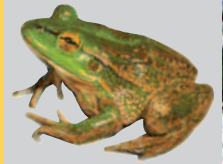


SPRING 2014
Newsletter No.42



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Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442

Spring and early summer rainfall

see page 9

DIARY OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Saturday 21st. "Equiculture – Responsible, Ethical & Sustainable Horse Ownership"

Newham Hall 9.30am – 3pm. Free, lunch included.

Equine Land Management workshop presented by Jane Myers.

RSVP: Penny <penroberts@bigpond.com> 0418 396837.

Saturday February 28th. Not-always-annual Summer Dinner-on-the-hill

To welcome new members and new neighbours. 6pm until whenever, 159 Dons Rd, Newham.

BYO just about everything (*except for 'first timers'*), drinks, seat, utensils, plate, glass etc and something for the shared table (can be savory or sweet).

RSVP: Penny <penroberts@bigpond.com> 0418 396837.

Events planned for Autumn – details to be confirmed

Soils workshop presented by Jim Sansom – a weekend, daytime event.

Grasslands in Victoria presented by Paul Foreman of Blue Devil Consulting – an evening speaker event.

MAY

Sunday 11th. Trees for Mum. Details to be confirmed.

Communities for Nature (C4N) grant 2014 – 2015

There are still funds available for 2015

Want to do environmental tasks on your property? Are there things you wish your neighbors would do? The items listed below may be eligible for grant funds.

- Local native plants and hardware
- Direct seeding of local native species
- Internal fencing where it protects remnant or allows for revegetation
- Management of woody weeds in protected areas and adjacent to roadsides

Contact: Penny <penroberts@bigpond.com> 5427 0795 / 0418 396837

Group contacts

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

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

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!

PLANT PROFILE

Fringe Myrtle (*Calytrix tetragona*).

The images show specimens growing on a roadside in Newham – shrubs about 1m tall with fine green, crowded aromatic leaves to 6mm in length. Flowers occurs in dense terminal heads in Spring and these make a stunning display. Deep red calyces persist after flowering and thus prolong the display.

This species occurs in all states, except NT, but is uncommon in our region and has only been noted between the rocky outcrops on the upper slopes of the Jim Jim (N and NW aspects) and on the roadside to the north below. It is more frequent on rocky sites north of the divide.

It can be propagated by seed or cuttings and is said to make an excellent container plant, responding well to pruning. It will tolerate extended dry periods and occasional inundation. Specimens have thrived in clay soils on the upper eastern slopes of the Jim Jim and it would be a worthy garden plant.



On 25th October, five members of the Roadside Management Group, AKA the 'Weedies', launched a concerted attack on two large blackberry thickets in Palmer Crescent. They were about 4m high and 4-5m in depth – too dense to cut and paint, we decided to direct spray. To obtain maximum coverage for growth of this dimension we used ladders to reach the most distant shoots.

Several members happily climbed the ladders and in spite of a few scratches, achieved a satisfactory reach. The results have been good but some follow up spraying will need to be done to completely kill these large infestations.



On 29th October, a member of the group undertook some poisoning of new broom growth in Jim Road and also in Wesley Park grounds. On 22nd November the 'Weedies', along with general Landcare members, undertook follow-up weed control on the Colwells Roadside abutting Hanging Rock Reserve. This was mostly small patches of recurrent Blackberry or new seedlings – but a large infestation of Spiraea was also 'debulked', with new growth being sprayed in early January when it had reached about 30cm height. The original intent had been to cut and paint but the plants were found on close inspection to consist of multiple stems forming dense thickets – a mammoth task to deal with using this technique.

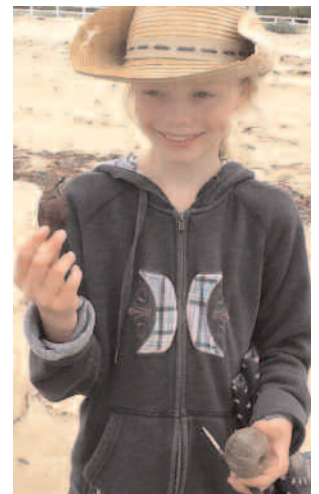
Camp Wyuna



Newham Grade 5/6 spent this years camp at Queenscliff. Camp Wyuna is a YMCA camp that has discovering the marine environment as its main focus. During the camp students spent time at the Marine Discovery Centre, canoeing to explore Swan Bay, beach combing comparing the different seaweeds and rock pooling. Alongside this environmental program, they also learnt about the history of Queenscliff and shipping at the Maritime Museum and about the military history of the town via a tour of the Queenscliff Fort.



Thank you so much Newham Landcare for helping make this camp possible. Many of the students described it as the best camp they had ever been on.



WANTED : Indian Myna project co-ordinator (volunteer) to manage Landcare's 10 traps



This involves as little as keeping track of the traps and trying to keep all 10 in circulation or you could expand the program – recruit new participants, record trapping data monthly, liaising with the Macedon Ranges Indian Myna Group and getting more traps out there... *your choice*. Currently 6 of the traps are in use. There is a comprehensive information package that comes with the job, including information for new trappers.

Contact: Penny 0418396837

Refer back to newsletter #39, Summer 2014, for more information if you are unaware of the impact of this introduced species on our native birds.

Extracts from the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group newsletter #30

Juveniles Indian mynas are out and about NOW. Juveniles are naïve and can be readily trapped – so long as wary parents are not with them. January and February and usually high capture months – when mostly juveniles, the future breeders, are caught. Every one we trap and dispose of is doing our wildlife a world of good.

ABC TV news ran an item in December 2014 on Noisy miners (the aggressive Australian native honeyeater) being a worse problem than the introduced Indian myna, apparently based on some research that will be reported on by Griffith University in Brisbane sometime in 2015. Noisy miners can be a problem in woodlands and urban areas but to conflate the two is silly, and to seek to argue that one is worse than the other is pointless. If an animal or weed species becomes a pest it needs to be managed or controlled.

Indian mynas are amenable to community control whereas Noisy mynas are as Australian as the Emu and are legally protected.

Bruce Lindenmayer puts it like this: "The issue of human modification to the environment leading to native species becoming pests comes up all over the place. It is an issue with Noisy miners who thrive in environments where humans and/or their livestock have degraded or fragmented the top storey or removed the understorey, excluding small insect eating birds." "Fenner School work in the Riverina has clearly shown that new plantings/restoration projects with mixed species attract the little birds, not Noisy miners."

MELBOURNE WATER PROJECTS



Healthy Farms for Healthy Waterways at “Kolora”

On Friday 31st October, N&DLG hosted an information evening on behalf of Melbourne Water for their Healthy Farms for Healthy Waterways program under their Rural Land Program.

There was a reasonable attendance by members to listen and view a presentation by Adam Logan, Project Officer – Rural Land Program (Melbourne Water). Adam provided us with an overview of the Healthy Waterways program and how landholders can participate by applying for funding for identified land protection works on their land.

By participating in these projects, landholders can protect and enhance their properties by the improvement of on-farm management practices, aligned to increased productivity while helping to improve the health of waterways for the benefit of the wider community.

Works that can be funded include fencing of drainage lines and other water sensitive areas. Management of drainage lines, managing native vegetation and grass filter systems in riparian areas and drainage lines. Establishing shade and shelter away from water sensitive areas. Farm track construction, improvement and drainage. Plants for revegetation and on going maintenance.

The following is an overview of the project one of our members, Karl Kny has committed to on his property.

The Kny property “Kolora” drains into Garden Hut Creek and has a degraded floodplain which is being rehabilitated. Within the floodplain are a dam and a *billabong* which have been dug clean and needed to be revegetated. The owners applied for funding under the Melbourne Water Healthy Farms for Healthy Waterways Program in October 2013. After a visit from a Melbourne Water Project Officer three projects were developed:

1. To provide exclusion fencing for the floodplain and creek to stop stock entering.
2. To revegetate the dam banks and drainage line below the dam.



3. To revegetate the banks of the *billabong* and its drainage lines on the floodplain.

The aims of the projects were to improve the quality of the outflows from the dam and *billabong*, reducing the amount of sediment and nutrient entering Garden Hut Creek. The landholder was to project manage all works, including sourcing quotes from contractors to complete the works and Melbourne Water would order the trees on behalf of the landholder.

The projects were approved in April 2014 and funding was received to cover the costs of 200m of standard fencing, 100 overstorey riparian plants and 300 semiaquatic plants that were ordered from Western Plains Flora. The Kny's picked up and paid for the plants in September 2014.

The fencing has been completed and the plantings took place in late September 2014. It has been a particularly dry spring and summer and the water level in the dams is very low. Nevertheless the semiaquatic plants are doing fine.

Adam Logan, Officer for the Rural Land Program of Melbourne Water, audited the works in January 2015 and was pleased with the outcome. Stage 2 projects are now being developed with Melbourne Water to introduce aquatic plants to the dams.

If you are interested in similar projects with Melbourne Water which would now be funded under their Rural Land Program you can contact Adam Logan on 9679 6940 or email adam.logan@fhe.melbournewater.com.au.

2014 another busy year



2014 has been a busy year, between the Hanging Rock campaign and welcoming our new bub Beatrix, there has been less time to work on the farm. Luckily we were successful in our 'Communities for Nature (C4N)' grant application. With the support of 'C4N' and Newham and District Landcare we created two planting zones with 400 metres of a mix of electric and conventional fencing excluding our adventurous roaming Dorpers. In an Autumn and then a Spring planting by Landcare volunteers we got over 600 shrubs and tree in the ground. After the recent rain they are all growing well. There was also assistance provided to control pests like rabbits and invasive weeds like blackberry and gorse. I was really pleased with the way Landcare and C4N worked in with the existing plans for our little farm and gave great advice on species and planting. My wife was also pleased for various reasons, especially with the strapping young German backpackers enlisted to help with the planting. Oh well, 'happy wife, happy life' I guess.

Newham Landcare through Communities for Nature provided resources and importantly boots on the ground and achieved a result that we couldn't have achieved ourselves. Special thanks to Penny Roberts for her continual time and effort along the whole process.

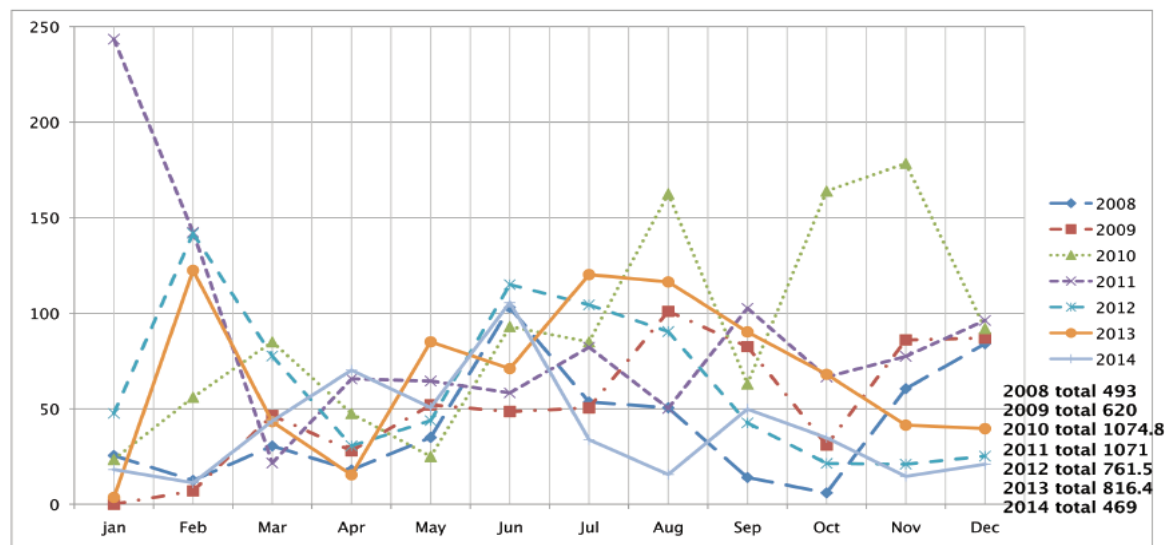
The Spielvogel's on Bryces Lane.

Photos by Kim Selby



Weather observations for 56 Robertson Drive, Newham. 2008-2015

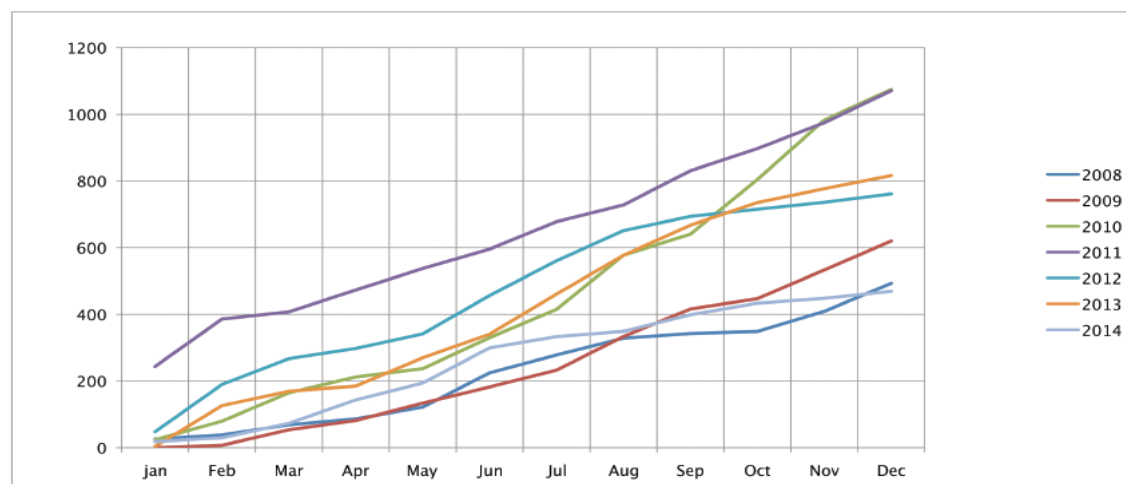
The graph below is for the monthly rainfall for 2008 to 2015. The cumulative total for each year is also shown.



The graph demonstrates that we had abnormally high rainfall in Jan 2011, Aug 2010 and Oct and Nov in 2010.

Low rainfall events were particularly noticeable in Jan and Feb 2009 (0mm in Jan and 7mm in Feb), Aug 2012, Sep and Nov 2008 (total of 20mm). Of interest is that Nov and Dec 2014 were the lowest months for rainfall in the 2008 to 2014 record.

The graph below is the cumulative totals



The graph highlights that 2014 has been the driest calendar year since my records is 2008, typically some 262 mm below the average.

	jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2008	25.5	12.5	30.5	18	35	103	53.5	50.5	14	6	60.5	84	493
2009	0	7	46.5	28	52	48.5	50.5	101	82.5	31	86	87	620
2010	23.5	56	85	47.5	25	93	85	162.5	63	163.9	178.4	92	1074.8
2011	243.4	142.4	21.6	65.6	64.5	58.3	82.2	50.2	102.6	66.6	77.4	96.2	1071
2012	47.6	141.8	77.6	30.6	43.8	115	104.4	90.4	42.6	21.4	21	25.2	761.4
2013	3.6	122.4	43.2	15.4	85	71	120.2	116.4	90.2	68	41.4	39.6	816.4
2014	18.2	11.2	43.6	70.2	50.6	105.6	33.8	15.6	49.8	34.8	14.6	21	469

The table above is the total for each month. In order of least rainfall to highest rainfall the years go: 2014, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2011, 2010.

I have extracted for the 2015 detailed figures that are available on request the following key parameters.

Warmest day 39.5, 14 Jan 2014, Coldest -3.4, 3 August 2014.

Wettest day 23.8 mm, 27 March 2014, wettest month 105.6mm, June 2014, driest month 11.2 mm, February 2014.

Windiest day 59.4 km/h, 24 June 2014.

Dominant wind direction ESE.

Nick Massie - 2 January 2015

Once again we gathered at Wesley Park for our end of year BBQ. The weather was kind and the 120 souls who took the chance were able to enjoy a wonderfully mild evening – although we did retreat to the Hall for last course. Over 30 of the attendees were children, so it was heartening to have a growing participation in our group of young families.

The Egg Toss was won by the Stirling family unit of Warren and Howard with an impressive win at 30 metres (or was it 50 metres?). Participation was greater than ever, requiring us to run two separate heats with the tournament Referee displaying his usual skill and wise moderation!

David Moore successfully defended his Wellie Toss title – who is going to defeat him next year? We need more strong men and women to step forward to put some pressure on him. Perhaps a Wellie throwing workshop / training session run by our past champion Paul Tanner?

Thanks to all those who turned up and helped make the evening successful and enjoyable. Special thanks to those who assisted with preparations and tasks on the night!

