

From the editor

PAUL ADAM

This issue contains a number of articles arising from presentations at the very successful National Seed Science Forum held at Mt Annan in March 2016 by the Australian Seed Bank Partnership.

Seeds are remarkable structures with three major functions – dispersal, survival and production of the next generation. Seeds of agricultural crops sustain both humans and many of our livestock. Seed biology has been a focus for agricultural research for decades, both for production and to understand many aspects of the ecology of agricultural weeds. It is only more recently that there has been growth in interest, and, importantly funding, for studying seed ecology of native species – both for the conservation of rare species and the restoration of ecological communities and the revegetation of former mining and industrial land. The articles in this issue cover a broad range of topics.

In the Australian environment fire is one of the most important factors affecting seed ecology and several articles cover aspects of recent research on the effects of fire. Alexandra Carthey and Michelle Leishman discuss fire and smoke as cues for germination, while Berin Mackenzie and colleagues investigate fire and germination in the Rutaceae, and Ganesha Liyanage and Mark Ooi report on the different germination responses of two members of the Fabaceae. Not all of Australian ecosystems are fire prone, and Karen Sommerville and colleagues discuss rainforest species which have previously been regarded as ‘difficult’ to regenerate because of ‘unstorable’ seeds. Alice Quarmby takes us to semi-arid NSW and discusses the importance of correct seed handling procedures in the regeneration of large post mining sites.

There are some species with seed production that is small and/or unreliable and, for these, conservation cannot rely on establishment of new seedlings. Joe McAuliffe, David Taylor and Keith McDougall discuss one such species – *Pomaderris delicata*. It is possible to propagate this very rare and declining species vegetatively and produce large numbers of new plants for use in replanting in the bush.

The News from the Australian Seedbank Partnership in this issue is from Neville Walsh, Megan Hirst and Andre Messina and discusses the biology of a small member of

the family Brassicaceae – *Ballantinia antipoda*. The family contains many crop species, and some of the world’s worst agricultural weeds, but also many herbaceous species with declining natural populations which are formally recognised as threatened. Plants in this category can decline towards extinction almost unnoticed, so it is good to learn of a success story where conservation actions have been taken before it was too late.

Stackhousia subterranea is a threatened species for which determining population size is difficult, because stems can arise from underground structures so that apparently discrete stems may belong to the same individual. Mark Wapstra and Lorilee Yeates describe a study of this species which examined underground architecture and permitted estimates of population size.

Since the last issue it was a great pleasure to attend the launch of the National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia prepared by the Standards Reference Group of the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) at a symposium in Sydney at which ANPC was one of the hosting organisations. It was a very well attended event, with excellent and stimulating presentations. The document is available online in the journal *Restoration Ecology* (as Vol 24, no S1, pp. s4–s32. June 2016) and can be downloaded here <http://www.seraustralasia.com/standards/contents.html>

Regular items include the Research Roundup, book reviews, a member profile (most appropriately in this issue of Anne Cochrane, who is a leading proponent of the Australian Seedbank Partnership), workshop reports and news.

Spring is very much in the air in southern states, after what, in many regions, has been a wet winter. Perhaps too wet in some areas. Growing conditions should be excellent, promising an exciting start to the field season. We are also anticipating a fruitful ANPC Conference in Melbourne. The organising committee have arranged what should be a very rewarding programme – and the next few issues of APC will include articles arising from Conference presentations.



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