

Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment



Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND 3442

Newsletter Editors: Paul & Marie Marmara

Vision & Mission

Newham & District Landcare Group has the following Vision and Mission.

Vision: To enhance biodiversity and natural ecosystems within the local environment.

Mission: To raise awareness of, protect and enhance the local environment.

This will be achieved by bringing the community together to address environmental problems, to appreciate the natural landscape, to assist in promoting sustainable agricultural production promoting the benefits of working and sharing together.

Changing of the Guard

As part of the rules of the Newham & District Landcare Group it is a requirement that the President steps down after three successive terms of one year. At the August AGM Penny Roberts reaches this milestone and will be stepping down.

The Committee acknowledges the tremendous amount of time and energy provided by Penny, so in some ways replacement is made difficult. However the Committee would like to ensure a smooth changeover and therefore invites an expression of interest in becoming President from a member prior to the August AGM. We wish to emphasise that after a very open discussion within our Committee it is clear that Penny will continue managing a number of projects and be involved in many ongoing tasks. We are not losing Penny, just allowing her to move gracefully from the Presidency and providing someone else with a leadership opportunity.

Our new President can expect that a considerable level of ongoing support will be available, apart from being able to make their own contribution to the continuing development and health of the Group. We have a fine Committee and many able supporters amongst our membership who will provide support to the new President.

Anyone who wishes to consider taking on this important role, whether for a year or a full 3 year term should feel quite comfortable in talking to Penny or any of the current Committee about the opportunity.

Thanks again Penny for all your hard work.



A younger Penny Roberts back in the Spring edition of 2005

News Items

Wesley Park

Landcare and Newham Garden Club have continued with the Enhancement Scheme. Observant members of the community will have seen mulch being spread. Planting will take place in Autumn. Members will be advised of dates of the planting as volunteers will be required.



Pests are Pests

Rabbits and foxes are the major pests causing economic losses in the Newham and District Landcare area, according to a survey conducted amongst landholders late last year. The costs and lost opportunities that they cause are very substantial, and cannot be ignored.

To this end, six adjoining landholders on the north and east sides of The Jim Jim have grouped together to do something about the problem. With substantial support from a federal government grant, they have begun a program to drastically reduce the populations of rabbits and foxes on their combined properties. A spotlight survey conducted immediately before the control programme began indicated high populations of both kinds of pest animal, particularly foxes. Future surveys will be conducted after the project is completed, to maintain a continuing measure of pest populations over time.

The programme is in three parts, a baiting campaign to reduce animal numbers, followed by destruction of habitat by ripping of warrens and removal of cover such as blackberries, then revegetation of the ripped areas with native plants. The baiting programme began in early March, with adjoining landholders advised and warning notices placed at the entrances to affected properties.

The current project will be used as a demonstration for other landholders in the area, particularly to demonstrate the benefits to be gained by groups of adjoining landholders working together to control their pests. For this purpose, one or more field days will be arranged, with dates to be advised.

Rabbits may be cute, and foxes admirable for their cunning, but they cause substantial economic losses that cannot be ignored. The project now under way is an initiative of the Newham & District Landcare Group, with the intention that it will be the first of a number of such campaigns to substantially reduce the populations of pest animals (rabbits and foxes) in our area.

To get involved, please contact John Luckock on 5427 0909 or Bob Evans on 5427 0784.



Roadside Management Group

The "Weedies" have decided to attack weeds in Lavender Farm Road. A "Cut & Paint" morning will be held by Philip & Richard to eradicate the broom along about 100m section of Lavender Farm Rd & plant with local understorey species. An effective way is to cut the broom and paint the stump with Roundup seems to inhibit any regrowth. It is proposed to work in a team of twos, one cutting and the other painting or spraying the stump. The dead plants are left in situ, they break down fairly quickly when laid as a mulch. Lunch, spray-bottles and gloves provided of course, people could bring loppers or pruning saws if they can.

By-laws

Newham & District Landcare Group thanks those that responded to the proposed Bylaw changes outlined in the last newsletter. The Committee has considered the comments made in adopting the proposals.

News Items



Landcare and Newham Primary School - looking good!

Newham Primary School has been one site of Landcare activity over the last 14 months. Woody weeds were dealt with prior to planting the area with indigenous natives. Mulch went down and necessary maintenance has been attended to.

The plants have done extremely well – have a look for yourself the next time you pass by – and the next step will be to plant the area around the dam.

One source of plants for this area will be the school itself, with students and Landcare volunteers growing plants in the newly completed shade-house within the school grounds.

The shadehouse was the last component of a Melbourne Water Community Water Grant received by the Landcare group in 2006 and its construction was managed by **John Winter**, a local builder.

Hopefully, a dedicated water supply and automatic watering system will be installed in the next year.

Our grateful thanks go to the following for their contribution:

David Aldridge did the site preparation free of charge. For bobcat & excavator work contact him on 5422 3210.

Mountview Steel Fabrication in Woodend [5427 4017] gave a generous discount on the steel framing work.

Another local builder, **Ian Thompson**, assisted John Winter with the construction and **Arthur Clarke**, fencing contractor, drove the posts.

A reminder of the invitation in the last newsletter that if you interested in helping our primary school please ring Jenny Waugh 5427 0408.

Planting Days

Information sheets on organizing a planting day are available – contact Penny or Hilary [5427 0795]

Web Page

Website up and running

All members are invited to look at the new NDLG website. It has been up and running for a while but we were refining the information that was to be posted on this site.

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~newhamlc/index.htm>

There is information on joining Landcare, advantages of joining, current groups and projects, trees that are recommended for our area and a calendar of events.

Newham Watermark Group Joins with Newham Landcare

A reminder to those who wish to but have not made contact to find out more about Newham Watermark (featured in the last newsletter to contact Newham Watermark - Contact Alice on 5427 0156 or email airda@bigpond.com)



Want to get your head around the way we are using and managing water in Australia?

Want to understand the nature and extent of the challenge we face in securing our water future?

Want to play a part in reforming the ways we use and manage water in this ancient, arid and fragile land continent?

News Items continued

April 19th 10am -12ish Rabbit control field session – see how working together with your neighbours gives more effective control. 229 Dons Rd., Newham

Rabbits and foxes do not understand property boundaries. There is little value in one landholder working hard to clear his/her land of rabbits and foxes if the neighbours don't, because the pests simply reinvade.

Effective control is achieved by groups of neighbouring properties working together in an organised way to make their properties an unfriendly environment for rabbits and foxes.

Recently six properties on the north and east sides of The Jim Jim have been working together to show how this can be done, supported by a grant from the Federal Government.

You are invited to join us in a farm walk and a cup of tea to see the problems and hear the solutions from the contractors who have done the work.

It's a LONG driveway.... Keep going until you see vehicles Further information: John Luckcock 5427 0909

Landcare members clean up Newham—Kathryn Nicholson

Sunday 2 March found eighteen enthusiastic members ready to contribute to the Clean Up Australia brigade. In twos and threes we radiated out from the Newham Mechanics Hall and in no time collected 25 bags of assorted rubbish and were ready for morning tea.

High on the list were drink and food containers of all descriptions and assorted tyres, rims and hubcaps. Although the majority of the rubbish came from the through roads, several bags were filled from the village roads and Wesley Park.

Thanks to all who participated.



Your Current Committee

President: Penny Roberts [5427 0795] Secretary: Donald Lang
Treasurer: Hilary Roberts [5427 0795]

Committee Members

Arthur Clarke, Chris Wiggett, John Luckcock, Fran Spain, Nick Massie & Jim Sansom

Please note that if any member wishes a copy of the Presidents Report, Treasurers Report or other items tabled at the AGM then they should contact the Secretary.

Members are invited to contact the committee on the contact numbers above on any issue.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] at 7.30 – 9 pm in Newham. All members are welcome to attend the Committee meetings to become more involved or raise specific matters. Please advise a committee member if you wish to attend. Meetings start and finish on timeand we enjoy them!!

Special interest groups

If you have any queries, or wish to contribute, please contact the person listed below.

Roadsides: Alice Aird [5427 0453] Sue Massie [5427 0065]

Seed bank/seed collection: Penny Roberts [5427 0795]

Newsletter items: Nick Massie [5427 0065]

Special Feature

The importance of the much unloved larger species of *Acacias* – Black wattle, Silver wattle and Blackwood.

By **Bronwyn Morris**, Horticultural technician, ECOLINC and volunteer Tree Project grower for our group.

This is a very large genus of the Mimosaceae family. Some 23 species grow within the Melbourne area. They vary in height, foliage, flowering times, seed pods [legumes], growing conditions and rate of growth. They are a well loved and studied group of trees and shrubs.

It is the larger trees previously mentioned that have slumped in popularity.

One should always remember that you should pick the right plant for the place.

I wouldn't recommend a Blackwood for a small, inner city Melbourne backyard but in a revegetation area, wildlife corridor or farm forestry patch the larger group of *Acacias* is the perfect tree for the right place.

The Blackwood, Black and Silver wattles are excellent examples of pioneering species, meaning "A species which colonizes previously uncolonized land, usually leading to ecological succession. Since uncolonized land usually has thin, poor quality soils with few nutrients, pioneer species are typically very hardy plants with adaptations such as long roots, root nodes containing nitrogen fixing bacteria and leaves that reduce transpiration."

This makes the fast growing *Acacia* tree species the ideal choice for re-veg. or degraded sites that are being re-established. The Black and Silver wattles are faster growing and shorter lived, which can be a problem for some people. This shorter life period is a positive and productive adaptation leading to ecological succession. "This means a more-or-less predictable and orderly change in plant communities eg. life, death, seeding and decomposing cycles."

They set up the soil conditions for other species to feed upon after they have died off.

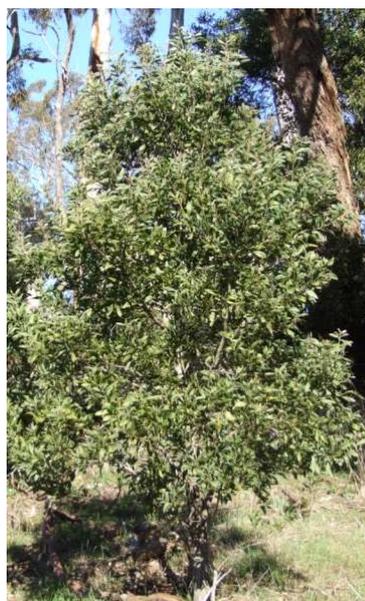
The decomposing plant material also produces large amounts of food sources for insects, which in turn increases the bird / wildlife populations. This in turn increases BIODIVERSITY. Which brings us back to why we revegetate degraded or barren sites in the first place? "To increase BIODIVERSITY."

Acacias' soil microbial activity and nitrogen fixing processes inhibit weed germination and encourage only native species to germinate. This is a simple form of symbiotic process between native species allowing them to out-compete non-native species.

So go forth and plant those big *Acacia* trees in the confidence that you are contributing directly to the biodiversity of your area. Both you and the animals will be thankful for your contribution.



Acacia mearnsii Black Wattle



Acacia melanoxylon Blackwood



Acacia dealbata Silverwattle

Upcoming Events

Details for some have not yet been confirmed – expect notification with details in the month preceding an event.

Two field sessions on pest animal control are in the planning stage – in Autumn and Spring, one each for rabbits and foxes. These sessions will add considerably to our knowledge on these pests, which have an enormous detrimental impact.

Friends of Hanging Rock events are all included – this is an important piece of public land in ‘our patch’ and our group members make up a sizeable percentage of *FoHR* members.

April – Sat 12th “Weedies” working Bee. Lavender Hill Road **9.30 am Cut & paint on 23 Lavender Farm Roadside– learn & practice this technique for dealing with woody weeds.**

Minimal disturbance of remnant vegetation, minimal quantities of herbicide. Several tool options to try. Lunch provided by our hosts, Philip and Richard. Bring secateurs or loppers if you can. Queries/RSVP to Philip 5427 4013 or wilkenna@nex.net.au

April – Sat 12th ‘Happy Feet’ screening & BBQ [Newham P.S.] 5pm for 6.30 movie start. BYO for BBQ & something to share and a cushion! contact Chris Wiggett Phone 5423 5279

April - Sat 19th Rabbit control field session

Doyles place, 229 Dons Rd., Newham—10am start
Refer article in Newsletter

April - Sat 19th *Spotlight Walk at the Rock [FoHR], RSVP Marie: 5427 0258 by April 16th Starts at 7:00pm—Bring torch and wear clothing suitable for the night*

April - Sat 26th Bat evening with Lindy Lumsden [and her pet bat ‘George’]

repeated for all who missed out on the fantastic session at Hanging Rock Reserve.

Don't miss out again!!! This will not be publicized generally as we have a ‘wait list’ of 110 from the last event...

Visual presentation, Harp trapping exercise, sonic recording. Tea/coffee/ cake.
Newham Hall \$5 per adult [under 16 free]
Numbers will be limited RSVP essential [Penny 5427 0795]

May – Sun 25th *FoHR planting Tree planting followed by sausage sizzle 9:00am start (Contact Marie 5427 0258)*

May - Sat 31st Fungghi workshop [register your interest *now* with Lori 98366394]

June - Sat 14th Official Autumn Hands-on session: Wesley Park Planting

June - Sat 21st Retro-fitting houses for thermal efficiency 9.30am Newham Hall

June - Sat 28th Winter dinner - Country & Western theme

August - Friday 8th AGM / Ian Hunter, Wurundjeri Elder

September - Sat 20th Official Spring planting – E/v 9 site

October - Sat 11th Wesley Park planting, Film & BBQ

December - Sat 6th End-of-Year BBQ

2009 – Feb - Sat 15th Picnic/field day looking at NHT funded sites



Indigenous Plants of Newham & surrounding district

Marie Marmara - Landcare member and grower of local indigenous flora

Acacia dealbata Silver Wattle ***Mimosaceae***

A tough, fairly fast growing plant. I really like the blue/grey fern-like foliage of this tree and the fact that it flowers mid Winter into Spring.

Size: approx. 5-30m H x 5-10m W

Habitat: Found along river flats, streamsides, in watercourses over drier slopes facing any aspect.

Form: Evergreen small to medium sized tree.

Foliage: Fern-like blue/grey leaves.

Flowers: Pale to bright yellow flowers which are perfumed, July to Oct.

Life Span: 20 to 80 years (dependent on environmental factors)

Similar Species: Similar to *A. mearnsii* in appearance. Three main differences being **1.** *A. dealbata* has raised prominent glands at the base of each pair of pinnae (leaf stalk attachments) **2.** Foliage of *A. dealbata* is more blue/grey. **3.** *A. dealbata* flowers much earlier than *A. mearnsii*

Landscape/Revegetation Use:

Excellent for erosion control and has the ability to grow quickly at high densities which makes it suitable for salinity recharge plantings. Silver Wattle quickly provides medium level shelter. Fixes atmospheric nitrogen to the soil.

Special Features:

Attracts seed and insect eating birds. Beetles feed on the foliage. Ants are attracted to the sugary glands on the foliage and also like the stalk attachment of the seed (funicle). Gum produced is food for Sugar and Squirrel Gliders. The tree provides nesting sites for birds and is host to the Imperial Blue Butterfly when it is less than 3m high.. The pollen is used by bees to produce honey. Leaves useful for dyeing.

Koorie Plant use:

The wood was used for axe handles, while the gum was mixed with ash to form a glue to fasten the axe head to handle. The gum was used in a sweet drink and both the seed and gum were eaten.

References:-

'Flora of Melbourne' SCAP 1993



Acacia dealbata - Silverwattle form



Acacia dealbata—Flowers/foliage/attracting honey bee