



Bungalook News

Newsletter of the

Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

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**Come and join us
on our next Friday Walk**

Friday 26 June 2015

9.30 am

Koonung Trail
and R.E. Gray Reserve

Meet at the end of Spencer St., Nunawading, Melways 48 F6 for a walk with Brian Duvoisin before a short drive to R.E. Gray, Outlook Dve., where we may find Greenhood Orchids. This will be followed by an informal barbecue at the invitation of the R.E. Gray Reserve Advisory Committee. All welcome.

The Coming of Winter - May 2015

With the coming of the **autumn rains** everyone seems to want to start **planting** – and I mean everyone. Advisory committees working in our bushland parks, community groups and private gardeners all seem to have the urge. Which is great! No sooner do we sit down for our morning cuppa on a Friday morning and in walks another customer – or five.

Our contribution to the amenity of our city over the past 27 years cannot be underestimated. Which is where **photographic records** are invaluable. Can you remember a particularly bare patch which now has towering eucalypts and wattles, masses of middle story shrubs and an ever increasing habitat of ground story grasses, flowers and scramblers?

With increasing numbers of volunteers both on Wednesday and Friday mornings, we have been able to supply most of the **plants ordered** by the advisory committees. Some species have been placed on **back order** and **we will endeavour to fulfil these requirements within the next year or so**. It is very important that the biodiversity of our parklands be enhanced, however we must also be mindful of the availability of some species; whether they can be successfully propagated and even, after all the work, they will survive in the wild. Included in the present orders is one for about 5,000 plants being supplied by both Bungalook and Greenlink for Council's development of the Heatherdale wetlands area.

Maintenance of our nursery continues. The **igloo** is up and running keeping our little seedlings warm on these cold days. After the orders have been set aside, a massive clean-up of remaining stock continues; all in readiness for our Sale Day and then in preparation for the new sowing season in spring.

Repairs to the west facing wall of the office will take place soon. The very thin boards will be replaced with weather boards and then painted to match existing walls. These should last another 20 years or more!

We welcome Nigel Brown as the **new Manager of ParksWide** and look forward to seeing him at Bungalook as soon as possible.

A work in progress. Council staff Millie Wells and Dion Scott, along with input from both Bungalook and Greenlink Nurseries, are in the process of producing a booklet '**A Guide to Indigenous Plants in Whitehorse**'. Aimed at encouraging local people to understand and source plants suitable for gardens this will be yet another valuable resource.

Activities during the past three months have included

- On Thursday 26th February we attended the launch of "**Get Involved – Local Volunteering Opportunities**" a booklet with information for the eastern suburbs community.
- Once every three months we go on an **excursion to an area of interest**, mainly within the city, to experience some of the achievements and difficulties of holding onto our precious environment. On Friday 27th March we were delighted to be guided by Brian Pell **along Gardiners Creek** from Station St. to the vicinity of Deakin University – Bennetswood/ Burwood. Brian supplied a fascinating summary of the history of this area. (see below)
- Then on Saturday 28th March our team, along with some our friends from Greenlink, participated in a **Sustainable Living Week Workshop** arranged by Lucy Menzies ParksWide Environmental Education Officer, at Yarran Dheran. Thanks to Denise for contributing a detailed report of this particular morning (below).
- As part of **National Volunteers Week**, many of our Bungalook volunteers who also work with the advisory committees in our bushland parks were acknowledged at an afternoon tea with Councillors and staff. Many have been contributing for thirty to forty years of involvement - a huge achievement. However no matter whether for many or just a few years, all are important.
- Finally on a sunny morning in May we held a very successful **Great Big Morning Tea** raising \$515! towards Cancer Research. Thanks very much Marion for a superb effort.

**Production for the three months to 21 May 2015 – 4,763 including 439 for Knox Environment Society
Hours : 864.30**

Margaret Witherspoon
Secretary/ Nursery Co-ordinator

Stop Press – Sale Day – Saturday 30 May.

A sunny day with many plants being sold to customers building up their gardens. A terrific profit of \$930 which will pay for repairs to the west wall of our office.

Thanks to all the volunteers who turned out in force with lots of friendly advice and general assistance.



Sustainable Living Week 2015

As part of **Sustainable Living Week**, a team of four volunteers from Bungalook Nursery – Anne, Denise, Marilyn and Peter P – participated in an event organised by the Whitehorse City Council. It was held between 10am and 11am on Saturday 28th of March at the Yarran Dheran Reserve Information Centre, Ashburton Drive, Mitcham.

Its aim was to promote indigenous plants that have adapted to the unique local conditions in Whitehorse and therefore provide the most suitable habitat for native wildlife. Its practical focus was to provide information about the factors to consider when selecting indigenous plants for private gardens.

Heather Eadon from Greenlink Box Hill gave an informative talk, 'The uses of indigenous plants', supported by a powerpoint presentation illustrating specific plant species.

The presentation was followed by a Q and A session, and information sharing amongst the attendees and local experts.

We provided a static display of photographs, information about Bungalook Nursery, general information about indigenous plants, as well as tube stock for sale and give-aways.

The Whitehorse City Council provided printed information sheets of some species from its indigenous plant listing available from the council's interactive mapping web site Whitehorse Maps.

Though few people from the community attended, those who did come were very interested, enthusiastic and appreciative of the event.

Any opportunity to promote indigenous plants and the indigenous nurseries in Whitehorse is always worthwhile. One individual talks to another and so the word spreads!

Denise Balint

Talk and Walk Along Gardiners Creek with Brian Pell

In 1836 John Gardiner brought a herd of cattle overland from Yass and settled at the mouth of the Kooyongkoot Creek and the Yarra River. It is thought that Kooyongkoot meant 'haunt of waterfowl'. Robert Huddle, the surveyor named the creek in 1837. It was later called Main Creek and Damper Creek.

In 1838 Arundel Wrighte settled in Box Hill (only 177 years ago). In 1841 Charles Mullin, a timber cutter, settled on Wrighte's land near Stott St. By the 1880's much of the area was cleared, mainly for orchards.

The railway line was extended from Camberwell to Lilydale in 1882.

In 1885/86 Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Louis Abrahams set up Artist's Camp on David Houstens's property, 1 mile from Box Hill Railway station (at the Box Hill Golf Course). Robert's painted *Lost, Artist's Camp*, *Settler's Camp*, *A Summer Morning Tiff* and *The Old Bridge at Gardiners Creek*. These show what the original vegetation was like.



The area was almost totally cleared for farming including a flower farm, poultry farm and orchards and an aerial photo taken in the mid-1970s shows Gardiners Creek between Station St. and Burwood Highway, with no vegetation.

In 1970 the Reserve was part of the Healesville Freeway Reserve, but this was scrapped in 1980.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) flood mitigation work saw the Creek rock-lined and a large billabong at the junction of Damper Creek (from Wattle Park) was filled in and a billabong and wetland formed closer to Station St.

By the 1980's the Creek was plagued with weeds. The City of Box Hill Parks and Gardens staff cleared truckloads of weeds and began planting. Community groups, school, scouts etc. held organised plantings, including Greenlink Box Hill which commenced in 1988.

Greenlink members Peter and Shirley Dwyer, who joined in 1996 followed soon after by Sue Betheras, commenced years of dedicated planting and weeding. Peter Cockroft (Box Hill Council and now Whitehorse City Council – (WCC)) planted large areas of the Reserve.

In 2014 Melbourne Water planted extensively along the creek. What a waste of money – trees less than 2 metres apart. What were they thinking? And will Melbourne Water do any follow up maintenance? Certainly WCC won't – their spray line marks the end of their responsibility.

This is one of WCC main areas for "Dog off lead" areas. Unabated dog traffic has destroyed ground storey vegetation and no new ground storey plantings now occur.

In the 1990's Deakin University purchased the Princess Elizabeth Deaf School on Elgar Rd. While it contained many weeds, it also contained remnant grasses and wildflowers. The building of the student accommodation in the NE corner saw the destruction of that. Deakin University has generated more adverse publicity for the Reserve than any other organisation.

The old bridge linking Stott St. and Glengarry Ave. was to be replaced. Instead of putting it opposite the student residences, it was replaced in situ. So the students walked across the rocks in the creek. Melbourne Water responded with barricade fences, which the students circumnavigated. With the new bridge in place, Deakin promised it would not use it as a thoroughfare for carting equipment from one side to the other using motorised carts. Soon after it was caught doing so and stopped. Next came a well-planned move to build a bridge across the Reserve. The concrete take off point from the Burwood Rd. site was built into the new building. When plans were submitted for an \$18 million dollar bridge the community went ballistic. 500 objections were submitted and the Council refused the Planning Permit. Deakin appealed to VCAT and was granted a Planning Permit, but WCC as the responsible landowner refused to give a Building Permit. The new Vice-Chancellor decided to take a different tack. She set up Gardiners Creek Crossing Community Reference Group to come up with a plan acceptable to the community. Greenlink attended meetings for over a year and jointly proposed a workable solution using an upgraded present footbridge. Suddenly there was a change in the senior personnel at Deakin and the Group was dismissed. This remains a major threat to the Reserve. Deakin will eventually get a bridge and the likely outcome is that it will eventually get management control of that part of the Reserve. This is the same story as the Point Nepean Reserve where a private organisation gets control of a public asset.

The playground which was unfenced, is now fenced to keep unsupervised dogs separate from the young children.

For 4 years Kingswood College students have planted and weeded a small area in the Reserve, with assistance from Council and Greenlink. An area planted last year around a dead tree shows good growth (no water stress) while around the treed areas there is limited growth (water stress).

Gardiners Creek is part of a MAJOR BIOLINK from the mouth of the Yarra to Healesville. Environmental groups such as WCIPP, Greenlink, and the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society need to ensure it remains. It is certainly under threat as further upstream the recently approved development onto the floodplain at St. Leo's site shows.

The Great Big Morning Tea

Thank you so much to those of you who were able to attend our Morning Tea for Cancer on a Friday in early May. Didn't we have such perfect weather to enjoy some delicious food and good conversation this year! Many thanks to the cooks and others for supplying mouth-watering food, as always there is something new to delight us.

And, best of all, thank you to all 27 of you for your generous donations. This year I am able to send in **\$515!** A wonderful result. It may take the Cancer Council some time for the receipts to be processed for you, let me know if you have a problem.

Marion Siseman

National Tree Day

“Planet Ark is celebrating 20 years of National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day - Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. Proudly sponsored by Toyota Australia, Tree Day is an opportunity to do something positive for your local environment and community and to reconnect with nature. National Tree Day started in 1996 and since then more than 3 million people have planted 21 million trees and plants and it's still growing.”

_Where to go this year.

Sunday 1st August 10 am.

Antonio Park, Newlands, off Edgerton Rd., Mitcham. Melways ref: 49 C8

Contact: Les Smith 9874 2641

Other Activities

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Bushland Education – Holiday Program

July 7th @ 10-11.30am Beautiful Bugs for 5-12 year olds

Learn about some of the amazing little creatures of the bush, why they are so important and how you can attract them to your garden.

Make an 'Insect Hotel' to take home!

Bookings Essential ph. 9262 6222

Corks. Corks. Corks

For many years Graham Errey has been collecting large quantities of corks as a fund raising effort for a local Girl Guide Group. Unfortunately the source of disposing these has been discontinued. Does anyone know where these could be usefully used rather than just going into landfill?

Please contact Graham on 9877 2685.

Bird walk in Yarran Dheran

Yarran Dheran Nature Reserve provides a variety of habitats that are attractive to at least 50 different species of birds. Some of these may be seen throughout the year and others are seasonal migrants.



See lists of birds seen on earlier bird walks at <https://yarrandherannaturereserve.wordpress.com/wildlife/bird-walks/>

Cecily Falkingham, knowledgeable birdwatcher and well-known local environmentalist will lead this walk.

We will meet in the Centre after the walk to compile our bird list and to have a cuppa



WHEN:

Saturday 4 July at 10.00 AM to 12 noon

WHERE:

Meet at the Yarran Dheran Information Centre.
Enter at the Ashburton Drive entrance, Mitcham
3132 (Melways Ref 49 B6)

COST:

This event is free

BRING

Binoculars if you have them

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL:

email gay.gallagher@bigpond.com by 28th June
2015



*Children are welcome but must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
Not suitable for very young children*