



Chum Creek
Landcare

CHUM CREEK LANDCARE NEWSLETTER

No. 10, Autumn, 2017



Chum Creek Landcare Group assists local landowners to care for their land and to increase biodiversity through:



- Educating
- Controlling weeds and pests



- Restoring Native Vegetation
- Monitoring stream health



- Providing services to members
- Partnering with other community groups and programs.



Contact us:

Email: chumcklandcare@gmail.com
Facebook: [facebook.com/cclandcare](https://www.facebook.com/cclandcare)
Website: www.chumcreeklandcare.weebly.com

Our new banner is shown to the left. Look for it at Chum Creek Landcare events.

Events schedule

Chum Creek Landcare Group 5 km walk with afternoon tea – Saturday, 27 May, afternoon. For further details, see P 2.

President's Report

This summer we completed the final section of the survey of Chum Creek from Lowes Road to where the Melbourne Water aquaduct crosses the creek. The lowest part of the creek to its confluence with Watts River was not accessible. Once again we were very fortunate to have Tabitha Barclay and Coral Jeffs to conduct this work. We were very impressed with the state of the first few kilometers of this creek section. It contained relatively undisturbed forest with many very large Manna gums and Scentbark trees, as well as some round leafed *Pommaderris* (an endangered species) and some lovely pool sections that would be great platypus habitat. Indeed, landowners reported seeing platypus in this region. The riparian vegetation further downstream is unfortunately not in great shape – in places it is non-existent or the creek banks are a tangle of blackberries and other weeds. There was also quite a lot of rubbish and agricultural waste littering the banks. This part of Chum Creek is not a healthy environment for platypus to move through to the upper creek.

As we were doing the survey I was also reading the government's draft Native Vegetation Clearing Review and the draft Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. The importance of protecting and restoring the riparian habitat in Chum Creek is even more critical given the

information in these documents. Healthy corridors of riparian vegetation are extremely valuable for protecting biodiversity and water flows in our heavily cleared state. Protecting these corridors now will avoid costly restoration work later.

On another topic, we would like to invite our members to join us on a walk to experience some of the magnificent headwater forests from Toolangi to near the chook farm on Old Chum Creek Road. This will be an opportunity for those interested in plant identification to learn about a number of ecosystems. There will be a chance to socialise with other Landcare members over an afternoon tea at the end. If you can't make the

walk we would still encourage you to drop by for the afternoon tea. Because of the lack of European Wasps this summer we cancelled a planned workshop so this will be a chance to get together again.

Chum Creek Landcare news

Chum Creek Landcare Group walk with afternoon tea – Saturday, 27 May, afternoon.

Your Chum Creek Landcare committee is organising a short walk (about 5 km) through the headwaters of Chum Creek catchment from the topographic divide along old tracks down to where Old Chum Creek Rd. crosses Chum Creek, near the chook farm, so you can see the diversity of fungi and vegetation present, all of which we will try to identify. It will also present an opportunity to socialise with other Chum Creek Landcare members. We will meet for the walk at 12.30 pm, at the corner of Old Chum Creek Rd./Heath Rd. and Chum Creek Rd. The walk will be subject to weather. Bad weather might cause this event to be rescheduled for the following weekend. We will finish around 3 – 3.30pm with afternoon tea near where Old Chum Creek Rd. crosses Chum Creek. If you cannot make it for the walk, join us for afternoon tea. To assist with catering, please let us know if you will be attending (by email to chumcklandcare@gmail.com, or by phone to Michael at 5962 5227)

Survey of Chum Creek is completed

This summer we were able to complete our survey of Chum Creek, to where the Melbourne Water aqueduct crosses the creek, just upstream of where it enters the Watts River. A report of the survey, which will include results for all 3 surveys of the entire creek, is currently being prepared and should be available this winter.

CYDECTIN available for Chum Creek Landcare members

If you are trying to eliminate wombat mange from wombats in your area and need more Cydectin solution, please let us know (email chumcklandcare@gmail.com, or ph 5962 5227) as we now have several litres of it and can provide it free to Landcare members.

Melbourne Museum seedlings will be available again this winter

Last year we were able to distribute about 1000 free indigenous plant seedlings to Chum Creek Landcare members. These were all rapidly snapped up. We plan to repeat this, with seedlings available this June. We currently do not know what species will be available, but they are likely to be similar to last year – mainly a mixture of shrubs and grasses with a few trees. If you wish to obtain some, could you please email us at chumcklandcare@gmail.com or phone Michael at 5962 5227, letting us know what type of plants (e.g. shrubs – wattles) you would generally like.

Featured Weeds – English Broom and Foxglove

English Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)



English broom is a declared noxious weed in our shire. It is a large deciduous shrub growing to 3 m high with woody stems that are green to brownish-green and prominently ridged. Young stems remain green for about three





years and actively photosynthesise before turning brown. English broom has bright green trifoliate leaves with short stalks that occur either singularly or in clusters. New leaves are produced in spring around the same time as flowering commences. Flowers of English broom are bright yellow, pea-like and sometimes with red markings in the centre. They grow to 15-25 mm long and occur singly or in pairs in the axils. English Broom requires two to three years growth before flowering and commonly lives for 10-15 years but may potentially live up to 25 years.

Peak flowering is from October to December, but flowers can appear sporadically throughout the year. Brown pods develop from the flowers. These pods ripen during summer and burst open due to heat, ejecting the

seed up to 4.5 m distance. Seeds germinate in both autumn and spring.

English broom is spread only by seed. Seeds in mud can attach to vehicles, machinery, footwear and animals. Floodwaters and animals can also contribute to spread.

The seed of the English broom, when stored dry, can remain viable for more than 80 years. More than 80 per cent of buried seed can remain dormant and viable after 45 months. This can result in a large soil seed bank under mature plants.

The seed coat needs to be ruptured or damaged before the seed will germinate. Fire can stimulate seed germination resulting in dense infestations of seedlings.

English broom establishes on disturbed areas such as timber plantations, quarries and road construction sites. It has the ability to become the dominant species and smother native vegetation, particularly after fire events, due to strong seedling recruitment. The weed also out-competes poor or degraded pasture and reduces agricultural production, while providing harbour for a range of pest animals.

Control is best accomplished from May through November before seeds are produced. This can be done by –

1. Hand removal: Small plants can easily be hand pulled when the soil is soft.
2. Cut and Paint: This method may be more practical for larger plants. Cut close to the ground. Be sure to paint the cut as quickly as possible to ensure the plant absorbs the poison.
3. Spray with herbicide: Where there is quite a large infestation and hand pulling or the cut and paint method would not be appropriate. English broom can be sprayed with a glyphosate- based product.

Further information is available from – <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds/english-broom> and https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/.../english_broom_web.pdf

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)



Foxglove basal leaves (left) and flowers (right).



The scientific name means “finger-like” and refers to the ease with which a flower of *Digitalis purpurea* can be fitted over a human fingertip. Foxglove is a biennial plant which produces a large, leafy rosette in its first year, then a characteristic flowering spike the second year. The flowers are a tubular bell shape which cluster at the top of the stem. Foxglove flowers come in a variety of mottled colours including white, yellow, purple or pink. These usually

hang to one side of the spike. Flowering occurs over a long period from spring to autumn. The first year of growth of the common foxglove produces only the stem with its long, basal leaves. During the second year of the plant's life, a long, leafy stem from 50 to 255 centimetres tall grows atop the roots of healthy plants. Millions of small dark seeds are produced from each plant. Foxglove reproduces from seed and wind or water can transport these.

Foxglove is extremely poisonous. All plant parts must be handled with extreme care. The entire plant is toxic (including the roots and seeds). Mortality is rare, but has occurred. Foxglove can cause heart block, irregular heart function, hallucinations, convulsions, severe pain, and may lead to death. The plants are able to rapidly spread and totally exclude native flora and fauna.

Dense infestations of foxgloves, sometimes seen in new pastures sown following bush clearance, take up space that would be better occupied by desirable pasture species. Fortunately foxglove foliage is quite unpalatable to livestock, so the main effect from infestations is a reduction in pasture productivity due to the replacement of more valuable forage species.

Control Methods:

- Grubbing (summer, spring and autumn). Hoe in young plants and remove older plants. Collect and dispose of flowers and seeds. Wear gloves, as the entire plant is poisonous.
- Glyphosate herbicide (summer, spring and autumn).

More information is available at <http://agpest.co.nz/?pesttypes=foxglove>

Chum Creek water quality during 2016

Approximately once a month throughout 2016, water samples were collected from two locations along Chum Creek (just upstream from Yumbunga dam and upstream from the primary school) and were tested for basic physical, chemical, and biological quality. This investigation was funded by Melbourne Water and carried out by Beth and Ken Bagley and Evelyn and Michael Feller. The main conclusion from this work was that the water quality of Chum Creek is variable, with large amounts of sediment (turbidity) following heavy rains. Total coliform bacteria are almost always present but this does not mean that the water is biologically contaminated. We hope to do further sampling to test for this. Chemically the water quality appears good, although we could not test for all chemicals. A report on this work is being prepared and will be available later this year.

Invitation to attend a discussion on bushfires impacting Healesville – 15 May, 2017

Healesville and its surrounding communities are considered some of the highest bushfire risk communities in Victoria. To better plan for bushfire the Yarra Ranges Shire is seeking your assistance.

To get the best outcomes for our communities and the environment, State Fire Agencies, Police and Local Government are working together to better plan and manage bushfires. The approach is based on the community confirming the effectiveness of fire management actions and informing, guiding and actively being involved in decisions, planning and investments. It is known that each landscape and each community is different and the best decisions are shaped by the people they affect. This approach will mean communities will get more of a say on how the risk of bushfire is reduced, including where and when planned burning should occur – protecting communities and the things that matter most to them.

As a first step on the 15 May there will be a discussion-based bushfire scenario. This exercise will use industry experts, latest modelling, images and inputs to simulate a fire impacting the Healesville area. The outcome will identify a range of issues and challenges that are unique to Healesville. The scenario will offer a unique opportunity to learn and test existing plans at the municipal, local, business and personal level.

Our collective knowledge of bushfire, combined with communities' understanding of what is important, their local knowledge and experience, will ultimately inform better actions and plans

The scenario will also identify a range of recommendations and potential actions that agencies and community can work together in making Healesville a safer and more resilient community.

The discussion based exercise will be conducted twice to allow broader community participation - **your input is needed:**

Monday May 15 – Afternoon Session



**Know your risk:
Bushfires in
Healesville**

SAVE THE DATE!
Monday 15th May

*A first for Healesville & surrounds,
Community bushfire scenario.
At Healesville, MEMO.*

More info & Register at
https://healesville_bushfire_scenario.eventbrite.com.au

Developed in partnership with:



Arrive 12:30pm for a 1:00pm to 3:00pm session - Light lunch and refreshments will be available on arrival
Monday May 15 - Evening Session

Arrive 6:30pm for a 7:00pm to 9:00pm session - Light Supper and refreshments will be available on arrival
For more information please contact Joy Harte DELWP, joy.harte@delwp.vic.gov.au or register at
https://healesville_bushfire_scenario.eventbrite.com.au

Where to get assistance with weed control and indigenous seedling planting

- For land adjacent to (within 20 m of) Chum Creek, the Stream Frontage Management Program of Melbourne Water offers assistance.
 - For land more than 20 m away from Chum Creek, the Ribbons of Green Program of the Yarra Ranges Shire can help.
1. **Melbourne Water** has been a very important and significant source of funds for improving and restoring vegetation around Chum Creek. Details of some of its funding programs are given below

River Health Incentives Program 21st Birthday

2016/17 marks the 21st Birthday of the River Health Incentives Program (RHIP). Since its inception RHIP has worked with 38 councils, over 230 Friends Groups and over 4,300 individual land holders to facilitate over 12,000 projects to the dollar value of \$45 million.

What is the River Health Incentives Program?

The River Health Incentives Program (RHIP) provides financial and technical assistance to landowners, local government, Parks Victoria and community groups to help them improve the condition of our waterways. RHIP consists of four different program types, suited to different landholders to deliver different waterway health outcomes. The four programs are:

- Stream Frontage Management Program (SFMP)
- Rural Land Program (RLP)
- Community Grants (CG)
- Corridors of Green (CoG) Program.

The key aims of the program are to:

- work with land managers to deliver cost-effective waterway improvement projects
- equip land managers with the right skills and knowledge to carry out and maintain waterway improvement projects
- ensure customer satisfaction through high quality program delivery.

Achievements and outcomes

The RHIP and its participants have contributed to ongoing weed control, vegetation management, the planting of over 3 million plants and the instalment in excess of 1,500km of fencing along our waterways, that's similar to fencing from Melbourne to Byron Bay.

RHIP is a program that promotes community participation by collaboratively developing landholder skills and increasing their knowledge about the land, environment and adjoining waterways. It shares cost and effort with the recipients, many of who have been in the program over numerous years, which results in empowerment, stewardship and advocacy within the community.

Details about these programs can be found in the following videos:

Overview

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/applyforfunding/RHIP/Pages/default.aspx>

Stream Frontage Management Program

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/applyforfunding/Pages/Stream-frontage-management-program.aspx>

Community Grants

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/applyforfunding/Pages/Community-grants-program.aspx>

Corridors of Green

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/applyforfunding/Pages/Corridors-of-Green-funding.aspx>

Rural Land Program

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/applyforfunding/Pages/Rural-land-program.aspx>

2. **The Shire of Yarra Ranges** Ribbons of Green Program has also helped many landowners in our area with revegetating areas away from Chum Creek. As of last year they require a minimum order of 300 seedlings, but such a number doesn't go that far.

Further information about this program can be obtained below.

Ribbons of Green

The planting of native vegetation through the Ribbons of Green program achieves two main aims – to contribute to sequestering of Council's vehicle fleet emissions and to improve biodiversity through habitat creation. The program aims to plant 60,000 plants each year across the municipality on private land, schools and Council land with support from community groups.

Benefits of planting native vegetation

- Weed reduction
- Linking or buffering existing habitat
- Enhanced recreational experiences
- Landscape — visual amenity
- Shelter for stock
- Erosion control



Placing orders and planting times

Orders are generally taken between July and November. Plants are distributed the following May to July. This gives nurseries time to grow the plants and allows them to be planted with the maximum opportunity of getting established before the next summer. It also gives you time to prepare the site.

When planted in late autumn or winter, plants do not normally need watering in summer, however we recommend you monitor them in extreme heat conditions.

To place an order contact Kym Saunders on 9294 6822 or k.saunders@yarraranges.vic.gov.au.

What is offered through the program

The Ribbons of Green program offers free indigenous tube stock (plants in small nursery tubes) along with free tree guards, stakes and weed mats to help the plants establish.

Advice is also available on how to prepare the site, control weeds and select appropriate species. All site preparation and planting is done by the landholder or school.

Things to consider before applying

- The amount of space you have available.
- Bushfire safety and maintaining defensible space around your home. Council will not fund plants within the defensible space around your home (see CFA website for more details).
- Participating properties need to have sufficient area to plant a minimum of 300 plants, of which 100 must be "trees" to account for the carbon offset component of the program.
- The other plants could be shrubs, ground cover species or more trees. This can be discussed with the Ribbons of Green officer.
- If individual properties are unable to take the total number of plants, neighbours can get together for a joint order.
- Minimum numbers do not apply to schools.
- Amount of time you can spend planting, allow approximately 1 days planting, per person, per 100 plants.
- The intention of this program is to establish bush style habitat. It is not for landscaping around buildings.

Events of interest

Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – The River and the Bay - the Yarra beyond the Valley - Presented by Dr Neville Rosengren

Wednesday, 3 May, 7.30- 9pm, with field trip on Thursday, 4 May, 10am – 3pm.

Neville will take you on a geological journey to describe the origins of the Yarra River and the formation of Port Philip Bay. He will discuss the Yarra delta, the form and origins of the bay and the river at lower and higher sea-levels. If you attend this event, you may also book to attend the field trip - How we modified a river, by Neville Rosengren. This field trip will explore the lower Yarra modifications including Herring Island, the meander cut offs near the Botanic Gardens, and the removal of the Queen Street falls and Coode Canal. Bookings are essential for the field trip.

Seminars are conducted at Bull & Bush Room, Grand Hotel, 110 Yarra St., Warrandyte.

For information or booking: phone 03 9840 9326 or email eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au

Australian Plants Society Yarra Yarra Group evening seminar – Fungi – Presented by Cathy Powers

Thursday, 4 May, 8pm

Held at Orana Bldg, Araluen Centre, 226 Old Eltham Rd., Lower Plenty (Melway 21 B9)

Demonstration of a love for parks and a large park in our mountain ash forests



Saturday, 13 May from 11 am - 2 pm at Mt Donna Buang - summit picnic ground via Donna Buang Rd, Warburton

Help us spell out the message 'WE *heart* PARKS' by forming a human sign to send a clear message to the Victorian Government that we want our forests and their wildlife protected in a Great Forest National Park now – before they are logged into oblivion.

There is limited space at Mt Donna Buang picnic ground, and the event is strictly limited to 400 participants.

For further information and to register, visit greatforestpicnic.eventbrite.com.au

The Great Forest Picnic is organised by the Victorian National Parks Association and supported by:

- Warburton Environment
- Warburton Habitat Tree
- Friends of Leadbeater's Possum
- Knitting Nannas of Toolangi
- The Wilderness Society Victoria
- Environment East Gippsland
- Goongerah Environment Centre
- Save Mt St Leonard Community Campaign

Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Fungi - Ecological interaction - Presented by Dr Sapphire McMullan- Fisher

Wednesday, 7 June, 7.30 - 9pm, with field trip on Thursday, 8 June, 10am – 12 noon.

Sapphire is a Fungal Ecologist and the Fungimap Coordinator, and she will explain what fungi do in our bushland focusing their ecology and links to other species. She will then highlight some local recognisable fungi that you can contribute data to Fungimap. You may also attend the related workshop: Fungi - ecological interaction and if you attend this seminar, you may also book to attend the field trip: Fungi ecology walk with Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher.

A workshop will be held in the afternoon (Wednesday 7 June, 3pm to 5pm) before the environmental seminar, where you can learn how to utilise the Atlas of Living Australia to explore the local fungi species recorded. In this session you can learn how to best share your observations and data with Fungimap. The venue for the seminar will be given at time of booking.

A field trip will be held in the morning of Thursday 8 June from 10am to 12pm. This will wander through Jumping Creek Reserve with Sapphire, where she will show you the local fungi and explain their roles in the bushland. You need to have attended the seminar to be able to go on the field trip. Bookings are essential.

Seminars are conducted at Bull & Bush Room, Grand Hotel, 110 Yarra St., Warrandyte.

For information or booking: phone 03 9840 9326 or email eepadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au