



## **Project De-Vine and Project Mohua Newsletter #13 - Jan 2016**

**“Clearing the pest vines out of Golden Bay and around Abel Tasman National Park”**

### **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 and over the hill from Riwaka to Marahau. 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. Apologies if you have more than one copy e-mailed as many people are in several groups. With some 370 landowners in our control areas, properties change hands – if you have sold please contact us so we can update the address list and look for contact details of the new owners. Feel free to skim the contents if the details are not your cup of tea!

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.

### **Project Summary**

Project De-Vine started as a small local weed busting project, to help landowners, who were overwhelmed by invasive vines (Banana passion vine (BPV) and Old man’s beard (OMB)). This has grown into a project with Golden Bay wide, and recently around Abel Tasman National Park ambitions. It is achieving landscape scale pest vine control primarily in eastern Golden Bay; some 367 private landowners (4760ha) are included in the project from Wainui Bay to Rameka Creek. 2015 saw Project De-Vine partner with Project Janszoon and Fonterra to assess and offer pest vine control on properties along the boundary of Abel Tasman National Park (about 60 with control of other pest plants that might threaten the Park) and the Fonterra supply farms (102) respectively in Golden Bay. This is aided by a grant from Lotteries New Zealand over one year. Control work is starting now on up to 40 of those properties.

Other grants have been received in 2015 from:

- DOC Community Fund and Tasman District Council to partially cover the costs of an Operations Manager and set up an office for 3 years.

Sponsorship of our working bees has been generously provided by:

- Cut’n’Paste, who supply gel bottles for us to use and give out to landowners who attend working bees
- Nelson Building Society
- Motueka Community Board – to assist with the costs of running working bees in Riwaka valley

**To date about 202,000 pest vines have been killed manually with many more sprayed. One third of these are in this last year alone. The vast majority are Banana passion vines (180,000) with 18,000 Old man’s beard vines and the balance in various others.** We plan to kill many thousands more to stop the spread of these rampant, forest destroying vines.

Vine weeds in New Zealand (especially BPV and OMB) are a major threat to regenerating native forest, riparian re-vegetation projects, lowland forest on karst and the margins of National Parks and Reserves in Golden Bay. These vines are capable of smothering low canopy forest, killing the canopy trees and preventing regeneration of native species. Existing strategies for controlling these weeds have not been able to prevent their continued spread and increasing intensity of infestation.

Project De-Vine works extensively with Department of Conservation, Tasman District Council and local businesses.



### Update on the various STAGES of our vine control work:

- Much of the area we work in covers landscapes that were in the too hard basket and as such were steadily getting worse. Landowners were "overwhelmed" - the most common word used by them to describe the steady increase in vine numbers and endless seedlings coming from surrounding properties. Climbing asparagus was also added to the list of controlled pest vines for Stages 1-3.
  1. **Stage ONE** – The upper side of Rocklands Road and Upper Rocklands Road – 16 properties  
This funding has been used up after 5 years of control work. We are aiming to apply this year for further funding to do biannual visits to hard to control areas.
  2. **Stage TWO** - The lower side of Rocklands Road and escarpment properties to Rameka Creek – 31 properties  
This funding has been used up after 4 years of control work. We are aiming to apply this year for further funding to do biannual visits to hard to control areas.
  3. **Stage THREE** - Pohara to Matenga Rd (start of Ligar Bay) 161 properties  
This funded work is now in its second year. The team will be revisiting many of the properties this autumn.
  4. **Stage FOUR** – Ligar Bay to Wainui - 96 properties  
The funded assessment work has been completed and vine control work has started in Wainui. Our assessors also recorded on the east side of Wainui other plants that Project Janszoon were worried about spreading in to the Abel Tasman National Park (ATNP). This is funded by the Lotteries grant with Project Janszoon also paying us to control a range of non-vine invasive pest plants there (see below under Stage 5, which applies to all Wainui properties).  
We are aiming to apply this year for further funding to do the pest vine control work in the Ligar Bay to Tata area. This will be based on how much effort the many landowners are doing, which can then be matched by the funding.
  
- A notable success is the clearance of pest vines from the approx. 600m of sea cliffs between Tata Beach and Ligar Bay. The indigenous trees were almost completely covered with Banana passion vines and some Old man's beard. A previous contractor had deemed it too hard. Our team has

achieved a nearly full clearance of the vines in 2 sweeps (2014 and 2015) and kept to budget for the landowners - Tasman District Council and Queen Elizabeth II Trust. Another sweep is planned this autumn to deal with seedlings.

- Our team has expanded so fast this year, that we have started an office in Takaka at Golden Bay Health Centre, 12 Motupipi St. With recent 3 year funding from a/ the DOC Community Fund, administered by DOC, and b/ Tasman District Council, we have been able to fund the office expenses and take on part time staff to relieve the pressure on our overworked volunteer management team. This includes an Operations Manager to oversee the logistics of keeping the teams in the field effectively, an Assistant Operations Manager to collate the field work and data downloading and thirdly, someone to assist with the accounting, which is being increasingly handled by the National Office of Forest and Bird. We are lucky that we have some very able persons to lift our work to the next level and continue the impetus to keep ahead of these rapidly growing plants. This will enable us to future proof Golden Bay and the DOC estate alongside us, from these frustratingly overwhelming pest plants.
- **Stage FIVE** - Project De-Vine has partnered with Fonterra, the main dairy company in New Zealand, to carry out free pest plant assessments on every Fonterra supply farm (102) in Golden Bay over the next four years, on a voluntary basis. By 2030 Fonterra farms are required to plant riparian margins to improve water quality. Vine weeds are a major threat to the success of riparian plantings. With part of the funding from Lotteries, Project De-Vine is able to offer subsidised vine control work to back up the assessment. Project De-Vine's team has also partnered with StreamCare East, to enlarge its nursery and provide a subsidised planting programme for the farmers in the Takaka River catchment. StreamCare West is already well established in the Aorere River catchment. This river recently won the inaugural Morgan Foundation New Zealand River Prize. Fonterra views this partnership of riparian planting and pest vine control work side by side as a first for New Zealand.
- Also in **Stage FIVE**, Project De-Vine has partnered with Project Janszoon, who is doing intensive pest plant and animal control in ATNP, to carry out free assessments on the 60-80 properties in Golden Bay, which are close to the Park boundaries, with the aim of creating a "buffer or halo zone" around the Park. Our assessors also recorded other pest plants that Janszoon were worried about spreading into the park. As with the Fonterra supply farms, Project De-Vine is offering subsidised vine control work to back up the assessment. With funding from Project Janszoon, our control teams will be able to deal with the various outlying pest plants, other than the vines, that are found in East Wainui and East Takaka properties next year.
- **Stage SIX** has already started with the aim to ultimately complete the "halo" around ATNP outside Golden Bay in the Riwaka to Marahau area. The first two working bees happened in October & November to help free 4 properties of the pest vines with more than 900 vines dealt with. We will be assisting more working bees to happen and other vine control initiatives to start. See photo below.



We are still getting many comments – “What about Takaka Hill and the Old man’s beard there!” We have put a proposal to carry out the control work to NZ Transport Agency and are working with them to start on the work. No date is fixed yet.

- Project De-Vine attempts to involve everyone in the community in managing weeds. Outside of the main project areas, Project De-Vine has started “Neighbourhood Weedbusting Groups” sponsored by many local businesses, which is providing advice, demonstrating control techniques and leading working bees. This spring, one working bee was held in East Takaka as well as the Riwaka ones. After an article in the Nelson Mail (2<sup>nd</sup> Oct), we have fielded many enquiries from others in the

region wanting to deal with primarily invasive vines. We are happy to try and offer advice or support to anyone wanting to control invasive plants. In particular a group has started to do control work on the Codger's Mountain bike track at the back of Nelson. This group has had great support from the Nelson City Council and can build on the work of the Brook Waimamara Sanctuary and their aim to expand their "halo" of invasive plant control around their fenced area.

- Project De-Vine was recognised by becoming a finalist in the Ministry of the Environment awards – Community Leadership category. Chris Rowse and his wife attended a gala dinner at the Beehive with the Ministers of the Environment and Conservation officiating. This was a great chance to meet others involved in similar work and raise the profile of our organisation.



### Climbing asparagus:

**We have left this information in from the previous Newsletters 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. A TDC Biosecurity staff member identified the probable source at the bottom of one garden and a local resident has been dealing with outlying plants.

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 on in the last two plus years and thousands of plants killed.

In Wainui, we are trying to control all CA plants found on the EAST side. There is a large infestation on the WEST side. Whilst we do not have funding to deal with this plant around all of Golden Bay, we do urge those with it on their properties to try and kill it. The birds like the orange/red berries and will move the long lasting seed quite a way. You can contact us for advice on control methods. It will only get worse!

- **Project Mohua** was started by our volunteer staff in 2014. 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 to create a “mainland island”, between ATNP & Kahurangi National Park (being investigated for World Heritage Status): **Weedbusting** (Project De-Vine), **Riparian planting** (StreamCare), **Trapping groups** & **Bird monitoring & habitat enhancement groups**. The website [www.projectmohua.org.nz](http://www.projectmohua.org.nz), is still being developed and covers the work of all groups. This will be expanded a lot in the next 6 months with recent funding.
- Project Mohua federation projects have had a big boost for five months last summer with the internship of a University student from Germany. Steffi has been helping with trapping, bird monitoring and planting. She was given the tasks of producing GPS maps of Riparian plantings and trapping locations, as well as doing write ups of the various groups to place on the website. Links to these are available on our website: [www.projectmohua.org.nz](http://www.projectmohua.org.nz). **Mangarakau Swamp** volunteers appreciated Steffi's help



to record data. She was very pleased to assist with the bird programme there, monitoring Bitterns, Fernbirds and Spotless Crakes. She was also posting on facebook: [project mohua](#). We have another student confirmed to arrive next spring.

- We send out a newsletter yearly to all involved. Updates during the year will be available on the **Project Mohua federation** website [www.projectmohua.org.nz](http://www.projectmohua.org.nz) Our logo has been created by Dean Raybould for Project Mohua.
- We receive support from Manawhenua ki Mohua through Onetahua Marae, our Golden Bay iwi, and the Nelson Marlborough Conservation Board.
- **You can meet us at our office in Takaka by appointment and can answer any queries.**



**Project De-Vine has grown very fast and we hope that the continuing support from TDC, DOC, our funding partners, Project Janszoon and Fonterra and various sponsors 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. We can put you on our list for helping with pest vine control or planting and other activities. 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 publishing our pest vine and trapping numbers alongside the rainfall figures on a monthly basis.**

**For more information contact:**

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**Or see our website [www.projectmohua.org.nz](http://www.projectmohua.org.nz) for the latest updates, volunteering and other links and data. Our facebook page has been restarted with some postings recently: [project de vine golden bay](#)**



**Best wishes and Happy De-Vining from all the team at Project De-Vine**

