



## Kira, Mary & Zac - A seedbank for endangered native mint

### What was your goal and what did you achieve?

Our project was to create a seed bank of an endangered mint species and we're working with the Botanical Gardens to create the seed bank because they're an endangered species – *Mentha satureioides*- native creeping mint.

The three of us worked together and the main people we involved were the Urrbrae Plant Club.

We're going to plant them in a couple of weeks because it needs to be warm for them, so they'll soak the seeds, put them in pots, grow them, then we'll put them into a garden on the Urrbrae Farm and then hopefully they'll be successful.

We can then collect the seeds and plant more seeds and eventually grow lots of them. It's a creeping plant so because of grazing it's endangered.

We haven't done too much promotion yet. There are a few teachers that have been involved – Ms Breeding is our Wetlands Coordinator, and Mr Anderson, the leader of the Plant Club – then the people in the Plant Club, Lauren is the student leader and I spoke to her a bit about planting and what would be the best time. We're still planning to do some posters and flyers to put around.

The plan is to eventually plant them off-site. We've previously done with this a different plant, the native twining pea, and that's very successful – we're planning to make a whole pasture crop out of it as a trial on the Farm so hopefully that will work. We had to research different types of native plants and where they originally were, so we know what sort of plants will surround it, to tell what type of animals lived there, why it became endangered in the first place. With the glycine pea, to grow the seed we had to put them in a cup of hot water, or room temperature but you need to double the time, and wait until they've soaked up the water a bit.

## Biggest success?

Getting the seeds in the first place I reckon because we met with someone from the Waite Campus and that's where we got the seed. Mary met with them one lunch time so that's the first big step - actually getting the seeds.

## Next steps?

Next we need to plant the seeds and keep them growing and then it's basically an ongoing thing - collect the seeds - we don't have a timeframe at the moment, until we have enough seeds. If it's successful we can think of other projects or other students might want to do trials. Once we have enough seed we should be able to distribute it as well once we've had a few cycles.

## Biggest challenge?

There haven't really been many challenges, we're pretty lucky because pretty much all the teachers are on our side and they're willing to help us and the project was given to us to do so there haven't been many challenges at all. Because the school has already been given a native species and it has been really successful, they trust us so it honestly wasn't too hard.

## What did you enjoy most?

I've enjoyed collecting all these weeds to compare with the native plants and to show how deteriorated the environment is.

Having the seeds and having the opportunity to plant them because there wouldn't be as many if we didn't have the seed bank. So we know it's secure and there'll always be more that we can plant if something goes wrong with the first batch of plants, such as if they get killed off by frost or something, so it really pleases me to know that we've secured that species.

Being able to work on a new project and learn new things has been good as well.

## Your advice to other students?

You can just keep persisting, trying to get people involved if you can, like anyone that can help is good, try and be professional about it - if you're acting silly then they're not going to trust you as much.

*This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Kira, Mary and Zac's words and opinions.*