

**WINTER 2009**  
Newsletter No.21



# Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a  
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



## 2nd Generation Landcare Grant

see story on page 9



## President's Message

### Participation – that's the commitment

It has become cold and many plants have entered their dormant period in what seems a 'normal' winter. Unfortunately anyone monitoring the rain gauge will appreciate that rainfall is well below 'normal' and members will have to contend with unfilled dams and lack of creek flow for another season.

Landcare has not been quite as dormant, with three collective member activities taking place on Dons, Coach and Anderson Road. These successful events reduced weed infestation and planted over 800 trees and shrubs on members' properties. Some new faces were seen at these events, **but not enough** – I urge all those who have not attended these, or previous plantings, to make themselves a promise to attend our next one. Apart from the social networking they are a great way to increase your knowledge in correct ground preparation and planting. As N&DLG now has a powered auger, a short training session at one of these plantings will enable you to access this tool to greatly enhance productivity on your own property.

I would like to congratulate the Roadside Management Group who have been providing invaluable assistance to the Shire in mapping roadside weed infestation. This information and the activities undertaken have directly enhanced the targeting of weeds and assisted in preventing reinfestation. If interested in participating please contact the secretary or enquire via our web page (Google Newham Landcare).

**Nick Massie**

## N&DLG Membership fees due 1 July

Cost of membership remains \$20 per property – fantastic value!

This cost covers the Victorian Landcare magazine and basic insurance whilst attending Landcare functions.

Through membership you have access to cheap native plants, tools/equipment for loan/hire, library items and a discount at Elders in Kyneton. If you are uncertain about just what items the group has available contact Penny or Hilary on 5427 0795 – all have been publicized in the group newsletter, but early members will not have the information kit that is now prepared for new members.

*A big thank you in advance to all who pay promptly – it makes our life easier!*

We have two Email lists – one for those who wish to receive only word documents and another for those happy to receive larger files, including the quarterly newsletter – and a snail-mail list. The newsletter and important events notices go out to the snail mail list which includes the 'word docs only' Email list.

**If I have you on the wrong list, please let me know on your renewal form.**

# DIARY OF EVENTS

## JULY

### Saturday 25th

Friends Of Hanging Rock – Working Bee 10.00am. Meet at Café... work until 12.30 then BBQ.  
Contact Paul 5427 0258.

### Newham Landcare Winter Dinner at Kerrie Hall 7.00pm (Kerrie Valley Road, Kerrie).

Members and guests are invited. The theme for the night will be Latin American. Entertainment by local musicians Polly Christie (vocals) and Andy Rigby (acoustic harp), with a performance of South American music, followed by instruction in some furious Latin dancing. Prizes for the best outfit and dancers.

Contact to register: Michael Quinn 5427 0129 or Don Lang 5427 0917.  
email: mfquinn@iinet.net.au donjudylang@mailcity.com

BYO: Grog and bring a plate – *advise what when registering. RSVP. 18 July.*

## AUGUST

### Friday 14th

### N&DLG Annual General Meeting – 7.30pm

#### *Why Migratory Birds Love Sustainable Coffee*

Phil Flanagan discusses the effects on migratory birds of land clearing for new coffee plantations in Costa Rica. In contrast the traditional shade grown coffee is known to provide a supportive environment for these birds.

This talk takes place directly after the AGM at 7.45pm and is free to members. Non members – gold coin. Supper is provided. RSVP: by 7 August – hproberts@bigpond.com

## DECEMBER

### Friday 4th

Mechanic's Hall Grand Opening at 11.30am – Contact Fran 5427 0661 for status or bookings.

### Saturday 5th

### End of Year Landcare BBQ at Wesley Park.

Time to start training for our two great events – the egg toss and the Great-Scott-Boot-Toss. Mark it in your diary now...

## Group contacts

**President:** Nick Massie. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts. **Secretary:** Don Lang.

**Committee members:** Penny Roberts, Jim Sansom, Arthur Clarke, John Luckock, Fran Spain, Doug Dalglish.

Chris Wiggett has stepped down from the committee but will continue to take an active role in the group – particularly in activities planned for families.

**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!

## Pests are Pests

Landholders on the slopes of the Jim Jim will have received a letter recently from the Department of Primary Industry advising of a project to dramatically reduce the rabbit population in the block surrounded by Dons Road, Three Chain Road, Boundary Road and Jim Road.

The letter may seem somewhat legalistic and a bit intimidating, but its intention is worthwhile. This is because 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 in 2007. The costs and lost opportunities that they cause are very substantial, and cannot be ignored.

A co-ordinated campaign over a wide area is the most effective way to succeed in reducing rabbit populations. Smaller campaigns suffer from the problem of reinfestation from untreated adjoining areas. To conduct a campaign over an area the size of the Jim Jim, with the large number of landholders involved, requires the resources of the DPI. They also have the authority to encourage less enthusiastic landholders to participate.

A typical control 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 and revegetation stages require time but not a lot of cost, whereas ripping can be expensive but it is the most important part because habitat destruction discourages reinfestation of the area and thus brings long term benefits.

This is a DPI project, but Newham and District Landcare Group can provide some assistance to members. In particular, a quantity of fumigant is available for gassing burrows at no cost, and guidance can be given in techniques for use of this material. Some plants in tubes will be available in the Spring for revegetation of ripped areas, also at no cost. Contact John Luckock on 5427 0909 for assistance.

Meanwhile all landholders in the Jim Jim area can expect to be visited by DPI officers in the coming months to look for signs of rabbits. The officers are well versed in techniques for controlling rabbits, and will be very willing to provide advice to landholders. Contact the DPI on 5421 1701 or 0428 587 317.

## Plant Profile: Bidgee-widgee

The *Bidgee-widgee* (*Acaena novae-zelandoniae*) is a useful soil-binding plant and ground cover which remains green all year.

It is a creeping, prostrate herb that grows to 10cm, with spherical white flowering heads standing tall to 20cm in Spring - Autumn. The red-purple-green fruiting heads that follow have arrow-shaped barbs which attach to passing animals and clothing.

Anyone who has experienced the task of removing *Bidgee-widgee* seed from socks, laces and track suit pants will consider this plant a 'weed' – as I did for many years! Now the girls are older, and de-seeding them is not my problem, my attitude has mellowed.

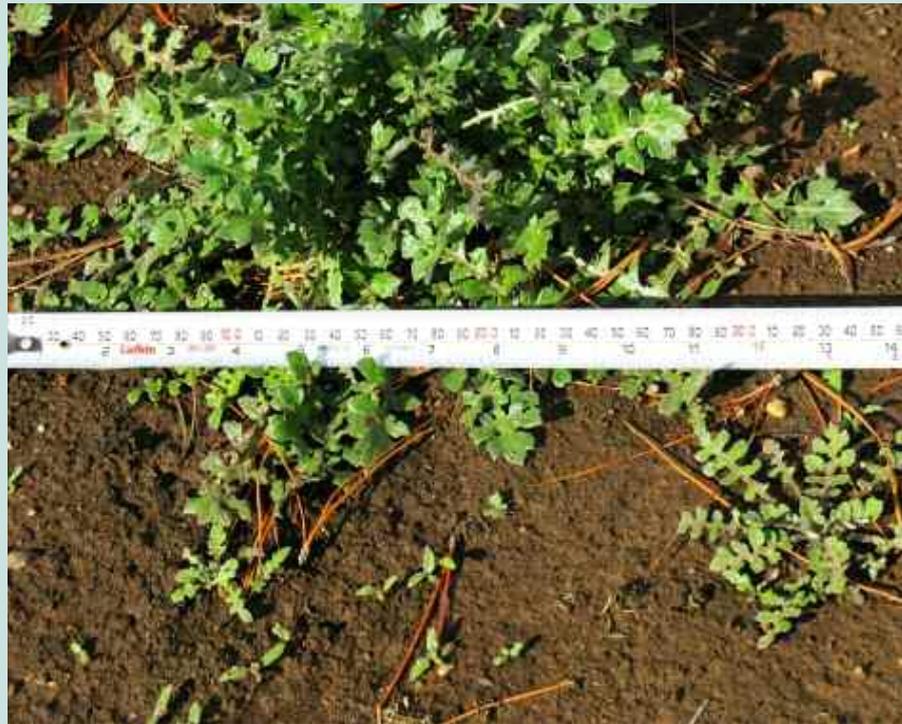
After years of trying in vain to eliminate this great survivor from around the garden I embraced it and cultivated an area as a trial lawn substitute. Unfortunately the flowering heads weren't removed by our mower so I abandoned the lawn idea, but now welcome it as a reliable, good-looking ground cover.

Early settlers used the leaves as a tea substitute.



## Capeweed – control it now!

The photograph shows a number of capeweed plants at various stages of growth on an otherwise bare patch of ground on the crest of a hill. It highlights a number of issues, not only in relation to capeweed, but also to other annual weed species:-



The fact that the ground is bare in late autumn means that it has a very poor pasture as a result of:-

- *Poor composition.* A predominance of annual species, flat weeds such as capeweed, patterson's curse and thistles, and, most likely, annual

grasses such as barley grass, silver grass, brome, and winter grass. All these annual species die off in the summer and leave bare patches which enable the cycle of annual weed dominance to continue.

- *Poor grazing management.* This results in the killing of perennial species and their substitution by the annual species. To the extent that over grazing continues, areas of bare ground expand. The paddock has a low carrying capacity or results in poor quality product outcomes and animal health issues because:-

- The predominance of annual species, which die in summer and thus have no response to summer or early autumn rain, means that there is little or no feed provided over the summer and early autumn months and thus lowers the carrying capacity of the paddock.
- Many of the annual weeds are unpalatable to stock or have physical characteristics that make them unattractive as feed, e.g. thistles or the sharp awns of many of the annual grasses, so what grows on the paddock is not necessarily eaten to produce product.
- The consumption of capeweed by milking cows taints the flavour of the milk and the awns of annual grasses contaminate the fleece of sheep and greatly reduce its value.
- The sharp awns of many of the annual grasses can cause stock injury, particularly to the eyes of sheep.

There is a considerable range in the size of the capeweed plants from 40cm to newly emerged seedlings of barely 1cm. (All the plants in the picture are capeweed). This highlights a number of factors, namely:-

- The early autumn rains only resulted in the successful germination and subsequent growth of a few annual plants. Those that survived grew and are now quite large. More recent rains have resulted in later germinations as evidenced by the very small plants in the photograph.

- If an endeavor had been made to control the earlier germinations with herbicide, it would have had to be followed up by a subsequent herbicide application to control the later germinations.
- The fact that some of the plants are now quite large means that a higher rate of herbicide will have to be applied than would have been the case if they were all of similar small size. (The rate of herbicide applied needs to be based on the size of the larger plants, not the small ones).
- Given the size of the large capeweed plants it is essential that the paddock be sprayed with herbicide as soon as possible because they are continuing to grow and if left much longer the larger plants will become much harder to control, if at all. The smaller plants, (seedlings), will be much easier to control.

Carefully follow the "Directions for Use" in relation to herbicide application. Amicide is the most frequently used herbicide for the control of capeweed as well as many of the other broad leaf weeds such as thistles and patterson's curse. Some features of Amicide to take into account would be:-

- The technique of "Spray Grazing". This entails the application of a low rate of herbicide followed by intense heavy grazing at ten times the normal stocking rate. The low rate of herbicide is insufficient to kill the plant, but it sweetens the plant and causes it to curl up from its normal prostrate growth habit and thus becomes more accessible to grazing animals. Once the grazing animals realize the sweetness of the plants after being sprayed they then preferentially graze them down to the ground and eventually kill them by over grazing. It is a very effective and cheap technique, particularly with sheep. However, caution is necessary in the use of this technique as the application of Amidide, and some of the other broadleaf herbicides, can result in the creation of toxins in some plants, e.g. variegated thistles and patterson's curse, which can cause death if grazed by animals, but generally only where there is a particularly heavy infestation of those plants. Some animals are more susceptible.
- Some herbicides such as Amicide and MCPA are quite volatile. This means that their vapours, (like a perfume or the odour of a dead animal), as opposed to actual spray droplets, can drift for many hundreds of metres from where the herbicide was applied. These vapors can kill susceptible plants such as fruit trees, roses and grape vines. Caution must therefore be exercised in their use to avoid damage to plants on neighbouring properties. The time of year when these herbicides are used therefore becomes very relevant. For example, using them in winter when many of the susceptible plants, particularly grape vines, have no leaves, or, in the case of roses, after a heavy winter pruning, is the safest time to use them as there are no or few leaves on the plants to absorb the herbicide vapors. On the other hand, after bud-burst in spring, this is the most dangerous time of the year in relation to grape vines when the new growth is at its most tender and susceptible stage. Given the number of grape vines in the district, this factor alone is an important reason for tackling capeweed now.
- Caution needs to be exercised if using herbicides such as Amicide for the control of capeweed in lawns adjacent to your house with susceptible plants in the surrounding garden. And don't ignore potential damage to your neighbours garden!

**Doug Dalgleish.**

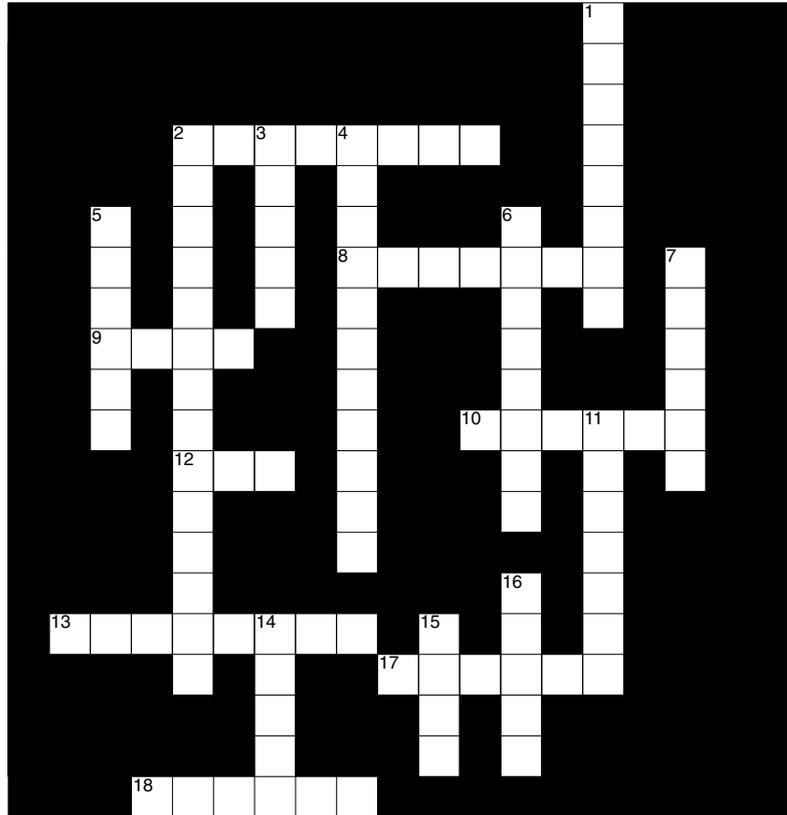
# Serious Kid's Stuff. . .

## ACROSS

- 2 Small green 'trees'.
- 8 In most green salads.
- 9 '——' and potato soup.
- 10 '——' sauce goes well with a pie.
- 12 Lika a '——' in a pod.
- 13 Used in a Red Russian soup.
- 17 Mashed '——'.
- 18 Long ,green and stringy.

## DOWN

- 1 The pickled variety is put in 'Maccas'.
- 2 Little cabbages.
- 3 Makes you cry.
- 4 Boxer's ears may have one.
- 5 Very smelly.
- 6 Makes a good fairy house.
- 7 Loved by rabbits.
- 11 Guacamole ingredient.
- 14 Kalamata is only one type.
- 15 Grows as 'ears' on stalks.
- 16 String, yellow and broad are some varieties.



## Answers to Summer edition crossword.

### DOWN

- |                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| 1 Blue tongue lizard | 6 Possum   |
| 2 Dingo              | 7 Emu      |
| 3 Platapus           | 8 Cockatoo |
| 4 Koala              | 9 Wallaby  |
| 5 Achidna            |            |

### ACROSS

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1 Redback spider | 7 Yabbies    |
| 2 Crocodile      | 8 Kookaburra |
| 3 Kangaroo       | 9 Wombat     |
| 4 Numbat         | 10 Galah     |
| 5 Joey           | 11 Bilby     |
| 6 Quokka         |              |



Weedies take a well deserved break during clearance work on Jim Road.

## Foreign Plants Swamp Aussie Battlers - media release

Invasive species from other countries spreading across Australia are the most immediate threat to Australia's own flora and fauna, according to CRC for Australian Weed Management (Weeds CRC) scientist and President of the Council of Australasian Weed Societies Dr John Virtue.

With the historical period of large-scale land clearing for agriculture now over, invasive weed species continue to expand in cleared country and bushland remnants, Dr Virtue said, threatening the survival of native plants and animals already stressed by severe habitat loss and changing rainfall and temperature patterns.

'Much of the current focus is on establishing biodiversity corridors to enable native plants and animals to migrate in the future, to more suitable climates. Yet this won't happen if exotic weeds destroy the remnants of natural habitat we still have left. We need to actively manage weed threats now as a fundamental part of our response to climate change', he said.

Launching a new series of weed management guides for Australian landholders and bushland managers by the Weeds CRC, at the inaugural SA Weeds Conference in Adelaide today, Dr Virtue said the plight of Australia's native plants and animals under these pressures is poorly recognised.

'Research by the Weeds CRC shows that invasive foreign weeds now threaten the survival of almost half the 945 native plants and animals on the threatened species list for NSW alone', he said.

'We think this pattern of threat to native biodiversity by invasive weeds is likely to be widespread across Australia, especially for patches of remnant vegetation near cities, towns and farmhouses where ex-garden plants have jumped the fence.'

Dr Virtue said the weeds chosen for these new management guides were selected after a survey of Australia's NRM regions.

'They are high impact environmental weeds, seen as a priority by a significant number of regional bodies. The perennial grasses, shrubs and vines all have the capacity to out-compete our native plants and deny food and shelter to our native animals. Some also pose fire risks'.

Dr Virtue said that for the first time plainly written yet detailed colour brochures suitable for use by local weed managers and community groups had been brought together for this important but overlooked suite of problem weeds.

The eight species covered in the series are:

1. *Lycium ferocissimum* (African boxthorn)
2. *Hyparrhenia hirta* (Coolatai grass)
3. *Cenchrus ciliaris* (buffel grass)
4. *Vinca major* (periwinkle)
5. *Erica lusitanica* and other *Erica* spp. (Spanish heath etc.)
6. *Cytisus scoparius*, *Genista monspessulana* and related species (brooms)
7. *Macfadyena unguis-cati* (cat's claw creeper)
8. *Pennisetum* spp. (some foxtails and fountain grasses)

Printed copies of the management guides will be distributed at the SAWeeds Conference this week.

They are available online at:

[http://www.weedscrc.org.au/publications/weed\\_man\\_guides.html#biodiversity](http://www.weedscrc.org.au/publications/weed_man_guides.html#biodiversity)

Contact: Dr John Virtue Weeds CRC & President of the Council of Australasian Weed Societies  
0428 112 943

For a selection of weed images visit: <<http://www.weedscrc.org.au/publications/media.html>>

For additional information contact Rita Reitano, Weeds CRC (08) 8303 6857, 0419 184 153 or [rita.reitano@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:rita.reitano@adelaide.edu.au)

## 2nd Generation Landcare Grant

We stood on our new block and putting a stake in the ground declared 'we shall build here and we shall plant there and there and there'. What we didn't, and most people don't realize, is how much work is involved after the stake goes in the ground. By the time you've dealt with planning permits, builders, house plans and landscaping, there is scant energy or funds left to pursue *The Great Revegetation Projects*.

But nothing motivates more than *free money* – in our case in the form of the 2nd Generation Landcare Grant from North Central Catchment Management Authority for half the cost of putting in the Wildlife Corridor along our Eastern Boundary (partly shared with the neighbours), so we put off the carpet and curtains for another year and got the trees in.

Many thanks to the volunteer Landcare Group members who turned up with tools and a go ahead attitude – within 3 hours we'd put in 800 plants. The best advice is to spray, rip, lay out the plants and equipment, and get an hour head-start on your workers. It makes for an easy exercise and happy workers.

It has to be said that without Penny's amazing organisational skills, we'd have never got started, (or got Denis to sign that last cheque for the fencing). Here's looking forward to the big Spring Push on the last weekend in August... *thanks everyone!*



**Denis, Kathy and family.**

## Tree Project plants for 2009

After all this rain I hope your thoughts have turned to planting... as the first of our 2009 Treeproject plants will be arriving in Newham over the next few weeks. A separate notice will be circulated when the stock has arrived, and this will give details of several 'sale days'. Orders placed last year will be set aside and the member notified individually when they are ready.

Some of these will be ready for planting within the next month. They may not grow much over the colder months but will be ready-to-go in Spring. If you wish to plant now, species must be frost hardy or go into an area with some frost protection.

Each year we have had a wider range of species available than the year before, and 2009 is no exception.

On the frost-hardy list are *Poa labillardieri* (Common Tussock Grass), *Austrodanthonia racemosa* (Tall Wallaby Grass), *Dianella tasmanica* (Tasman Flax Lily), *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge) and *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiny Mat-rush) – all these are great for binding banks, stabilizing drainage lines and in massed plantings for a grand effect in your garden.

Shrubby under-storey plants available will be the 3 local varieties of tea-tree, River Bottlebrush, Kangaroo Apple, Prickly Moses. There will be the 6 local Eucalypts, 5 varieties of wattle (in addition to Prickly Moses) and Drooping She-oaks.

Think about it!

## Book reviews

### ***Field Guide to the Birds of Australia***

7th Edition – completely revised and updated

Ken Simpson and Nicholas Day. Published by Penguin Books

382 page paperback

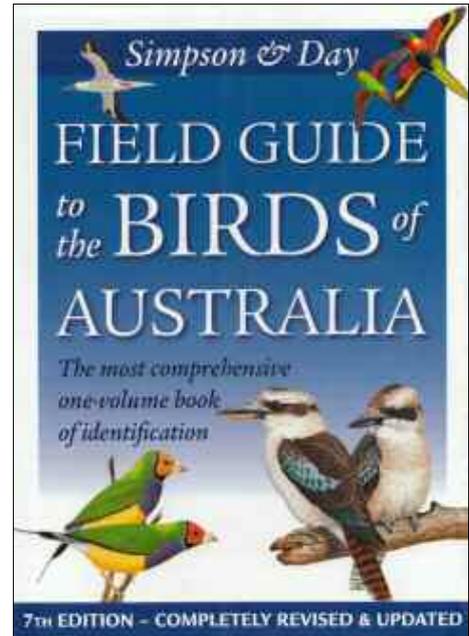
This book promotes itself as 'The most comprehensive one-volume book of identification', and it certainly lives up to its claim. To begin with, there are 132 full-color pages, which show all of the bird species in Australia. Most species have two or three depictions, showing the male, female and sometimes juvenile or breeding and non-breeding variations. All of the pictures are highly detailed and are very pleasing to look at.

The information for each species contains a precise description of what the bird looks like, its size, voice and habitat. There are also distribution maps for each species showing their breeding and non-breeding ranges.

In the back of the book, there is abundant information on the breeding habits of each family of birds. There are also four pages of hints for birdwatchers and an extensive list of bird watching organizations.

This book would be useful for anyone with an interest in bird watching, as well as for those who just want to identify the birds in their garden.

Reviewed by **Josh Kozelka**, USA, Wiggett Wwoofer



### ***Macedon Range Flora*** A Photographic Guide to the Flora of Barrm Birm, Riddells Creek

Russell Best and David Francis

Published by Riddells Creek Landcare

52 page paperback

For those of you who do not like to read, this is the book for you!

It is brimming with beautiful photographs of the flora in the Riddells Creek area (most of which can and have been found in the Newham area). Each photograph comes complete with a description of the plant, its botanical name, common name and the family it belongs to.

For those of you who do like to read, there is a fantastic Quick Plant Identification Guide, Glossary, Index and maps of the areas where the plants can be found.

The Quick Plant ID Guide is especially helpful as it gives a color/shape guide and the appropriate page reference i.e. blue flowers with 5 petals, appear on pages 1, 48, 49 and 50. You could easily identify the plants you find on your own property just by using this book... better still, give it to the kids and make them learn about nature!

Enjoy the pics, I did!

**Chris Wiggett**

