reserve look forward to developing the resource and increasing the number of species grown,” said Peter.

For more information about the seed orchard project, contact Peter Carrucan on (03) 5562 6179, or Dave Warne at the Greening Australia Alcoa Portland Regional Seedbank on (03) 5521 7856.

Pallister’s Reserve

Pallister’s Reserve is located at Orford, about 30 kilometres north of Port Fairy in southwest Victoria.

The reserve was created in 1990, when the Trust for Nature, the Ross Trust, NRE and donations from local conservation and naturalist groups raised enough funds to purchase the 130-hectare property from Mr W Pallister. A further 124 hectares was purchased on the western boundary in 1992 to add to the reserve.

The reserve includes 130 hectares of native woodland containing swamp and manna gum, shining peppermint, blackwoods and a rich understorey of prickly tea tree, wattles, banksia, allocasuarina and sweet bursaria.

The many swamps and wetlands throughout the property make the reserve an ideal place for waterbirds to nest and breed, including broilgas.

The old woolshed on the property has been converted into the group’s headquarters and includes a number of beds to bunk down volunteers who require overnight or weekly accommodation. A shipping container donated by Portland Aluminium has been converted into a tool shed for the group.

The group holds regular meetings and working bees. On meeting days members do odd jobs and carry out bird and plant surveys. For more information about the reserve contact Peter Carrucan on (03) 5562 6179.

Direct seeding fact sheets

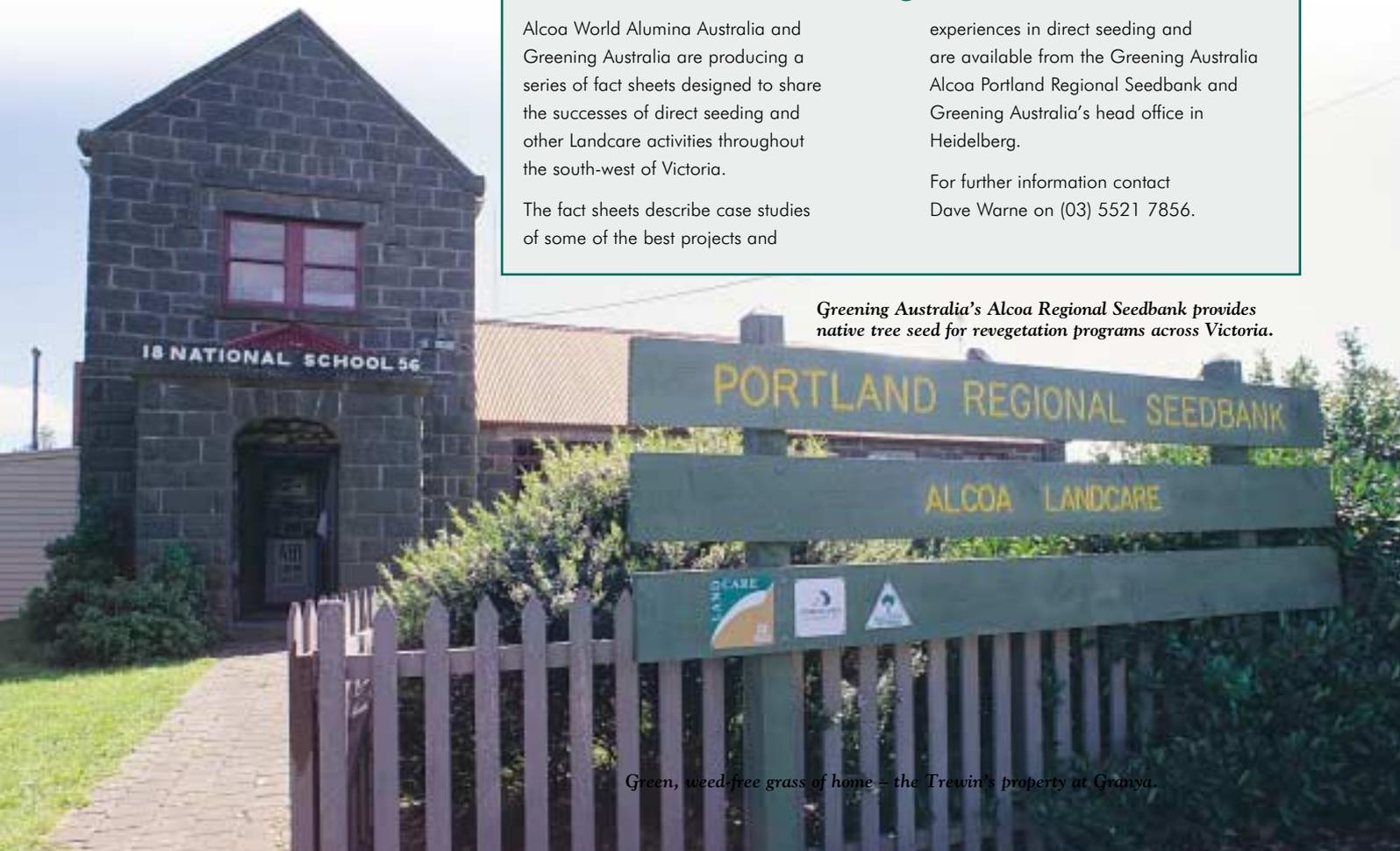
Alcoa World Alumina Australia and Greening Australia are producing a series of fact sheets designed to share the successes of direct seeding and other Landcare activities throughout the south-west of Victoria.

The fact sheets describe case studies of some of the best projects and

experiences in direct seeding and are available from the Greening Australia Alcoa Portland Regional Seedbank and Greening Australia’s head office in Heidelberg.

For further information contact Dave Warne on (03) 5521 7856.

Greening Australia’s Alcoa Regional Seedbank provides native tree seed for revegetation programs across Victoria.



Green, weed-free grass of home – the Trewin’s property at Granya.