

WINTER 2010  
Newsletter No.25

# Newham & District Landcare Group

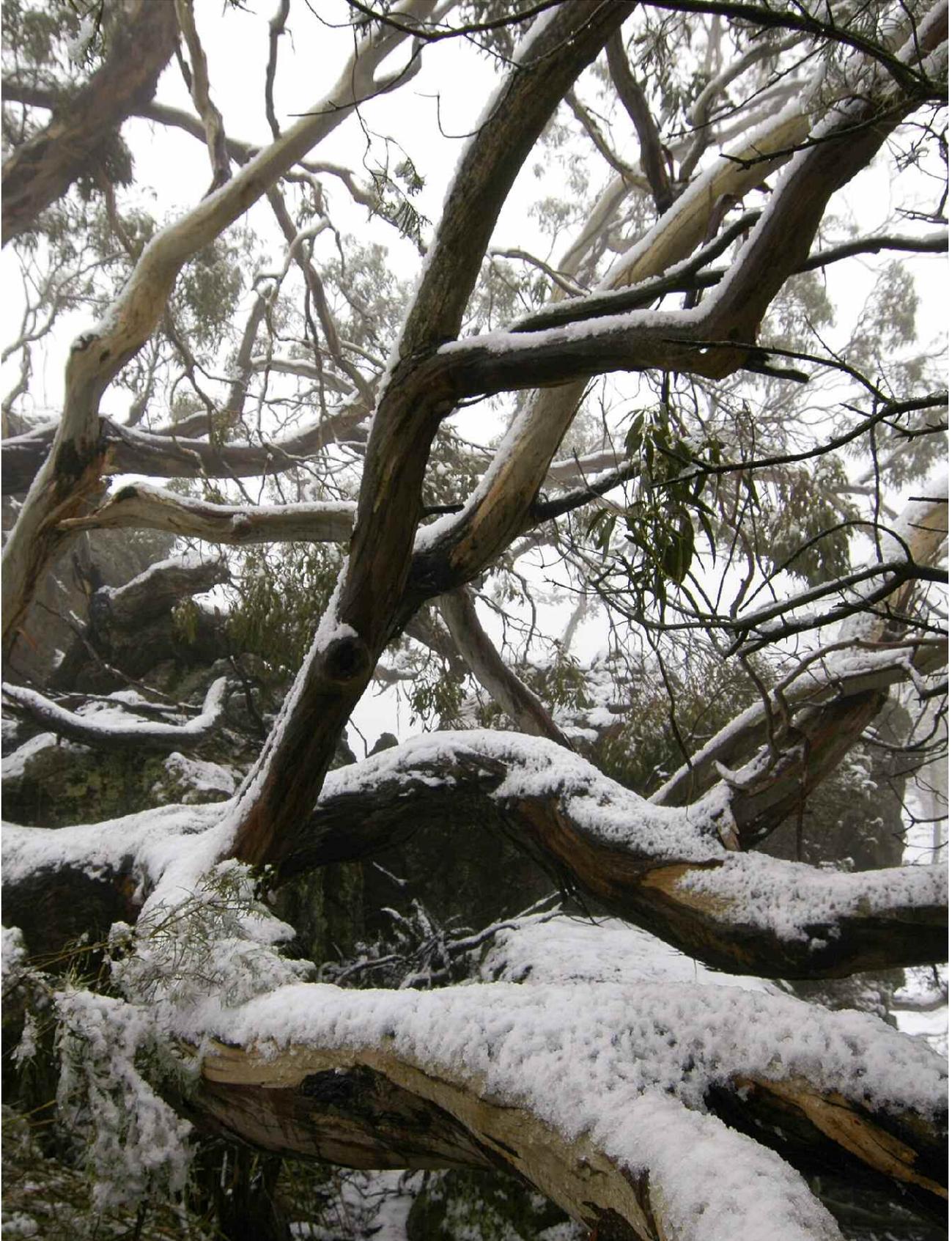


Working towards a  
healthier environment

Melbourne Water  
Victoria  
The State Water Utility

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Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



## President's Message

Membership renewals have been sent out and I urge all to renew and to encourage your friends to join and contribute to your community and environment.

With elections in the air I remind members that the annual general meeting and election of committee and officers will be held on 13th August 2010 at the Newham Mechanics Hall. Look out for the forms and participate.

Next year will be an exciting one for Newham Landcare with a fund raising programme in development that is based on research undertaken with landowners. We expect to make advances in the development of bio links between major landscaping features as well as plantings on private and public property.

Suggestions for other projects are most welcome.

**Nick Massie**

## Roadside Management Group Report

Further weed mapping data of Boundary and Whitebridge Roads was entered into the Macedon Ranges Shire Council data base on 4 May. The number of roads in the Newham district which have had their weed profile mapped by the Group and the details entered into the MRSC data base, is now 12.

The Group also undertook a working bee on 3 June in Palmer Crescent to remove and spray a huge infestation of Paterson's Curse in a property's nature strip. 18 large bags of weed were removed. Please keep a lookout for this weed on your property and commit to remove it, before any infestation becomes a serious problem, not just on your land, but to all land in the district.

A talk has been arranged for Friday 8 October at the Newham Hall, where Julie Graham and Carolyn Selway of the DPI will discuss plants purchased from Nurseries which can have a weedy potential and plants which are sometimes sold at local markets and may be State Prohibited Weeds. They will also discuss State Declared Weeds.

Members interested in attending this talk should take photos of any plants they want identified, rather than bring the plant itself to the venue. More details of this night will be advised later.

## Group contacts

**President:** Nick Massie. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts.

**Committee members:** Penny Roberts, Don Lang, Sue Massie, Jim Sansom, John Luckock.

**New members, general queries:** Penny Roberts; 5427 0795.

**Roadsides:** Sue Massie; 5427 0665.

**Newham Primary:** Jenny Waugh; 5427 0408.

**Animal pests:** John Luckock; 5427 0909.

**Wesley Park:** Fran Spain; 5427 0661.

**Flora, library, small tools, grants:** Penny Roberts; 5427 0795.

**Spray trailer:** Chris Wiggett; 5423 5279.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] between 7.30 – 9pm 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 time... and we enjoy them!

# DIARY OF EVENTS

## AUGUST

**Saturday 7th**

***Hands-on session at Newham Primary School***

[in conjunction with a school parent working-bee]. This will involve maintenance in the plantings along the creek. Wellies may be advisable. Afterwards we can use the school BBQ so BYO BBQ items or a packed lunch. Starting 9.30am.

**Friday 13th**

***Newham & District Landcare Group AGM***

7.30pm at Newham Mechanics Hall.

***7.45pm – Improve Soils Naturally***

Our guest speaker, Kerry Marsh, will explain the practice of natural farming.

## SEPTEMBER

**Saturday 11th**

***Spring planting/ maintenance – Wesley Park***

Can you spare a couple of hours? More information to follow.

Contact Penny: 5427 0795.

## OCTOBER

**Sunday 3rd**

***Corporate plantings***

If you are interested in seeing how these operate, why not come along. This Spring we have 3 corporate groups coming to Newham district – wanting to plant 1000-1500 plants each. Contact Penny for details (5427 0795).

**Friday 8th**

***Weed Talk – Julie Graham***

Newham Mechanics Hall, more information to follow.

**Sunday 10th**

***Before and after visit –***

to a local property – details to be confirmed.

**Sunday 17th**

***Lancefield Show***

More information to follow.

## NOVEMBER

**Saturday 27th**

***School Fare – Newham Primary School***

## DECEMBER

**Saturday 4th**

***BBQ at Wesley Park***

Annual end-of-year event at Wesley Park – *put it in your diary.*

## Winter Dinner



It was cold outside on Saturday 26 June but inside the Newham Hall it was hot when members got together to celebrate at the Landcare Winter Dinner. The night had a South American theme and many of the participants dressed up in response, with red being a predominant colour. In keeping with the theme, for the shared table, members provided some delicious South American style food and as the home of chocolate, many of the desserts honoured this tradition and all very tasty it was too.

Carlos and Naomi provided the entertainment by demonstrating the Salsa and trying to teach the rest of us! This is a very sexy dance with changes of partners and apparently only a few basic steps. It seemed simple but many mistakes were made which lead to much hilarity.



Carlos and Naomi

The Hall was decorated by members in the colours of South America and all overlooked by Los Vaqueros. Fran made a sombrero piñata which the children had great delight in bashing to reveal the exciting contents. Thanks also to Natalie and Vanessa Wiggett for looking after the children on the night.

All members are thanked for their efforts in making the evening a great success.



## Plant Profile: Chocolate Lily

*Athropodium strictum* is a herbaceous perennial indigenous to our area and occurring commonly.

Look out for this tussocky herb that flowers along roadsides, in remnant native grasslands or in herb-rich foot-hill forest from October to December.

Grows in full sun to part-shade.

Height 30-60cm, width 20-80cm.

Flowers on a branched stem from mid-late Spring.

Lily pollen is often beautifully sculptured.

This plant has lovely chocolate (vanilla) scented flowers and can be planted singly to add interest among other perennial plants, en masse or grown as a container plant.

It dies back to tuberous rootstock after flowering, then re-shoots with Autumn rains.

The Kulin people used to cook and eat the white tubers.



## **IMPROVE SOILS NATURALLY**

Our guest speaker, Kerry Marsh, will explain the practice of natural farming. She will discuss the importance of soil testing and methods of managing and improving soil without the use of high analysis fertilisers. Advice will also be provided on making your own fertilisers.

Her talk will cover topics of interest for home gardeners as well as large acreage managers and all are urged to attend.

Kerry, a resident of Woodend, is a consultant agronomist specialising in sustainable farming methods, particularly in relation to improving soil naturally. Working as an agronomist, balancing minerals in soil, has led to understanding how to balance minerals in animals, particularly horses and she now works with racehorse owners and trainers to ensure that their horses are nutritionally sound.

Kerry's qualifications include a Bachelor of Education and Agricultural Science Degree, she has nine years experience as a biodynamic farmer and is a member of the Biodynamic Agriculture Vic. Committee.

### **Newham Mechanics Hall**

**13 August 2010. 7:45pm, after AGM**

**Contact Hilary Roberts 5427 0120 to register  
Or email [hroberts@bigpond.com](mailto:hroberts@bigpond.com) - by 6 August**

**SUPPER PROVIDED**

**FREE TO MEMBERS.**

**GOLD COIN DONATION FOR NON MEMBERS**

## **Mammals of the Macedon Ranges**

Once again we were privileged to have Bruce Donaldson talk to us at the Newham Hall about another of his interests. This time he gave an illustrated talk about 40 of the different mammals which inhabit the bushlands around the Macedon Ranges area. We were introduced to the species, their habits and an evaluation of their place in the environment. As usual, Bruce imparted his own inimitable perspective and sense of humour on the subject which meant that not only did we run over time as usual but enjoyed the whole process also. For those unable to attend, keep your eye out for a repeat at some stage.

## Book reviews

### **Recreating Country**

Stephen Murphy (first published May 2009)

*This fabulous little book is a comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to designing plantations that will last forever – and we now have multiple copies available for loan.*

'A blueprint for the design of sustainable landscapes' is the sub-title of this small book – and indeed it is.

The author has 26 years experience in the revegetation industry – running a native nursery in central Victoria and through involvement in conservation groups managing native vegetation reserves.

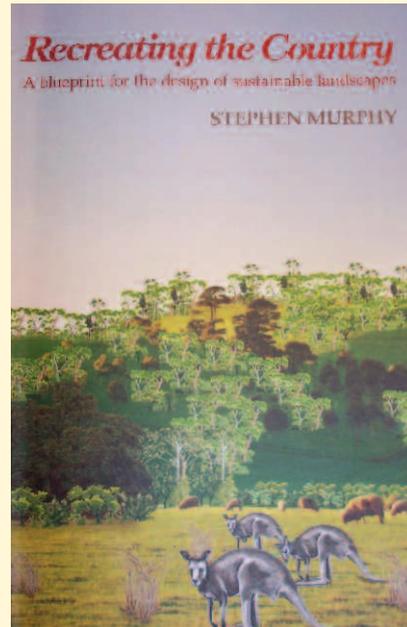
Chapters cover the case for more sustainable design, the ten design principles that form the blueprint, integrating farm forestry with sustainable design, design examples demonstrating application of the blueprint, establishment techniques and ongoing management.

Technical terms are used and the text is referenced – but it is well written and laid out.

Lots of pictures, stand-out headings, scoring system highlighted etc...

Despite being jam-packed with information it is easy to access key points – or detailed descriptions if that is what you want.

A must-read for anyone doing revegetation on their properties... I wish it had been available when I started out!



## Newham rainfall statistics and statistics

For the statistically minded and all of us concerned with the weather, I have looked at the rainfall statistics for Newham from 1979 to 2009 – 31 years of rainfall records courtesy of Ken Sweaney!

- Average rainfall for the 31 years from 1979 to 2009 has been 699mm.
- The lowest reading in 1982 was 379mm and the highest, in 1993 was 1042mm.
- The 9 years to December 2009 have ALL been *BELOW* the 31 year average of 699mm. The low in 2008 was 401mm and the high was 680mm in 2003.

- From 1979 to 1988, 8 out of 10 years were above the 31 year average.
- From 1999 to 2009 only 2 out of 11 years were above the 31 year average.
- For first 6 months of 2010, 4 out of 6 months have been above the monthly average for past 31 years.

All this tells us is what we probably already knew – we have had an almighty long drought.

This year has been the best 6 months (January to June) for 12 years, so enjoy it while you can. Who knows whether it is an aberration or a turn-around

**Hilary Roberts and Ken Sweaney**