

## In My Garden

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### Pop-Ups

Since wonderful rain broke that oh-so-long drought, our gardens have been blessed by lots of plants popping up. At Tuross, one of the main gains has been our gutter goodies. Years ago, I had aluminium gutter guard installed in an unconventional way – done in a way to make it unobtrusive. This was one idea that didn't work. The result was that a nice layer of compost built up within the gutters, under the gutter guard. And in that compost, seeds germinated occasionally.

Nothing much happened during the drought, because the composted soil just dried out. But when the rains came, so did the baby plants. Recently we had the gutter guard replaced by steel guard (also unobtrusive, but promising to be more guarding, less seed-raising). And before the gutter guard was replaced, I went up a ladder and removed a ton of seedlings from the gutter along our lower roof.

One seedling is obviously a **Leptospermum**. There is a big plant of this nearby – itself a pop-up from Queanbeyan. It pulls in the butterflies big time. Not knowing the species, we call it **Leptospermum 'Butterfly'**. Also in the gutter were many seedlings of what look to me like casuarinas. Hoping they are just that, I've planted them out at Queanbeyan where I have plenty of room for whatever size they turn into (big, I hope, and Black-Cocky-attracting too). The only **Casuarinas** I planted at Tuross are **Allocasuarina verticillata**, and the survivors all turned out to be males, so the pop-ups can't be their offspring. It will be interesting to see what these seedlings turn into. Norfolk Island Pines, **Araucaria heterophylla**, frequently come up in our garden there but none have ever come up in our gutters - probably the seeds are too big. Thank goodness.



At Queanbeyan, there are many new plants of what I think is **Solanum cinereum**, pictured. This forms a small shrub. It has fruit the size of cherry tomatoes; these might be attractive to birds (although they are said to be poisonous to stock). The fruit of **S. linearifolium**, which also occasionally pops up there, is certainly popular with birds, as are the fruit of **S. aviculare**, which has occasionally come up at Tuross (where it's only ever survived for a few years). The only problem I have with **S. cinereum** is that it has fierce prickles, ready and willing to attack, so it will have to be removed or kept cut back from beside tracks. (The prickles are the brown things sticking up from the leaves in the photo. Copious, aren't they?)

I've raised **S. linearifolium** by striking cuttings in water, and I had several doing nicely at Tuross before the bushfires closed the Kings Highway, keeping us away; they didn't survive our prolonged absence. I'm finding it interesting to see what comes up at both places now the ground is moist (a rare event on our Queanbeyan land).

