

WINTER 2012
Newsletter No.33

Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment

Melbourne Water
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Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



**Safe and secure –
one of Brigitte's babes**

President's Message

Spring this year should be a great season for planting and now is the time to think about species, numbers, hardware and what preparation is needed for the site.

The attached edition of "River Reflections", published several years ago by Melbourne Water, has a load of information about minimizing herbivore damage to revegetation sites.

Wallabies, being able to browse over the top of standard plastic wrappers and enjoying a varied diet, inflict significant damage on young plants. Guards, mixed seedlings in a single tube, browsing deterrent grit and wallaby exclusion fencing are all discussed.

Western Plains flora now has a generic deterrent grit, bringing down the cost of this product – if anyone is interested in trialling this please let me know.

My thanks to the outgoing committee members Lorraine Rutherford and Jenny Waugh for their significant contribution (including 9 months as President for Jenny) and ongoing commitment to the group.

Thanks also to David Bonsall for the wonderful job he does with the group newsletter.

Committee meetings, held on the 1st Monday of the month, February – December, are open to all members. Participation is appreciated and encouraged in whatever way, and for however long you can manage. Past members of the committee include Jim Sansom, Alice Aird, Amanda Cole, Phil Flanagan, Roger Rugless, Sally Stabback, Chris Wiggett, Don Lang, Doug Dalglish, Marty Dillon, Melanie Roberts, Sue Massie, Lorraine Rutherford and Jenny Waugh.

If you would like to become more involved or have any suggestions for activities, please contact a committee member or come along to a meeting.

Group contacts

President: Penny Roberts. **Vice President:** Helen Scott. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts.

Committee members: Howard Stirling, Karl Kny and Nick Massie.

Secretary: Fran Spain.

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

Roadsides: Sue Massie; 5427 0065.

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 18th – follow-up planting at Newham Primary School to bulk out the Southern windbreak.

There are still 250 plants to go in the ground to complete the Wild Action Zoo Day grant requirements. At an easy (novice) planting pace of 15 per person per hour, 10 people could easily do this in 2 hours – *A breeze.*

From 9.30am until the plants are in the ground then head to the store for morning refreshments.

The aim will be to prepare holes with the Stihl auger as it was heavy going with the Hamilton planter in this area last time, due to compaction of the ground – *Even easier.*

If it is all just TOO easy and we finish in record time we could check for recurrence of broom, blackberry and gorse in the revegetation area beside the creek and hand-pull any seedlings. It is now about 2 months since Landcare paid for these weeds to be cleared by hand – so time enough for some to re-appear, but hopefully not much.

Any queries to me at this address <penroberts@bigpond.com>

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 16th – The Weedies Group working bee.

Join us at 9.30am to cut and paint weeds along Shelton's Road, Newham. This road of significant vegetation has many beautiful wildflowers in Spring. We are seeking the participation of NDLC members from 9.30am to 12.30pm, followed by lunch. RSVP Sue Massie on 5427 0065.

OCTOBER

Sunday 14th – A very Special Planting

Join us at Hanging Rock Reserve for a very special morning.

Barry Peters, musician and childrens entertainer, will be joining us and performing his latest show in the area adjacent to the planting site.

Planting from 9-12 with BBQ lunch to follow.

Whilst all comers are welcome for the planting and BBQ, numbers of children for the show will be limited to a maximum of 35. The Show is aimed at lower primary and 3-4yo children.

Barry has recently performed locally at Lancefield kindergarten – if more than a few of the children were there Barry will change the planned performance.

A separate mail-out will be made to member families with primary and/or pre-school children.

Please confirm your place early when you receive this.

Spare places at the show will be offered to non-member Newhamites.

Indigenous, local, native – what the heck, what's the difference!?

Truly local plants have evolved for the soils and climate of the area in which they occur and can be expected to perform better than those from other regions.

Truly local plants are thus natives grown from seed collected within the area – and at Newham there are only two commercial options – Reminiscent Willandra and Acres Wild, which both grow on a small scale.

Other options are to purchase TreeProject stock from the Landcare group (a service provided only to our members) or surplus plants from the Newham Primary School Propagating group. Or you can learn how to grow your own by coming along to Thursday morning growing sessions – all welcome, no charge.

Plant Profile: Hop Goodenia

Goodenia ovata is an upright or spreading shrub, growing between .5m – 1.5m in height and is a reliable under-storey plant.

It can be seen in the wild on Mount Macedon and in the Cobaws – often massing in shaded gullies and lower slopes but it will also cope with an exposed aspect. Yellow flowers occur sporadically throughout the year, but predominately in late Spring to early Autumn. Leaves are bright green with toothed margin.

It grows quickly and responds well to clipping.

Propagation is generally from cuttings or by layering – come along on a Thursday morning to propagating session and learn how.

Images show: natural form, clipped line of plants, foliage close-up.



Austrian Winter Dinner



Another fabulous evening was held on 30th June, the annual Newham Landcare Winter Dinner.

Most people came in costumes and enjoyed themselves dancing and eating the "restaurant quality" food. The Bavarian Dancers – Heide's lovely children – were just superb, they showed us up with their terrific slap dancing and excellent timing.

The Hall looked beautiful with cypress pines, lights, snow(!), wreaths, bunting and our inimitable candleabra dressed in Austrian red and white.

Thanks to all who helped make decorations, set up and clean up.



More Koala facts



Deborah Tabart recently visited Newham and provided us with many koala facts

1. Cars are the biggest killers of koalas, especially at night. Around Newham the 'hot-spots' for koala road deaths are Hennerbergs Rd, the Romsey Rd and Three Chain Rd. ***Be wary, and drive more slowly, between dusk and dawn.***
2. Dogs and cows attack koalas when they cross open ground to another habitat. ***Keep dogs locked up at night.***
3. Loss of native habitat due to land clearance is the greatest threat to the continued existence of Koalas.
4. Males have bigger and broader noses than females.
5. Koalas are marsupials, not bears. They carry their young in a pouch.
6. Koalas sleep for 19-20 hours per day. They move mostly at night, but are often also active and mobile during the day.
7. Chlamydia is a bacterium that infects a wide range of animals. It is considered to be the main pathogen of Koalas. Causes chronic infections in koalas and can cause infertility, blindness and ultimately death.
8. The male has a dark scent gland in the centre of its chest. He rubs this on the tree in order to mark his territory.
9. Koalas communicate with each other by making a noise like a snore and then a belch, known as a bellow.
10. When born, Koalas are only two centimetres long, which is about the size of a jelly bean.
11. Koalas Australia wide eat about 120 of the 600 varieties of eucalypts. In a specific area they prefer to eat only about 4-6 different types, hence the need for diversity of vegetation.
12. Koalas do not normally drink, getting their moisture from gum leaves. However, in times of drought, they will drink if necessary.

Galvanized folding wire frames

Re-usable (many times!) folding steel wire frames are available now from the Landcare group.

Importation from China has been undertaken because of the prohibitive cost of the locally produced equivalent.

Advantages of folding wire frames:

- easy to use – MUCH easier to use than hardwood stakes (*bang!bang!bang!*).
- hold plastic wrappers firmly.
- can be used on any site.
- cost per use low – potential for 6-10 uses (based on Roberts experience) but cheaper than hardwood stakes after just one additional use!
- initial cost only \$1.70 each.
- available in Newham from Landcare. Contact Penny on 5427 0795.

Another shipment of 6000 frames has been received recently. These are better than the first batch imported (the steel is stronger and the welding better) with only a very small increase in cost.



TreeProject

TreeProject = very cheap plants but limited species and variable quality

Each year, since it was formed in 2004, our Landcare group has ordered 2000 plants through TreeProject.

These are grown by volunteers (both city-based and local) and sold to members for the cost of the materials used. The 2000 grows by 500 or so as multiple seedlings in a single tube are lovingly (compulsively?) separated.

This service averages down the costs of revegetation for our members and hopefully expedites the development of significant habitat within our landscape. It also gives members information about local plants and their benefits.

Wanted: TreeProject co-ordinator for 2012-2013

The co-ordinator role involves placing the order in Spring of the preceding year, collecting grown plants when ready and organising their distribution to members.

For more information call Penny on 5427 0795.

TreeProject stock available in Spring 2012

2012 plants that were too small in Autumn will be ready for Spring – price remains 40c per forestry tube.

Contact Penny on 5427 0795.

Waterwatch in Newham – *Additional backup !*

We are delighted that we have a second team of Waterwatchers in Newham. The grade 5 and 6 students at Newham Primary School have been sampling and testing water from Deep Creek for over 5 years, and they are now joined by Brigitte and Karl Kny who will be testing water from Garden Hut Creek which runs on their property.

Earlier this year they expressed an interest in doing the testing, and have since done the Waterwatch training with Melbourne Water. All they needed then was a testing kit – which the Landcare Group was happy to purchase for them. They have already sampled the creek at 6 points on and near their property, and hope to maintain this large sampling regime each month.

While Karl will specialise in the water testing, Brigitte is particularly interested in identifying and monitoring numbers of macroinvertebrates at each site. She has already taken photos of many of them, and is compiling an identification folder. Who knows – this could be another book in the making to complement her book of local wildflowers.

Jenny Waugh

Waterwatch Co-ordinator.

Living with wildlife

It was winter in Newham – as it is every year at this time when we have our AGM, but Despite the punishing wind, rain and cold, members gathered in the warmth of Newham Hall for a warming drink, some fine food and a terrific talk by one of our own members.

Brigitte Kny has been a resident of Newham for over 20 years and has been caring for injured, sick and abandoned native wildlife for most of that time.

Brigitte treated us to a series of stories and pictures of the fauna she has handled over this time along with good advice and handling techniques for the different animals. We all gained an appreciation of the practical problems involved and the commitment necessary for the task. Solutions to practical problems are not always simple when rescued animals are escape artists, attractive to every passing male or have very particular dietary needs!



Whilst some of her suggestions were challenging, especially when it comes to removing snakes from the kitchen, we forgave her much when she donned her Collingwood scarf and provided sound design tips on the appropriate head ware to wear to ward off swooping Magpies. Strictly only to be worn in the paddock where no friends or neighbours can see you!

We were most grateful for the time and effort Brigitte put into her presentation, and applaud her knowledge, passion and care which she devotes to the handling of wildlife in our area.

Be aware, we share this place with many different animal species – slow down and drive carefully from dusk to dawn.

Hanging Rock Revegetation Project



N&DLG was successful in obtaining funding of \$5,310 from the Communities for Nature Grant administered by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and on 27 May 2012 Stage 1 of the plantings took place. Over 600 plants were positioned along the creek where it crosses the main entrance access road. Over 20 people took part and enjoyed a splendid BBQ after in the Park. Stage 2 will take place in October.

