



Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group Newsletter

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FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK...

Hi Landcarers,

This year has commenced with very good news for the environment on the Mornington Peninsula. Gidja Walker (ecologist) and Leon Costermans (botanical artist, botanist and geologist), both valuable contributors to our group, were recognised in this year's Australia Day awards for their contribution to the environment. Both awards are richly deserved and we are very happy to note this recognition.

Melbourne Water (MW) is planning a survey of Main and Splitters Creeks later in the year with the goal of improving the health of our waterways. If you back onto one of these creeks and are contacted by MW, please support by providing access for the survey.

We have an amazing committee that works extremely hard and is having success by increasing the number of biolink properties through our catchment. Already several property visits have been undertaken this year and we are collaborating with the Koala Group bringing more properties into the Greens Bush to Arthurs Seat Biolink.

Greg Holland is working with landholders further north in this biolink.

Tahlia Cruise is working on the Spring and Double Creeks Biolink Project and the Meet Your Bushland Project.

Bridget Beattie is working with the Flinders Golf Club to tackle the weeds there.

Sam McKeon is spreading the word via social media and Amanda Jane Breidahl is focussing on feral animal management as well as hosting afternoon tea and a guided bush walk for **all members** to welcome our new members, and organising the AGM which will have expert speakers explaining "What's so Special About Greens Bush?".

Friends of Flinders Coastline led by Mark Aarons meets every second and fourth Friday morning of the month, this group is doing amazing work along the coast.

The **Greens Bush Association** led by Virginia Carter and Mark Mooney are achieving wonders with their monthly working bees, protecting Greens Bush.

Greg Holland and Gidja Walker featured in the ABC's 7.30 Report in a piece about a recent decision to protect Westernport.

For more good news, please see page 3

So the message (and the work) of helping to improve our environment is spreading and we have every reason to be optimistic about the protection of our natural values. **You can help by spreading the word to friends and neighbours.**

Finally we are delighted to welcome Jodi Vermaas to the committee as editor of this "new look" newsletter. We are extremely appreciative of Jodi's enthusiasm and kindness.

In the meantime, keep weeding.....please.

Michelle Stacey. admin@wildman.net.au

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What's On

Sunday March 3rd

Clean up Australia Day no charge
<https://www.cleanup.org.au/cleanupaustaliaday>

Sunday March 3rd

2:30pm
Welcome to New Landcare Members
See flyer page 2 no charge

Monday March 4th

Gardens for Wildlife registrations open for 2024 no charge
<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Volunteering/Gardens-for-Wildlife>

Saturday March 23rd-1st June

9am-12.00
VNPA Nature Stewards Program- 10 week environmental education course \$175
naturestewards@vnpa.org.au

Sunday April 14th

2:00pm
Main Creek Landcare AGM
Main Creek Community Hall no charge

On demand

Junior landcare "Fun with Costa" playlist of 22 u-tube videos hosted by Costa Georgiadis no charge
https://youtu.be/O_2LluKSL_g
or
<https://juniorlandcare.org.au/>



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

AFTERNOON TEA AND GUIDED FLORA WALK IN GREENS BUSH

You are invited to help us welcome our new members and learn more about Main Creek Landcare and what is planned for 2024

When: Sunday March 3rd at 2.30 pm

Where: 131 Hyslops Road, Main Ridge

Enter by the first gate, which is directly opposite number 130 'Panorama'. Please shut the gate and follow the drive up to the top of the hill.

What to bring: all the usual things – hat, sunscreen, water bottle, sturdy shoes etc.... we will supply the refreshments 😊

RSVP: at Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/welcome-to-new-members-afternoon-tea-wildflower-walk-tickets-817921674747>

Note- this event will not be cancelled due to weather (other than fire) as we have good rain protection.



Contact: Amanda Jane on 0417 363 425 ajbreidahl@gmail.com



From 1 January 2024, land protected with a covenant through Trust for Nature will be exempt from land tax in Victoria.

We applaud the Victorian Government's decision to remove this significant barrier for private investment into conservation, whilst simultaneously recognising the importance and value of permanent protection.

This landmark change has been 10 years in the making – a truly collaborative effort involving Trust for Nature, landholders, the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and member groups including the Australian Land Conservation Alliance and Land Covenantors Victoria.

We expect this historic exemption to significantly increase the appetite of Victorian landholders to contribute to much needed protection of biodiversity on private land in Victoria.

These changes may also benefit landholders who are currently paying land tax on a covenanted property, or for those who are exploring the possibility of covenanting land that is not their primary residence.

Find out more about the land tax exemption [here](#), and further information and FAQs [here](#).

To apply for a land tax exemption you will need to contact the State Revenue Office (SRO). Applications can be received online through My Land Tax (from April 2024 onwards), by contacting the SRO online, or by mail at:

*State Revenue Office
GPO Box 1641
Melbourne, VIC, 3001*

Currently, only 22% of Australia's land area is protected through national and state parks, Indigenous protected areas and private reserves; in Victoria that number is even lower at just 17%. Given around two-thirds of the State is privately owned, private land will play a critical role in securing the future of our unique ecosystems and species and help meet global and local targets to protect biodiversity.

Plus, protecting biodiversity goes hand-in-hand with fighting climate change – with ecosystems across land, water and sea providing natural carbon sinks, helping absorb human induced greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise go into the atmosphere.

There are already 1600+ properties protected through conservation covenants across Victoria. These properties, along with Trust for Nature reserves, store about 4.2 million tonnes of carbon.

We hope that with these changes to land tax, some of the financial pressures relating to conservation on private land will be alleviated and more individuals will protect unique habitat on their properties forever.

Corinne Proske
CEO, Trust for Nature

Landcare receives funds from Recycling donations

Many thanks and well done to all those who have

1. recycled bottles, cans and eligible containers at the new Recycle-it stations and
2. donated these refunds to Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group.

To nominate Main Creek Landcare as a recipient of your refunds, please enter **C2000009261** (5 zeros) when returning your items.

These donations are trickling in all the time. The total so far about \$25.00.

Recycling eligible containers helps the environment by supplying material for new products and donations to Landcare assist the protection of our beautiful environment with ongoing biolink work and weed management.



Containers eligible for recycling in this scheme are

- Plastic soft drink bottles
- Glass beer bottles
- Cans with soft drinks and/or alcohol
- Small fruit juice cartons

In eligible containers include

- Glass wine and spirit bottles
- Juice bottles over 1L
- Cordial bottles
- Milk containers, other than flavoured milk
- Concentrated fruit or vegetable juice
- Health tonics

Recycling points:

OTC BP

Safety Beach
1 Marine Drive, VIC Safety Beach
1300 237 010
Open: 8.00 – 18.00

Return-it

Depot - Rosebud
1/8 Henry Wilson Drive, VIC Rosebud
1300 237 010
Open: 8.00 – 17.00

OTC Red Hill Cellar and Pantry

Red Hill South
141 Shoreham Rd, VIC Red Hill South
1300 237 010
Open: 8.00 – 19.00

Return-it

Depot - Dromana
32 Brasser Avenue, VIC Dromana
1300 237 010
Open: 8.00 – 17.00

For questions please email: maincreek@mplandcare.org.au
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Joining or hosting a Clean Up Australia Day activity could now be a lucrative source of funds as well as a great thing to do for our environment !!



It's time to deadhead or dig out Agapanthus

Agapanthus praecox

Origin: Southern Africa

Size: 40-80cm high, 1-1.5m wide

Flowers: November - February

Best removal time: Before seeds form

Seeds: March - May



What it does

Invades gardens, bushland and roadside areas. Tolerates a wide range of conditions from damp to very dry. Takes over and displaces indigenous grasses and groundcovers. It also attracts large numbers of snails and slugs.

How it spreads

- reproducing seed and vegetatively (root growth or fragments)
- when seeds are transported by soil movement
- wind and by dumping garden waste in bushland areas
- commonly sold at markets, nurseries, fetes and club fundraisers. Buyer beware!

How to remove it

Remove by hand

This is only practical for small clumps of the plant. It is important to pull out all roots from beneath the soil. Alternatively, cut the flower heads off before seeding to help prevent spreading. Brush cutting or mowing must be done regularly.

Spray with herbicide

Cut leaves off, brushcut or mow to stimulate new growth, then spray new growth with a registered product and ensure you check the label and follow instructions. Ring the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning on 136 186 for full details.

Dig out

You will need to ensure that all the root material is removed when digging out. It is important to avoid dumping the soil elsewhere as this will further distribute the weed. The area should be monitored for any regrowth.

Indigenous alternatives to plant

Many shrub alternatives indigenous to the Yarra Ranges region are available and would make great substitutes for Agapanthus. Some alternatives include:

- [Spiny Mat Rush, *Lomandra longifolia*](#)
- [Butterfly Flag, *Diplarrena moraea*](#)

source: Yarra Ranges Council





WORKING BEE GREENS BUSH

9am 2nd Saturday of the month

Meet @ end of Greens Road, Main Ridge. Melways 254 D3

***Note: Dates of working bees & meeting sites may vary due to weather & works priorities.
Please register to receive email notifications.***

Come along & join in the works to help protect our magnificent Greens Bush, MP National Park. Learn about our local flora & fauna, bushland restoration principles/techniques & meet your fellow local, bushland enthusiasts.

Works vary each month & may involve

- control of invasive, habitat-altering introduced plants
- mapping of significant species / flora & fauna / works areas
- dilapidated fence removal
- educational walks

Bring along / wear sturdy shoes, long top & pants, hat, gloves, eye protection & water - all weeding tools supplied.

If you would like to attend, please register on ParkConnect or email me at localhabitat@gmail.com

To receive all notifications of all Greens Bush Activities, become a member. Go to www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au create a profile & join GBA

Shelterbelts are important pieces of infrastructure on the farm; they offer productivity gains to livestock and cropping farmers. Traditional shelterbelts, commonly known as “windbreaks”, were usually established with tree species such as Cypress Pines. These windbreaks, whilst offering the farmer some means to protect stock and crops from winds, did nothing to benefit local wildlife.

This guide, one in a series of Practical Landcare guides, offers you the landholder, ideas on how to establish Natural shelterbelts to make not just productivity gains on your farm, but to create a place of valuable habitat for your local wildlife. This guide does not provide detailed design elements (there are plenty of other references available for this purpose) but it does highlight the virtues of using locally-native plants species to establish a natural shelterbelt.

Inspired with this knowledge, you will be able to make a valuable contribution to the bio-diversity of your local environment by creating both an important piece of farm infrastructure and a healthy eco- system at the same time.

Why *Natural Shelterbelts* are superior to *Cypress Pine Windbreaks*

Well-made natural shelterbelts offer effective wind screening for stock and crops. This is important for you because it contributes to the productivity of your farm. There has been much science conducted to quantify the productivity gains arising from providing shade and shelter to stock and crops.

A natural shelterbelt comprising locally-native (indigenous) plant species can offer very effective shade and shelter whilst creating a place of valuable wildlife habitat. Using the right mix of plant species and plant forms (trees, shrubs, etc) in the right density and at the right spacings will create a healthy eco-system with a great diversity of plant and animal species. A food web is created, where all creatures eat and are eaten. Your eco-system will comprise all manner of plants, lichens, mosses, fungi, birds, mammals, bats, reptiles, amphibians, insects, macro-invertebrates, and countless other organisms living within its soil.

Creating a healthy eco-system within your natural shelterbelt offers local wildlife not just a place of habitat, but a valuable place of refuge and source of food; some species will now have a place to nest and to breed and to perform breeding rituals.

Cypress windbreaks are problematic for you the farmer, and they offer nothing to support our wildlife. Foliage can be too sparse. It can be too dense, preventing wind from permeating at reduced speed, thus promoting turbulence. Limbs can break off with age. Unfenced Cypress windbreaks are exposed to stock browsing foliage on lower limbs, leading to gaps at ground level through which the wind can roar. Stock camping under Cypress Pines may be exposed to toxic foliage; pregnant cows, in their last tri-mester, are likely to abort after eating Cypress foliage. Denuded soil at the base creates a haven for weeds such as Deadly Nightshade. The mono-culture nature of these windbreaks leaves them vulnerable to significant pest attack from such diseases as Cypress canker (*Seiridium cardinale*).

A Cypress windbreak, in a state of collapse, with sparse foliage and falling limbs is ugly and detracts from the physical beauty of your farm. Maintenance of these windbreaks adds unnecessarily to your workload.

So, what are the benefits of a natural shelterbelt ?

There are numerous benefits, both for your Farm Productivity and for the Bio-diversity of your local environment:-

- Indigenous plants, grown from local-provenance seed have evolved over eons to be best-adapted to local conditions. They will have the best chance to survive frosts, fire and pest attack. Damaged, they will regenerate from seed (stored in the soil), from roots or lignotubers and from epicormic buds in the stem. A shelterbelt comprising indigenous plants is durable & resilient. This means that there are substantially lower costs for re-establishing a damaged shelterbelt than there are for re-establishing a damaged exotic windbreak. A mix of plant species as found in a natural shelterbelt is much more resilient to pest attack than the mono-cultural exotic windbreak.
- Creating a natural shelterbelt is often the only reason that a private landholder will undertake a tree-planting project. Establishing the shelterbelt introduces back into the landscape sorely-needed native vegetation - sorely needed, because in its absence, our local wildlife lacks essential habitat.

- Land-clearing for farming and housing has reduced the amount of native vegetation available for wildlife habitat. Fragments of remnant bush, often de-graded with poor species composition, dot the landscape. On their own, these “islands” offer little to our wildlife, but linked by natural shelterbelts, wildlife is able to move about the landscape in its quest for food, habitat, refuge and breeding. Such linkages are called wildlife corridors.
- Shelterbelts can be used for good effect in fire protection. They can be used to protect farm buildings from flames, embers and radiant heat. Because shelterbelts slow down the wind, they can be very effective in reducing the impact of bushfire on the farm. There is much literature available on the topic of using shelterbelts to offer fire protection - use your favourite Internet search engine to search on “shelterbelts for fire protection”.
- A well-managed property, with aesthetically-pleasing landscape features and with a healthy natural environment (with birds and butterflies in abundance) offers the landholder a great deal of satisfaction and contentment. A well-managed property requires the least amount of work in return for the most amount of farm productivity. The farm becomes a good place to be, rather than a place to toil. Prospective buyers will sense this and the re-sale value of your property will reflect this.
- The positive benefits of the healthy eco-system you create will extend beyond the shelterbelt out into the broader farmland. For example, birds living in the shelterbelt can fly out to predate crop-damaging insects beyond. In the same way, isolated living remnant trees, which too are highly-valued, are also protected by your shelterbelt inhabitants; “dieback”, the scourge of many old lone remnant trees, is blamed on the lack of bio-diversity and an unhealthy eco-system. Your shelterbelt can help to protect our old remnant gum trees !
- Compare the explosive power of a burning *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine) plantation with the more-benign burning green, species-rich natural shelterbelt. Unlike exotic windbreaks, natural shelterbelts will not be lost when burned. Temporarily damaged - Yes, permanently lost - No.
- Some exotic species used in windbreaks are weedy - *Pinus radiata* is a good example of a tree which will readily take hold on roadsides and in native forests. Its seed is fine and is released in vast plumes to drift on the wind.





‘WHAT’S SO SPECIAL ABOUT GREENS BUSH?’

You are invited to join us for the

**Main Creek Landcare AGM and
a panel of guest speakers who will share with us just
how special Greens Bush is...**

Virginia Carter: of Local Habitat and Greens Bush Association

Larry Wakefield: from Birdlife Australia and

Kim Cott: our local Ranger from Parks Victoria.

When: Sunday April 14th at 2.00 pm

Where: Main Ridge Community Hall,

Main Ridge Recreation Reserve, Main Creek Road, Main Ridge

Enquiries: Main Creek Landcare Secretary

adriennemjs@gmail.com



My Whinge - Working Bees

Craig Dodgson

You know you must be getting old when the worker at the supermarket checkout says “Now if I’ve put too many items in that bag and it’s too heavy for you ‘Dear’, just tell me and I’ll put them into another bag.”

I may be getting older (just a ‘young’n’ in the eyes of some) but I think I can still hold my own at working bees. And yes, the legs below the shorts maybe getting a little bit knobbly and the varicose veins a sight to behold but the body is hanging in there, even if I require the occasional afternoon nap.

I have partaken in a number of working bees for our Landcare group but for the first time, I joined the Greens Bush Association as we undertook a Saturday morning activity. The idea of spending precious weekend time pulling out weeds when I do it as a paid job during the week seems a bit odd but the good company and the chance to garner knowledge from others makes it more than worthwhile.

Our team leaders, Virginia and Mark, have a vast wealth of expertise. Greens Bush is their backyard and they know it intimately. Our task for this day was to re-visit an area that had been weeded 10 years previously and we were now doing a follow-up to remove emerging Pittosporums. I think I heard correctly that Virginia and Mark have been involved in restoration work in Greens Bush for many, many years, a true testament to their dedication.



Twining glycine (*Glycine clandestina*)

Instructions given and Phytophthora cautions completed, we headed off. Part way along the track, Mark stopped to show us a particularly beautiful area that they are proud of. And quite rightly so as the rewards of their hard work could be clearly seen. The bush was as it ‘should be’, in balance, free of weeds and exhibiting the diversity of flora you would hope to see in a healthy plant community.

As we arrived at our work area, the importance of follow-up was made clear as Pittosporums were threatening to undo the previous good works done. Many hands make light work and as the Pittosporums were quite small, we made good progress. My ‘bull in a china shop’ approach to pulling out these emerging trees had to be somewhat curtailed as Virginia pointed out the importance of trying to maintain the vegetation around the base of these saplings where tiny plant communities have to be carefully preserved. Also, the occasional climber and twining plant, whether it be the native clematis or twining glycine, sometimes use the Pittosporums to assist their growth and again needed to be protected. Virginia showed us how the Pittosporum could be removed while still preserving the scrambling plant we want to save.



Working with likeminded people who are happy to share their knowledge and expertise makes turning up to working bees in an area of particular beauty, in which we all have a vested interest, a pleasure and not a chore. Seeing the dedication to an area that Virginia and Mark have shown is inspiring and makes me want to tackle the weeds on our own property even more.

It is a daunting challenge and there is much to be done and time is pressing and I’m not getting any younger but seeing what can be achieved is a goal I want to aim for. I must get started straight away but perhaps an afternoon nap first, just to keep my strength up of course.

AS’s note: You can see the knees (third from the left) – they’re not knobbly at all!

Why are there so many White Cabbage Butterflies?



Female White Cabbage Butterfly (Wikipedia)

Most of us will have noticed swarms of White butterflies seemingly everywhere and especially on brassicas eg cabbages. Why it is so you may ask?

An article in *The Conversation* by Nigel Andrew, Southern Cross University, supplies some answers.

Apparently this butterfly (*Pieris rapae*) which is NOT indigenous to Australia has flourished in the recent weather conditions. It has the ability to "exploit moist and warm conditions over the past winter....it can also cope with cold.

Milder winters mean the overwintering pupae emerged and mated early without being predated on as their natural enemies take longer to emerge after the milder weather".

A key way to control them is to "cover your crops with insect-proof mesh, provide an uncovered sacrificial plant to attract the female to lay her eggs on" and in time the beneficial predators and wasps will win the battle and kill the caterpillars.

The good news is beneficial predators are attracted to "messy gardens with different habitats and flowers", so my White Cabbage Butterfly caterpillars should be gone in no time.

For more information please click [here](#)

AS

VALE ALICE GREENBERGER

It was with much sadness that Main Creek Landcare learned of the recent passing of Alice Greenberger. Alice has been an enthusiastic member of our group for many years, regularly attending events and on one occasion organising a 'frog call' event on the property where she lived. She had a keen enquiring mind, especially about the local environment and will be greatly missed.

Vale Alice.