



Bungalook News

Newsletter of the

Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

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Bungalook under COVID 19



Minimum volunteers and customers, while orders await collection.

Never could we have believed what affect these past three months would have had on this world. Bungalook, along with Greenlink Box Hill and many other community nurseries such as ours have been allowed by Government authorities to operate, but with very strict constraints including minimum staff. Thank you to all volunteers who have respected this situation. Unfortunately, many orders, particularly for Whitehorse Council Advisory Committees, have been either cancelled, or at least postponed. Thankfully, those with grants have been advised that extensions will be granted.

In the meantime, a couple of large requests allowed us to provide thousands of plants from our stock of more than 20,000 plants. Stock that had been so enthusiastically propagated by Bungalook volunteers over the past summer.

With the permission of the office bearers and a couple of key volunteers, Darebin Council took 4,500 for a project enabling some of its parks staff to remain employed. This was a huge commitment by just five volunteers over a two-week period who cleaned and packed stock ready for pick up. Greenlink was also able to supply 1,500 for that same order – maintaining our cooperative relationship as ever.

It is understood that we are all missing the friendship. Maintaining the nursery with minimum staff will remain for now with just a couple of extras coming on occasions. Unfortunately, one or two prospective volunteers have been asked to wait, all walks have been postponed, The Great Big Morning Tea has been cancelled, as has National Tree Day. What a Christmas Party we may be able to anticipate!!

In the meantime, home gardeners are still welcome, abiding by the stipulated Health Department requirements.



Revised Government restrictions that came into effect on 12 May have enabled the Whitehorse Council Risk Assessment team to ease constraints on working bees conducted by advisory committees working in bushland parks – BUT only slightly. Please be patient.

Volunteer hours	February 299.25,	March 225.25,	April 169.25	Total	693.75
Production	February 637	March 278	April 227	Total	1,142

A great effort given the times.

Margaret Witherspoon 28 May 2020

Since COVID19 shut down many people have not only spent time outside weeding and planting here and there but have also continued with gardens that have had massive make-overs in the past couple of years.

In an effort to maintain contact with our volunteers, two editions of a newsletter, 'Keeping in Touch,' have been circulated. In the first, the garden of Anne and Ian Payne was featured. Below is Anne's story.



What an eerie state we are all experiencing.

The wonderful rainfall we have been experiencing has given Blackburn Lake a good flushing and many of the tracks have been covered with water.

Lots of people on walks and chatting with good distancing, is great to see.

The water birds are quite prolific too.

Fungi everywhere, and huge.

No doubt Cootamundra and Wurundjeri Walk are the same.

I thought you might be interested in our back-garden renovation to make it a much more wildlife habitat. Ben Crisfield-Smith worked with us to design the area

and we were very impressed with him and his design. He chose most of the plants and we paid him to help us place them. Ian & I then did the planting. With Amanda's handy auger!!

We began our garden work at 81 Central Rd in late July & discovered after the removal of the concrete paths, etc. that the neighbour's stormwater had been leaking into our property for a couple of years and until that was fixed, we couldn't move in the area. It was like a floating ground. The concrete had been holding it in the corner and when that was removed (with great difficulty for the digger!) it just spread out over the yard. So, 2 months went by before we were able to get the area dry enough to continue.

The work finished end of October.

Our plants from both Bungalook and Greenlink, in our newly made water garden at our place, have just flourished. We did plant rather late in November but planted well and looked after them which has paid off in spades. The lythrum was gorgeous and the bulbine, stylidium, kennedia & water plants amongst all the other 240 odd tube stock have been great. I think we lost 8 -10 plants in all.

A pair of Pacific Black ducks nested in a clump of thick poas, grevillea and correas, etc. and their 3 ducklings enjoyed the water for about 2 weeks before disappearing to a better place!

We have lots of photos, but these might give you an idea of the garden.



The next feature comes from Doug and Jenny Scott

The house in Park Road, Mt. Waverley, was purchased at the beginning of 2014. As far as the garden was concerned, it was worse than a blank slate, overgrown with weeds and blessed (cursed) with an overabundance of lilypillies. The front garden was quickly revamped but the rear garden had to wait for certain work which would have destroyed the rear garden. This work was completed at the start of 2019 and the creation of the rear garden could begin.

The site is blessed with a good fall towards the rear corner of the block which adjoins Damper Creek Reserve. This fall invited the creation of a watercourse diagonally across the rear of the block which feeds into a pond at the back corner. Damper Creek was the inspiration, especially the lining of the creek with basalt boulders. A load of boulders was subsequently delivered which formed the basis of the landscaping.

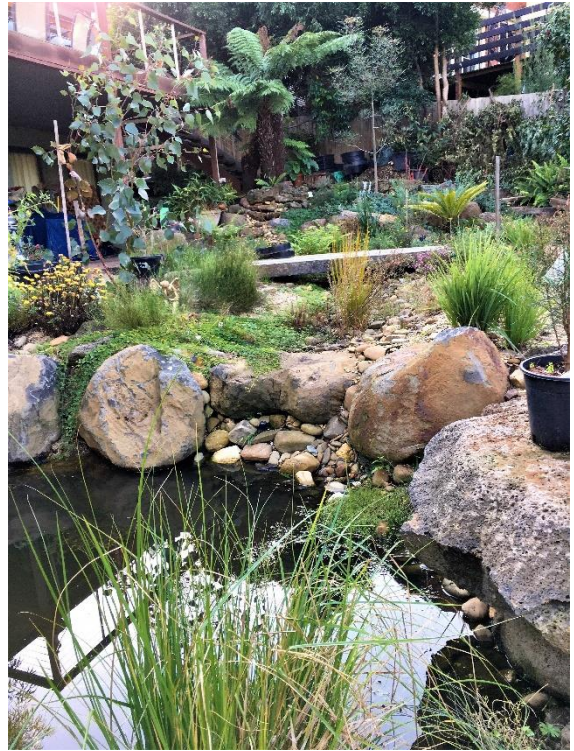
The rocks were far too large to be moved by hand and we were fortunate enough to gain access through the reserve for an excavator and bobcat. The basic formation of the landscaping was done professionally with the watercourse and pond lined with a rubber liner.

A pump recirculates the water from the pond to a small waterfall located at the foot of mature tree ferns. Stormwater from the house runs into the pond.

Once the landscaping was complete the fun could begin. Bungalook was an important source of plants for the garden and the knowledge gained as a volunteer was invaluable.

I'm sorry to admit that this is not a purely indigenous garden. Although many plants came from Bungalook, Greenlink and Knox, we have also sourced plants from Kuranga, Banksia, Pinewood and even K-mart. With over a year for establishment, we can reflect on what has worked particularly well. The creek bed is now well populated with Nardoo, *Rununculus inundatus*, *Solenogyne*, *Adiantum*, *Pteris tremula*, *Viola hederacea* and *Veronica gracilis*. The rear boundary adjoins the reserve and (with a few exceptions) plants are carefully chosen to ensure any seeds which escape into the reserve are of local provenance. The back boundary is quite densely populated with *Microlaena*, *Lomandra*, *Goodia*, *Correa*, *Hardenbergia*, *Dianella* and various wallaby grasses.

Particular successes include a *Kennedia prostrata* which cascades over a large rock to the pond and *Pelargonium australe* which is prolifically self-seeding throughout the garden. Problem plants include the *Persicaria* which rapidly overran the pond and various indigenous grasses which are sprouting with alarming frequency.



This garden has been an adventure which is destined to reveal many surprises as it matures.

Quiet Times.

While many have taken time to spend in the garden or take a walk in the park, our wildlife seems to have come closer when times have been quieter.



Left: Cheeky young Butcher Bird in a garden close to a back door.

Right: Sugar gliders have been spotted in one of our local parks.

The sugar glider is a small, omnivorous, arboreal, and nocturnal gliding possum belonging to the marsupial infraclass. The common name refers to its preference for sugary foods such as sap and nectar and its ability to glide through the air.



Weeds

“At least the weeds are happy” – a comment from Greenlink President Robert Jones.

While Council staff and associated contractors have been working in our bushland parks, thanks to COVID19 our volunteers have been unable to participate in their regular weeding bees. Perhaps this is the time to refresh our knowledge of some of the weedy problems which can be attacked on our return.

One of the books in the Bungalook Nursery Library is ‘Bush Invaders of South-East Australia: a guide to the identification and control of environmental weeds found in South-East Australia’: Author and Editor Muyt,A.

Also available is the booklet ‘Indigenous Gardening in Whitehorse’ which has a comprehensive section on Weeds in Whitehorse with descriptions and pictures of weeds that tend to dominate. While environmental weeds cause problems in bushland reserves this also applies to gardens, thus threatening the whole balance of the remnant flora and fauna of Whitehorse.

What is an Environmental Weed?

Environmental weeds are non-indigenous (not locally native) plants that impact on indigenous vegetation. Some of the effects of environmental weeds include the following:

- Suppress and exclude indigenous vegetation
- Prevent regeneration of indigenous species
- Reduce habitat and displace native fauna
- Provide favourable conditions for introduced pest animals such as rabbits and foxes
- Disrupt ecological and physical processes such as fire regimes, hydrology and nutrient cycles
- Increase fire risk



Infestation of Panic Veldt Grass

Some weeds are also termed ‘noxious’. The definition of ‘noxious weed’, varies between states and territories. In Victoria, noxious weeds refer to those that are declared under legislation (Catchment and Land Protection Act, 1994) and impact natural areas, primary production or human health.

Under the Whitehorse [Community Local Law 2014 \(DOCX 58.27KB\)](#) a land owner or tenant cannot allow noxious weeds to grow on their property.



If noxious weeds are found, Council will direct the person responsible for the property to remove the weed and ensure it does not grow again.

*Left: Blackberry
(a declared noxious weed)*

*Right: Sweet Pittosporum
(an environmental woody weed)*



Adapted from the book ‘Invaders of South East-Australia’, Whitehorse City Council online information and publications.

There are many references about weeds in books, pamphlets and online.