



Newsletter of the
Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant
Project Inc.

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After a long month of cold temperatures, wind, storms and in some areas, severe floods, we are wondering what happened to Spring and our more usual balmy November days. December looms and it seems La Niña may grant us a wetter than usual Summer. However, our gardens are flourishing and many bush shrubs and trees also are thriving with the extra rainfall. Callistemons are brilliant and Spring flowering shrubs seem to be flowering with vigour. As we prepare to head off seed collecting, we wonder how this extended cold wet season will change what we can find and expect seeds will be ripening much later. Despite having to adapt to nature's seasonal variations, we are already pleased with germination rates and very busy with tubing up, as you will read in our Nursery report. We also have an article on our participation in the Whitehorse Spring festival, followed by one on our much-anticipated visit to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens nursery. We salute two local heroes, feature a less well-known park, the R E Gray reserve and include some information about what's happening in other local parks. As usual, a plant is singled out as our Feature Plant, and we point you in the direction of an interesting article about Deep Planting, a method which works well for woody plants and could be worth trialling in your own gardens and bush revegetation projects. Finally, thank you for your support this year. We wish you all Seasons greetings as we move into December and best wishes for the New Year.

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Nursery News



Preparation for the coming season is in full swing. A Gerni pressure cleaner has been purchased and put to use, cleaning the igloo cover, tubes, trays and pots to great effect. Shade cloth has been reinstalled, gutters cleaned and irrigation system monitored. Maintenance of the buffer zone continues thanks to the efforts of Amanda, Doug and Dianne. Customers and those walking by are commenting on the spring flowers which are proving a great demonstration of our indigenous flora.

Whitehorse City Council has replaced

the access driveway bollards with a substantial low level one bar fence in line with fencing along Wurundjeri Walk, Fulton Rd.

Day to day activities at the nursery include improving techniques with cuttings and sowing copious amounts of seed for the coming season propagation. Plant labels are continuously replaced as required. Any new printing of labels includes the QR code leading to the particular plant on the website. (see below)



Thanks must go to those who collected and are continuing collecting seed and cuttings over the past year. A new permit to "Take Protected Flora" has recently been approved by DELWP which will enable our dedicated collectors to continue during the coming three years. It is envisaged that small groups will be both collecting and learning together such things as where, when and how to collect. Happy collecting.

Marilyn has passed over her work with the laptop which will now be available onsite for updating all nursery operation activities. We thank Marilyn for her work in this area over many years, especially when building the website. Welcome our new members. Their background skills are certainly going to be an asset in the future. Our volunteer base is rising rapidly after a difficult two years with COVID-19. The festive season is fast approaching. From the committee and volunteers, we wish you a happy and safe time with family and friends.

Margaret Witherspoon



New volunteers Andrew and Richard (right)

Rotary Club of Box Hill Central – Heat bed donation.

A recent improvement in our nursery facilities was the addition of our second heat bed installed by Sage Engineering. Funding for this came from the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central under their Environment Support program. On September 22nd, we were visited by three representatives who were interested to see the work we do at the nursey and observe how necessary heat beds are used to enable the process of efficient germination over Winter. Their generous grant of approximately \$1700 doubled our seed tray heating capacity. It was immediately covered with another set of trays filled with seeds which had been shivering through Winter, but once ensconced on a heated mat, germination rates markedly improved. Seen here in the photo are, left to right John Elrington, Malcolm Chiverton, and Liz Stinson. Our sincere thanks go to them and the club for this very generous and much appreciated support.



Spring Festival

The Whitehorse City Council Spring Festival theme for this year was **Our Backyard** which celebrated the community coming together and enjoying the collective backyard we all share - **Whitehorse!**

The Bungalook Nursery stand present the nursery activities, our volunteers and our aims of growing plants indigenous to Whitehorse and getting them into our parks and gardens.

Over 500 hundred tube stock seedlings were handed out free to visitors to the festival, many questions were answered about our plants, for example whether they were edible, how and where to grow them and how to care for them.

We were very fortunate to have a fine sunny day, particularly given the number of days of rain in recent times.

We had a dedicated groups of volunteers who prepared the stock before the event, set up the stand and attended the stand all day.



Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne - Nursery excursion

Fifteen keen people from Bungalook headed down to Cranbourne in November, delighted at having been granted access to the inner workings of the [Cranbourne Botanic Gardens](#). We were greeted by Mandy Thompson, who manages the nursery. After an initial sanitizing walk-through shoe bath, a most informative guided tour began. The nursery deals with a huge range of Australian native plants, including threatened species, which are grown for CBG and other botanic gardens in Victoria. It becomes not only a supply source but sees its role as providing a back-up for conservation purposes.

Mandy was plied with many practical questions, which she answered openly and generously. Of particular interest to us were issues we deal with every week as we propagate on a much smaller scale. Practical issues around basic propagation components were discussed: what blends and brands of seed raising and potting media are used, how do you treat various seeds and cuttings, deal with weeds, moss and lichens, preserve hygienic conditions, feed, manage differing water and temperature requirements and manage quality of plants. We were shown through the propagating shed where we were agog at the folk transplanting small hair-like rare orchid seedlings from mini hot-house containers into pots to grow on in. We admired their beautiful stainless-steel benches, industrial fridge, stores of bulk media and mixes, then the computerised water and temperature-controlled hothouses, and spacious weed-free indoor greenhouses full of such a vigorous healthy range of plants.



Finally, we went over to the community - run nursery on site and mingled with the volunteers there who, like us, come in to learn and contribute as they propagate plants, although the range they deal with is far wider than ours. It was good to see how a comparative organization manages and does the many day to day tasks necessary across the seasons.

After all our walking and talking, it was time to adjourn over to the Boon Wurrung Café for lunch and a chat, followed by a wander around the beautiful spring-flowering gardens, with some of us lucky to be accompanied by Ann Adams, a Bungalook regular who has also volunteered as a guide around the Cranbourne Botanic gardens for many years. Our thanks to Ann for organizing the visit, and to Mandy for the access granted and her generous informative guidance through the nursery itself.



AMONGST THE ELDERS

Our cover photo for this newsletter is of the large grass trees in the Stringybark Garden at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. These magnificent plants are *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*, *X preisii* and *X*



australis. *Xanthorrhoea* comes from the Greek, xanth meaning yellow and rheo a flow, which refers to the resin or gum produced by some plants. The large grass trees in this garden, have been rescued by licensed nurseries from bushland, that was being cleared for housing, mining etc in NSW and WA. Their growth is very slow, varying from about 25mm in 10 years to 10mm per year. Some of the grass trees in this garden are approximately 400 years old. The Aborigines used many parts of the plant such as: the gum as a glue to make weapons and tools, the flower stalk as fire sticks and spear

handles, the sweet nectar from the many flowers on the long flower spikes and starch from the base of young leaves.

Feature plant *Acacia paradoxa*



This Spring a number of Acacia species have germinated well, including *Acacia paradoxa*, commonly known as Hedge wattle. This grows into an attractive, large shrub and thrives in either full sun or part shade. Like all our indigenous varieties, it is a tough customer, and being adaptable, manages the clay soils around Whitehorse well. Its foliage is bushy and prickly so it is wonderful for your backyard habitat planting, as well as being useful bird refuge out in the parks and bush reserves. It is a pretty shrub when flowering from August to November, a fast grower and also valued for its habitat and bird attracting qualities. We have been busy tubing up plenty of these seedlings recently, so come Autumn, hopefully many of these very ornamental acacias will be plants will be bought and planted out widely across the district.

Further information:

[Bungalook Nursery](#)

[VICFLORA](#)

[Whitehorse City Council](#)

Two Local heroes - Belinda Moody and David Berry

Belinda Moody



It was wonderful to hear that Whitehorse Council's staff member - Belinda Moody, Tree Education Officer & Coordinator of the Whitehorse Gardens for Wildlife program, was recently awarded a Planning Champion award by the Planning Institute of Australia.

This award 'recognises non-planners for making a significant contribution and lasting presence to the urban and regional environment over the last 1-2 years. It's awarded to non-planners who promote and advocate for good planning and planning outcomes and the value of planning and/or the planning profession to the public.'

Congratulations Belinda.

David Berry

Last week, David was awarded the Inaugural CROWAG (Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group) Volunteers Award. CROWAG are the umbrella group that represents over 16 groups within the City of Whitehorse who advocate for an enhanced urban environment.

The award recognised David's outstanding contributions to the City of Whitehorse and wider community. His volunteering extends at least 36 years (1986 - 2022) with significant roles including:

- President Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society for 22 Years (2000-2022)
- Founding committee member (2007) and Chairman (2020–2022) Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society Environment Fund
- Founding member Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group (CROWAG) 2005.
- Supporter from 1998 and advocate for the Bungalook Nursery
- Wurundjeri Walk development and revegetation - Advocate for and member of advisory committee (1986-2022)
- Committee member Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Action Group (BLSAG) that secured. McCubbin Park with financial contribution from 3 levels of Government
- Member CW committees including City of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Committee member of Whitehorse Active Transport Action Group
- Author of 'Fighting for the Trees' and Editor of The Tree Society Newsletter



David and Sally have moved to Rosanna and the Whitehorse Community will miss their valuable contribution and friendship. We wish them well.

David Berry (centre) receiving his award from Ross Gillespie and Di Tribe (CROWAG)

Lesser known local reserves - R. E. Gray Reserve

There are several small reserves across Whitehorse which contain both open spaces, parklands and some valuable bush remnants. RONALD E. GRAY RESERVE is one such area. It is [located](#) near the northern end of Springvale Road just off the Eastern freeway. It covers 3.614 hectares and is roughly divided into two areas. The site of the original house and outbuildings is now cleared and there is a



large grassed open area, a playground and includes an electric barbeque. A wonderful smaller area of remnant bush land is being managed by Council as a conservation area. This park is an excellent example of a neighborhood park offering both the natural bush environment and a flexible family play area.

BRIEF HISTORY -In the early 1950's a patch of native ground orchids growing near No. 9 Springvale Road was declared a 'Wild Flower Sanctuary' by the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria. The Society donated materials and possibly paid for a protective fence that was erected around the orchids. The then owner, Mr Enrico Savana preserved the surrounding bushland area around his home

but with increasing age and ill health, he finally sold it to a developer. It remained undeveloped for some time, then in 1966, the attention of Council was drawn to this land by Mr. R.E. Gray of its engineering staff. Mr. Gray is now deceased, but at the time, he believed the area should be preserved as a wildflower sanctuary because of the native orchids. Subsequently Council resolved to make an application to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for the zoning of the site as proposed Public Open space which secured a small area for the preservation of the orchids. After more time passing, there was a proposed development and subdivision of the larger site, which residents only became aware of through the plans going before Council. This caused surprise and disappointment at the loss of an accessible open natural area, and many wrote objections to Council. Following a public meeting Council acquired the open space and after considerable debate, the local North Nunawading Action Group acquired the remainder of the land in May 1977. The Action group then formed a Committee of Management for the area now known as R E Gray in 1977. The Committee cared for the reserve for many years but has finally closed as participating volunteer numbers had significantly declined.

This reserve is well worth a visit, not only for its park open space, but also for a look at the remnant section which contains a marvelous mix of many of our local indigenous species. This includes *Acrotriche serrulate*, *Arthropodium strictum*, *Correa reflexa*, *Cassinia longifolia*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Indigofera australis*, *Pimelia humilis*, *Platylobium obtusangulum*, and *Xanthorrhoea sp.* There is also a huge Yellow Box eucalypt to appreciate, preserved and able to grow across the years because some concerned local residents in the past fought for the preservation of orchids, wildflowers and trees ensuring that this area was protected from development.



Around the parks

Pobblebonk Point at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.

Pobblebonk Point is currently being repaired. This point is a wonderful spot to access the wetland area, view the many water birds, and is used extensively when volunteers in the Water watch team are sampling for Melbourne Water, and by students in the Environmental Education Program. Recent flooding has delayed the work, but it is hoped it will be completed very soon.



Anne Payne



<http://blackburnlakesanctuary.org/>

Links for a selection of other park groups.



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>

Heatherdale Creek Parklands

<https://www.facebook.com/HeatherdaleCreekPAC>

Cootamundra Walk Friends

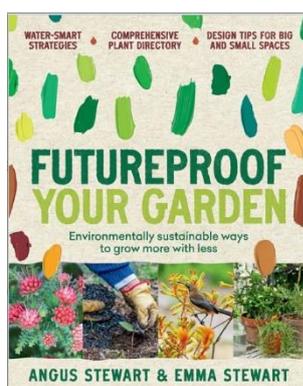
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CootamundraWalkFriends>

Blackburn Creeklands

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

Deep planting

When planting out our tube stock, the usual method is to plant it in the ground at the same depth that it is in the tube. In an article in the recent edition of *Organic Gardener*, (November, Issue 137, 2022) an edited extract from the book *Futureproof your Garden* by Angus Stewart and Emma Stewart explained the great advantages of Deep planting. This method has been trialed by Angus who is now convinced that our traditional method



should be amended. This is because of the success the deep planting method has shown in improving the survival and growth rates, particularly for woody plants such as shrubs and trees. It works well for plants that have elongated stems and those that are routinely propagated from stem cuttings. The article explains that deep planting is successful because new roots can form on the buried part of the stem so that as the plant develops, it has the potential to develop deeper and bigger root systems than it could have if it were planted at normal depth. This extra root system can be established in the deeper layers of soil giving the plant access to more water and nutrients. As well as describing

the benefits of this method, it also provides an illustrated step by step instructions which Angus uses when establishing trees and shrubs on his farm. So provided your soil has reasonable drainage and is not too rocky, it could be well worth experimenting with deep planting in your own garden or revegetation project.

Next Committee Meeting:

14th December 2022

Bungalook Nursery Newsletter March 2023 edition: 84

We are seeking articles for each edition of the newsletter. Please submit items for the next newsletter by 22 Feb 2023. 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.