

C ommunity of

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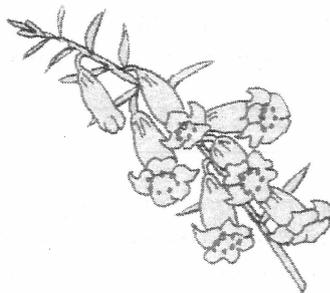
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CRISP Nursery News

November/December 2008



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Ringwood VIC 3134
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CRISP Management Team

Nursery Manager: Annette O'Sullivan
Nursery Assistant: Bill Hermon
Community Development Worker: Stephanie Dean

President Andy Powell
Vice President Peter Wooton
Treasurer Paul Chenery
Secretary Merrilyn Smith
Committee: Annette Culley
Mark Smith
Carmel Koesasi
John Beeston

Newsletter Editor: Linda Hibbs

SALES AREA

Open:

Wednesday 9.30am - 12.30pm

Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm

Saturday 10.00-1pm (1st and 3rd of the month March- Nov)

VOLUNTEERS

Most of the work at CRISP is carried out by volunteers. These are people from within the community who give their time to help provide a large range of indigenous plants for the Maroondah Region. If you care about your local environment and would like to help out at the nursery - join the friendly team. No experience needed. Learn the difference between various native plants, learn to propagate and pot up the many seedlings.

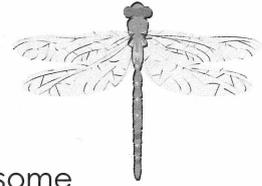
Where are we?

CRISP is located in GREENWOOD AVE, Ringwood (just next to Jubilee Park). If you can't find a volunteer amongst the plants - walk down further and find them in a small building on your left - just before Reverse Art.

Come and browse the sales section or give some of your time to help the others.

DISCLAIMER: Crisp Nursery Inc does not hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed in CRISP news. They may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the organisation, but are merely printed to share information with those who are interested in the conservation of our local flora and related environmental concerns.

A note from the Editor



Elections are underway for the council. Whilst some wards and some municipalities have candidates supporting the environment openly, in my own ward of Arrabri this does not seem to be the case. On the few occasions the word 'environment' is mentioned, it seems to be linked with a line of other concerns and thus does not show the candidate has environment as a priority. On a more positive note – the current council has been more active on environment issues than any other so this can only be a good thing and something that we hope will continue. This doesn't mean councils don't have to be lobbied...they still need constant reminding of what steps need to be taken - but at least if they listen then we are further down the track than we were a number of years ago.

The CRISP volunteer team have put in many hours of work again this year to nurture the plants from seed to seedling. Without their effort and the enormous amount of work put in by Annette and Stephanie and Bill – the nursery would not survive. Come along and join in the propagation activities or just lend a helping hand. New faces are always welcome.

I would like to thank those who contributed articles for this issue: Alan Strachan on the seed survival vault in Norway; Annette Culley shedding some light on committee matters; Olwyn Smiley for kindly sharing with readers her experience of obtaining water tanks; Alan Strachan and Stephanie Dean for the photos and Dale Morgan for the information about the National Tree planting day; Gwyn Davies for her articles on preserving our rail reserves and small critters in the garden; Bernadette Thomas for her update on the Sustainable Living Project.

The next newsletter will be out in March - so start thinking about what articles you might be able to contribute. A personal story about your experience with CRISP or plants in general - something of fascination to the members (like Alan's article in this issue), how to maintain plants in a dry environment (like Trevor's in this issue) or some practical guidance in growing Indigenous Australian plants. All are welcome - and photos are a lovely bonus. Also if you have drawn or painted any Australian plants or flowers or know of anyone who does and would like to contribute to the newsletter - let me know.

Send articles and photos to: lhibbs@ihug.com.au

Come along on the 6th December for the Annual Christmas party - see advert in the newsletter. Keep on buying your plants and promoting CRISP nursery to those in your neighbourhood. Hope to see you there!

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and may 2009 be a good, peaceful and positive year for all.

Linda Hibbs

From the manager

Annette O'Sullivan



It is hard to believe we are here again, looking forward to planting for autumn and of course the Christmas party; hope to see many of you there.

Our Saturday sales days are now finished for the year. I would like to thank everyone for supporting us throughout the year and thank you to all the volunteers who looked after the plants and customers in our sales area. We will be giving the area a good spring clean again in preparation for the New Year. You will still be able to purchase plants but we are encouraging people to make good use of their time preparing for autumn planting by weeding and mulching. We are all potting up madly in expectation of a good year in 2009.

We have some good orders from the council; 8,000 tube stock for Glen Park, 10,000 for Dorset Road, 200 advanced plants for a bush food garden at the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and another 700 for the First Friends of Dandenong Creek planting day at the Scott Street Billabong.

I have been going along to the Sustainable Living Space Film nights organized by Bernadette Thomas. The nights have been really enjoyable and it is a good opportunity to catch up with other people interested in a wide variety of environmental issues. The next film:

'Who Killed the Electric Car' is on **Tuesday 25th November** at 6.30pm. It will be screened at Function Room 3, Manningham Civic Centre, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Entry is free but bookings are essential: [HYPERLINK "mailto:bdettethomas@gmail.com"](mailto:bdettethomas@gmail.com) bdettethomas@gmail.com or 9687 8675.

I hope you all have a happy and safe Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Cheers Annette



Community Development Report

Stephanie Dean

The busy selling period is over for a while now – I trust that your plants are surviving!! Over the past few months thousands of plants have moved through the Sales Area or been packed into orders. We are now very busy filling all the empty spaces with seed trays, potted up seedlings and preparing for next year's orders. There is never a dull moment around the nursery.

The nursery would be unable to function without the dedicated support of so many community members. Some help by volunteering regularly on a Wednesday and/or Friday. Others come occasionally when they are able, some stay for the whole morning and some for just an hour or so. Many of our volunteers are involved in background work – sourcing plant material, helping with computer issues, taking on a committee position, newsletter editor and contributors or acting as liaison between the nursery and community groups. There are many others who support the nursery through their membership (to check whether your membership is current look at the top right hand corner of the mailing label). Whatever you are contributing – be assured it is much valued.

In recent times we have welcomed quite a number of new members and are most pleased to welcome some new volunteers. I trust that your association with the nursery will be a great positive in your life.

Back in August we held the AGM at Federation Estate. It was a most interesting night. Bernadette gave us an update on the Sustainable Living Space Project – see her information in this newsletter for current information and activities. Andrew was a fascinating speaker and many of us were most inspired by his talk on the local orchid species. Such intricate and fascinating plants we have when you take the time to really look. His photos and descriptions were brilliant.

Our next major function is the annual end of year celebration. We are most fortunate to have amongst our members Trevor Blake. He has hosted this event a number of times in the past few years at his beautiful property in East Ringwood. He has offered to do this again this year so on the 13th of December from 12 – 3pm (or any part thereof) gathering at the Blake's for BBQ and celebration of the years achievements. Meat and drinks provided if you are able to bring a salad or sweet to share that would be much appreciated.

Please RSVP to the nursery for catering purposes.

Local Friends Groups

Heathmont Bushlink

Working bees held 1st Sunday of the month
Contact Roger: 9876 6762

Loughies Bushland

Working bees held 1st Saturday of the month
9.30-12.30pm. Meet in Kubis Drv at the Main
Entrance. Coming up: Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2
Contact Carol: 9870 8126

First Friends of Dandenong Creek

Contact Barry: 9801 1628

Mullum Mullum Creek Bushcare Group

Contact Dale: 9870 1060

FJC Rogers Reserve

Contact Gwen: 9879 1427

Friends of Wombolano

Working bees held 3rd Sunday of the month
Contact Andy: 9729 4550

Friends of Ringwood Lake

Working bees held first Monday of the month.
Meet at the Sound Shell at 10.00am
Contact Des French: 9879 4176



Nesting next door.
Tops and tails.
Spot the Tawny Frogmouths amongst the bark. (Linda)



CRISP committees and incorporation

by Annette Culley

CRISP Nursery came into existence in 1994 but did not become an incorporated body until November 1996. Nevertheless the committee existed well before 1996 and I have a vivid memory of the day the whole committee turned up for a meeting with a solicitor whose name I no longer remember at a well known Ringwood legal firm. There were so many of us there that he was forced to usher us into the firm's boardroom; we had come to discuss the serious business of Incorporation. The day was enlivened by the escape of Olwyn Jones' little dog Jemma out onto busy Maroon-dah highway and I seem to remember Olwyn and Eva Buchanan setting off in pursuit as the remainder of us, including the solicitor, waited patiently in the boardroom.

Well, enough of reminiscing. The committee has continued to steer the CRISP ship through waters both calm and turbulent to this very day. Most of us were unencumbered by experience and no doubt mistakes were made along the way. Much practical support has, and still is being provided by our Nursery Managers past and present and more recently by our Community Development Worker as well.

One ingredient of our committee meetings has been fun. We have learned tolerance and patience and have been prepared to listen and take advice. One instance comes to mind, when then committee member Anne Perry suggested that we put some money into an ethical investment account. Some of us didn't know about those but we agreed to do so anyway. Our money has earned interest ever since, our consciences clear of any worry about where the money is being used. We have never regretted this decision.

Some important decisions that have been made along the way:

- To become incorporated.
- To offer paid employment to suitably qualified volunteers and others.
- To enlarge the nursery area.
- To pay for fencing and other necessities.
- To sell our plants to the public.
- To use some of our funds to enable work to be done in some of our reserves and areas of bush.

Other issues that command attention are occupational health and safety, the organization of Annual General Meetings and Christmas parties, decisions about finances (can we afford this or that or can we do without) and more recently we have turned our attention to climate change and the challenges that this presents to us. Water conservation and solar power are two issues that we are grappling with at present.

Recently we have had new members on our committee and they are proving to be a godsend with new talents and enthusiasm. Peter Wootton joined the committee last year and Merylyn and Paul Smith this year. New members are always welcome and almost always a good time is had by all.

Annette Culley has been a long standing committee member. She has been interested in environment issue since the 1970s and was co-organiser of a clean up day at Heathmont Park in the 1980s. The local Catholic church saw many environmentally conscious people and ran plant nights to get to know the plants in the local Heathmont area. Annette also was there when the Heathmont bushlink was formed. ED

What's on...

Sustainability Action Group - Train the Trainer 29/11/08 & 6/12/08

Date: Saturday November 29, 2008
Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Location: Doncaster Secondary College - 123 Church Rd, Doncaster
Notes: See flier under Non-Maroonah Activities
A grassroots education program.
For more info -
Tom Dowsley (SAW '08 Director) 9846-7601 or tom_dowsley@ozemail.com.au,
Sue Ringersma 9841-42185

NO DIG GARDENING WORKSHOP

Date: Sunday November 30, 2008
Time: 9:30 am - 2:30 pm
Location: 65 Kerr Crescent, Montrose
Notes: Cost: Depending on numbers. If there are 10 or more people it will be approximately \$40 per person.
Contact: Claire Troupe - 9761 8334
RSVP: 25th November

INTERNATIONAL BUY NOTHING DAY

Challenge yourself on Saturday 29th November to switch off from shopping and tune into life. For more information go to <http://www.buynothingday.co.uk/>

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Date: Sunday November 30, 2008
Time: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
Location: Templestowe Uniting Church - 104 Atkinson St, Templestowe, Victoria (carpark at 111 Wood St- Melbourne Melway ref 33E4).
Notes: Do we have the will to save our planet in this time of universal crisis? There is opportunity in the challenge and much that can and must be done. Come and join an evening of lively conversation and insight at a public forum to be held at Templestowe Uniting Church on Sunday 30th November, 7.30pm to 9.30pm. The forum 'Economic Meltdown-Threat or Promise' will feature David Spratt, author of Climate Code Red. The radio play 'Titanic', based on the sinking, will again be presented as a moving allegory of our situation. The church is located at 104 Atkinson St, Templestowe, Victoria (carpark at 111 Wood St- Melbourne Melway ref 33E4).

For enquiries, phone 03 9846 8464 or email juliejames4@gmail.com.
The forum is sponsored by 'A GRAND STAND for the environment'. See also <http://warrandyte.unitingchurch.org.au/grandstand.htm>

Join the Yahoo Maroonah Environment group and keep up to date with what is happening in your area.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MaroonahEnvironmentNetwork/>

OR contact Margaret Barber: baberoz@hotmail.com



Sustainable Living Space

by Bernadette Thomas

There have been growing interest in the idea of setting up a Sustainable Living Space in the outer east since we started in March this year. The consultation process has involved over 230 community surveys, 5 focus groups, and numerous presentations and discussions with various environment and community groups; the result of which show that there is a need for a space dedicated to sustainability and where the community can come together to learn and share their knowledge and skills about living sustainable lives.

The Sustainable Living Space has continued to network and make connections with environment and community groups across the outer eastern suburbs. What we have found is that there is a lot happening in the community – permaculture groups; climate change networks; bushcare groups; youth sustainability actions; as well as community and faith groups engaging with their members about environmental issues. We have been able to connect with many of these supporting a strong network in the community focused on maintaining our environment.

As part of our consultation we have been (and will be) working with two schools in the area – Parkwood Secondary College has conducted community surveys, completed a site visit of CERES environment park and will create designs for the Sustainable Living Space; as part of Sustainability Action Week at Doncaster Secondary College (in December) we will be facilitating a number of workshops based on sustainability themes.

In response to the wonderful feedback from the community we have begun some activities of our own – incorporating them into the consultation process. Our monthly 'green' film nights have become popular, and have provided a forum for networking and making contact with others in the area who care about sustainability. In the future we hope to encourage discussion around the issues presented in the films. We will continue to bring the 'green' films to the community on the last Tuesday of the month next year, alternating between the two council areas.

Also in 2009 we have planned a number of 'Eco-bus' tours; initially an open veggie garden tour and an ethical shopping tour (as part of Healthy Lifestyle Week in Manningham in late Feb/early March). We have a number of other ideas and hope you can join us for one of these tours.

As an addition to our work with the community in 2009, we will be working with some of the community and neighbourhood houses to develop sustainability workshops for the community as part of their overall programs, so look out for these in mid 2009.

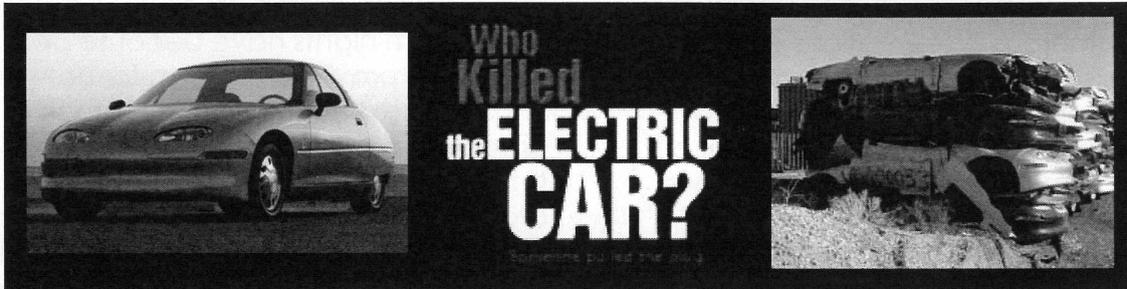
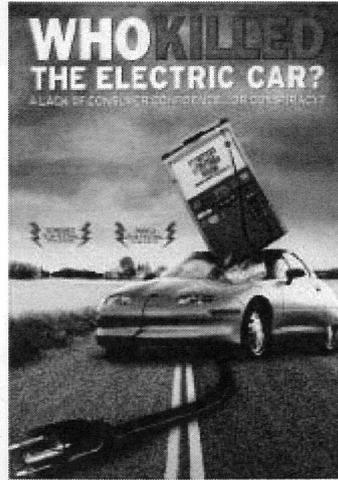
The 'Friends of SLS' email network continues to grow with 102 (at last count) on the list. This group also have wide connections through many other groups in the community, sharing information about activities and ways for the community to come together for sustainability.

It has been a very hectic 9 months with some great results. Thanks for being involved and supporting the Sustainable Living Space.

Sustainable Living Space Movie Night!

It was among the fastest, most efficient production cars ever built. It ran on electricity, produced no emissions and catapulted American technology to the forefront of the automotive industry. The lucky few who drove it never wanted to give it up. So why did General Motors crush its fleet of EV-1 electric vehicles in the Arizona desert?

Who Killed the Electric Car? chronicles the life and mysterious death of the EV-1; examining the cultural and economic ripple effects caused by its conception and how they reverberated through the halls of government and big business.



**Tuesday 25th November
6.30pm**

**Function Room 3, Manningham Civic Centre
699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster**

**Entry is free but bookings essential: bdettethomas@gmail.com or 9687 8675.
(Light refreshments provided)**

STAY TUNED FOR OUR 2009 PROGRAM OF 'GREEN' FILMS!!

The Sustainable Living Space is proudly supported by Manningham & Maroondah City Councils, North Ringwood Community House, Park Orchards Learning Centre & Eastern Volunteers Resource Centre.



Is your membership up to date?

Check your mailing label to see if or when your membership is due. If there is no date it indicates that you are not currently a financial member. A membership form is at the end of the newsletter. Photocopy or fill out and send to CRISP now.

Seeds and survival of the planet

by Alan Strachan

Australia is one of the leaders of the world in plant research, and has now added to its reputation by sending seeds of iconic Australian plants up to the International Space Station. They include the waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*), the flannel flower (*Actinotus helianthii*), the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) - available from CRISP Nursery, and a few seeds of the wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*). The seeds will be tested on their return to see if the low gravity and differing radiation levels affect their viability. There were reports that vegetable seeds from China germinated to produce giant pumpkins and zucchinis after being in space.

The four seed groups were chosen because of their iconic status and their ability to survive for a number of years under tough conditions, such as fire and drought. If they are unaffected by their time in space it might make them suitable for storage and cultivation in a space ship or on another planet, as a food source or to provide oxygen. They might also become part of an off-planet seed bank in the future.

The last minute inclusion of the wollemi pine is fascinating in that a plant which probably grew in the time of the dinosaurs 200 million years ago was only discovered in 1994 and is now in space!

This space experiment is another in a line of seed survival projects in which Australia is involved. The Millennium Seed Bank Project was set up by the Royal

Botanic Gardens at Kew in the UK in 1995, and the Botanic Gardens Trust in Sydney is a partner. Housed in a special building in Sussex, the Project seeks to develop a global seed conservation network, capable of safeguarding wild plant species. Amongst its objectives are the collection of seeds, herbarium specimens and data from 24,200 species worldwide, including the entire UK seed bearing flora, and to conserve these collections both in the Seed Bank and in the countries of origin. The current project runs until 2010, and Australia is providing seeds from 100 species each year until 2010, provided by the Botanic Gardens Trust in Sydney and the National Herbarium of Victoria.

But perhaps the most interesting and exciting seed collection is that in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway. On the island of Spitzbergen, about 1120 km from the North Pole, the Norwegians, with finance from many sources including Australia, have dug a tunnel 120 metres into the side of a frozen mountainside. At the end of the tunnel are three storage areas which will be kept at a temperature of -18 degreesC by a refrigeration unit using locally mined coal. It is claimed that a refrigeration breakdown would take several weeks to raise the temperature to that of the surrounding bedrock, a warm -3 degreesC. Spitzbergen is considered an ideal location because of its lack of earthquake activity, and

its permafrost. It is also 130 metres above sea level so would not be affected even if the ice cap melts. It cost about \$9 million to build, funded by the Norwegian Government. Storage of seeds is free of charge. Operational costs are being funded from many sources, including Australia. The Vault officially opened on February 26 2008.

Approximately 1.5 million distinct seed samples of agricultural crops are thought to exist. The facility has the capacity to store about 4.5 million species, stored in special four ply packets heat sealed to exclude moisture. Each seed species stored is a copy of a sample stored in the country of origin. Only the country of origin has access to the Vault. Breeders, research-

ers, etc., will not have access - they must approach the country of origin. The main aim of the project is to provide a safety net against the accidental loss of diversity in traditional seed banks through catastrophe, accident, equipment failure, funding cuts, etc. In recent years some have been destroyed by war and civil strife. It is estimated there are something like 1400 crop diversity collections around the world, but many are in politically unstable or environmentally threatened nations.

Prior to construction, a feasibility study determined that the vault could preserve seeds from most major food crops for hundreds of years. Some seeds, including those of important grains, could survive for longer, possibly thousands of years.

Editor: For further information on the Norway Seed Vault -

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svalbard_Global_Seed_Vault

OR

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2008/02/25/2171649.htm?site=science&topic=tech>

Artists view of the vault build in Norway

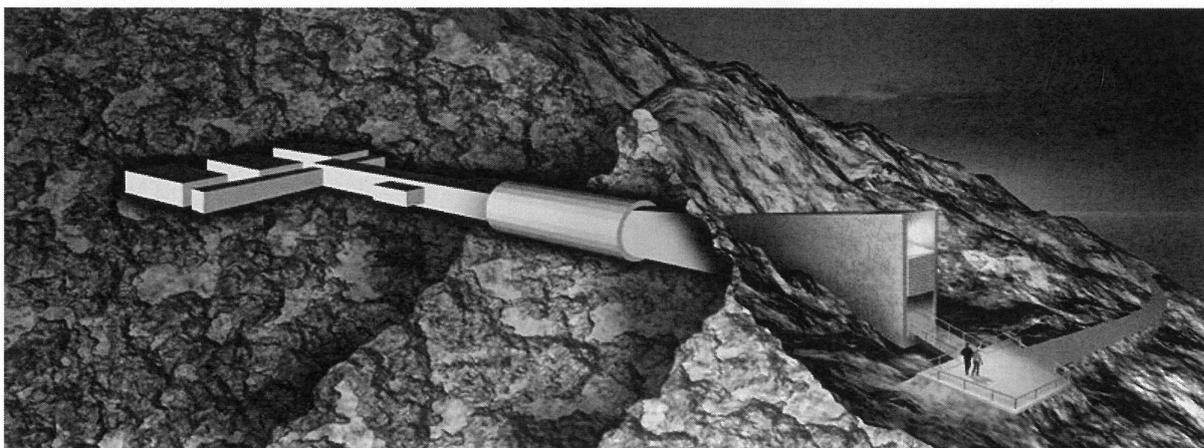


Photo by Global Crop Diversity Trust
free permission usage: wikipedia

Alan Strachan came to CRISP through the Mullum Mullum Bushcare Group because their property backs on to the creek. He has been involved with them for 5 or 6 years. He has been involved with CRISP over the past four years, including serving on the committee. His particular interest at CRISP is the sales area. You can see Alan's picture signs and demonstration pots with large mature plants to show customers what the plants might look like when mature in the sales area. ED

Water tanks

Some practical advice

We found the cheapest way was for us to buy the tank and pump ourselves, then get our own plumber and electrician to install. The tank was delivered free by ARI Plastank, and he would have put it right into position for us except that we hadn't got the site prepared.*

However, our roof is a very simple one. Not every house is as easy to set up with a tank.

So we'd recommend the following: Get advice from a lateral thinking plumber (or two) first about the best option(s) for the specific situation. Get several quotes. What we paid in the end was about half the initial quote we got from Yarra Valley Water!

Check the costs of ordering the tank and pump yourself and having it installed by your own plumber and electrician. Get the biggest tank possible, and then double it!

A rebate is available for tanks (> 5000 litres) plumbed to laundry and toilet. Use the water here in the cool months, and water the garden guilt-free in summer.

Think laterally. With a complex roof design, it is possible to collect water from the stormwater pit using a sump pump, and this may be the cheapest, most efficient option.

Bladders are available for storing rainwater under the house. More expensive than a tank, but great for properties that don't fit tanks.

by Olwyn Smiley



Photo by Linda Hibbs

For small roof areas (eg carports/sheds) recycled food barrels and large plastic wheelie bins are cheap options, and they fit into narrow areas like between the house and the side fence. McCrackens (Canterbury Rd Bayswater) has every kind of fitting you could want, including downpipe diverters and tank outlets.

If the house has an old hot water tank in the ceiling this can be used as a header tank - the rainwater from the main tank is pumped here, and gravity feeds to the taps. This is more energy efficient than running the pump every time the tap is turned on..

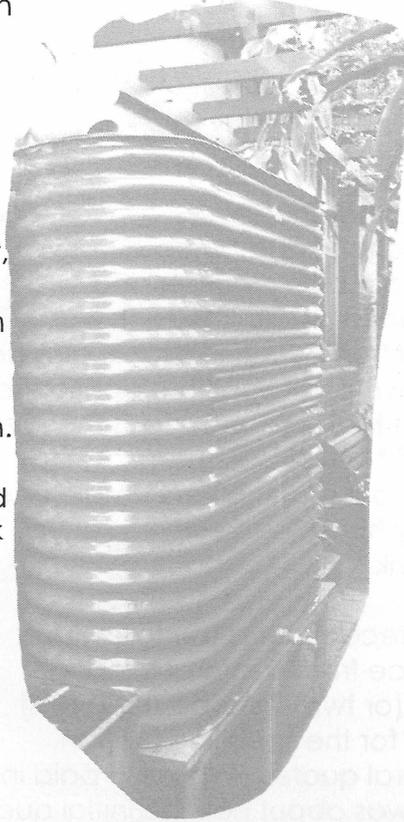
Don't forget to use the grey water too. It makes all the difference to the garden over summer. Check www.lanfaxlabs.com.au for suitable laundry detergents.

Talk to people who have tanks already. Visit and see what others have done. See as many places as you can to get ideas of what is possible. There are annual open days for sustainable houses in the Melbourne area and further afield. Read everything you can find. Check www.greenmakeover.com.au and www.derekwrigleydesign.id.au for information about Stuart McQire's and Derek Wrigley's books.

Another resource that people locally

might be interested in is www.beyondbuildingenergy.com. This is a program whereby people in a local neighbourhood can group together to have solar panels installed at greatly reduced cost. If 50 households each buy a solar panel set up, the cost, after the rebate is only \$895 per household. The company bulk buys the panels etc, and installation costs are heavily reduced when so many neighbouring homes are involved. The downside is that the total cost of about \$9000 per household has to be paid upfront, with the rebate being reimbursed later. I think one solution is to seek sponsorship from local businesses to pay the upfront cost, minus the \$895, and it is then returned to them in full when the rebate comes through.

*Note - our tank was installed in 2002. Prolonged drought has changed things, with lots more tank installing businesses. Pricing may be rather different now.



Come and join in celebrating the end of the Year Christmas BBQ

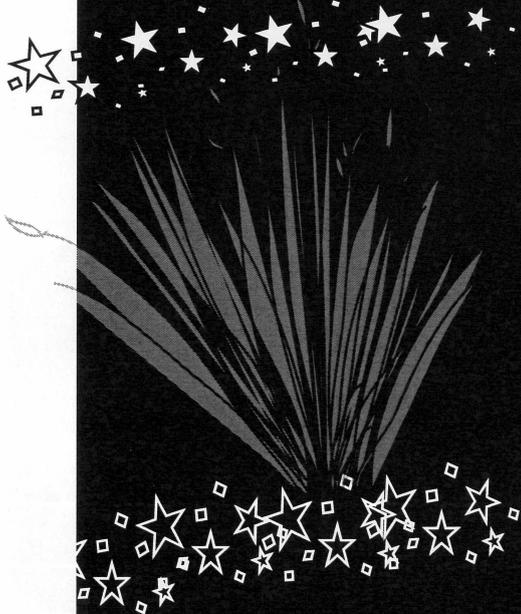
Where: Trevor and Beryl Blake's home
22 Vista Avenue
East Ringwood (Mel: 50 C10)

When: Saturday the 13th December

Time: 12.00- 3.00pm

Meat and Drinks provided.
Please bring a salad or something sweet
to share.

Please RSVP to CRISP for catering purposes:
crisp@melbpc.org.au
Tel: 9879 3911 Fax: 9879 1161



Adjusting to dry times

by Trevor Blake

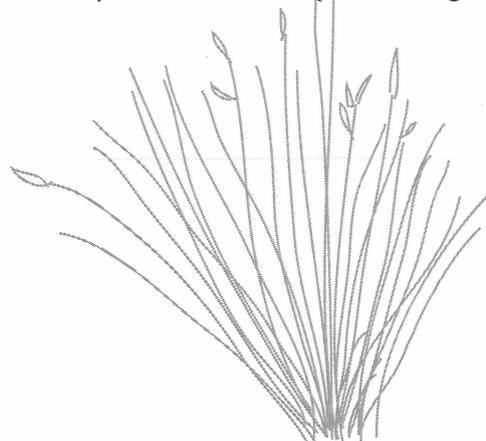
So we know what drought is all about from our experiences over the last few years – well this year is going to be a little drier and probably hotter.

The reason I say drier is that the amount of soil moisture is being reduced each year as what rain we do have is not replacing the evaporation rate. You will notice this if you are planting, the holes you dig are dry, dry, the deeper you dig – even if its after some of the good falls we had in November with a storm dropping 22mm. and a week later another 16mm. – the moisture penetration has only been a couple of cm. With the warm weather and a little wind this surface layer dries quickly. Add to this mix a layer of vegetative mulch and moisture penetration is less still. Mulch that allows maximum penetration are gravels, stones and rocks, unfortunately also the most expensive. I still advocate a 6-8 sheet layer of newspaper under any mulch to stifle weed growth and I know all well balanced lazy gardeners will agree with me.

Evidence is now becoming quite clear in the range of species dying out. Certainly planting in spring is a no no as the roots just haven't the time to grow enough to ensure the plant's survival – that means watering into April the next year if they are to stand a chance. Big trees are dying and I draw your attention to the Red Stringybark (*Euc. macrorhyncha*) – this species is really suffering. Individuals take a couple of years to die from the first signs and

the deaths seem to be gradually descending in altitude as the slopes dry out. The Mealy Stringybark (*Euc. cephalocarpa*) and Yellow Box (*Euc. melliodora*) do not seem to be affected in the same way so these are probably more successful species to plant. The poor old Red Stringybark has had a bad time with the possums constantly eating new shoots until the trees just run out of puff and die; the *Pittosporum undulatum* guzzling all the water from around the base of the trees where the birds dropped the seeds - big trees simply died of thirst. The Red Stringybark is very susceptible to a change in the water regime and we are seeing the results.

Enough of the doom and gloom. November is grass time and they are looking superb at the moment. The wonderful Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) never seems to amaze with its resilience to dry – why on earth anyone would contemplate Kykyu Grass when our indigenous grass will outshine in every department, except seeds in your socks, beats me. There is an amazing selection of Wallaby Grasses that cope very well with dry times and they look so good.



It's easy to collect the seed and spread it around. The tufty Poas are worthwhile checking out as an excellent landscaping plant.

Common Wallaby Grass
(*Danthonia caespitosa*),

Wallaby Grass, (*D. laevis*)

Velvet Wallaby Grass, (*D. pilosa*)

Clustered Wallaby Grass, (*D. racemosa*)

Bristly Wallaby Grass, (*D. setacea*)

Short-haired Plume Grass
(*Dichelachne micrantha*)

Silver-topped Wallaby Grass
(*Joycea pallida* (previously known as
Chionochloa pallida))

Veined Spear Grass
(*Stipa rudis*)

Common Tussock Grass,
(*Poa labillardieri*)

Velvet Tussock Grass, (*P. morrisii*)

Tussock Grass, (*P. sieberiana*)



I have mentioned these grasses for their ability to survive in dry times, add to the beauty and diversity to a garden and provide habitat for a number of small creatures, particularly butterfly larva.

Now in this grass thinking mode consider our 2 indigenous Grass Trees *Xanthorrhoea australis* and X, minor you can plant the former from a tube and probably just before you depart this earth you will enjoy it's first flower, however think of the generations unborn!!! Of course if your excess dollars are burning a hole in your pocket have nurseries got a deal for you. You can buy them with trunks or multiple trunks, you can get them blackened by fire and these can flower in a short time. The size of the trunk can fit the size of the hole in your pocket and big ones will wound your bank card. Beware buying them from a truck on the side of the road at 1/3 the price – they will be dead in 3 years. Now X. minor in tubes is a winner –it can flower within 4 years but you aint gonna get no trunk – no sir! TB

NOTE:

CRISP Nursery sells the following grasses mentioned by Trevor:

Danthonia setacea

Dichelachne micrantha

Joycea pallida

Stipa sp.

Poa labillardiera

Poa morrisii

Danthonia sp



Website under construction
Watch this space...

Ken McInnes is setting up a website
for CRISP
Details in forthcoming newsletter

Poetry

DANDALOO

From the humble Murrumbeena
Past the ever-flowing Yarra,
Through parades of autumn Moomba,
He aspired to golden sands.
Rode the waves of Gunnamatta,
Dreamt of golden Coolangatta,
Wooed the girls of Wangaratta
In this Anglo-Saxon land.

Watched the penguins of Kilcunda,
Lost his darling to Wonthaggi,
Gobbled prawns in Mallacoota,
Traveled west towards alpines,
Pinched tobacco in Porepunkah,
Fed galahs in Yackandandah,
Caught the view from Kosciusko
On his way to Jindabyne.

Cruised the curling Murrumbidgee,
Stoned the crows of Wagga Wagga,
Passed the swamps of Cootamundra,
In this Anglo-Saxon land.
Plucked the waratahs of Mudgee,
Cursed the eels of Parramatta,
Climbed the mountains of Katoomba
With his cultivated hands.

Paced the fields of Goondiwindi,
Nibbled wicketty and yabby,
Heard the mocking kookaburra –
Which he did not understand.
Slept in shade beside Toowoomba,
Swung a bat at Woolloongabba,
Spied the dingoes by Marroochy
In this Anglo-Saxon land.

Saw the lofty peaks, Kuranda,
Swooping currawongs of Daintree,
Blushed at stories of the yowie,
Hitched a ride to Kakadu.
Stood in wonder by Nourlangie,
Fished for giant barramundi,
Crossed the gorges and the deserts
Till he came to Ningaloo.

Fled the ghost towns of Kalgoorlie,
Trespassed through the Maralinga,
Took a breather in Barossa,
And a well-earned sip of wine.
Stomped the grapes of Coonawarra,
Chased a pig-skin in Dimboola,
Gathered apples in Mildura –
His life a pantomime.

Swam the waters of Eucha,
Paddled-steamed to Yarrowonga,
Stretched the boundaries of Wadonga,
Here the boy became a man.
Dreamt of darling in Wonthaggi,
Headed home to Murrumbeena,
Past the ever flowing Yarra
In this Anglo-Saxon land.

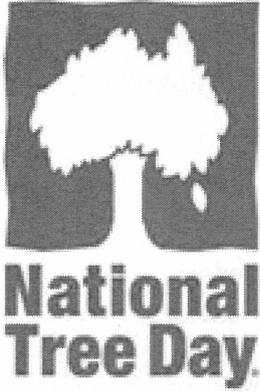
Damian Balassone

First published in ARENA magazine (Oct/Nov 2008) Carlton
North, Victoria.

Reprinted with the kind permission of the author



(poem submitted by Carmel Koesasi)



Information courtesy of Dale Morgan

Planet Ark is delighted to announce the results of National Tree Day 2008. This year 312,000 volunteers, including 229,000 school students planted 1.6 million native trees and shrubs at 3500 tree-planting sites around the country. An excellent result for the environment! Thanks again to everyone who participated in this year's event and to everyone who is yet to participate in remaining National Tree Day planting events for 2008.

National Tree Day is an ongoing campaign with planting dates registered throughout the year. If you would like to register additional tree-planting dates during 2008 please visit treeday.planetark.org.



Volunteers help out on National Tree Day at Mullum Mullum Creek

In 2009 the dates will be:

**Schools Tree Day -
Friday 31st July**

**National Tree Day -
Sunday 2nd August**

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation
National Tree Day Hotline 1300 88 5000
e: treeday@planetark.org
web: treeday.planetark.org



Mullum Mullum Creek National Tree Day activities

Photos by Alan Strachan and Stephanie Dean



Iloyd Smiley helping dig the soil

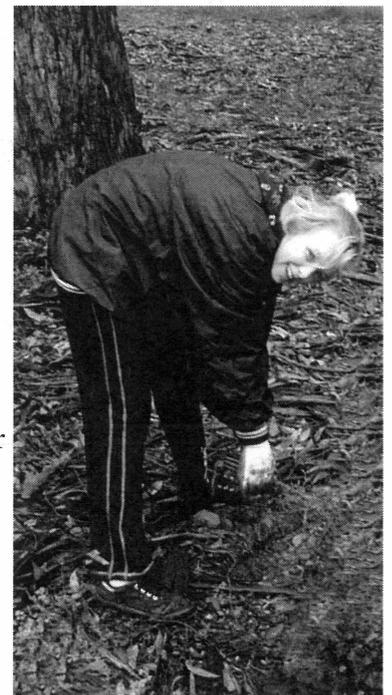


Monica Anson was one of many young people helping out on the day

Voluneteers helping out on National Tree Day at Mullum Mullum Creek Reserve. Dale Morgan walking towards camera.



Bill Hermon and Alan Strachan load up the trailer



Some small critters in my Heathmont garden

by Gwyn Davies

Illustrations by Gwyn Davies

Wasps

There are many different kinds of wasps, but the only one that is a serious problem for the gardener is the introduced European wasp. You can distinguish this wasp from any similar native species, of which at least one appears in this area. The European wasp is yellow and black. Any similar, striped, native wasps may be other colours, but not yellow. Each year I see at least one beautiful orange and black Mud Wasp – they appear to be solitary.

There are smaller black mason wasps, which make nests of mud in crevices outside your house, and what our local insect expert calls 'right-angled' wasps of several sizes, but slender, and with a body that angles sharply. There is a long-bodied golden-brown wasp with a long ovipositor – possibly a caterpillar predator.

You may have had the misfortune to meet up with the 'blue ant' – a monster in bright metallic blue-green armour, and reddish legs. In fact a wasp, the wingless female, over 2 cm in length, is quick on her feet and has a fearsome sting, so take care around her.

One year, a strange gall formed on a leaf of my Snow Gum. It swelled up into a structure the shape and colour of a huge stalked eucalyptus blossom, but in solid tissue. Then from the flattened top appeared a hundred little holes maybe ½ mm across – the exit for lots of tiny wasps, whose mother had stimulated the growth of the gall as a nest for her babies.

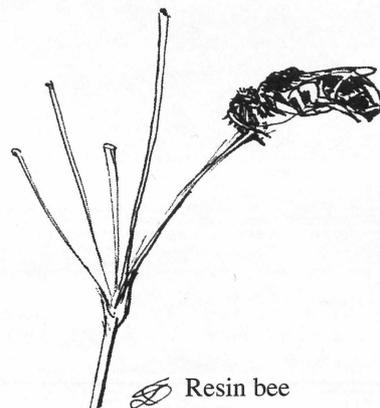
Bees

Some native bees look similar to wasps. There are many small species, of which a few feast on my *Bursaria* when in flower.

I have seen a purple-black resin bee, about 1 cm long, a yellow dot on its tail, sitting immobile on a sprig of blue flax lily for days, looking spider-cocooned. But closer inspection and a photo revealed a rapid leg-twitch to clean an antenna. They are solitary bees. The female builds a nest of resin for her eggs.

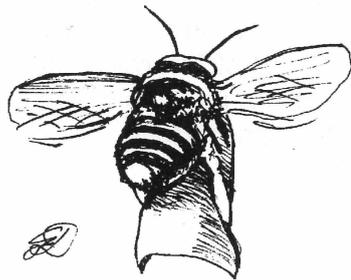
I have also watched a leaf-cutter bee neatly snipping curved pieces of leaf from a European lime (soft-leafed) tree. Each piece was neatly rolled under her legs, and carried to her nest under a rock. This bee is larger, 1.5 cm long, with blackish body, and palest blue and black stripes on the abdomen. Her flight is accompanied by a distinctive heavy bzzzz.

Some very small honey-brown reed bees nest in the dead hollow twigs of a plant in my garden – a group of them – each with its own twig. And I once saw some tiny homalictus bees – bright metallic blue-



green, hovering around an old post. This year, I am fairly certain I saw a blue-banded bee, some metres away. The blue stripes caught the sun and shone out brightly, but it disappeared before I could approach. These bees are distinguished by their stocky fuzzy brown body, and blue and black striped abdomen, and they are almost the size of a honeybee. Apparently, the blue-banded bee is a buzz-pollinator like the bumblebee. Why import an exotic bee when we have our own buzz-pollinators!

There are native social honey bees, but their colonies are small compared to the introduced honey bee which can be a pest in the bush – claiming bird nesting sites, and competing with the native bee for nectar.



Ants

We all have experienced ants in the house. The most common culprit is the Argentine ant. On researching, I found that it is a problem here in Australia because there is only one genetic type (and no different castes of workers, queens, etc, as in many ants and honey bees) so it doesn't compete with other colonies, but has formed one huge colony of individuals that stretches across Melbourne. If you try to kill it, you will only deter it for a while, as the colony is soon replenished.

My greatest gripe against these ants, besides the ecological one that they clean up the plant and animal detritus that native ants would otherwise feed on, is that on hot nights when I go out on the tiled patio, particularly if I splash a bit of water on the ground, they then go stir-crazy, and run up my legs, biting furiously.

There are other ants in my garden – tiny black ones, smaller than the little Argentines, larger orangey-brown 'sugar' ants, and slenderer black ones the same size. I have even seen a medium small ant with a huge fat, pale belly – bright yellow, as I recollect – on its own.

And we have all met the feisty, fiery-biting, jumping ant, and stealthy, mainly nocturnal, bull ant. These ants do a great job of cleaning up dead animals, small and large, that inevitably appear in the garden.

Some ants have a close relationship with other species. There are ants that nurture scale insects and aphids, who pay them back with honeydew exuded from their bodies, so if a plant is badly infested with scale or woolly aphids, and you see a trail of ants on the stem, they may be the culprits. The Imperial Blue Butterfly, occasionally seen locally, lays its eggs on small Black Wattle plants, and a species of small black ant tends and protects the caterpillars.

Lacewings

These delicate, large-winged insects may sometimes be found in the house in summer, if a door is left open. They are pale green, their bodies soft. The wings do not fold up, but simply close beside and above the body, like an envelope, and the antennae are quite long. They may be up to 2 cm in length.

Lacewings and lacewing larvae consume aphids, whiteflies, and scale insects, as do ladybird beetles and their larvae. So if you notice the monstrous encrustations of greenfly on your roses beginning to shrink, check the flower stems for larger, wingless, bug-like insects amongst the greenfly.

Dragonflies and the like

The gorgeous dragonfly is a speedy and fierce territorialist, and predator of flying insects. It will stake out an area above your pond, and dart about, catching insects,

and chasing off any competitors. Its larvae, and those of the damselfly, brown, wingless, crawly things in the pond, will keep down any mosquito larvae.

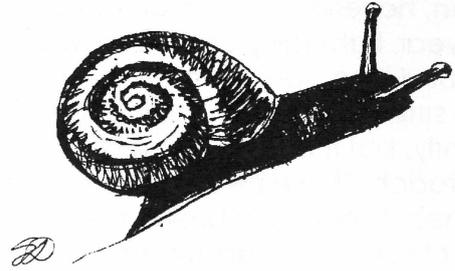
The smaller damselfly appears in various colours – the prettiest in metallic blue and brown. Sometimes a few of them appear together. Another dragonfly, which I think of as the 'army helicopter', is mid-sized, more thickset, and a dull to orangey brown.

Slugs and Snails

Yes, there are good guys here too!

The native snail is small, dark and bluish in the body. The shell is a flat spiral around one cm across. You may sometimes see a pale empty shell, or living snails, under a log or rock. This guy is mainly carnivorous, and I am told, eats introduced slugs and snails, as well as living plants, decaying vegetable matter, and insect larvae.

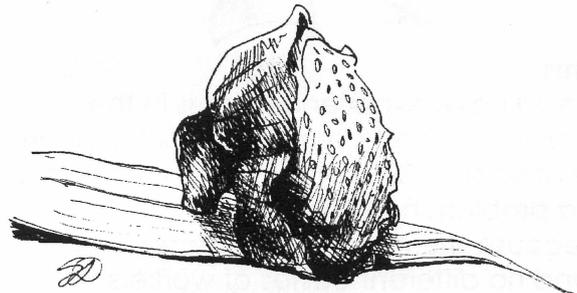
You may see a slug that is larger than the usual ones, and covered with distinctive dark spots. This leopard slug eats decaying vegetable matter, but prefers the high



protein content of other slugs, and snails. If you put down snail bait, you will probably kill these good guys too.

Lizards

I almost never see skinks in my garden, and I never these days see the small white papery eggs under turned rocks. But when I shift some old, half-composted, branches, or move a pile of roof tiles in the warmer weather, they dart out. They really seem to like cool, secluded places. I am going to make a large lizard house out of old framing timber, stacking lengths into a pyramid, with old roof tiles inside. If I can stabilise it, the grandkids can climb on it too.



Good Websites

An excellent native bee site.

<http://www.aussiebee.com.au/abol.html>

The following has a set of pop-up pix that give you an idea of the type of insect you might want to identify. Click on it – there's heaps more info about them.

http://www.ento.csiro.au/education/insects_allies.html

The 'Blue Ant' wasp

<http://www.csiro.au/resources/BlueAnts.html>

Lots of dragonflies.

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/education/insects/odonata.html>

Good info and IDs on butterflies, snakes, lizards, frogs.

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/bioinformatics/>

The Museum of Victoria will also take email queries, accompanied by photos, of any critters you'd like to have identified. Check this site for Guidelines for queries

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/DiscoveryCentre/Ask-us-a-question/Identifications/>

Take out or renew your membership now!

CRISP needs your support now more than ever! Your neighbourhood needs more natives to remain green at a time when water is scarce

Due on July 1st each year

(For Members joining after March ,their next subscription falls due the following year)

What does your membership mean for you? Apart from helping support your local Indigenous plant nursery (run by volunteers), all plants are available to you at reduced rates (eg. tube stock will cost \$1.00 instead of \$1.50 and 150mm pots cost \$3.00 instead of \$4.00.

You are helping to keep Maroondah's local flora and fauna alive. Support CRISP and help your local environment.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP FEES: (Please circle)

Single: \$10 per annum

FAMILY: \$15 per annum

GROUP: \$20 per annum

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact: Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please forward payment to: The Treasurer
CRISP Nursery Inc.
PO Box 706
Heathmont, VIC 3135

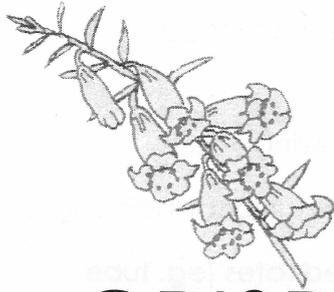
If undeliverable please return to:

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Box 706

Heathmont

VIC 3135



CRISP Nursery Newsletter
