

Newsletter of the
Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant
Project Inc.

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We hope you enjoy this newsletter around the theme of our marvellous local waterways. We begin as usual with our nursery report and then develop the theme through an article on Water management in Whitehorse, providing a map of the four catchment areas and the creeks and the waterways which link to tributaries eventually making their way to the bay. We show how efforts have been made not only for flood mitigation but also water purification through setting up of wetlands and raingardens along the creeks. An example in this newsletter is about the raingarden which runs beside Bungalook and the role of many volunteers in its construction. The next article introduces an ancient amphibian fossil, and then a showy local wetland plant. As in each quarterly newsletter, we feature one of the local parks and bush reserves, many which are based around waterways. In this newsletter we learn about Heatherdale Creek Parklands in an article written by a generous volunteer who for thirty or so years has put sustained effort into caring for her local environment. News from Blackburn Lake, Blackburn Creeklands and Yarran Dheran, situated on Mullum Mullum Creek, follows. The parks committees welcome you to their Clean Up Australia Day sites this weekend, gathering on Sunday March 6th, an opportunity in which everyone is especially encouraged to participate. There are some other interesting environmental snippets about plants and trees, including the recently launched Eucalypts of Whitehorse booklet and finally, we have news of our famous Facebook launch. We hope you jump on; have a look and we are waiting to see how many followers we might attract!

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Nursery report

Summer is drawing to a close and with so much quality stock on the benches we are now turning our attention to filling our orders and marketing to the wider public. Thank you to those advisory committees and groups who have placed orders for the coming planting season. After a couple of years working with restrictions in the parks, it is pleasing to see new projects being planned. Even during the hot weather home gardeners have been busy buying, planting, and caring for their gardens and nature strips. It is evident that our website is a source of information to those who come to the nursery with a knowledge of the plants they would like to add to their home environment. Many come with phone in hand ready to go!



Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood) trees have been 'dripping' with seed throughout Whitehorse.

Thank you to all with "Permits to Take Protected Flora" who have responded to our request to collect seed for the seed bank. A couple of forays to learn about our indigenous flora in situ, while giving the opportunity to actually collect, certainly proved popular. Much has now been cleaned and catalogued for autumn and spring sowings.

While we have delighted with our resident tawnies, another little critter, a young Blue Tongued Lizard, appeared basking in the sun, albeit looking a little as if he/she had been in the wars with part of a tail missing. It is hoped it grows back again, as we have been assured. Another example of providing a safe habitat,



be it for birds, lizards, frogs or butterflies. Of course, cameras captured the moment. *Photos: Michael and Doug*

As we come into autumn, work at the nursery will include sowing Asteraceae (daisy) species and concentrating on cuttings of some of the more difficult species. Some of our volunteers have great skills with this task, and others are willing to learn. Always with the aim of increasing the diversity of our stock.

Thank you to your contribution over the past three months.

| | Production | Hours |
|----------|------------|--------|
| November | 1323 | 193.25 |
| December | 1920 | 188.50 |
| January | 1216 | 222.50 |

Thank you also to Doug and Michael who have been working hard weeding and trimming the buffer garden beds, and to those who have been scrambling under the benches weeding and salvaging seedlings that grow in the gravel.

Margaret Witherspoon On behalf of the Bungalook Team. 23 February 2022

Committee meetings

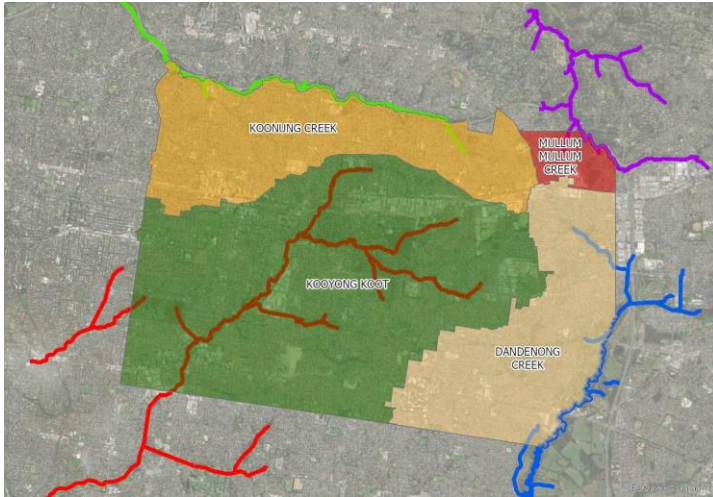
Monthly Committee meetings - open to all volunteers at the nurse

Our committee loves getting together and discussing what is happening and what needs organizing around Bungalook. In fact, we love this so much that, following on from weekly Zoom catch-up meetings started during the months of Covid isolation, we decided to have monthly rather than quarterly committee meetings! We felt that we needed more time than once every quarter to cover the wide range of organizational and practical needs that arise every week. We also want to spread the knowledge and workload from a few dedicated long-term volunteers to a broader base and are now in the process of digital capture of the knowledge of experienced volunteers as well as planning more volunteer education and marketing.

Water garden and Whitehorse waterways and water strategy

Whitehorse waterways

The City of Whitehorse straddles four catchments, Koonung Creek, Mullum Mullum Creek, Dandenong Creek and Kooyong Koot. The Council now understands “that by keeping some water in the landscape we can better support green space, decrease pollution and protect the ecological function of waterways.” There are several Integrated Water Management assets within the Whitehorse catchments all designed in part to mitigate the risk of flooding and clean stormwater through natural processes. This is not without its challenges given the urban environment sends some 85 percent of its rainwater to drainage, versus some 15 percent if the land were to be forested.



Source: Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy 2021-2040– draft. Available at [Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy](#)

We have a stormwater harvesting system at Box Hill City Oval (Bolton Park) which is designed to also reduce pollutants entering the waterway. Sparks Reserve is a retarding basin in Box Hill and there is the Heatherdale retarding basin on Purches Street. There is also a good watergarden in front of the Whitehorse Council Nunawading offices (illustrated right). The Melbourne Water owned Wurundjeri Wetlands (illustrated left) located on Fulton Road, provides a great example of constructed wetlands within a functional retarding basin.



Photo left: M.Anderson



Further east we have the Wurundjeri Creek (Fulton Road drain) with the watergarden adjacent to Bungalook nursery taking water from the Orchard Grove Reserve, as discussed and illustrated in the article below.

Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy.

Council is developing a new Integrated Water Management Strategy for Whitehorse to build urban resilience, enhance biodiversity and adapt to a changing climate.

This includes how we manage:

- Creeks, waterways and wetlands,
- Stormwater, flooding and drainage
- Irrigation of parks and gardens
- Alternative water sources

From the 1st - 21st of July, 2021 the community was asked for insights into developing and prioritising the strategy to shift towards becoming a water-sensitive city, whereby water is managed to enhance sustainability, liveability and resilience.

Feedback was sought mostly online via Council’s “Your Say Whitehorse” engagement platform and promoted through the Whitehorse news, social media and emails to community networks and council facilities.

Draft of the Strategy may be sourced from [WIWMS](#).

Wurundjeri Walk Rain Garden

This Rain Garden is located between Mirrabooka Oval, Bungalook Nursery and the Samuel Road footbridge in the eastern section of Wurundjeri Walk.

Planning for the Rain Garden, which filters storm-water flowing into Wurundjeri Creek from the northeast, first commenced in early 2007. Melbourne Water, the City of Whitehorse and the Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee were involved in the planning process and Melbourne Water was responsible for its installation.

The concept plan for the Rain Garden is different to more traditional wetland construction techniques. Being more like a 'drop-in' turf cricket pitch it is a series of ponds constructed over a sediment base containing different grades of gravel and sand. Storm-water is filtered by the indigenous plants planted in the ponds. These plants also take the bulk of the pollutants out of the water. The physical elements are allowed to settle before the water gradually (and at low velocity) passes into Wurundjeri Creek. After leaving the Rain Garden the water is much cleaner than water entering via the storm-water drain and because it leaves at much lower velocity there is a much-reduced capacity to cause creek bank erosion downstream.

After preparation in October 2007 tenders were called for the project construction in November 2007 with structural works occurring over the summer of 2007-2008.

In April 2008 the Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee in conjunction with volunteers from Bungalook Nursery organised a very successful community planting activity in conjunction with Melbourne Water and Whitehorse City Council. Around forty-five people attended the activity, with 1,900 plants planted in two of the ponds under the supervision of staff from the project contractor, Ecodynamics. A BBQ at Bungalook Nursery followed the activity.

Following the community activity, the project contractor was responsible for planting most of the plants in the ponds.

The Rain Garden has worked well since its construction and the habitat created is a wonderful addition to the park. Whitehorse Council staff and ecological consultants from Envirotechniques now manage and maintain the Rain Garden. Until recently, Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee members conducted regular water quality testing and bird surveys in the Rain Garden.

This section on Wurundjeri Walk by: M Witherspoon



Feature plant

Purple loosestrife; Lythrum salicaria

A water-loving plant, Purple loosestrife thrives in a bathtub at Bungalook and recently its bright purple plumes have been abundant, as shown in the photo. This is a perennial herb with tuberous roots which can be used as a bright border plant and grows from 0.5 – 1.5 metres.



It can be found flowering across the warmer months from September to March with crowded spikes of purple to magenta petalled flowers that are also very attractive to butterflies, hover flies and of course bees. As such it is a pretty water-loving plant that looks great in damp positions around bog gardens, rain gardens, ponds or backyard water bowls. This wetland native likes growing in moist soils or even shallow water or could be kept in a pot in a fishpond or bowl. As the plants begin to die back before winter, it's leaves also offer autumn colour. So why not consider this showy little number for your damp spots

Fossil amphibian - *Koolasuchus cleelandi*

Victoria's surprising new state fossil.

At Bungalook we plant things in the ground; in a previous life I dug them up as fossils. This is the story of one of those fossils.

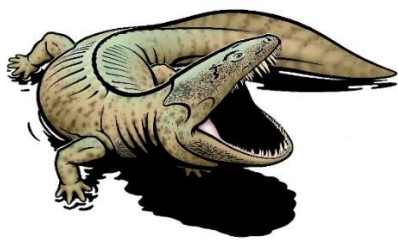
During the last lockdown (or maybe the one before) Museum Victoria announced that they were looking for a fossil as the official State Fossil Emblem. They presented five contenders for a public vote and, to cut a long story short, a fossil amphibian belonging to the Order Temnospondyli, and described in 1997 by Anne Warren (La Trobe), Tom Rich (Museum Victoria) and Pat Rich (Monash), won the vote.

Over 300 million years ago, Temnospondyli, now an extinct group, were among the first vertebrates to walk on land. Living Amphibia (frogs and salamanders) arose from an early group of Temnospondyls. Mainstream Temnospondyls continued for another 100 million years becoming larger and more diverse with time, and supposedly dying out at the end of the Triassic period (200mya). However, an astonishing fossil discovery in Queensland in 1983 of an almost complete skeleton, showed that one determined group of Temnospondyls, the Chigutisauridae, had survived in Australia for another twenty million years into the Jurassic. More astonishing still, a team led by Pat and Tom Rich had been enthusiastically looking for bones of small dinosaurs and tiny mammals in Cretaceous sediments on the rock platform along the Victorian coast between San Remo and Kilcunda, when remains from a larger animal began to turn up. It was at first assumed that these bones belonged to an unknown dinosaur because these rocks were 60 million years younger than those encasing the Queensland Temnospondyl. But could this new creature actually be a Temnospondyl? As Australia's Temnospondyl expert at the time, I was called in when a distinctive piece of backbone was found, closely followed by two enormous lower jaws. I recognized that these belonged to a member of the Temnospondyli and that they were also from the Chigutisauridae, only much, much younger. This exciting new discovery was named *Koolasuchus cleelandi* for Lesley Kool

(who extracted most of the bones from the rock), and Mike Cleeland (who found many of them). Museum Victoria now houses bones from most parts of the skeleton of this huge Temnospondyl. It is the only Temnospondyl from Victoria, and the only Temnospondyl to have lived in the Cretaceous.

Koolasuchus was the same shape as the living giant salamanders of Japan, with a flat, broad head, long body, and short tail, but larger - about three metres long! It survived in Victoria among a fauna that included a variety of small dinosaurs and some tiny early mammals, although these most likely lived on land while *Koolasuchus* inhabited quiet streams and ponds. Its large teeth indicate that it was a carnivore, presumably feeding on fish and the occasional unwary dinosaur.

Members of the Chigutisauridae are now known from earlier rocks in other Gondwanan countries such as Argentina, South Africa, and India with *Koolasuchus* remaining the last surviving Temnospondyl anywhere in the world.



The upper drawing of *Koolasuchus* shows the whole animal, while in the lower *Koolasuchus* is lying in wait in the shallow water surrounded by fallen Ginkgo leaves. Notice that there are four toes on the front limbs and five on the back, a character shared with living amphibians. Many of the bones are on display at Melbourne Museum. Illustrations are by Peter Trusler courtesy of Museum Victoria.

Article by: Anne Warren

Heatherdale Creek Parklands Advisory Committee

Heatherdale Creek Parklands Advisory Committee was formed in the early 1990s and was previously known as Simpson Park/Somers Trail Advisory Committee.



Currently there are 8 Committee Members, some of whom have been part of the group for almost 30 years. We hold monthly meetings to discuss the many issues that arise in the park as well as planning for working/planting bees. We are a very proactive group, as most of the Parkland Committees are, and are passionate about enhancing the almost 25 hectares of Parkland in this

area beautiful area of Mitcham. Somers Trail meanders along Heatherdale Creek and right through the park and there are many remnant areas of bushland which are doing remarkably well.



Over the years we have planted around the many entries to the park as well as developing numerous new sections and these have been planted out over the past 2-3 years. The Bungalook Team has provided us with more than 2000 plants for these sessions and despite the Covid Restrictions and lockdowns we have been able to invite members of the local community to help with these planting bees. On one occasion last

year we had 32 people join this session. We have also been fortunate to receive Sustainable Grants in both 2020 and 2021 which enabled us to purchase the plants we selected from Bungalook Nursery.

For the past 6-8 years we have organized the Clean-Up Australia Day in our park and there is strong support with 40- 60 local residents coming along to help. This year the event is on Sunday 6 March 2022 and we will be promoting it widely and hope to have many come and join us.

In 2021 we also participated in the iNaturalist Nature Challenge and had approximately 20 locals come along for a walk through our park, accompanied by Ian Moodie from Council, who has an absolute wealth of knowledge about the bugs, birds and flora we found. We are doing the same again this year with another Walk proposed on Sunday 1 May 2022 and again will be promoting widely via posters on our Notice Boards, emails to those on our database and posting on the various Facebook sites, particularly Mitcham Nature.

One of our Committee Members is highlighting a “bird of the month” common to our local park and there is a QR code to click on to get more information on that particular bird. This has proven to be of great interest, particularly for youngsters.

We also had at least 5 Tawny Frogmouth nests and there were lots of chicks this year. They can often be seen in specific trees and people walking through the park are very interested to see if they can be spotted.

Valerie Turnbull Secretary, Heatherdale Creek Parklands Committee

14 Feb 2022

Ed: Simpson Park Dog off lead proposal.

*The Whitehorse Council had an option to install an enclosed dog off lead park at the northern end of Simpson Park. Funding would have been provided by **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Manager, Open Space Programs**. Following a lengthy period of consultation with the community the Whitehorse Council decided not to proceed with the project.*

Blackburn Creeklands



Our friends from the Blackburn Creeklands are pleased to report that a female **Superb Fairy-Wren** has been sighted recently in Blacks Walk. After many years absence, there were sightings last April in Furness Park near the Main Street bridge. They feared that the reconstruction of the bridge (now reopened again) would not encourage the species to stay. Probably a migrant from Blackburn Lake, it seems the bird moved westwards to avoid the hubbub at Main Street. They are hoping more birds will be found and are now turning their minds to protecting and enhancing the habitat there with compatible plantings from Bungalook.

BlackburnCreeklands@gmail.com or visit: <https://blackburncreeklands.wordpress.com/>

Blackburn lake Sanctuary

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary held our first working bee on the 17th of February and for the first time we tried a Twilight working bee time of 6pm with a shared supper afterwards. It was a great success, as often the February Saturday date is a scorcher. We found lots of weeds and much dryness, as in all the bushland parks. We need some decent rain so we can plant our Bungalook plants in a few months time!!

Maintenance at the Sanctuary has included a new landscaping treatment on Central Rd where Vegemite Creek (stormwater) enters the Lake. This area has become degraded and quite dangerous.



Work has been planned for some time to update Pobblebonk Point. This platform was developed over 20 years ago to accommodate access to the Lake water, for the Water Monitoring program, and to provide visitor's the opportunity to view the water birds, etc. Because the area is frequently flooded, the new platform will be designed to

minimise future damage. Currently Whitehorse Council are seeking public comment.



As in many of our bushland parks, the Parks and Natural Environment staff have been busy clearing up the aftermath of the December and January storms, that saw such a lot of damage to the tree canopy.

And lastly, we are thrilled to tell you that the Whitehorse Environmental Education Program has appointed 2 staff who will share this position that has been vacant for such a long time.

Jacque Green and Tanveer Alvi took up their roles last week and the program volunteers look forward to working with them, in further developing the program.

Anne Payne

Events:

Possum Prowl Friday April 8th 6.30pm for 7 - 9pm

We are going on a Possum Prowl to see how many Gliders we can find & maybe even a Rakali? Meet at the Blackburn Lake Visitor Centre, bring a torch & binoculars if possible, warm clothes, and Kids, please bring an adult!

Not suitable for toddlers or strollers. For more information & to register contact 0437 172 333 or blsac@bigpond.com

Breakfast with the Birds – Autumn Survey Saturday 23rd of April 7.30am for 8-10am.

Bring binoculars if you have them, and kids, please bring an adult!

Join our expert leaders Ian Moodie & Greg Oakley, stay for raisin toast, & help tally up the numbers for this autumn.

City Nature Challenge April 29th to May 2nd

Why not turn your cameras on Eastern Melbourne's outstanding urban biodiversity!

Be a Citizen Scientist for these 4 days!

To get involved:

1. Download the free iNaturalist app,
2. Look out for wild plants and animals, in the bush, or at home, to photograph from Friday 29 April to Monday 2 May.
3. Upload your photographs to the app.

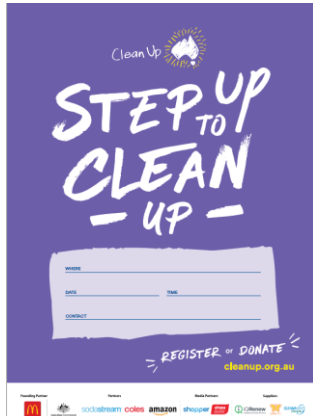
A detailed program of events at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary will be advertised soon!

But there are events throughout Melbourne.



<http://blackburnlakesanctuary.org/rsp-whatson.php>

Yarran Dheran -



Acacia genistifolia

 **Yarran Dheran**
Nature Reserve



MARCH

Sunday 6 March *Clean Up Australia Day* 10.00 to 12.00 noon
Tuesday 15 March *Monthly Bird Survey* with Frank Gallagher 8.00 am
Friday 18 March *Eucalypt ID walk* in Yarran Dheran with Tony Slater
10.00 – 12 noon
Tuesday 22 March *Waterwatch* 8.00 am

APRIL

Sunday 3 April *Working bee* 9.00 am to 11 .00 am
Wednesday 13 April *School Holiday Program Platypus Habitat* 10.00
– 12 noon
Tuesday 19 April *School Holiday Program Frogs at Yarran Dheran* PM
Tuesday 19 April *Monthly Bird Survey* with Frank Gallagher 9.00 am
Friday 22 April *Nocturnal Wildlife Walk* with Ian Moodie 7.00 – 8.30
pm
Sunday 24 April *Frog walk* with Aaron Cook 6.30 pm
Tuesday 26 April *Waterwatch* 8.00 am
Saturday 30 April *City Nature Challenge iNaturalist Bird Walk* with
Frank Gallagher 8.00 – 11.00 am
Saturday 30 April *City Nature Challenge iNaturalist Insects in Yarran*
Dheran with Ian Moodie 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Sunday 1 May *City Nature Challenge iNaturalist Flora in Yarran*
Dheran with Graham Bower 10.00 – 12 noon
Sunday 1 May *City Nature Challenge iNaturalist Waterbugs in*
Yarran Dheran with Gay Gallagher 2.00 – 4.00 pm

MAY

Sunday 1 May *Working bee* 9.00 am to 11 .00 am
Sunday 15 May *Bird Walk* with Ian Moodie 8.00 am – 10.00 am
Tuesday 17 May *Monthly Bird Survey* with Frank Gallagher 9.00 am
Tuesday 24 May *Waterwatch* 8.00 am

JUNE

Sunday 5 June *Working bee* 9.00 am to 11.00 am
Tuesday 21 June *Monthly Bird Survey* with Frank Gallagher 9.00 am
Tuesday 28 June *Waterwatch* 8.00 am

For information about Yarran Dheran or details about events, Visit their website [at https://yarrandherannaturereserve.wordpress.com/](https://yarrandherannaturereserve.wordpress.com/) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/YarranDheran>

Eucalypts of Whitehorse

Eucalypts (often called Gum Trees) are commonly found in our parks, gardens and as street trees. There are over 700 species of Eucalypts in the world and while they vary enormously, they can be difficult to identify. Whitehorse Council has recently published an extremely useful guide written by Tony Slater which enables residents to have a go at identifying the beautiful gum trees, many currently flowering, around the city, in people's gardens and in parks and reserves. The 40-page guide includes 18 Indigenous eucalypt species and 20 non-Indigenous; a go-to guide for Whitehorse residents.

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/trees-and-gardens/trees/eucalypts-whitehorse>

Climate change – Street trees

Without urgent action, these are the street trees unlikely to survive climate change

<https://theconversation.com/without-urgent-action-these-are-the-street-trees-unlikely-to-survive-climate-change-172758>

Deafened Plants

Deafened Plants are adversely affected by the racket of urban traffic. They get stressed and grow less well.

Donation - Blackburn Primary environment team

Following a request in November 2021 from student members of the Blackburn Primary Environment Team and a discussion with two "lovely very switched on young ladies", \$100 worth of seedlings were boxed up and taken by Margaret Witherspoon to school. Information about the plants and planting instructions were given to group by Margaret. Students continued to care for the seedlings during the summer school holidays.

Christmas event - 2021

Bungalook Nursery put on a catered event for its Christmas function. We really appreciated the effort and contribution made by all those who helped make the day such a success. We all gained so much pleasure from having so many members and visitors who share the day.

Facebook comes to Bungalook (or is it the other way around?)

Finally, we are delighted to announce that we now have a Facebook page. This idea was discussed by the committee who decided that it would be a very useful marketing and publishing tool that enables us to spread information about what we have growing in the nursery much farther afield than our current methods of newsletter and local support in park newsletters and council publications. But the trouble was how do we manage to do this? We are digital migrants all, and none of us felt we possessed the necessary knowledge. So, into the TOO HARD basket went that idea. But then, late last year, a very tech-savvy person came along to help us in the hands-on plant propagation area. Soon it became apparent that here was a digital native who could run rings around and through the internet. And he volunteered to set us up on Facebook! A week later, when asked how the whole process was going, he replied "Done"! Everyone present fell off their propagating stools, but we have recovered and now want to thank Dennis Bareis for his speedy and competent Facebook page launch. We hope that all newsletter readers have a look at it and also sign up to be followers. This isn't hard to do and it will enable you to have another means of seeing what's going on at Bungalook or if there are any specials or sale days coming up. It also gives you a way to give us feedback and support. We look forward to seeing you sign up and are very grateful to Dennis for his work.

Keep in touch and follow us



Next Committee Meeting:

12.30 PM, 23 March 2022.

Bungalook Nursery Newsletter May 2022 edition: 81

We are seeking articles for each edition of the newsletter. Please submit items for the next newsletter by 25 May 2022. Submit to wcipp@yahoo.com.au marked for the attention of the newsletter editors.

Bungalook Nursery Newsletter editors:

Mark Anderson and Christine Hallam

WCIPP Inc recognises the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land on which the nursery is located.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Nursery.