



# Bungalook News

Newsletter of the

Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

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Email: [wcipp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wcipp@yahoo.com.au)

Website: [www.wcipp.org.au/~wcipporg](http://www.wcipp.org.au/~wcipporg)



Bungalook Christmas barbecue Friday 13 December 2019 12 noon. All welcome to come along and join our volunteers. RSVP desirable but not necessary.

## The Coming of Summer

From the beginning of August propagation of new stock in preparation for 2020 has been progressing at a rapid rate. In July 2019 council ceased providing both seed raising and potting media. While we have been thankful for this supply over the past 7 years, very satisfactory arrangements are now in place. Media is sourced from a small reliable supplier and seed raising mix prepared by volunteers. It too is proving satisfactory thus far, with high germination rates of many species.



*Washing the igloo shade – a task that needed a team of helpers.*

A sudden burst of hot weather meant that the shades had to be hauled out of the tool shed and erected. The difference in temperature is quite noticeable, especially on those hot windy days; the plants seem to be most appreciative.



Frank and team have been working for months planning a shade for the north wall of the potting shed. Despite one very hot day at the beginning of November it was finally secured in place.

*Vic and Amanda appreciate shade over the outside benches while Dianne mulches and waters the garden beds.*

Every three years application for a new permit to collect plant material from remnant vegetation is required from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Thank you to a new team of volunteers who will be assisting with collections during the coming months. This is a great way to learn more about our indigenous vegetation; out in the field observing the many plants that comprise our local eco-systems. Requirements and limitations of the permit itself add to the respect we must have for our fragile remnants particularly here in the City of Whitehorse.

We look forward to the coming year helping the advisory committees and friends of various bushland parks with their revegetation projects. More than thirty years ago local communities saw the need to source plants for many exciting revegetation projects. Thus, a community nursery was established with enthusiastic volunteers, a young Geoff Lodge (son of Alan Lodge) – a Burnley student at the time, and a bicentenary grant. It is our aim to continue and extend this support to those advisory committees and friends' groups especially. In addition, many local residents are now seeing the benefits of local indigenous plants in their gardens and community projects, especially through the Gardens for Wildlife program. Climate change may well see an increase in these benefits.

Because of the many calls on supply of plants this year it was decided not to hold a Spring Sale – hopefully next year. However, with the growth of stock, both in maturity and quantity, the committee has agreed that we offer plants as pre-Christmas specials. We plan to hold an Autumn Sale/Open Day in May next year; a day which has always been popular since its inception some years ago.

Council purchases. Last July we supplied 1500 mixed species for National Tree Day and 500 more for the Spring Festival in October – a day where both Bungalook and Greenlink Nurseries come together to meet the public.

Tubed up	July, August and September	7,804
Hours	July, August and September	990.05

Margaret Witherspoon  
27 November 2019

## Plant Propagation Workshop. 11 October 2019

On Wednesday 11 October Tony Slater was welcomed to Bungalook to conduct a workshop on Plant Propagation. While we have been propagating plants for more than 30 years there's always something new to learn. For a couple of hours Tony brought to us his vast experience which includes Research Leader, Molecular Plant Breeding in Agriculture Victoria as well as working from Tasmania to Cape York. In doing so he covered a wide range of issues including addressing questions put to him from volunteers prior to meeting.

The following are only brief summaries of discussion points.

### Hygiene and Plant Health.

Matters of critical importance include clean facilities, equipment, tools and pots and disposing of heavily diseased and dead plants.

If collecting fruit, seed and cuttings from outside the nursery, make sure it is pest and disease free.

Get to know your local pests, diseases and weeds, how to identify them and how to keep them under control.

Conduct regular inspections of the plants and facilities for early stages of pests and diseases. It is better to treat early rather than when you have a major outbreak.

Take care when watering, as water can spread disease spores in the water splash.

### Genetic Diversity

Do we want genetic diversity or maintain genetic integrity?

If you want genetic diversity, then seed propagation is the way to go, but some self-pollinating plants may need to be cross-pollinated to create genetic diversity.

*Then came the hands-on activity; with apple blossom being dissected to expose the male and female components of the flower.*

## Seed Propagation.

Aspects of seed propagation were covered in great detail including media, seed collection, seed storage and treatments, chemical dormancy and sowing.



*Above: Dianne and Tiffany separating a tiny blossom.*

## Cuttings



*Above: Tony Slater with Belinda Moody, Whitehorse City Council Tree Education Officer who facilitated the workshop.*

Propagation by cuttings is an important and simple method to rapidly multiply plants.

Cutting propagation doesn't rely on flowering and seed set and is important in the nursery industry for clonal reproduction of cultivars, so that customers get a final plant as described on the label. Most native plants can be propagated by cuttings.

*One question asked prior to the workshop, was about propagating difficult species and/or where only a few such specimens remain. This is something to consider in the coming year with a proposed new heat bed.*

*Time got the better of us with only a short time for hands on preparation of cuttings. Nevertheless, we went away with so much to contemplate.*

Detailed notes are available both in hard copy and online.

## Tina Mundell

Twenty years ago, Tina left Blackburn to return to her home in England after spending nearly thirty years here in Australia, particularly Blackburn. She was a very early member of the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society when a meeting consisting of 70 members was not uncommon, and one of the founding members of Wandinong Sanctuary Advisory Committee. But Tina was also one of the founding members of our nursery when it was Nunawading Indigenous Plant Project and when we worked rain, hail or shine in the igloo at the back of the council nursery in Jolimont Rd. Forest Hill. Although on a brief visit, she revelled in catching up with friends and spending just a little time working at Bungalook, far more pleasant surroundings than in former days.

*Below and far right: Tina Mundell in the 1990's.*



*Above: Tina as a guest at the recent Whitehorse City Council Volunteers afternoon tea, pictured with Cr. Denise Massoud and Margaret Witherspoon*



## Blue Tongued Lizards.

On a warm sunny morning, a welcome visitor to Bungalook was spotted slithering quietly under the benches. The following are excerpts from information posted on ABC Radio Hobart on November 14, 2018.



**“As the days get longer and warmer, it's not just humans that are drawn out into the sunshine.**

Blue-tongued lizards are out and about, and it's often hard to tell if they are fighting or mating.

The lizards are a common sight in backyards across south-eastern Australia, but they have some traits you may not be aware of.

Blue tongues, or blotched lizards, are also the subject of a number of myths when it comes to their bite and interaction with snakes.

**Dr Ashley Edwards from the University of Tasmania** has studied the lizards for 24 years, and said the males started emerging from hibernation in September — with attitude.

‘They start getting all worked up. They fight with each other through October and start mating in November,’ she said.

‘When you come across two lizards together it's sometimes hard to tell whether their intentions are honourable or if they are fending off another male.’

Blue tongues are common in backyards, and Dr Edwards said they'd coped well with urbanisation.

### How to be a good host.

If you're lucky enough to have a resident blue tongue, there are a few things you can do to help accommodate them in your garden.

Dogs can kill them, so it's helpful if there's rocks or bushes for the lizards to scuttle away to and hide in.

Snail bait can also be harmful — the lizards won't eat the bait, but they will eat the poisoned snails.

Dr Edwards' advice is to skip the bait, and let the lizards take care of the snails for you.



‘If you've got a blue-tongued lizard in your garden, you probably won't have much in the way of snails,’ Dr Edwards said.

Netting and wire to protect fruit trees or poultry can also be deadly for the lizards.

‘They can crawl through netting if it's too small, but then they can't back out because of the direction of their scales and they can die if they get stuck out in the sun.’ ”

**PHOTO:** (Supplied: Ashley Edwards )

*If anyone is lucky enough to shelter blue tongues in their garden, we'd love a photo.*

Right: *Our resident Striped Marsh Frog. Quite often found under the benches in the shade house. Photo: Mark Anderson*

