Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group

Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group Newsletter June 2026

ABN 58359753653 Number 70

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In this issue

What's On

Monday 1st June, Friends of Seawinds Planting Day 9am-11am meet at the Seawinds Native Plant Nursery

Friday 5th June, World Environment Planting Day 9am-12:30pm Join MP Koala on World Environment Day to help improve koala habitat around the beautiful town of Flinders. For more details and to register: https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/world-environment-day-koala-food-tree-planting-flinders-tickets-1989198123134?aff=oddtdtcreator&keep_tld=true

Wednesday 10th June, Community drop in re sale of Cerberus land 5:30pm-7:30pm https://www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/delivering-future-estate/community-information-sessions/register

Sunday 14th June, Koala Tree Planting Day 9am-12:30pm Help MP Koala improve koala habitat around the beautiful Main Ridge. For more details and to register: https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/koala-food-tree-planting-day-main-ridge-tickets-1987373386297?aff=odcleoeventsincollection

Sunday 14th June, Greens Bush walk and talk 10am Highlighting MCCLG's tax deductible donation works done and proposed for 2026-2027 with Virgina Carter and Kim Cott
RSVP: **admin@wildman.net.au** **see page 8**

Sunday 26th July, National Tree Day - planting event with Bernie's GB@AS biolink- Save the date and details to follow on your email.

Sunday 28th June, Mantons and Stony Creek Woody Weeding Help remove Pittosporum at Main Ridge Flora Reserve 9am-12pm followed by morning tea.
RSVP: **memwood27@gmail.com** or on 0417 302 558 or David Maddocks on 0429 990 518

Tuesday 30th June Last Day to get your tax deductible donation in for our Greens Bush Community Restoration Project before EOFY -see page 5

Every 2nd and 4th Friday of each month 9am - 11am
Friends of Flinders Coastline working on shire managed coastline.
For more details call Mark Aarons 0407093620

Every 2nd Saturday of each month 9am
Greens Bush Association Working bee
https://www.facebook.com/greensbushassociation/ or localhabitat@gmail.com

3-9 August Landcare Week - theme "Experience Landcare" -watch this space for planting days

From the editor…

Thanks to everyone who came along to our AGM at Flinders Civic Hall on the day of the by-election and the Red Hill Market.
The commitment of those who came was rewarded with a thoroughly engaging presentation by Mel Barker CEO from the UNESCO Western Port Biosphere.

I was surprised how much I didn't know about this important area that covers most of the Mornington Peninsula, despite living in it. Including that it can only exist because people do live within it.

If you missed out but would like to know more head here : https://www.biosphere.org.au/ and check out the "our biosphere" tab.

Should you dip your boots on and off farms?

Phytophthora cinnamomi

P. cinnemomi, is an exotic water mould (AKA cinnamon fungus) that has spread across southern Australia and is deadly to a wide range of susceptible plants.

Its discovery on a property scheduled for revegetation this autumn, generated an investigation into this widespread mould, ways of countering it, and whether revegetation can/should be done in infected areas.

It is impossible to eradicate the mould with current technology, so the recommended solution is to seal off the area and isolate it.

But this is difficult to impossible to achieve across our diverse peninsula.

Further, a recent analysis along a 70 km transect from Glenburne to Sugarloaf Reservoir found a remarkably high level of infection from a variety of *Phytophthora* species (Dunstan et al 2016).

Dunstan et al concluded that "*Phytophthora species are widespread, abundant and diverse in natural ecosystems*", and that "*We have probably been underestimating Phytophthora diversity in Australia*".

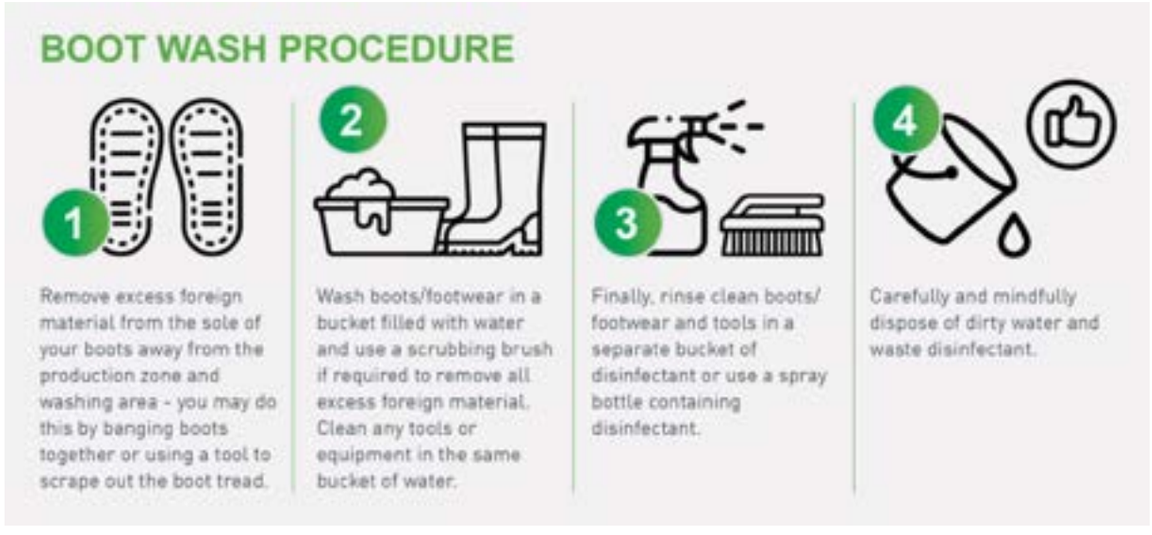
Greg Holland has drafted a briefing note from the extensive literature on this topic, available here. Also provided is a table of the vulnerability of common Peninsula plants. The results are based largely on the Western Australian experience, and Greg has included "?" to indicate either unknown, or a dicey finding. ***They are an indicator only and no guarantees are provided.***

Although eradication is not possible, there is a chemical (phosphite) that when sprayed or when injected into plants in an infected area has shown improved survivability of seedlings planted in affected areas.

Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, therefore is planning a trial planting in the known infection area to gather experience. The young plants will be sprayed before planting. The work will be done under strict quarantine conditions, with knowledgeable volunteers, and under expert advice. More info as it proceeds.

Landcare is collaborating with the Shire's Regenerating Agriculture and Agroecology folks on coordinating a talk by an expert later in the year.

In the meantime you may want to consider the below when moving between properties.



The disinfectant can be 70% methylated spirits or a 1% solution of household bleach which is made by diluting 1 part bleach in 4 parts water.

Phosphorus and your Waste Water

At our last MCCLG meeting while discussing our autumn water watch results from Splitters and Main Creek, we were pondering the possible causes of the level of disturbance/pollution we were seeing. This lead to a discussion about the waste water from our households on site waste treatment and the effect these systems could have on not only the waterway but on the surrounding indigenous plants that are highly susceptible to phosphorus toxicity.

So here is what AI says on the difference in phosphorus release between a traditional septic and a waste water treatment plant that is now the required system:

While both systems struggle to remove phosphorus purely through standard biological processes, **where and how the phosphorus is trapped** changes completely between a septic system and a home sewage treatment plant (HSTP).

1. Where Phosphorus is Trapped

- **Traditional Septic System (Soil-Dependent):** A standard septic tank removes virtually zero phosphorus. The phosphorus leaves the tank in the liquid effluent and flows into your underground soakage trenches. **The soil itself does 100% of the work.** Phosphorus chemically binds (adsorbs) to minerals in the soil like iron, aluminium, and calcium.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant (Tank-Dependent):** Advanced biological HSTPs use specialized bacteria (Phosphorus Accumulating Organisms) that gorge on phosphorus during alternating oxygen cycles. The phosphorus is trapped inside the physical body of the bacteria, which settles to the bottom of the tank as sludge.

2. Risk of Environmental "Leaking"

- **Traditional Septic System (High Long-Term Risk):** Soil does not have an infinite capacity to absorb nutrients. Over 10 to 20 years, the soil directly beneath your trenches can become fully saturated with phosphorus. Once saturated, the phosphorus "breaks through" and leaks freely into local groundwater, nearby creeks, or down slopes—a major trigger for toxic blue-green algae blooms.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant (Low Risk):** Because the phosphorus is stored in the tank's bottom sludge, it is completely isolated from the environment. When you have your system professionally pumped out every few years, that phosphorus is physically sucked out and taken away to a municipal facility.

3. Advanced Chemical Stripping

If you live in an ecologically sensitive zone (like near a waterway on the Mornington Peninsula), a standard setup for either system may not be enough.

- Septic systems cannot be easily upgraded to strip phosphorus.
- Many modern HSTPs can be retrofitted with a **chemical dosing unit** (usually alum or lanthanum). This chemical causes the phosphorus to instantly clump together and sink to the bottom of the tank, removing up to 90%+ of phosphorus.

Regardless of the system you use, EPA Victoria guidelines highly recommend using **low-phosphate or phosphorus-free laundry detergents and soaps** to protect your local environment from nutrient overload.

Below is also a link with tips on how to reduce the microplastic load going into your waste water when you wash your clothes.

https://planetarkenvironmentalfoundation.cmail20.com/t/d-l-guhcyd-dujhjkkrhl-h/

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SIGNIFICANTLY HELP OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT?

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR DONATION TO MAKE AN IMPACTFUL DIFFERENCE TO THE HEALTH OF OUR BEAUTIFUL GREENS BUSH, IN THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK AND BE TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

This year Main Creek Landcare will be partnering with South West Mornington Peninsula Landcare and combining all donations, big and small, to help fund vital weeding and restorative work in Green's Bush. Strategic sections will be chosen to enhance high quality areas, that can be followed up appropriately, as part of the long-term strategy for habitat restoration in the park.

We are very excited about this initiative and hope that you will consider making a Tax Deductible donation for the end of Financial Year.

To make your donation please make a direct deposit to -

Name: SWaMP DGR charity A/C
BSB: 633 000
Account number: 224 389 981
Reference: Your surname (and) Greens Bush

To receive your Tax Deductible receipt:
Email swamp@mplandcare.org.au and Cc maincreek@mplandcare.org.au
with your name, email, postal address and date that you made your donation.

Thanking you for your generosity and support. For further information please contact Main Creek Landcare maincreek@mplandcare.org.au

Southwest Mornington Peninsula Landcare

Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group

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

MEET YOUR BUSHLAND

2026

Mornington Peninsula landholder engagement program

Meet Your Bushland connects local landholders with an expert bushland restoration specialist and Landcare members to help you understand, protect and enhance your natural areas.

Who is this program for?

Landholders on the Mornington Peninsula interested in understanding their bushland and its role in:

- Enhancing biodiversity
- Improving agricultural productivity
- Reducing the impact of weather and climate extremes, and
- Reducing the local impacts of climate change.

What you'll receive

- A walk-and-talk on your property, focusing on areas with the highest habitat value.
- A short, tailored report outlining:
  - The conservation values of your property
  - Management approaches
  - Available support including funding opportunities
- A follow-up tour of a nearby property demonstrating successful conservation outcomes.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST OPEN NOW:

Contact - Nathan Wainwright
nathan@regeneratingfarms.com.au
0403738310

This **free** program is proudly delivered by the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network in partnership with Regenerating Farms and generously supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Trust.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST

Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network

REGENERATING FARMS

Seeing trees dying?

Climate Change Dieback on the Mornington Peninsula
Greg Holland

Our unique Peninsula environment faces a range of threats. Well known natural examples include fire, drought, pathogens, boring insects, and over-browsing by herbivores (insect and mammalian).

Resilient ecosystems in a stable climate have developed mechanisms to survive and recover from such setbacks. One example is the way eucalypts bounce back from fire by reshooting new leaves and branches from buds hidden behind their protective bark layer.

However, a new threat is emerging – Climate Change Dieback (CCD) is where a combination of local drying and more frequent and severe heat waves is severely impacting vulnerable plants. Examples can be found here.

There is growing evidence that our changing climate is increasing the impact of CCD. Many cases already have occurred across Australia, where a tipping point has been passed and the ecosystem collapsed. See here for more information.

An emerging concern is that CCD may combine with existing natural threats to increase the overall vulnerability.

Let's consider an example. A drying climate leads to a severe bushfire that burns the leaves, and weakens a patch of eucalypts. They respond by reshooting through their bark. Then, an intense heatwave kills the new shoots. Many plants cannot recover and die – the entire patch may even collapse. More robust species expand to fill the vacated niche and a new ecosystem becomes established. Sadly, those replacements are often the weeds that we have been working to control.

A schematic of this process is shown in the second figure (from here).

Doing Your Own Tree Planting this Winter?

Then FYI the outlook for new plantings this year is not great, with the BOM now predicting a 80% chance of a dry winter and El Nino growing into what could be an extreme event.

Greg Holland recently came across a field trial by Hovells Creek Landcare that tested the impact of adding water crystals and slow-release fertiliser to the hole dug for the pant compared with the usual procedure of simply placing the plant directly in the hole..

As you can see in Appendix 3 : Practical Guide to Planting Tubestock Trees, both additives have a positive impact.

A couple of tips follow:

- It is important to dig a deep hole (30 cm would be ideal) and mix 1 teaspoon of water crystals with the soil at the bottom of the hole. This encourages deep root development. Using more than a teaspoon of crystals has been known to push the plant out of the hole.
- If using fertiliser it must be low phosphorous. Greg's experience with the use of Osmocote Native Fertiliser has been that it promotes too much leaf growth, which causes stress from both wind and excessive evaporation, so be conservative.
- Editors note: I have found that if you can make **reusable** wire tree guards (which are much more resource and time consuming rather than plastic or cardboard guards) the trees *seem* to be more resilient to wind damage as they are exposed to the wind as they grow.

If there has been planting at your property in the last few years associated with Bernies GB2AS Biolink an assessment of survival is being conducted with the potential for replanting gaps. Please reach out to us if you would like an appraisal.

Wildlife injuries

Mark & Virginia from Local Habitat are now trained & registered Wildlife Rescuers, volunteering for Wildlife Victoria. They have been doing this work since January 2025.
The majority of their call outs are for kangaroo/vehicle collisions on the MP.
They have noticed there is a lot of confusion in the community about who to call. People have reported that it has taken up to 2 days for any response.
Wildlife Victoria (WV) has the most efficient 24-hour call-out system. All rescuers are notified within 5-10minutes of the public calling in an incident, meaning they can get to the injured animal immediately. WV have a list of specialists who can attend the scene if the animal requires sedation &/or veterinary care.
For Wildlife injuries/reporting call Wildlife Victoria

Members of the public can report incidents of sick, injured, or orphaned native animals found anywhere across the state to Wildlife Victoria's 24/7 wildlife emergency response service on (03) 8400 7300 or by filling out the **online reporting form.**

Greens Bush Restoration-Community Project

Project:

Last financial year, Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group, in partnership with South West Mornington Peninsula Landcare Group (SWaMP), launched a tax-deductible fundraising initiative to support critical land management work in Greens Bush National Park.

We were delighted by the response and encouraged by the restoration work achieved in 2025–26. This year we want to continue to expand on last year's success. We ask you to consider making a tax deductible donation to this project in which 100% of every donation goes towards weed management in Greens Bush.

Our Plan:

Virginia Carter and Mark Mooney, leaders of the Greens Bush Association and Kim Cott, Parks Victoria, have strategically planned the sections to be targeted for this initiative. The initial round of weed control will be undertaken by professional contractors with follow up weed control being supported by volunteers.

How the Work is Done:

Contractors Ruby and Darcy Nigro from Skinks Bushland Recovery are tackling woody weeds in this year's target area, mainly Sweet Pittosporum. Their 'tools of the trade' are an electric drill and a narrow, directed nozzle from a backpack containing herbicide. The technique of drilling small holes into the base of invasive species, then filling the holes immediately with herbicide is highly successful, killing these pest plants where they stand with minimal disturbance to the surrounding flora and fauna. As the targeted plants die their dying structure continues to provide habitat and shelter for small birds, mammals and insects. This allows more light and rain beneath the targeted tree enabling native flora to regenerate. This very specific management of these invasive species avoids widespread destruction of ground covers and maintains soil integrity.

How to Support the Project:

We aim to keep funding weed contractors so this essential work can continue. This year, our fundraising target is **$35,000**, which will allow work to be completed at the current site and make significant progress in the adjoining high-priority area.

Or if you would like to attend the Greens Bush Association regular working bees, please email localhabitat@gmail.com to be notified of future dates. Attending working bees is an opportunity to help protect our magnificent National Park, learn about local flora and fauna, bushland restorations principles/techniques and meet your fellow local bushland enthusiasts.

Upcoming Walk and Talk:

If you are interested to see this restoration work firsthand, please come to a gentle ramble of about 2 km which will be held on:
Sunday 14th June – please RSVP: admin@wildman.net.au for more details.

Kim Cott, Ranger - Parks Victoria and Virginia Carter -Greens Bush Association, two people who possibly know Greens Bush better than anyone else, will lead the walk and talk.

How to Donate:

Tax-deductible donations for this project can be made by direct deposit to:

Name: SWaMP DGR charity A/C
BSB: 633 000
Account Number: 224 389 981
Reference: Your surname and Greens Bush

To receive your Tax Deductible receipt: email swamp@mplandcare.org.au and copy to maincreek@mplandcare.org.au with your name, email, postal address and date that you made your donation.

Thank you for considering donating to the Greens Bush Restoration - Community Project.