



Newsletter of the  
Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

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After a long cold winter, the Silver wattles bursting into flower along the creeks in our bush parks are a welcome sight and the slowly warming weather reminds us all that seasons come and pass. This was a tough winter for us at the nursery as several of our stalwart team had their own health issues and unwelcome diagnoses to contend with. However, we have mostly come through it and the propagation and steady work continues, which you can read about below in the nursery report.

Next, we report on the progress of a couple of members constantly caring for our surrounding buffer zone and a Winter walk with Tony Slater teaching us how to identify Eucalypts and their similar looking relatives.

In this issue we have included tributes to two inspirational conservationists, Les Smith and Dr. Beth Gott.

You will read about where our plants go in reports from some of our bushland Parks groups, plus we feature the humble bush tucker plant Murnong (*Microseris walteri*), because of its connection to Dr. Gott.

There is some news plus links regarding mistletoe research which is ongoing, so please read on and enjoy this Winter newsletter from Bungalook.

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## Nursery report

While many are wondering whether these cold, grey days will end, the wattles are bursting forth wherever we look. Even though it may be too cold to prepare cuttings, we have been trying a few. A long-awaited new heat bed has just been installed, which will boost production immensely.

Grasses are being sown prior to the commencement of large-scale sowing of wattles, eucalypts and many other seed varieties which have been stored over winter. While some species may not have been harvested over the last summer season, we are confident that our stock will be built up over the coming months.

Late Autumn saw a flurry of orders going to advisory committee planting projects. Volunteers were out in great numbers in various parks, no matter how cold the day.



Over the past couple of months, Mark has been assembling an impressive new storage system for the push-in labels. While an increasing number of very clever customers download information onto their phones, we mere mortals appreciate information on an individual label that can be popped into a tube and ready to take home.

### Upcoming event: Spring Festival: -Sunday 23 October

*Below: Spring Festival 2018.*

Spring Festival is an event held by Whitehorse City Council which showcases many different community groups.

Bungalook and Greenlink Box Hill have held very successful combined displays for many years now; aiming to educate the public on what we do and to give away some plants. It is understood Gardens for Wildlife and the council nursery will be situated together with our two nurseries. With construction works at the Nunawading precinct, the festival will be held this year at the Hub and Tunstall Park, Nunawading, where 500 plants from each nursery (sponsored by council) will be given away.



Margaret Witherspoon

## Bungalook Buffer

Members will have noted over the last few years that the area in front of the nursery has undergone much development. The land around the nursery is not ours, so why are we trying to maintain and improve it? We call the area around the nursery the BUFFER. This is because it provides an environmental buffer to the nursery by reducing the weed incursion from surrounding land and properties. Windblown seeds add considerably to the maintenance requirements of the nursery and the buffer helps to cut down the amount of weeding required in our plants and under the benches.

Note that on two sides, the West and the North, the Council is responsible for the buffer, although the Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee has conducted much of the planting and maintenance on the Northern boundary. The eastern boundary is a difficult site as there is a steep cut into almost pure clay. Nonetheless, this area has been planted out by Bungalook members to provide screening for the residents of Illowra Walk. This area also provides propagating material for the nursery.

The most recently developed area is to the right of the nursery entrance. A little planting took place under the instruction of the previous director, Liz Henry. Over the years, removal of weeds allowed the wallaby grasses to colonize the area but the real development started after the council removed a sizeable tree. This allowed the light in and removed competition for water and nutrients.

Development of the area then proceeded rapidly, greatly propelled by Dianne Hannaford and assisted by Doug Scott. The showpiece is the small area in and around the rocks. Here you will find one of my favourite plants, *Dillwynia cinerascens* (Grey Parrot Pea) which sports a brilliant gold flower in spring. Nestled under the *Dillwynias* is *Pimelia humilis* (Common Rice Flower) as well as numerous chocolate and vanilla lilies. In front of the rocks, there is a patch of *Craspedia variabilis* (Billy Buttons) interspersed with chocolate and vanilla lilies. Behind this bed you will find *Correas*, *Pomaderris*, *Spyridium* (Dusty Miller) *Indigofera* and *Goodia* (Golden Tip Plant). Upper story plants



include several *Eucalypts* and, currently in flower, *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle). Bird habitat is catered for with prickly *Acacia paradoxa* and our currently flowering *Hakea decurrens* (photo to left). Further along you will find *Banksia spinulosa* in flower as well as the ever-present *Goodenia ovata* which always seems to need pruning. On the corner, you will find a good stand of *Dianella tasmanica* (Tasman Flax Lily) which seems to be thriving in spite of this being a very dry position. Growing up the Black Wattle is the rather untidy vine known as Dodder Laurel, a great hiding spot for birds.

This garden bed performs many functions. As a complex environment it provides homes, food and shelter to insects and birds. As a demonstration area it allows us to show plants in a hybrid environmental/ horticultural setting. Most of the plants have been labelled to assist members of the public and nursery volunteers alike. They provide a setting where our volunteers can discuss the uses and care of the plants we sell. We look forward to seeing this area mature and improve over the coming years.

Doug Scott

## Eucalyptus identification walks in Wurundjeri Walk



Eucalypts and their relatives can be quite difficult to identify. During lockdown, local resident Tony Slater decided to use his time productively by developing a Whitehorse guide booklet for Eucalyptus tree identification. Tony and Belinda Moody from Whitehorse Council launched the booklet in March at Strathdon House. Following this, they offered to lead interested locals on two guided walks at Wurundjeri Walk so that residents could learn how to identify Eucalyptus

tree varieties. On Friday July 1<sup>st</sup>, 16 folks gathered at the nursery and set off, followed by another group of 18 on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Tony began each walk with an introduction in the shed where he gave us a short botany lesson explaining some terms which are necessary and useful for the process of plant identification using a glossary and a key. He taught us how to use the Key in the guide which takes you through the steps. It is like the game of “Guess Who” - where you answer a question, then certain options are eliminated before you go to the next category which matches what you are looking at. Buds, their number, distinct shape and how they are arranged on the stalk, fruits (gumnuts) and their size, shape and number, leaf shape, bark types are all important details to be



observed, and each observation leads you one step closer to the final identification of a particular tree. It helps if you can access low-lying branches, but sometimes you need to use binoculars. Afterwards, we enjoyed our coffee by the brassier fire (thanks Linda and Dennis) and felt that despite the wintery chill, we had all had an interesting and helpful afternoon acquiring much useable knowledge. We appreciate Tony and Belinda’s expertise in the area and their enthusiasm and willingness to share it. Free copies of Tony Slater’s *A Guide to the Eucalypts of Whitehorse and Surrounds* can be downloaded from



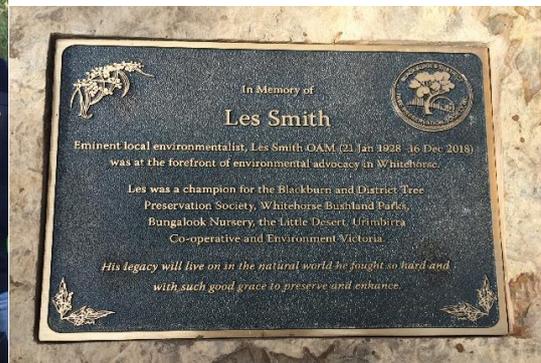
<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/trees-and-gardens/trees/eucalypts-whitehorse>

Christine Hallam

## A Celebration for Les Smith OAM

On National Tree Day, July 31<sup>st</sup> this year, a commemorative planting and plaque unveiling ceremony was held to honor Les Smith. This took place in the Blackburn Triangle gardens, corner Blackburn & Canterbury Roads, Blackburn. The Blackburn Triangle, a beautiful park natural park, was the site for planting activities organised by the Tree Society in the early 1960s and again from 2000 to 2007, with Les as always involved.

Over thirty people, including twenty Smith family representatives, current and retired Tree Society committee members and Whitehorse Council representatives and invited guests attended the activity on a cold but sunny winter's day. Helen and Andrew Smith unveiled the plaque followed by family members planting thirty indigenous plants in the park. All attendees then enjoyed a morning cup of tea and refreshments, organised by Anne Payne.



Les was passionate about nature and active in protecting and enhancing the natural environment throughout his life, with this being recognized officially when he was named Nunawading Citizen of the Year in 1975. Until shortly before his death in 2018, Les remained an energetic volunteer and member or executive committee member of a number of organizations across Whitehorse and further afield in Victoria (see plaque). His volunteering included nursery work here at Bungalook from its earliest beginnings as the Nunawading Indigenous Plant Project and through its relocation and reformation as WCIPP. He was also a vital part of the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society and a member of Antonio Park, Yarran Dheran and Wandinong bushland park advisory committees where his roles included committee member, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, membership secretary and newsletter editor!

Les was actively involved further afield in the campaign to save the Little Desert from being cleared for farming in the late 1960s. This campaign was instrumental in launching a wave of environmental campaigns throughout Victoria leading to the formation of what is now Environment Victoria, an organization Les actively supported. Les, affectionately dubbed the 'Godfather' of environmental advocacy in the City of Whitehorse and beyond, was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his community service in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2017. His legacy will live on in the natural world he fought so hard, and with such good grace, to preserve and enhance. (Thanks to David Berry's report from BDTPS website -used with permission)



Many of us were saddened to hear of the recent passing of Dr Beth Gott. Her lifelong interest in the natural environment was demonstrated in her career choices, which began with graduating in Botany from Melbourne University and later studying the life-cycle of Rye cereals at London University. On her return to Melbourne, she conducted research on wheat varieties grown in Australia before turning her attention to 'ethnobotany' and the study of the traditional uses of native plants as a plant physiologist and ethnobotanist as an adjunct researcher in the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University.

Beth's area of research expertise was in the use of Australian plants by Indigenous Australians, where she made major contributions since the 1980s in assembling extensive databases of plants used by the Aboriginal peoples of south-eastern Australia, for food, medicinal purposes, as tools or as fibre, while also

documenting the landscapes created by Aboriginal management, including the use of fire. Dr Gott created the Aboriginal Educational Garden at Monash University. [Click here for further information about the Aboriginal Garden at Monash and to download a plant list.](#)

In 2017 she was awarded a member of the Order of Australia (AM) for "significant service to the biological sciences as an ethnobotanist specializing in the use of native plants by indigenous people". The following year saw the celebration of the Murnong Festival Celebrating Biocultural Knowledge. As creator and curator of the Aboriginal Garden at Monash, Beth was a speaker and special guest of honour. She played an important role, over many decades, in recording and preserving indigenous biocultural knowledge and heritage, collaborating with indigenous people in a culturally sensitive manner, sharing the results of her research, and ensuring that her plant knowledge was well documented and preserved for the future. We appreciate her life of contribution towards conservation and, in a way, continue her work through propagation and developing awareness of our indigenous plants, their value and possible uses in our own gardens and parks.

## Feature Plant - Murnong



The humble Murnong (*Microseris walteri*), also known as Yam Daisy is a perennial herb that features now as a more well-known bush tucker plant, largely thanks to it being given more scientific acknowledgement including through the work of Dr. Beth Gott. It resembles a Dandelion and has small yellow flowers and milky tubers that can be eaten raw, or cooked. As a food plant, it is a soft, nutritious, and somewhat sweet, flavoured root vegetable, which tastes a little like a Sweet Potato. It can be hard to identify in the wild because it looks like a lot of other yellow daisy plants, including dandelions and flatweed. The main differences are that flat weed has a rosette of hairy, wavy-edged leaves that sit flat on the ground, while Murnong has upright lance-shaped leaves. Murnong flower stems have a curved, drooping top as the bud develops,

then straighten as it opens, whereas flatweeds and dandelions are upright as the bud is forming. This is a low-growing or ground cover plant which likes part-shade and moist well-drained soil. It attracts butterflies when flowering from July to February. This is one of the bush tucker plants we propagate at Bungalook.

## Mistletoe propagation project

Members of Bungalook Nursery, and Greenlink Nursery are continuing to work with the Gardens for Wildlife sponsored by the City of Whitehorse. The program is working on the collection, storage, distribution and propagation of the three Mistletoes growing in this area of Victoria. Valuable data is being collected which will help us and researchers spread these very important plants across our environment. Contact your local Gardens for Wildlife representative or the City of Whitehorse if you wish to host mistletoe on your property.

**Mistletoe superglue.** <https://cosmosmagazine.com/technology/materials/biodegradable-superglue%EF%BF%BC/>

**Mistletoe decline could threaten nectar-feeding bird populations**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-18/mistletoe-decline-threat-nectar-feeding-bird-population/101246810>

## Heatherdale Creek Parklands

**Heatherdale Creek Parklands Advisory Committee** has had a busy few months.

We organized four Working Bees during the months of June and July.

On Saturday 18 June we had 8 local volunteers come along and help dig 400 holes in areas that had been sprayed and mulched, ready for planting. Then on 25 June, we had approximately 35 volunteers come along to help plant 400 plants in several areas of the park along Somers Trail. This was part of our most recent order of 650 plants provided by Bungalook Nursery.

As the season has been rather wet, we decided to continue our planting program and we again invited a small group to help dig the holes the week prior to planting. The hole-digging was held on Saturday 9 July at Simpson Park. Once again, 8 willing helpers came along to dig another 250 holes at three different locations in the park. The final Working Bee was a planting session on Saturday 16 July. Amazingly we again had over 35 volunteers come along on a very cold, drizzly morning to give us a hand. We were fortunate to have a neighbour provide water from his garden hose which he popped over the fence right next to where we were planting. Thank you, Neighbour!

It was a fantastic effort, and the task was done in no time. Graham Bower, our Working Bee Planner, suggested it would be a good idea to dig the holes first with just a few people and follow up a week later with as many volunteers as we could muster to pop the plants in.

We promoted our working bees widely by posting on Facebook Sites, our own HCPAC included, notices on our Boards, emails to around 50 people on our database and some letterbox drops. And it worked!

The local community is very supportive of our efforts to enhance our beautiful parklands and we have planted over 2000 plants in about two years. Many thanks to the team at Bungalook who have been able to provide us with what we want for our Park. The next order will be coming soon as we have been successful in receiving grants to cover the cost of the plants.



Valerie Turnbull, Secretary, Heatherdale Creek Parklands  
<https://www.facebook.com/HeatherdaleCreekPAC>

## Cootamundra Walk



Cold frosty mornings are a good time to warm up with some vigorous planting, weeding and mulching. In June and July, we concentrated on infill planting in the garden beds adjacent to the bushland area, while in August we moved over to

Cootamundra Walk East. Over the years garden beds have been planted with our local indigenous plants, creating and extending the corridor – a very pleasant walk for the locals as well as a flight path for our feathered friends. *Platylobium obtusangulum* (Common Flat-pea) are doing well – adding to the diversity we wish to create. This is one species Bungalook Nursery has had great success with this past season.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CootamundraWalkFriends>

## Yarran Dheran -

### National Tree Day at Yarran Dheran 2022



We had an extended and most successful celebration of National Tree Day at Yarran Dheran this year, over four events: two school planting days with Mitcham Primary and Mullauna College and two community planting days, with Buddhist Light International (Box Hill) finally culminating in a general community planting day on National Tree Day, where 33 participants attended, including some very young volunteers (photos below)

Thanks to all our committee members and our Friends group who worked diligently and hard before all events in site preparation, especially hole digging, to ensure the success of the plantings and to our community for their support.



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>



**Next Committee Meeting:**

28<sup>th</sup> September 2022. 12.30 PM.

AGM - To be confirmed

**Bungalook Nursery Newsletter December 2022 edition: 83**

We are seeking articles for each edition of the newsletter. Please submit items for the next newsletter by 24 November 2022. Submit to [wcipp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wcipp@yahoo.com.au) marked for the attention of the newsletter editors.

**Bungalook Nursery Newsletter editors:**

Mark Anderson and Christine Hallam.

With thanks to Linda Buxton for editorial support.

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.