

Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND 3442

Newsletter Editors: Paul & Marie Marmara

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Action Plans are really what landcare groups are all about!

Work out what we want to do – work out who's going to do it – get the money and **ACTION!**

That's why we had a meeting at the Newham Hall on Wednesday, March the 16th.

Thirty-six people came along and there were several apologies from those who could not attend. Seven Action Plans were discussed:

1. **The Newham Deep Creek Project.**
2. **Road-side vegetation.**
3. **Water-ways, water quality.**
4. **Landcare and the Primary School.**
5. **Seed-bank- seed collection – plant propagation.**
6. **The Patersons Curse Project.**
7. **Rabbits and foxes.**



group of

The idea is for each Action Plan to have a Co-ordinator and a group of people keen to make things happen. The cluster of people may be centred on an interest (eg. Seed collection) or a locality (eg. Road-side vegetation along a particular road.)

The list of seven (above) is not necessarily final! Is there another landcare issue that **YOU** would like to get up and running? Is one of the seven an Action **YOU** would like to get involved with? Please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of the Committee.

Four of the Action Plans have Co-ordinators and things are really beginning to happen as the Newham and District Landcare group approaches its first birthday!

What the Committee is discovering (somewhat to our amazement) is that there is considerable money available from the authorities and various corporate funding bodies for projects which fit into broad environmental strategies.

Let's keep the ball rolling and get the **ACTION** happening!

Jim Sansom
President of Newham & District Landcare Group
Phone 5427 0408



Paterson's Curse - look out for rosettes from NOW



Due to the unusual rains we experienced over Summer, Paterson's Curse is already present as well developed rosette stage plants at locations known to be affected. This weed 'normally' appears several weeks after the first decent Autumn rains – and so would be seen as enlarging rosettes from early in May. It is easiest to get rid of the plants whilst they are still rosettes.

They can be dug out or spot sprayed with glyphosate [Roundup or equivalent], to which they are sensitive at this stage. If you are going to use a chemical spray, doing it when the plants are small minimizes chemical usage [and hence risk to other vegetation]. If plants are present in greater numbers it is better to use a selective spray to avoid leaving bare earth, which can encourage other weed growth.

Queries or sightings? Want to see it in rosette form?
Contact Penny Roberts [Co-ordinator] Phone 5427 0795



HELP BREAK THE CHAIN

ANTS

The Formicidae (Ants) are often encountered throughout the local bushland and are a dominant component in terrestrial ecosystems where they actively compete with other invertebrate taxa constantly recycle nutrients and are important predators and competitors of other invertebrates. They are also important on soil structure as a result of their nesting activities with some species such as *Iridomyrmex* transporting soil particles to the surface from as far down as 15 metres underground galleries throughout the life of the colony. It has been estimated that in one year, the burrowing activities of all ants in Australia produce enough topsoil to fill a freight train 3000 kilometres long.



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tribution of numerous habitats such as soil, under stones, hollow branches and numerous cryptic forest leaf litter. Ants also have a unique ability in exploiting habitat resources and provide an ideal assessment method for all forms of environmental monitoring.



The diversity and abundance of Australia's ants also impact upon the distribution of numerous habitats such as soil, under stones, hollow branches and numerous cryptic forest leaf litter. Ants also have a unique ability in exploiting habitat resources and provide an ideal assessment method for all forms of environmental monitoring.

Australia has over 1800 described species of ants with many thousands more awaiting description from other collections held in Australia. To date, the only central Victorian regional collection of ants is held at the Insectarium of Victoria in Woodend.

BIOLOGY

A typical colony begins when virgin males and females leave the parent colony and mate (depending on species), either on the wing or on surrounding vegetation. Males die shortly afterwards. The fertilised queen then begins constructing the underground nesting chamber where the first batches of eggs are produced.

Once the first brood appears, the queen may feed developing larvae on nutrients stored in her own body as in most *Camponotus* species, or they may forage in the open for suitable prey as in *Myrmecia* (bull ants), the success of colony establishment depending on the ability of the queen to locate and capture prey successfully.

As the first brood mature, foraging and nest expansion is undertaken by the worker caste leaving the queen to devote her remaining life to egg production. Mature colonies consist of foraging workers (neuter females), reproductive queen or queens (reproductive females), and winged virgin males and females.

Some species may also have intermediate castes as found in the genera *Rhytidoponera* as well as other ants of the Ponerine group, with differentiated queens being replaced by mated workers. Depending on species and time of year, eggs and larval stages may be present within the nest and it is usually the foraging worker caste that is encountered in the field as they actively seek suitable food items for return back to the colony.

Article kindly supplied by Woodend Insectarium.

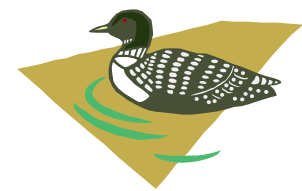
The Newham Deep Creek Project - Progress Report



Key Aspects of the Project:

- Staged clearing of weed species to maintain habitat. (Rather than complete removal of weeds which would destroy populations of native birds and animals.) Staged re-vegetation.
- Bio-survey to establish present condition of vegetation, animal and bird populations, water holes etc.
- Engineering survey and plan to stabilize channel, install weirs and rock chutes etc where necessary to manage extreme flows and possibly to re-instate wetlands which appear to have been drained during the 1800s.
- Communication with landholders, Melbourne Water and the Catchment Management Authority in matters relating to funding, technical and other support.
- This Project is seen as a 'test case'; an attempt to work out an approach which could be applied to other small streams in the area to the benefit of landholders who otherwise would be struggling along by themselves.

(For a map of the NDC Project see the Newsletter, Spring 2004.)



What's been Happening?

- As mentioned in the last Newsletter (Summer 2005), funding in excess of \$25000 has been received. This will be spread amongst 7 properties along the creek. This funding has come from three sources: Melbourne Water, the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Shire.
- The Bio-survey (carried out by a team of six young scientists from Latrobe University) has now been completed. Six representative sites were selected for study along the valley, stretching from near the General Store down to Three Chain Road. We are expecting the report of this base-line study within the next two or three weeks.
- To get the Engineering Survey started has proved to be more complicated than anticipated. Funding was not certain till mid March. The next step involves developing a 'Scope of Works' statement – a necessary preliminary to making a contract with a firm of engineers. This is being done with the help of Maunsell Engineering and Melbourne Water. Collaboration with Melbourne Water is essential since this body becomes the official manager of the whole Maribyrnong catchment on July the 1st this year. The Survey and data gathering will have to meet the requirements of Melbourne Water.
- Seven landholders have received funding for specific operations on their properties which fit into the over-all improvement of the environment of the Newham Deep Creek. (The Planting Day planned for May 15th on Judy Don's property is part of the broad scheme. See elsewhere in this Newsletter for details about how you can take part.)

This project has a long-term perspective. Things will not necessarily happen in a big hurry but we are convinced that the eventual out-comes will be very worthwhile.

Jim Sansom (Co-ordinator of the NDC Project)



Environmental Weeds and Invasive Trees



What are Environmental Weeds?

Environmental weeds are plant species that predominantly invade natural areas and compete with or choke out native plant communities.

Why are they a problem?

Environmental weeds cause damage to native plant communities through competing with naturally occurring vegetation for moisture, nutrients and light. Native animal populations can also be effected by the change in vegetation due to replacement of their natural food source and habitat with exotic species.

Weed species also tend to provide greater harbour for pest animal species and some can be poisonous to stock and other animals.

Where have they come from?

Some environmental weeds may have been introduced accidentally eg. As contaminated or imported grain or fodder, however most have been introduced as garden or decorative plant and then have “escaped” into the environment. The most common method of spread are from dumped garden waste containing bulbs, seed or root pieces, deliberate planting in inappropriate areas and from birds or animals spreading seed.



The above article was taken from “*Weeds of the North Central Region*”, which Sally Stabback has in our Landcare Library, please feel free to contact Sally on 5427 0059 to have a loan of this interesting book, which goes on to list numerous weed species with great photos and much more detailed information.



Archives - Important History

It is important for us to keep good archives. Therefore copies of all plans for projects, applications for funding, etc. must be submitted for archiving to Sally Stabback.

This information gives a group history, plus information for those who come after us. It is also valuable as part of the history of the district and its residents.

Similarly photos need to be taken, before, during and after plantings and projects with dates, names of people, and a clear description of location.

Please ensure all involved within the Landcare Group provide this data to our librarian, Sally Stabback, Phone 5427 0059.



Clean Up Australia Day - 6th March 2005

By Sue Massey, coordinator for the Newham area.



Two Newham sites were registered for Clean Up day and nine volunteers collected rubbish from around Newham village and nearby roads.

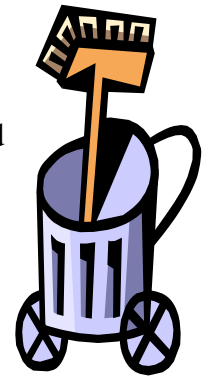


Approximately 88 kg of rubbish was cleaned up and this consisted predominantly of beer bottles, beer cans, plastic soft drink bottles and cans, with food and confectionery wrappers also very prominent.

Clearly some people are still regarding their environment with contempt.



with



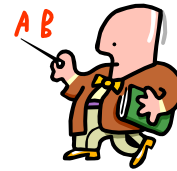
Many thanks to all who participated on the day.



Thanks from all of us too



The Regional Co-ordinator Reports



Field Days put on by Landcare groups near our area include a very successful day on the last Saturday in March at the Penny's property, Darraweit Guim. Farm forestry and re-vegetation techniques were highlighted. Jan Smith (Melbourne Water) spoke about the benefits of the Stream Frontage Management Program which is available to all property owners with land adjoining streams in the Maribyrnong Catchment. Financial help is available for stream-side improvements.

John also mentions the Field Day put on by the Deep Creek (Lancefield & Romsey) Landcare Group focusing on plant identification and seed collection. This day took place on April 17th.

As the Landcare 'expert' in our region, John is always ready to help and asks that if you have any land-care ideas or issues please get in touch with him:

John Robinson
Werribee and Maribyrnong Landcare Co-ordinator
Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
Tel: 5429 9629 Mob: 0417 518 913 Fax: 5429 5828
Email: John.Robinson@dpi.vic.gov.au
Based at: Romsey Service Centre
Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 98 Main Street Romsey



Calendar 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.

May	2 nd . Committee Meeting 15 th Tree Planting – Dons property. (See elsewhere in this Newsletter for details)
June	6 th . 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 th . Committee Meeting 15 th Friday Evening Meeting - Guest Speaker – 7.45pm. Venue and details to be announced. 15 th . (Copy due to Editor for Winter Newsletter)
August 1 st .	Committee Meeting.
September	5 th . Committee Meeting. 17 th ./18 th . Spring Planting. Venue to be announced.
October	3 rd . Committee Meeting. 9 th . BBQ lunch, Social gathering and AGM 12.30 pm Newham Hall. 29 th . (Copy due to Editor for Spring Newsletter).
November	7 th . Committee Meeting. Wildflower walk(s) Details to come.
December	2 nd . Friday Evening BBQ and Social Gathering; 6.00 pm at the Newham Hall. Games and Treasure Hunt for children. 5 th . Committee Meeting.



Coming events:

Each year we plan to have two ‘hands-on’ days like the one coming up on May 15th – doing something constructive, sharing a meal together and have a special activity or guest. These will provide an opportunity to get to know one another better whilst learning about landcare issues.

May 15th ‘Hands-on’ day beside Deep Creek, Newham.

Morning planting session.

Learn about the planting method that Melbourne Water are suggesting -massed plants in small wallaby-proof enclosures.

Discover more about our Riparian plant species and how they would occur



naturally.

Lunch provide by our host, Judy Don.

Afternoon ‘Bunny blaster’ demonstration and discussion of its role as an aid to rabbit control.

When: 10am until 2ish, Sunday May 15th

Where: Property of Judy Don

Enter from 1244 Rochford Rd., Newham. If you are arriving after 10 am, park where you see and then head for the creek. We won’t be far away!

What to bring: hat, gloves & sunscreen.

RSVP by May 8th to Judy Don 5422 2269 or Penny Roberts 5427 0795

