

## Coral Berry Crusaders Continue

The battle against Coral Berry in 100 Acre Reserve wages on as our team of hard-working volunteers continues to gear up week after week. The highly invasive weed, Coral Berry, has been present in the reserve for at least the past 30 years and there have been various groups and individuals take on the task of weeding it out in that time. This particular effort by the Flora & Fauna Society, in conjunction with Norfolk Island Regional Council is proving to be highly successful and long lasting, with almost the entire reserve being swept over in 8 months.

*Rivina humilis*, commonly known as Coral Berry, is an invasive understory plant that blankets the forest floor and competes with native species for light, water and nutrients. Originating in Central and South America, it is now well established throughout Australia, South-east Asia and the Pacific, including Norfolk Island. Each plant can reach up to 1m in height, and during the Summer months



Ally Nance, Jerry Cook and Mark Hallam planting some native trees.

their usual attractive, dark green foliage is interspersed with elongated clusters of bright red berries which are carried away by birds, on boots or simply lay where they drop.

During the past 8 months, volunteers have contributed 1219 hours to the Coral Berry cause and covered approximately 95% of the affected areas. To provide a bit of context to the invaluable efforts of these wonderful people: if NIRC were to contract out this weed control it would have by now taken 9 months of full time employment to achieve the same results that have been accomplished in 8 months of 3.5hrs/week of enjoyable and productive work.

One benefit of Norfolk's recent dry conditions has been the slow regrowth of the next seedlings, which will hopefully allow us to finish the last of the remaining sweep, and make a start on the second, before they're given a chance to thrive when the rains come.

The summer months in Hundred Acres saw some beautiful activity. The White terns and White-capped Noddies returned and we were able to watch them performing their courtship rituals, selecting nest sites and flying home with beaks full of fresh fish. We were even lucky enough to help a few gorgeous fluffy terns back up onto their perches in the pines after some failed flight attempts or strong winds. It's been lovely keeping an eye out for any new chicks as we all emerge from deep within the valleys and gather in the central clearing for a beautiful spread of fresh produce and coffee put on by Liz Hewson for morning tea break.



Not only have we been pulling weeds, we've also been planting a few native trees as well. Christmas time saw us planting a small number of Oleander (*Pittosporum bracteolatum*), Popwood (*Myoporum obscurum*) and Melky Tree (*Excoecaria agallocha*) from the nursery, and some Ti (*Cordyline obtecta*), kindly propagated and donated by Jerry Cook.

Over the school holidays we were lucky enough to have the addition of lots of children digging in and doing their bit to conserve Norfolk's unique biodiversity. They took great pleasure in helping the tern chicks and monitoring their progress each week. One particular week they even counted all of the resident nesting tropic birds, totalling approximately 20 pairs! We also had the children from the NI Connect Holiday program join us for a couple of hours towards the end of the school break.



Will Jones and the tern chick he saved  
(Photo cr. Lianne Jones)

None of this program would be possible without the support



Will Jones and Lilli King putting a tern chick out of harms way (Photo cr. Lianne Jones)

of the Norfolk Island Regional Council, a big thankyou to Jim Castles and Phil Reid (*past and present Manager of Planning and Environment*). Also thankyou to the Flora & Fauna Society, Judith Andersen in particular for her hard work and for never failing to crack the whip. To Jerry for his Cordylines, to the kids who chose to spend their holidays helping us protect Norfolk and her environment, and to the NI Connect staff and children from the holiday program for joining in as well. Thankyou to Liz for always filling our bellies and of course, last but definitely not least, thankyou to our Norfolk Island Conservation Volunteers, for your ongoing time, hard work and passion.

All are welcome, visitors and locals like, to come and join in our weekly weeding sessions. We meet every Wednesday morning between 9 and 12.30. Even if you can only give 15 minutes, it makes a world of difference.

**Lilli-Unna King**

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

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