

# Newham & District Landcare Group

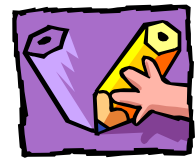


Working towards a  
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND 3442

## CALENDAR FOR 2005

- All members are welcome to come to any of the monthly Committee Meetings but please notify President (Jim) or Secretary (Roger) so we can arrange seating and catering.
- Details of all activities will be posted at the Newham General Store.
- For further information about any event, or requests or ideas for other activities, contact a Committee Member.



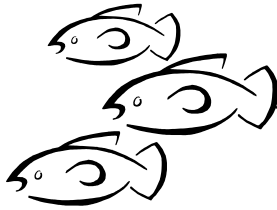
February	7 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting 16 <sup>th</sup> Meeting in Newham Hall (Input from Members) 8.00 pm. 27 <sup>th</sup> Waterwatch Day (See elsewhere in this Newsletter for details)
March	7 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting.
April	4 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting 15 <sup>th</sup> . (Copy due to Editor for Autumn Newsletter)
May	2 <sup>nd</sup> Committee Meeting 15 <sup>th</sup> Tree Planting – Dons property. (See elsewhere in this Newsletter for details)
June	6 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Visit to successful Landcare property – details to come. National Tree Day – at Newham Primary School – details to come. Landcare subscription for 2005/2006 due at the end of June.
July	4 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting 15 <sup>th</sup> Friday Evening Meeting - Guest Speaker – 7.45pm. Venue and details to be announced. 15 <sup>th</sup> . (Copy due to Editor for Winter Newsletter)
August 1 <sup>st</sup> .	Committee Meeting.
September	5 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting. 17 <sup>th</sup> ./18 <sup>th</sup> . Spring Planting. Venue to be announced.
October	3 <sup>rd</sup> Committee Meeting. 9 <sup>th</sup> BBQ lunch, Social gathering and AGM 12.30 pm Newham Hall. 29 <sup>th</sup> . (Copy due to Editor for Spring Newsletter).
November	7 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting. Wildflower walk(s) Details to come.
December	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday Evening BBQ and Social Gathering; 6.00 pm at the Newham Hall. Games and Treasure Hunt for children. 5 <sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting.



# River Health Strategy



Melbourne Water has recently taken over the administration of the whole catchment of the Maribyrnong River. In order to improve the streams in the catchment, Melbourne Water has commissioned a major study called the 'Port Phillip and Regional River Health Strategy'.

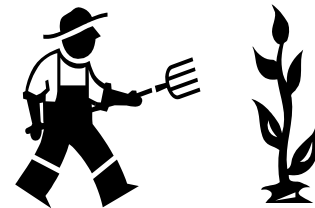


A 'Draft for Consultation' was issued late last year and our Landcare Group, in conjunction with the Deep Creek (Lancefield and Romsey) Landcare Group has made a submission commending Melbourne Water and emphasizing what we consider to be the important values of the upper part of the catchment. A number of individuals have also made submissions.

Anyone wanting further information about this should contact Jim Sansom (Phone 5427 0408), Roger Rugless (Phone 5427 0100) or the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator, John Robinson, at the Shire Office in Romsey.

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## Gorse Attack No.2 by Andrew Attwood (Landcare member)



(Gorse Attack No. 1 in the last Newsletter, dealt with the 'cut'n'paint' method.)

As most people are aware, the initial removal of gorse is usually followed by regrowth requiring persistent treatment to eradicate the pest.

I have had success with a '**WEEDWAKKA**' attachment to my brushcutter. Some gorse infestation on our property was removed initially by bobcat while other plants were cut to ground level, as far as possible, using a chain saw.

Herbicide can be applied to the stalks but I have found that the cutting back of the regrowth with the **WEEDWAKKA** was effortless and effective.

By persistent monitoring and use of the **WEEDWAKKA**, the cost of gorse control and the effort required can be minimised to achieve total elimination. It seems that the second cutting back is instrumental in the destruction of the plants.

NOTE: This Newsletter would like other readers to send in their tips and experiences about methods of weed control. Share your success stories!



# The Newham Deep Creek Project - Progress Report



Since the Spring 2004 Newsletter real progress has been made with this long-term project which aims to re-habilitate the 3.5 km of creek-line from the Newham Primary School, northwards to Three Chain Road.

Over this distance the Creek flows through eleven properties and almost all landholders are involved in the project.

Three grants have been applied for and all have been successful amounting, in total, to approximately \$25 000 in financial assistance of some kind.



**The first grant** is the Melbourne Water “Stream Frontage Management Program”. This comprises a direct contract between the land-owner and Melbourne Water to fund such things as weed spraying, fencing, re-vegetating with indigenous plants etc. with the outcome being to improve the quality of water flowing into the Maribyrnong River.

An assessment team from Melbourne Water visited eight properties late last year. Discussions were held with land holders to determine their priorities for the ensuing year within the guidelines of the program. The wonderful thing about this program is that once you are ‘on the books’ of Melbourne Water, you are on a plan which goes forward – it is not just a ‘one off’! Subsequent visits and discussions take place to assist you in stream frontage management as the years pass. \*(See below for details if you want to join this excellent program.)



**The second grant** is the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Community Grant. This has to be administered by the Landcare Group and it requires a 50% input by the local community in cash or in kind (such as labour, use of equipment etc.)

Five properties made applications through the N& D L G under this scheme and will receive \$17 500 during this year. The Landcare Group also received \$800 towards administration and publicity costs. The role of the Landcare Group is to co-ordinate the various funding opportunities for the long-term up grading of the Newham Deep Creek. Aspects of the over-all plan include:

- A bio-survey to establish present populations of native birds, animals and plants along the creek.
- An engineering survey along the channel to collect data for an engineering model which would assist in determining what works are needed to create stable stream flow under different rain-fall conditions.

**A third grant** of \$1000 has been received from the Macedon Ranges Shire to help fund an enthusiastic group of young scientists from Latrobe University to carry out the bio-research.



**Thanks to Councillor Henry Bleeck for his help with this funding.**

A further grant application (this time to the Federal ‘Natural Heritage Trust’) is due in by the end of February. This will be geared specifically to facilitate the engineering survey.

Any comments or offers of assistance with the Newham Deep Creek Project are most welcome.

Contact: Jim Sansom      Co-ordinator.

\*Any property owner with stream frontage within the Maribyrnong Catchment – this includes Deep Creek – is eligible to apply for a Melbourne Water grant. I have a supply of application forms so please give me a ring : 5427 0408.

## The Newham & District Paterson's Curse Project



Paterson's Curse is not a major problem in our area, but within the Newham District there are a number of small outbreaks.

The **Newham & District Paterson's Curse Project** aims to facilitate the eradication of Patersons Curse from our district in several ways.

- ◆ Increasing general awareness of this weed will increase the chance of any spread from existing sites being recognized and dealt with promptly.
- ◆ Financial assistance [50% of cost of professional spraying] may be sought by the Landcare group through the Catchment Management Authority.

A precondition to obtaining funding support from the CMA is the declaration of Paterson's Curse as a "Local Priority Weed". Already Landholders have the responsibility to take "all reasonable steps to control and prevent the spread of this weed on their land and adjacent road-sides" [Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994] except where VicRoads has responsibility.



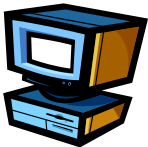
In order to achieve "Local Priority Weed" status for Paterson's Curse, 80% of property owners within the defined area must indicate their support.

The boundaries for this project were decided by marking all known outbreaks on a map and then extending a generous distance beyond them.

In the week before Christmas roughly 300 letters calling for support were sent out by the Environment Officer of Macedon Ranges Shire Council to the owners of properties that fell within the project area. Follow up contact will be made with those who have not yet responded, in order to achieve an 80% support level. Also, further information regarding Patersons Curse will be provided to those who requested it.

Eliminating Patersons Curse from our district **is** achievable.

Landcare notes on Patersons Curse [and other weeds] are available on [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/notes](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/notes) or via Dept. Sustainability and Environment office in Kyneton, at 53 Mollison St. Tel.: 54211722 or contact the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136186 [they will mail out relevant information].



If you have any queries or comment, please ring Penny Roberts on 5427 0795 *and please return your letter of support if you have not already done so.*

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## Landcare Library

Did you know that as a member of the Newham and District Landcare Group you have access to our Library?

A wide range of journal material is available covering many topics relating to land management, whole farm planning, treatment of weeds, indigenous plants etc.

For example, do you know why the presence of indigenous native birds assists the productivity of a farm? An article in the Library gives a complete answer.



To browse or borrow give our librarian, Sally Stabback, a ring : 5427 0059.

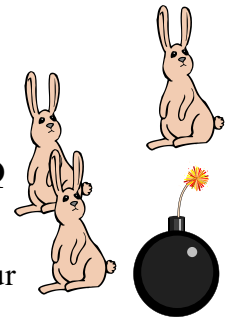
## Autumn Planting at Don's Property - May 15th

This day will comprise **planting, learning about local indigenous species, BBQ lunch and a “Bunny Blaster” demonstration/discussion.**

A chance to spend some time



together and make a difference to our



This section of the Newham  
need of revegetation.

Deep Creek has been cleared of weeds but is sorely in



After planting tubestock of indigenous species beside the creek for a couple of hours, lunch will be provided by our host Judy Don. Following this Penny Roberts will demonstrate the use of a gas-fired instrument used to aid the control of rabbits.

**When? Sunday May 15<sup>th</sup>. 10 am till 2 pm-ish.**

**Where? Newham Deep Creek – Newham. Enter at 1244 Rochford Rd. Newham**

**RSVP by May 8<sup>th</sup>. to Judy Don (5422 2269) or Penny Roberts (5427 0795)**

BYO gloves, knee-pads, hat, sunscreen etc. (a small trowel would be good)



## Myths - Acacia's - Short Lived

Many Acacias are pioneer species, rapidly regenerating after fire. In some forest systems, as the taller eucalypts overtop the wattles and light diminishes, some species are out competed and disappear.

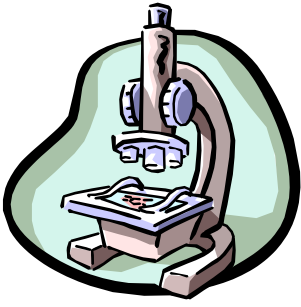
However, Victoria is blessed with a diverse range of wattles. Some are very long-lived, such as the Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon* which is well known to have a long life span. The “Black Wattles” *Acacia mearnsii* at Black Hill Reserve locally are dated at approximately 80 years old.

So whilst some species are short-lived, this is by no means true of all species. Because of the pioneering habits of Acacias, they are useful plants to establish in order to provide a nursery for other species, such as eucalypts, which will benefit from the shelter provided by the wattles. Acacias are also important in restoring the nitrogen balance in soils after fire and are a haven for ants, which in turn entices echidnas.

*Article taken from Land for Wildlife Vol. 1 No. 6.*



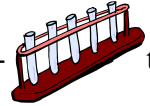
## Waterwatch Comes to Newham



**Waterwatch** is a water quality monitoring program which has been operating in communities throughout Australia since 1993. Groups or individuals can measure various physical and chemical aspects (eg temperature, pH, salinity) of local waterways like creeks, dams, wetlands and rivers. The information collected can give people an idea of the health of their local environment, and may also be used by regional community and government agencies for practical decision making.

samples.

The Waterwatch co-ordinator for our district, Leigh Mitchell, will be there to show us how to use the kit, and to discuss the meaning and usefulness of the results.



Come and learn how to use the **Waterwatch kit** to collect and test wa- ter

There will be a limit of 12 places so that everyone can see clearly what's going on, but another day can be organised if there's the demand.

**When:** Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 1 – 4.30 pm (including a break for afternoon tea)



**Where:** venue to be advised.

**Contact:** Jenny 5427 0408

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## Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* article by Marie Marmara

A perennial mat forming grass, easily recognised by its bright green foliage and distinctive arching/weeping flower heads. This grass is flowering and seeding now, so seed collect from your property.

- Distribution;** Wide spread within our district.  
**Site Preference;** Moist, well drained sites. In partial shade or full sun.  
**Growth Rate:-** Fast   **Salt Tolerant:-** No   **Frost Hardy:-** Yes  
**Drought Tolerant:-** Yes, within natural range  
**Other Tolerances:-** Shade and competition from trees, acid soils.

**Land Protection Value:-** A very useful perennial pasture species due to strong matting root system. Also makes excellent soil stabiliser.

**Food Value:-** High forage value as it produces 4.2 to 7.4 t/ha, is 55 to 80% digestible and produces 10 to 27% crude protein. It will increase with higher rates of fertility and grazing. This grass should be grazed short because rank growth is unpalatable and may suppress clover germination.

**Ornamental Value:-** One of the best shade tolerant lawn grasses. (adapted from *Indigenous Plants for North Central Victoria* compiled by Greening Australia Vic. Page 184, 1999)



Weeping grass as scanned from *Plains Wandering* Ian Lunt, Tim Barlow, James Ross 1998 page 122.