

Project De-Vine – Golden Bay

“Clearing the pest vines out of Golden Bay”

Update of our current projects

We have highlighted new or particularly pertinent sections in **bold**.

Project I:

In 2010 we applied for funding help from the Biodiversity Condition Fund to help clean up 14 properties along the upper side of Rocklands Road over 3 years and received over \$54,000 plus \$4000 from the TDC Biosecurity Department. The project's administration and reporting is done by volunteers and the funds are handled by the volunteer treasurer for the local Forest and Bird branch.

We have already dealt with many areas of heavy infestation and the transformation is amazing. To date the first project, after 3+ years, has dealt with 30,700 banana passion vines (BPV) and 158 old man's beards (OMB) and is maintaining a nearly nonfruiting/seeding state, “zero density”, on the properties. We are continuing with a 50:50 sharing of costs with the owners until the funds run out. This will be at the end of this year or a few months after.

We are very aware that the success of this kind of project relies on continuing the maintenance. We are proposing to apply to Tasman District Council in the Annual plan submissions for help with an annual monitoring of the properties; the same will be true of the second project. A small amount compared to the outside funding received already for the two projects of about \$240,000.

Project II:

Because of the success of the first project and the systems we had set up, we felt able to tackle an even bigger area. In 2011 we applied for funding help from the Biodiversity Condition Fund to clean up 31 properties along the lower side of Rocklands Road and from Birds Rd to Rameka Creek. This is a big area and covers 6 kms of the escarpment. It is a very challenging terrain and several large properties have required a lot of input to help the weedteam achieve access and not get lost! Tracks have been established where no one has gone for decades. Some of the routes are amazing with deep canyons and sink holes. They are then walked with a GPS unit and a map created. We have received the full funding applied for of \$184,973, over 3 years, as well as very helpful support from TDC Biosecurity and DOC staff. The second project, in its 3rd year, has dealt with 44,000 BPV's & 8,200 + OMB's.

We are in the same situation as Project 1 – see above – with the funding due to stop in early 2015. We are also applying for help with on going monitoring will make sure that the massive changes are maintained.

Project III:

Unfortunately, the weed problem does not stop there & food sources 2-5 kms away are easy re-seeding food sources for the larger birds – especially the Pigeons. So in 2011, we started to gather together the property owners of Pohara & analysed the properties that need help there. 7 pods were established with 1-2 local people leading them. They knew many of their neighbours & could go door knocking to gather data. We have already collated together a lot of data on to spreadsheets, looked at 160+ properties and established that there are about 75 needing help. This third project is starting in April with funding for \$179,998 over 3 years and it will cover all Pohara, from the farm land surrounding Richmond Hill through to the edge of Ligar Bay, along Matenga Road. TDC has funded work in the reserves around eastern Golden Bay and at the Pohara Water Reserve, where the weedteam were contracted by TDC to deal with the many pest vines in there. So far in the last 2 years: 6778 banana passion vines, 244 old man's beard have been dealt with & one

very large Wonga Wonga covering about 500m² is reluctant to fully die! The weed team will return again next year. **This makes it over 93,300 vines killed manually in the all the projects to date.**

A recent working bee in Pohara behind the houses of Abel Tasman Drive dealt with 732 vines in one morning. In this photo a large old man's beard is being dismantled.

Climbing asparagus:

This pest vine is well established in the Pohara area and a few other sites in Golden Bay. It has strong climbing shoots that can choke young native seedlings and kill them. We have persuaded the Nelson- Tasman Region Pest Management Committee to include it as a “progressive control” plant for the Pohara area as a test run to raise awareness of it and start to get it under control there. It is hard to kill the larger vines with their many tubers. Many areas along the Pohara cliffs have been worked over in the last two years and thousands of plants dealt with.

We have had \$500 each from both the Tasman Environment Trust and QEII trust to run trials on the worst areas and these are going well. We have included a low dilution, of only ½% glyphosate (compared to the usual 2%), option for areas amongst native seedlings to try and minimise damage to them. This has been used up north in various other programmes. Feeling confident with our treatment protocol will ensure that when we are working around the many properties in Pohara that we can have the most effective outcome.

Project IV:

By covering the area from Ligar Bay to Tata & Wainui with about 100 properties needing help, this will complete the eastern escarpment area from Rameka Creek to the Abel Tasman National Park, with over 300 properties involved. The funding to organise the set up & do the assessments has been approved and we have compiled contact data of most of the owners in the area on to our data base. We will be doing the assessments in a few months time.

Our team is also involved with contract work for TDC and QEII at Tata Peninsula, which our manager, Chris Rowse, showed to TDC councillors and staff in February.





The working bee last month at Tata Peninsula, on private land next to the above mentioned QEII and TDC work, resulted in 25 people attending & 1000 banana passion vines or old man's beards being cut and pasted. In this photo Moira is searching for the start of a multi stemmed banana passion vine.

Micro-Weedbusting groups:

These are being started with local and national sponsors and aim to help localised groups of lifestyle block owners and others who have the same pest vine problems, but are not covered by the main funding. With the sponsors, we can provide support to start a group and run working bees where a member of our weedteam attends and gives advice on pest plant control, plant identification, vine cutting and pasting training, plus giving out pottles of glyphosate gel to use that day and keep for their own properties. **The first one is underway and had its working bee on April 12th in Patons Rock.**

It was a great success, with 250 banana passion vines being dealt with by a mainly local force of 10 people, plus some who could only manage to attend the information talk at the start.

Patons Rock is the site of a significant infestation of climbing asparagus, where it has spread to over 20 properties and the foreshore so far, mainly in small numbers. It was a common garden plant grown for its foliage, which was popular in cut flower arrangements. The working bee introductory talk focused around identification and ways to kill it by:

- digging it up – usually only small ones due to its multiple root system and tubers which are often left behind.
- applying some glyphosate gel to the stems and foliage
- or spot spray all the foliage with a dilute glyphosate solution (2% or even as little as ½% can work with nothing else added) to allow the plant to absorb it deep into its root and tuber system. Larger vines will usually need the same treatment the next year as not all the tubers will die in one application.



November to April is the effective period in which you can spray the climbing asparagus.

The group are already keen to organise two more working bees, one along the slope behind the Patons Rock houses and another one in gullies around Grant Road off the Puramahoi main road. The aim is to deal with the worst areas in the working bees and the owners can work on smaller patches themselves. Advice on the cut and paste technique of killing the vines is given, plus vine identification on site and Cut'n'paste glyphosate gel pottles are given to use and are available free to those that attend to take home to work on their own vines. Those that want to be involved can contact Gaylene 525-9878 or Baerbel 525-9434.

A well earned morning tea put on by the landowners involved was much appreciated by all.

Farming initiative:

We have been having discussions with Federated Farmers, Fonterra representatives, individual farmers and other interested parties to try and come up with a package to present to the farmers to assist them with pest vine management on their properties. In Golden Bay these vines [banana passion vine (BPV) and old man's beard (OMB)] are on the Nelson - Tasman Regional Pest Management Strategy as "Progressive Control" plants for Golden Bay. There are large areas of large potential areas of shelter belts, retired slopes and gullies etc. with either established or regenerating smaller native trees where pest vines can establish. Vine control there can be daunting. With the riparian planting programme being strongly implemented, it is also important that pest vines, which are spreading seeds very widely, are well under control to minimise smothering of the new plantings. This will also help those small streamlets in gullies that can easily be blocked of light by large vines. We presented an option to a small group of the farmers at a Federated Farmers meeting recently, which was well received and the first farmer put up his hand to join the pilot scheme. It was also mentioned that this pilot scheme is a great way forward for the farming sector to be more proactive about farm management that is already starting to include more responsible eco land management, that ultimately is linking in to the community at large around them eg seed spread to and from other properties in this case. We are looking for 10 – 20 farms that have some pest vines that are prepared to be part of a one year trial. We have linked with Ekos, a charity specialising in facilitating private sector financing of environmental management, that is also looking to pilot a scheme to enhance eco farming practices. The farmers will meet some of the costs. We are aiming to attract sponsors who wish to meet their corporate social responsibility aspirations.

If this pilot works, we can continue the process again the next year and so on, as well as adding in more farms. We will be applying for funding to cover a/ the set up costs, assessments and auditing and b/ the co-shared



costs of the vine control work. We think this is a very innovative scheme that could be used in other areas with similar pest plant problems and we have the experience with our existing weed team and data systems to manage it well and make it happen here in Golden Bay.

Project De-Vine has grown very fast and is hoping that the continuing support from TDC, DOC and QEII will continue. This has resulted in a great partnership producing effective and cost efficient pest vine control on a large scale. The media has been helpful by running articles in the various local newspapers. The Golden Bay Weekly is now publishing our vine numbers alongside the rainfall figures on a monthly basis.

For more information contact Chris Rowse: 03-525-8588 or 11nikaus@gmail.com