



Project De-Vine Newsletter #12 Jan 2015

“Clearing the pest vines out of Golden Bay”

Hello neighbours and supporters!

This newsletter is primarily for all the landowners involved with Project De-Vine who are mainly on the eastern side of Golden Bay. It is you as landowners and pest plant controllers that have made Project De-Vine possible. The newsletter is also for the various team members, DOC and TDC staff, sponsors and supporters near and far. If you have a neighbour in the funded groups without e-mail please pass this information along to him or her.

It has been a very busy year, with many exciting new projects and contacts being made. At the same time the on-going projects are still happening & receive regular attention to keep the pest vines from re-establishing. As a non-profit group under the umbrella of Forest and Bird, we have benefitted massively from their local support, insurance cover, financial administration and more recently logistics support from their head office.

Big change:

Project Mohua



Project Mohua has been born these last 3 months. Mohua is the Maori word for Golden Bay and also the Yellowhead bird, which was once common here until about 60 years ago. It is a coming together of the 4 different eco-volunteer groups working in Golden Bay: **Weedbusting** (mainly Project De-Vine), **Riparian planting**, **Trapping groups** & **Bird monitoring & habitat enhancement**.

Project De-Vine started in 2010 as a neighbourhood weedbusting project in response to the difficulty for individual landowners in removing pest vine infestations. We now organise vine removal teams all over Golden Bay. We have received funding from Biofunds, Tasman District Council, QEII Trust, Tasman Environment Trust, local businesses and individual owners. We have manually removed over 10,000 Old man's beard and 100,000 Banana passion vines and plan to kill many thousands more to stop the spread of these rampant, forest destroying vines.



StreamCare was started to provide native plants to farmers for riparian planting. It has been running in western Golden Bay for 8 years and has planted 35,000 trees so far. It is at capacity and still has more farms in western Golden Bay and a list of others awaiting trees on the eastern side. We are aware that this planting has already had an impact on the sediments coming down these rivers and their water quality, which was frequently affecting the mussel farms in the bay. A smaller nursery has recently been expanded near Takaka. This nursery will assist farmers with their riparian plantings in the Motupipi & Takaka river catchments.

Bird monitoring in Golden Bay

Many volunteers assist with bird counts at various locations in Golden Bay. The work includes counting the Shags at Tata Beach at their daily early morning stone swallowing and regurgitation ritual. Godwits and other coastal migratory birds are counted. Inland, there is regular counting of Rock wrens, Kiwis and other endangered birds, which are indicators of the levels of predators, who are being controlled by trapping in hundreds of traps. Injured birds are also assisted by various volunteers. The Friends of the Cobb are very active in these fields. Here Marian Milne is helping with tagging a Great Spotted Kiwi.



Trapping in Golden Bay

There are many trapping groups focused on catching Stoats and Rats primarily. There is a **funded trap lending scheme** which has provided over a thousand traps. The traps are visited by volunteers regularly and the catch numbers monitored.



We have set up a website that is now basic but functioning, www.projectmohua.org.nz which will showcase the work of these groups. It will provide links to the many agencies and other groups around the region who support us or are working towards similar goals. Importantly, it has a volunteer page for those who wish to help Project Mohua. You can help with tree planting (the riparian stream margins), check trapping lines, monitor bird populations, and assist at our weedbusting working bees or with editing articles and other paperwork that can be done at your home. The website will also provide links to pertinent information about the various activities we cover.

Big thanks to Hamish Foxwell, who created the website as a Takaka High School IT project. This has now been set up and is being expanded by Robert Jenkin.

New projects this year:

Micro-Weedbusting groups:

These are being started with local and national sponsors and aim to help neighbourhood 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 the support and expertise with a member of our weedteam to start a group and run working bees. We will give 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. **We held a working bee at Tata Peninsula on private land, next to the work we are doing on the seacliffs for QEII and TDC. 25 people attended & 1000 vines, banana passion or old man's beard, were cut and pasted.**



Moira is searching for the start of a multi stemmed banana passion vine.

We had several working bees last autumn and started a group to cover the Patons Rock and Puramahoi area. We will be looking to start up another group this autumn and hold more working bees. You can help at these Saturday morning events by contacting Chris at 11nikaus@gmail.com . He keeps a list of willing volunteers to be contacted by e-mail when the next session is getting close.

Farming initiative:

We have been having discussions with Federated Farmers and Fonterra representatives to try and come up with a package to present to 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. There are large 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.

This pilot scheme is a great way forward for the farming sector to be more proactive about farm management and thus helping the community at large by lowering seed spread to and from other properties. We are looking for at least 20 – 30 farms who have some pest vines and are prepared to be part of a three year trial. The farmers will meet some of the costs. If this pilot works, we can continue the process by adding more farms. We will shortly 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 didn't succeed with a funding application last year, but did receive \$25,000 from DOC regional partnership funding. This helps us to attract the bigger funding we need to sustain the work. We think this is a very innovative scheme which could be used in other areas with similar pest plant problems. We have the experience with our existing weed team and data systems to manage it well and make it happen here in Golden Bay.

Contract work:

Our project De-Vine team has expanded and now has a dedicated “**contract team**” which has successfully tendered for work in Abel Tasman National Park to control many pest plants in the North end of the park. As well as pest vines, we are dealing with Willows, Sycamores, Ivy amongst others. Another contract controls pest vines along the rivers of Golden Bay. These contracts have needed a big step up in reporting, processing and preparing health and safety plans to cover every hazard and unexpected events. We have also been busy dealing with pest vines in the Tasman District Council reserves around Pohara and eastern Golden Bay.

The work in Abel Tasman National Park is very exciting. Project Janszoon is injecting a lot of energy and money and hence attracting more money to restore the ecology of the Park. Over a 30 year period they aim to clear it of pest plants and animals as well as assisting or re-establishing bird populations.

Our work outside the park fits so well with the clean-up inside the park. Weeds know no boundaries.



Introducing a new fruit to replace the Banana passion vine:

Project De-Vine is collaborating with the local branch of Federated Farmers and Fonterra in Golden Bay to provide a replacement to the Yellow banana passion vine (BPV) which has escaped so widely and been the main focus of our work. We have just passed the 100,000th BPV which our team have killed manually, plus the many tens of thousands by spray work, when it is too dense to do manually. Many people are used to eating the fruit and we are trialling another option, sometimes referred to as the "Red Banana Passionfruit", *Passiflora antioquiensis*, which is closely related to the Banana passion vine, but is not as vigorous. It has stunning rose-pink to red pendulous flowers, which produce long ovoid yellow fruit, considered by some to be the best flavoured of all the passionfruit species. It is a bit harder to grow, but according to all reports, is not likely to spread – similar to the Purple Passion fruit you see in the shops, *Passiflora edulis*. We are hoping that once passion fruit eaters try it, they will be happy to move to this non-invasive species.



Update of our current projects

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

Our intrepid **“funded team”** has taken on two more workers (not shown in the newspaper photo here), Zara (in the photo below) and Graeme to make up for the others working in the contract team. It is steady at 6 people now. They have been busy crawling (literally in places) their way up the gullies at the top end of Richmond Road and Bay Vista Drive in Pohara. A big thanks to Phil Castle and Beth Burdett, who have added Mail Merge to our spreadsheet programme to produce the reports, which update as we go – it is such a time saver for the paperwork manager.



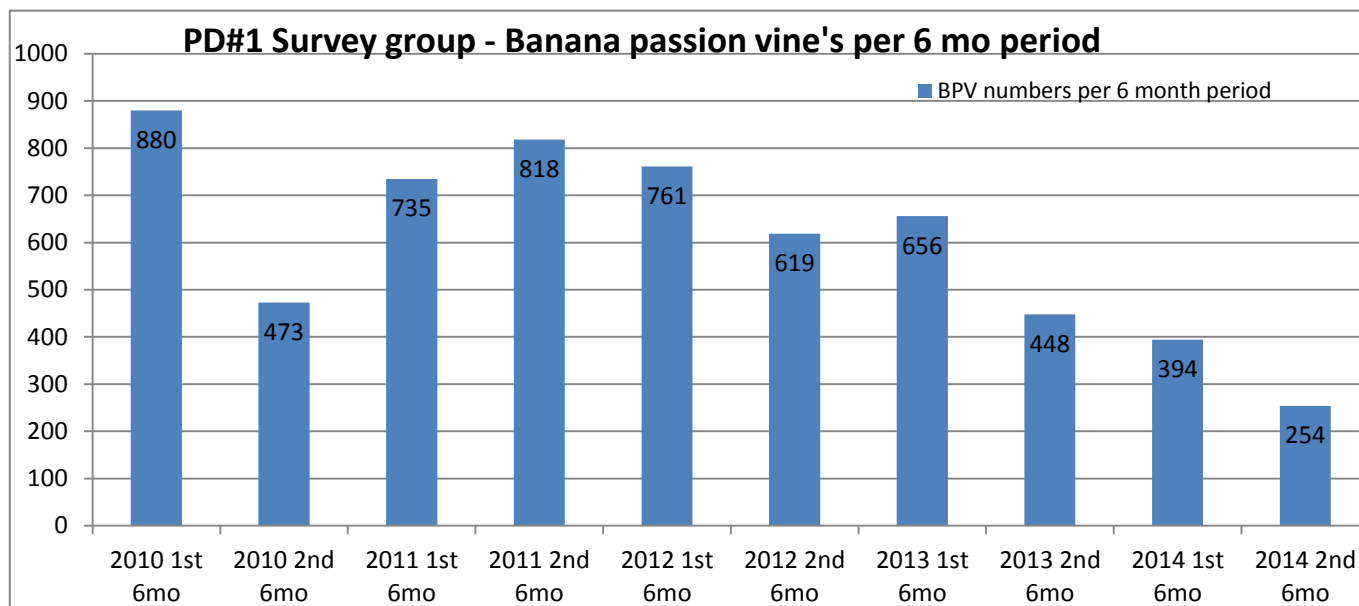
Project I:

In 2010 we applied for funding from the Biodiversity Condition Fund, from the Ministry of the Environment, to help clean up the vines on 14 properties along the upper side of Rocklands Road over 3 years and received over \$54,000 plus \$4000 from the TDC Biosecurity Department. As is the

case in all our work, 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 4 years, has dealt with 33,345 banana passion vines (BPV) and 180 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. Since the funds ran out we have been using our management fees from the contract work to support this project.**

Inside this project are the original 4 "clear of pest vines" properties, who have been counting the seedlings for 5 years, even though there have been no fruiting vines on the properties for many years. The seeds are brought from properties nearby that have become "clear" of vines in the last 3 years. You can see the numbers of seedlings steadily dropping. One gully, which is the main source of seedlings in this survey group, was logged 4 years ago and this disturbed many seeds brought in by birds roosting in the big trees.



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 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 km of escarpment. It is a very challenging terrain and several large properties needed a lot of effort to help the weedteam reach the remotest corners 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. **This second project, at the end of its 3rd year, has dealt with 46,800 BPV's & 8,800 + OMB's.**

We are in the same situation as Project 1 – see above – with the funding finishing in 2015. We had some monies left after the third year and will continue until it runs out – probably late this year.



A working bee in Pohara along the slope, behind the houses of Abel Tasman Drive dealt with 732 vines in one morning. Here a large old man's beard is being dismantled. Project III.

Project III:

Unfortunately the weed problem does not stop here. Seeds of vines 2-5 km away are easily

spread by larger birds, especially Pigeons. So in 2011 we contacted the property owners of Pohara & analysed those who 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 about 95 needed help. This third project started last September with funding of \$179,998 over 3 years and it will cover all Pohara, from the farm land surrounding Richmond Road through to the edge of Ligar Bay along Matenga Road. **The team are at the top of Richmond Road and have dealt with 12,000+ vines from the Pohara store to there already.**

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 there. **So far in the last 3 years: 8174 banana passion vines, 758 old man's beard have been dealt with & one very large Wonga Wonga vine covering about 500m2 which is reluctant to fully die! The weed team will return again next year. This makes it over 116,000 vines killed manually in all the projects to date.**



Climbing asparagus:

We have left this information in from the last Newsletter to remind people about this less visible “sneaky pest”. This vine is well established in the Pohara area and a few other sites in Golden Bay. Our working bee in Patons Rock highlighted the small outbreak there, which TDC Biosecurity staff identified (he found the probable main source at the bottom of one garden) and a local resident have been dealing with. 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 plus years and thousands of plants killed.

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 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, we will 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 started the assessments last winter and will restart when we have time available with our busy team schedules.**

Project De-Vine has grown very fast and we hope that the continuing support from TDC, DOC and QEII will continue. The result is a great partnership producing effective and cost efficient pest vine control on a large scale. Thank you so much to all the volunteers who help to keep the project moving along with technical support and at working bees. If you have any skills you can help us with, then do contact us. Our website has details of immediate needs. The media has been helpful by running articles in the various local newspapers. The Golden Bay Weekly is now publishing our pest vine numbers and trapping numbers alongside the rainfall figures on a monthly basis.

You can meet us at the A & P show on Sat 17th Jan, where we will be at the Forest and Bird stand promoting Project De-Vine and Project Mohua and can answer and queries.



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

Or see our website www.projectmohua.org.nz

for the latest updates, volunteering and other links and data.

Unfortunately our facebook page volunteer has been unable to keep posting. If anyone out there is interested in doing this, please contact me. It is: project de vine golden bay



Appendix:

Here is our table of vines numbers for the last year, showing the figures from the previous newsletter a year ago and the changes over 3 month periods to September and then the monthly changes as our team worked in Pohara. Some 37,000 vines were killed in this last year manually.

Last update: 31 December 2014	Number of properties involved	Banana passion vines - Fruiting	Banana passion vines- Seedlings	Old man's beards - All	Other vines	All pest vines Totals	Totals Monthly Change
Project #1 Upper side of Rocklands Road	16	12602	14723	178	2942	30445	
Project #1 Survey group	4	104	6167	2	0	6273	
Project #2 Lower side of Rocklands Rd to Packards Rd & Rameka Ck	31	32213	14608	8813	444	56078	
Project #3 Pohara to Matenga Rd (start of Ligar Bay)	161	7714	4368	128	0	12210	
TDC Reserves	3	7384	790	758	450	9382	
Contract work LINZ + ATNP		222	76	26		324	
Project #4 Ligar Bay to Wainui	96	912		88		1000	
Patons Rock / Puramahoi Group		205	45			250	
TOTALS to date	307	61356	40777	9993	3836	115962	
TOTALS 31 Dec 2013	48	47833	21177	7079	3005	79094	
TOTALS 31 March 2014	303	51358	30213	8773	3017	93361	
TOTALS 30 June 2014	303	52603	33655	9325	3332	98919	
TOTALS 30 September 2014	303	55517	37717	9364	3487	106083	3385
TOTALS 31 October 2014	303	56931	38456	9474	3487	108346	2263
TOTALS 30 November 2014	307	58923	39466	9993	3836	112216	3870
TOTALS 31 December 2014	307	61356	40777	9993	3836	115962	3746