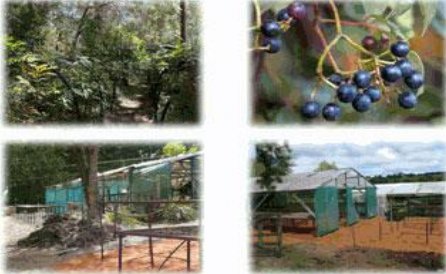


Our History

Are you interested in local Native Plants?

Enjoy propagating, seed collecting or nursery work?



The Dorrigo Showground Nursery is being refurbished.

A local Landcare project is looking for volunteers who enjoy working with soil, seeds and growing local species.

Experience is appreciated, but everyone is welcome!

Contact Annie

Dundurrabin Landcare Group.

Ph: 66571189 or email rdi3@bigpond.com

Dorrigo Community Nursery began as a small landcare group project in 2017, instigated by Annie Stanton and a small group of volunteer members.

(See [Acknowledgments](#))

Dandarrga Landcare Native Nursery was established on the site of an abandoned Greening Australia nursery on the showgrounds at Dorrigo. The Dorrigo Showground Trust had begun the initial renovations, earlier in the year, but there was still plenty to do.



A small team of hard-working volunteers held several **working bees in 2017** to refurbish one shadehouse and renovate the kitchen, common area and part of the grounds. Most of the initial work made use of recycled timber and locally donated skills and tools.

We seemed to have just the right mix of skills and talents to get the job done, and though we worked hard, we also had a lot of fun.



Funding from Regional Australia Bank in Armidale, Dorrigo Environment Watch and some generous donations from Dandarrga Landcare Group members made this possible, and allowed us to lease part of the nursery site, begin propagating, and purchase equipment for landcare work, such as two tree pullers for non-chemical control of the ubiquitous small-leaved privet.



Thanks to a small grant from Bellingen Shire's Environmental Community Levy Grant, pots, trays and propagation supplies were acquired, and the nursery opened for business in December 2017. In the first three weeks of operation we propagated 20 local rainforest species from locally collected seed and seedlings.

Barry Hicks, who had established private nurseries at Billy's Creek and Mt Hyland, was an invaluable mentor, passing on his knowledge of local endemic species, propagation techniques and seed collection.



Agreements with ETC Dorrigo and Centrelink allowed us to provide voluntary and Work for the Dole activities. Activities included composting-making, propagating and seed processing, and further renovating, gardening and landscaping at the nursery.

Landcare regen sites were begun, clearing privet and replanting at Dundurrabin Community Centre, Bielsdown River and Deep Creek in Dorrigo, and on private land near Dundurrabin.

In the following year, significant community support for our landcare projects and events came from Clarence and Bellinger Landcare, the Showground Trust, Dorrigo Hardware, Stan Cork Machinery, the Dorrigo Seedsavers and a great team of volunteer members and supporters who donated equipment, material, plants and labour.



A grant from the Wettenhall Foundation in 2019 funded a laptop and video camera to make short videos, maintain records, develop training materials, and publish species information. It also enabled us to hire audio-visual equipment and venues in order to host workshops and presentations by local experts such as Dr Jacky Williams and ecologist Mark Graham.

Once established, **Dandarrga Landcare** began receiving emails, calls and visits from

landowners with offers to visit areas where local species were in seed, with seed donations, with plant specimens they wanted identified, and with encouragement and support



We began to learn about our local flora, and visited local sites to identify species and collect seed. We aimed to monitor, record and share data about our local native flora species, and show how they fit into the web of life in our region. Barry Hicks conducted free **Rainforest ID sessions** on Fridays at the nursery. We developed workshop material and species labels, sent out newsletters to our members, and published our data online on the [NSW Landcare Gateway](#), and on a [Facebook page](#).

Market stalls at our local markets, festivals and agricultural show generated interest and fruitful connections for further collaboration with native plant nurseries, plant experts, landowners and local gardeners.



We constructed a propagation tunnel on site, and made a [Youtube video](#) on the process. An old wooden **barrow** was rejuvenated and stocked with Rainforest Trees for sale at the **Dorrigo Rainforest Centre**. **Rainwater tanks** were installed, and irrigation to four shadehouses, as the drought and local water restrictions threatened to end our progress.

In late 2019, the terrible local fires hit our community. Over 3,300 trees (two cattle truckloads), survivors of the fire at Barry's nursery at Blue Rock Road, were transported,

re-potted and revived at the nursery, with the help of the local community and Dandarrga Landcare members.

The 19th Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival went ahead despite the crisis. We held a kids' workshop on composting paper and propagating seedlings, well attended by festival goers, with everyone participating in building a compost heap. The kids took away a gift paper cup with local River tea tree seedlings they planted themselves.



The Festival volunteers delivered their compostables to the nursery - food waste, paper cups, plates and bamboo forks from 3,000 or more visitors. With an early start, several volunteers coordinated the chipping, safe storing, burying and initial composting of the total load before midday.

Floods and then a global pandemic followed. Nadia and Annie kept the Nursery open, following covid regulations to the letter, providing a safe social hub and, when fear of food shortages loomed, many buckets of mushroom compost and seed packets to local gardeners.

Dandarrga Landcare regen sites were added at Rocky Creek, The Blicks River, Dangar Falls and the Bielsdown River through town. The Bielsdown River Care Project is in its third year, and has opened up the river through Dorrigo, and involved local residents in **riparian habitat restoration workshops**.

A shelter belt has been planted at the Labyrinth at Dangar Falls, and a community planting of 100 trees in collaboration with Bellinger Shire Council, upriver of the falls.

Weed control and planting is ongoing at Dangar Falls.

The Bielsdown River Walk, a popular walking track, was begun on Crown Land in 2020,

and is now managed under license. **Nest boxes for local wildlife**, built by Glen Little, were installed along the river.



Mentoring and seed is still provided by **Dorrigo Mountain Top Landcare Group**, a landcare initiative begun 40 years ago by Ruth and Rod Holmes and their neighbours on the eastern Dorrigo escarpment. We collect and propagate seed from many regions on the Dorrigo Plateau, and surrounding area.

Bill Peel and Barry Hicks conducted **landcare site consultations** for local landholders, and a [Native Seed Calendar](#) was developed for our native seed collectors. Site consultations are shared with Dandarrga Landcare to add to our developing knowledge of local flora.



Dorrigo Seed Savers, a local group that had been established for eight years to disseminate heritage and non-hybrid food seed, approached us to take over the administration in 2019. Weekly sessions on seed saving are still held on Wednesdays at the nursery. Seed was available at the Dorrigo library, and is now for sale at the nursery and at local Dorrigo markets. 'What to plant When' calendars and seedlings are also for

sale. Dorrigo Seed Savers has a [Facebook page](#) and a [Facebook Group](#) to share information and create a community of seed lovers.



The nursery lease area was expanded in 2020, and the Dorrigo Seed Savers gardens now produce abundant food, herbs, flowers and seed on site. **Free food Fridays** provide fresh, foraged and donated produce.

The Dandarrga Landcare and Dorrigo Seed Savers amalgamated in 2021 under the **incorporated not-for-profit** banner of **Dorrigo Community Nursery Inc.** We now have a brochure, new signage, a business card, and a new website under development. We have a combined membership of over 200 people.

Our newest project is the **Dorrigo Community Garden**, currently being established on an area below the nursery site, under an extended lease from the Showground Management Committee.

We are also collaborating with the **Dorrigo Local Aboriginal Land Council** on their local regen sites, and on a proposed community garden and bush tucker walk along the west bank of the Bielsdown River.

Throughout our rapid expansion in these early years, **a group of dedicated people** on the committee and in the core group of volunteers donated their time and energy to manage our administration, funds, correspondence, grant applications and acquittals, online media, promotions, events, workshops, parties and celebrations, markets, and volunteer activities.



The volunteer work of administration, bush regeneration and on site garden and nursery work continues, with some of the original people and a core group of new and hardworking volunteers, bringing new skills and talents.

Acknowledgements:

Early establishment years: Annie Stanton, John Wieruzsewski, Nadia Camatta, Barry Hicks, Matt Forde, Peter Murphy, Evelyn Hirsch, Shakti Mudra, Di Smedley, 'Spud', Jeanette Jones, Phil Arundell, Rick Deason, John Newstead, Susan Allom, Reg Stanford, Eleanor Sharman, Max Burnett, Les Bravery, Rhona Verrall and Barry Hunt, Des Peters, Iain White, Ronny Cox, Keith Holmes, Ruth and Rod Holmes

Later years: Annie, Nadia, Peter, Evelyn, John Newstead, Chris Valentine, Jeanette Jones, Rhona Verrall and Barry Hunt, Barry Muche, Leela O'Callaghan, Bridget Rees, Carol Smith, Rebecca Doblo, Lyn Livingstone, Ellie Fruitrich, Stephen Thiering, Sally Hunter, Lynda Keft, Joanna Dadd, Piers Hammick, Les Bravery, Rohan Chiswell, Kate Smith, Lyndy, Susan Atwood, Andrew Beasely, Phil Johnson, Greg Manski, Graham Pryor, Phil and Julie Hyland, Marilyn Wall, Peter Vlatko, Colin Hutton, Genevieve Marende, Joanne Parfett, Miream Turner.

Many more names could be added here, for the part-timers who drop in to help or attend working bees on the regen sites. We welcome all volunteers.