



NATURAL STATE

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Welcome to the first edition of the Natural State Newsletter

Hello, this is the start of a quarterly promotional newsletter that is available for anyone interested. As a brief introduction Natural State is a private business started in 2002. We offer a range of revegetation services in the SA MDB, Adelaide Hills/Fleurieu and South East of SA. Currently there are 5 of us employed, 2 full time and 3 part time/casual. Due to a rising interest level in what we are doing around the SA MDB and beyond we thought it was time to let people know what's happeningon ground.

Native plant nursery now open

Recently the Natural State nursery has opened to the public, at this stage on Thursdays and Fridays only from 9am – 4.30pm unless by appointment. Situated on Second Avenue next to the football oval (see map on tubestock order form). We currently have a range of plants in forestry tubes at the clearance prices of \$2.00 each for seed grown and \$3.00 each for cutting grown. Also available is a range of established local native species in 125mm pots, most flowering at present and suited to coastal, mallee, and hills areas. These plants are priced at \$6.50 each while stocks last. We are currently sowing the next season's range of species including not only local natives, but Native Australian plants in general. If you would like to order, now is the time to take advantage of even further discounted prices. Call 85723049 to enquire about the current stock available and the other options we can provide, or visit the nursery on Thursdays or Fridays.



Above: Matt inspects the nursery stock in shadehouse

Tubestock order form now online

Our latest order form for revegetation species has just been added to the website. Fill in the quantity column for each species required as well as your details on page 3. You can send them in to us via email, fax or post and our nursery manager will be in contact asap. The pricing for our nursery plants is also on page 3, you will find, compared to our competitors - we are very competitive. If you have any ideas or suggestions for our website please feel free to pass them on via the info@naturalstate.com.au message box.

A map to find the nursery is on the last page of our tubestock order form

Left: The sign near the entrance gate and driveway to the car park.



Staff Profile



David talking to students at Murrundi Reserve.

Introducing David Vanderbyl. David started with Natural State in the ‘early days’ of 2002. He is a Ngarrindjeri man aged 36 and he currently lives near Wellington on the traditional aboriginal burial ground property called Murranghun (pronounced - murr-an-goan). He is a talented wood carver in his spare time making traditional tools and artefacts as well as lifelike animals. David is a keen nature lover with a particular interest in snakes and reptiles. He has great skills and experience in all aspects of revegetation and garden/park maintenance. He is a good friend and a hard worker, is full of practical jokes and is a valuable asset to the Natural State team.

Smoke water and wetting agent trial

This planting season we started an ongoing trial for our direct seeding and hand seeding sites that involves the use of a wetting agent and “smoke water”. Our 400L spray unit tank is used to water in the seeding as we go. The smoke water has a chemical that helps promote germination while the wetting agent has the two fold benefit of acting instantly to help hold the water sprayed on to the seeding as well as persisting in the soil for up to 12 months. This retains any rainfall around the seed, whilst also helps penetration of the all important summer rainfall, thus reducing runoff and evaporation.

Right: Direct seeding being watered in with wetting agent and smoke water.



Threatened Species Recovery Project

In early September we were involved in caging the nationally threatened Metallic Sun Orchid between the Coorong and Tailem Bend. Other activities included collecting and spreading the rust fungus onto bridal creeper nearby. Throughout early October we are concentrating on chemical control of the bridal creeper immediately threatening the 3 target populations.



Left: *Thelymitra epipactioides* – Metallic Sun Orchid on the Jakaitis property near Tailem Bend.

Right: Matt spraying rust spores on bridal creeper on the same site as the orchid pictured left. The rust will be used to collect spores in future and slow the spread of bridal creeper on this site.



Bird and bat box project



Above: A students message

One of our school education projects is to get students to make bird and bat boxes. After making them they get to write a small message, take them back to school or their town and hang them up to see who moves in! We feel it is very important that children learn about the importance of habitat for local fauna and also to learn that they **can** actually make a difference to local environmental problems. We emphasise to the students that even though we are planting thousands of trees, many of them will take 100 or more years to provide suitable hollows for habitation, and that by providing bird boxes, it's one way of helping to ease the problem.



Above: Students from Adelaide working together to make a bird box

The students work in groups of 3 or 4 and are provided with instructions, materials and a partly made box that they get to finish off. Once complete they are encouraged to write their name, school and a message to the world. Then they can see over time what type of birds occupy the box. Some ongoing maintenance is required to ensure only the native species move in.

To date we have made about 250 boxes with school children from all around the state. Some groups have taken the boxes back to their schools or homes whilst most have donated the boxes to be put up in our local wetlands. The boxes are made to suit our local species of birds (and the odd possum!) - The Owlet nightjar, Red rumped Parrot; and the bat boxes are known to be used by our local species of bats as well.

We would like to thank local bird expert Peter Koch for his invaluable knowledge, experience and advice.

If you feel that your school would be interested in contributing to your local area, and learn some new skills, give Natural State a call on 85723049 to find out more about what we can offer.

New growing partners project

Over the next few months we are seeking expressions of interest from people interested in growing trees for our revegetation business. Are you sick of those hard to fill cheap plastic tubes??? Unlike our competitors' schemes, we will supply easy to use materials and seed to grow 200 plants FOR FREE. There will be a half day personalised training session to be held at the nursery site in Taillem Bend on the 1st of December from 10am-1pm. The training session will cost \$30 per grower and includes a BBQ lunch with drinks. The trees will be used to help revegetate eroded land in the mallee areas of SA. There are monthly support emails and advice from the project officer Daniel Brown. To register and become involved contact Daniel direct on 0428727057 & daniel@naturalstate.com.au or through the office on 85723049.

International River Health Conference - Mildura

On the 16th, 17th and 18th of October Daniel and Matt are heading to the Mildura Conference presenting the bird and bat box sessions to over 500 students. We will keep you posted on how it went in our second newsletter, which will be out next quarter.

Over 1500 participants have been involved in our Environmental Education programs since 2004.

Right: Daniel & Matt talking to one of the groups of 60 students at the SA River Health Conference at Swanport Wetland - 29/07/05. Total of 250 primary/high school students.



Onepass tree planter

Our newest addition to the revegetation machinery we have available is the 3 point linkage tree planter. We have been using the planter on several sandy sites around the Murraylands. This planter will bring many benefits to our tree planting service, especially the ease of mass plantings and the time and money savings for landowners. We are looking forward to promoting the planter in action, we are hopeful of having a few demonstrations to the public through the local LAP groups.

Left: the planter on the way to another days work



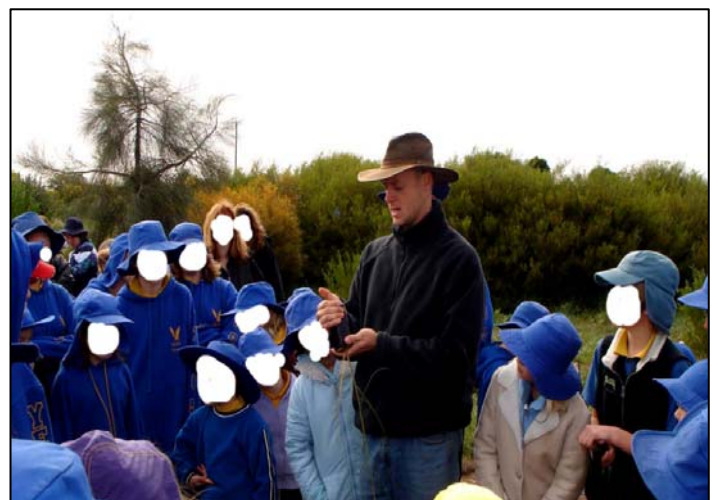
Tree planting days

Every year we are involved in Planet Ark community planting projects in the Murraylands and Riverland region.

Some of the projects that we have donated our time to help out this season include:

Pangarinda planting – Tailem Bend Primary School (500)
Roadside planting near Puzzle Park – Murray Bridge (500)
Blanchetown Golf Course – Swan Reach and Districts
Landcare Group (700)

These plantings are usually on weekends.



Above: Matt and the Tailem Bend P.S at Pangarinda

Weed control amongst T & R Pastoral -Murray Bridge tree planting site

The last few months have been busy working through maintaining revegetation sites after the reasonable winter season. The biggest site is the T & R Pastoral planting we undertook in 2003, of approximately 10Ha. Originally 3,500 trees were planted and guarded, all on an automatic watering system. We have faced and overcome some interesting challenges to date on this site, including:

- stock eating trees
- very shallow soil over sheet limestone
- several floodings
- sub contractors spraying trees
- rapid weed growth after rains

The species planted consist of:

Eucalyptus cladocalyx – Sugar Gum

Eucalyptus largiflorens – River Box

Eucalyptus leptophylla – Fineleaf Mallee

Eucalyptus odorata – Peppermint Box

Eucalyptus porosa – Mallee Box

Eucalyptus socialis – Red Mallee

Right: *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* – Sugar gums after spraying



Bushcare work

Some of the Bushcare work so far this season has included Boxthorn, Golden Wreath Wattle, Tobacco Bush and Peppercorn tree control. Some of this work was located along the Karoonda Road near Murray Bridge for the Murray Mallee LAP group. Willow control will commence very soon in several wetlands.

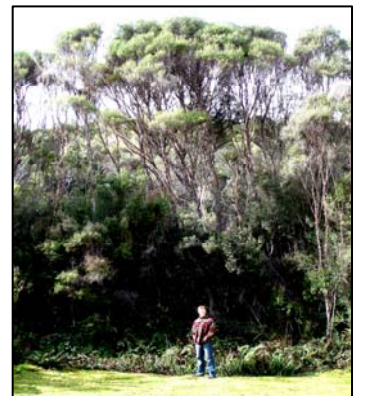
Although we do bushcare work primarily in the Murraylands, originally Matt was trained in the Adelaide Hills for bushcare work. We do travel anywhere for work and are looking forward to doing more bushcare work in the hills over the next few years. If you want bushcare contractors that are hard working, do a great job and are reasonably priced call Matt now on 0439727057 or email matt@naturalstate.com.au .



Above: Matt tidying up willows after excavators had tried pushing them over for Lower Murray Operations job last year.

The Big'un file

This is the first example from the Big'un file. Recently Matt and fiancée Karina went to the west coast of Tasmania for a holiday. Whilst trekking through the rainforests they came across some large Prickly Teatrees- *Leptospermum continentale*. In SA this plant grows in higher rainfall areas over 700mm / year and is up to 3-4m high. This one here is well over 10m high.



Plant profile

Lomandra effusa – Irongrass or Scented Mat Rush. This hardy tussock is a real survivor. The *Lomandra effusa* grasslands are actually rated as a threatened plant community in the SA MDB. It is widespread around Tailem Bend, the Eastern hills face and areas of marginal cropping land in the SA MDB. It provides habitat for many species of reptiles as well as attracting insects when in flower.

Flowering occurs during the winter months through to early spring.

The plant grows on shallow rockier ground as well as sandier soils. It is a useful landscaping plant. Generally slower growing, it can tolerate frost, drought, grazing, and even chemical spray drift. It does not mind being mowed as long as it is not cut too low. The roots do not like disturbance once established.

The old specimens can be up to 60cm high x 70cm wide. At this length it is estimated the plants are hundreds of years old. The leaves are so tough, the early settlers actually used the plant's leaves to tie their shoes together!



Above: Irongrass tussock

Below: It puts on a show when in flower



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Thank you for reading the first edition of the Natural State Newsletter

Well there it is, the first edition of the Natural State newsletter. We hope you have found it interesting and you now feel that you know more about what Natural State has to offer in natural resource management. We are trying our best to have a positive impact with every project we work on. Don't think that we have shown you all of what we are doing, as we have many more surprises still to come.

If you have read this far please feel free to comment on this issue via email – info@naturalstate.com.au.

If you are even keener than that - get out there and do your bit, together we can overcome many of the challenges that face the natural world today!

Until the next issue.....from the Natural State team - be good.