

## COMMUNITY SEED BANK

### *To Establish a Community Based Seed Bank for:*

- Community Revegetation Projects.
- Urban Amenity Planting.
- Erosion, Reclamation, Soil stabilisation, Farm trees etc.
- Community Education.
- Provide an accessible database of the local flora.

### *Provide Training in:*

- Native Plant Identification.
- Native Seed collection and cleaning techniques.
- Native Seed Propagation.
- Planting.
- Seed storage Techniques.
- Seed Data Base Use.



Workshops are planned for mid November. However, if you are interested in starting a seed collection now - seed collection tools and propagation materials are now available at 'The Lab'.

Any interested group or individual is most welcome to take advantage of these resources as well as the expertise of experienced seed collectors.

You are encouraged to organise a field day for your area. The project will provide tools, printed material and training.

The Capricorn Seed Bank is a valuable community resource (yours) that provides seed and valuable knowledge on plants for your project. The only cost to you is your participation.

Contact details are at the top of this letter.  
Ian Denley



## ORIGINAL AIMS OF THE SEED BANK

Create seed bank to store seed.  
Educate volunteers in seed collection  
Collect information on seed species characteristics.  
Distribute information on propagation trials.  
Document results of project  
Maintain the seed bank and data base.



### Seed Collecting

Why should we bother collect seeds? A seed collector looking for a plant with ripe seed has to plough through bushland dragging heavy tools, often climb trees and generally risk life and limb, the atmosphere is usually hot and insect ridden. Many people would say that if we can buy native plants from a commercial nursery we should be content with that. On the other hand, ploughing through the bush gives you a chance to observe wonderful Australian flora and fauna.

The main reason however is that collecting local seed means that we can put local strains of plants back into the bush and in so doing protect local biodiversity. As population increases so does the need for development and infrastructure. That in turn eats into native habitat and at the same time introduced species push out native plants.

Once the initial survey and study work of Rem Veg was completed, the next step was to formulate strategies and work out how they could be implemented. Part of the future planning was the selection of the five management and monitoring sites where we would not only write management plans but carry out the revegetation of parts of the areas.

When the idea of collecting seed and growing plants for the Rem Veg projects was first discussed there seemed to be so many problems. The first of which was, as usual, money!! This problem was solved with a grant from Natural Heritage Trust. The grant money enabled the group to employ a co-ordinator, buy tools including a microscope, storage containers and a small refrigerator.

Then the practical and physical problems had to be addressed. The seeds would be stored on shelves in the demountable building that held our office and in a small refrigerator bought with grant money. It was thought at first that volunteers would have to set up propagation facilities in their yards and part of the early training was slanted in this direction.

The coordinator made up a training package that drew together information on seed collecting and plant propagation not only from his own studies but also from The Department of Natural Resources CSIRO, Greening Australia and the Society for Growing Australian Plants. Small workshops were staged over the next few weeks and we were off



### Seed Workshop

The collection of seeds is the first step and often the most enjoyable. The next step is the cleaning and drying process which can be labour intensive, painstaking and at times very frustrating.

There are a number of methods used to prepare seeds for storage. These range from simply picking out leaves and twigs and allowing capsules to dry then sieving to remove fine dust, such as for eucalypts. Other species however might require having their fleshy outer coat removed before drying and storing. This can be to minimise micro-organism development and in some instances the pulp must be removed because it is known to inhibit germination. Removing a fleshy coat may sound easy but sometimes it is necessary to try different soaking solutions in order to replicate the cleaning process that occurs in a bird or animal's digestive system

Preparing seeds for storage can mean that a volunteer's experience can range from humdrum through messy to explosive depending on what plant they are dealing with. We lead an exciting life sometimes!!



Examples of fruit



Ingenious drying racks



<<< Dianella

Grevillea>>>



## Seed Collecting for non botanists

- 1 Collect seeds number collecting bag
- 2 Collect sample of plant that seeds are from add same number as seeds

FOR EACH SAMPLE FILL DETAILS IN FORM BELOW

DATE COLLECTED	
WHERE COLLECTED	
MAP COORDINATES IF KNOWN	
SEED AND SAMPLE NUMBER	
No OF PLANTS COLLECTED FROM	
TYPE OF PLANT (CIRCLE)	TREE   SHRUB   VINE   GROUND COVER   GRASS
ABUNDANCE OF PLANT AT SITE	
DESCRIPTION OF PLANT, GROWTH HABIT AND BARK	
COMMUNITY TYPE (CIRCLE)	DUNE   BEACH SWAMP   HILL SLOPE   CREEK RAIN FOREST   WOODLAND
COLLECTORS NAME	

<u>COMMENTS</u> IF NEEDED ON ANY SPECIAL FEATURES OF PLANTS OR PLACE COLLECTED
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### REMEMBER

Ask permission of the proper person or authority first

Do not damage vegetation inappropriately

Wear appropriate clothing, gloves and foot wear

Take a first aid kit

Take insect repellent and sun screen

Carry water

**Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back**

When the Community Seed Bank was started in n 1998 the original aims were to train volunteers to collect, clean and store seed, to collect information and grow plants for Rem Veg Projects

The availability of local provenance seed however meant that other local groups asked if it was possible for us to propagate plants for them, they then applied for grants in order to undertake their own revegetation projects.

Because of this interest, with the help of Livingstone Shire Council, the Community Nursery was born

In 1999 there were 13 seed species in the seed bank in 2011 that has increased to over 200 and the nursery now supplies local provenance plants to Environment Groups, Government departments, University of Central Queensland, Shire and Regional Councils, Schools Churches and Youth Groups, and Developers and Landscaping firms.

The message we constantly emphasise is that it is imperative that we each protect the biodiversity of our local species and habitats by replacing as many local species whenever and wherever we can.

In 2005 Rem Veg volunteers assisted the Nursery supervisor in the “Seeds for Life” programme. The Millennium Seed Bank Project This project was an international collaborative plant conservation initiative that aims to safeguard at least 24,000 plant species from around the globe against extinction. It is staffed by the Seed Conservation Department of The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in the UK.

Seeds collected were also used in research undertaken by the University of Queensland and the Royal Botanical Gardens. Major themes of research included seed dormancy, germination, storage and application of seed research to revegetation practice.

Why did they want to collect seed from round the world? For many of the same reasons that we did but on a larger scale:-

- To preserve endangered, threatened or vulnerable species at the local, regional or international scale

- To collect and preserve endemic species native to an area

- To collect and preserve for the future species valued and used by people

As in the Millennium Seed Bank we think it vitally important to collect and store seeds now so that in the future local provenance seeds are available to propagate plants for revegetation projects and gardens. The only difference is that while we plan to keep seed for up to 10 years they plan for at least 100 years

The Community Seedbank and Community Nursery hope to preserve our natural heritage by supplying local species, adapted to the local environment and able to provide appropriate food and habitat for our native wildlife.

As with money, seeds are deposited in the bank and later withdrawn. To increase the amount and variety of native seeds held in store we are always looking for people to contribute to our savings account.