



# CHUM CREEK LANDCARE NEWSLETTER

No. 11, Winter, 2017



Chum Creek Landcare members having afternoon tea after the walk through Chum Creek's headwaters in May.

## Events schedule

**Chum Creek Landcare Group Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, 2 August, 7-9pm. Chum Creek Primary School, 705 Chum Creek Road, Melways ref 269 C3**

This will feature an illustrated talk by David Blair on - **Land for wildlife: How to improve wildlife habitat on your property** - What makes a good farm for native wildlife? We discuss what you can do on your property to encourage the wide range of native species, including the value of old trees and logs, setting out the perfect planting, designing dams and whacking weeds. Build it and they will come!

David is a Chum Creek Landcare member who also works as a researcher with the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. Results of some of their latest research will be presented.

## President's Report

It is always satisfying to report good news. Earlier this year Landcare groups wrote to the federal government urging that the government commit to guaranteed funding for Landcare for the next 5 years. The new budget has actually allocated 1.1 billion dollars for the next 7 years. The other good news is that Northern Yarra

Landcare Network has funding to hire a facilitator for about one day a week. Facilitators can be helpful in advising about funding sources, helping with workshops and sharing ideas about better resource management.

While the shorter and colder days of winter restrict many activities, it is a good time to reflect on garden successes and challenges. Do you have consistent success with certain fruit or veggie crops or do you find certain crops never seem to produce. Are there certain garden pests that defeat you? At our last AGM we had members share information with us, with some excellent short presentations on Indian Myna trapping and using infra - red cameras. At some stage in the spring we would like to run some information sharing sessions from our members, perhaps about garden experiences. If you have a topic you would like to give a brief presentation on or would like to learn more about, please let us know. We also think there would be value in having a workshop about healthy dams. We have focused on the creek a lot and would like to look at ways to improve upland areas away from creeks. Given it may be a dry summer, dams can be healthy refuges for platypus if there is some connecting vegetation with the creek, so perhaps healthy dams could be worthy of discussion. These are just some ideas. What would you like Chum Creek Landcare to do? Please let us know.

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## **Chum Creek Landcare news**

### **Do you want to continue receiving news from Chum Creek Landcare?**

We wish to update our membership/ mailing list and would like to know if you still wish to remain a member and receive information from us. If you wish to be taken off our membership/ mailing list, please let us know by email at [chumcklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com) or by phone at 5962 5227.

### **Third Chum Creek Survey report will be available soon**

The report from last summer's survey of Chum Creek and its adjacent vegetation, from where it crosses Lowes Rd. down to near where it meets the Watts River, is currently being prepared. It will be available later this winter.

### **Chum Creek Landcare Group may produce a brochure to assist bird identification in our area and wants your input!**

We may produce a colour brochure with photos and brief descriptions of birds known to occur in our area. This would be distributed free to Chum Creek Landcare members. This should assist bird identification and increase interest in local birds. However, we would like to know if you think this is worthwhile and, if so, what birds do you think should be featured. Please let us know by email ([chumcklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com)) or by normal mail (c/o 490 Chum Creek Rd., Chum Creek, Vic. 3777).

### **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. We will have a similar number of free seedlings soon this winter and were hoping to have them available for distribution this month, but we haven't heard yet when they will be available. We will send out an email when we know. In the meantime, if you wish to get any, please contact us by email at [chumcklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com) or by phone at 5962 5227.

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## **Featured Weeds – Manna Ash and Irish Strawberry**

### **Manna Ash (*Fraxinus ornus*)**

Manna ash or South European flowering ash is a medium-sized deciduous tree growing to 15–25 m and native to southern Europe and southwestern Asia. The bark is dark grey, remaining smooth even on old trees.

It has pale pinkish-brown to grey-brown buds, with a dense covering of short grey hairs, and leaves that are in opposite pairs, up to 30 cm long, with 5 to 9 leaflets; the leaflets have a finely serrated and wavy margin, and they turn yellow to purplish in autumn. Flowers are in dense bunches up to 20 cm long in late spring. They have 4 creamy-white petals. The flowers are dioecious (individual flowers are either male or female), but only one sex is to be found on any one plant. The fruit is a slender samara 1.5–2.5 cm long, the seed 2 mm broad with wings 4–5 mm broad, green ripening to brown.



**Manna ash leaves, flowers, and fruit.**

### **Irish Strawberry or Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unido*)**

Irish strawberry or strawberry tree is an evergreen tree which grows to about 10m high. It is native to Ireland and the Mediterranean area but is an invasive weed in Victoria, South Australia, and NSW. This species has escaped cultivation as a garden ornamental, prefers damp situations, and is particularly invasive in sclerophyll forests and urban bushland.

The tree has leaves which are alternate, oval, shiny dark green and leathery. Young stems are hairy, older stems have red flakey bark. Drooping clusters of bell-shaped, whitish, perfumed flowers are produced in autumn. Fruits from the previous year ripen at about the same time as the flowers open. Large, round, warty berries, ripen from green to deep orange, in autumn. Berries are not very palatable, and contain pulp and many small hard seeds. Spread by seed, with birds and foxes as the main vector. Large lignotubers persist after fire, and resprout quickly after rain.

The tree is moderately palatable to livestock but is potentially toxic to all animal species. In people it affects the motor nerves, produces mental confusion, and permanent insanity. Poisoning has been reported in goats, cattle, sheep and horses.



Irish  
strawberry  
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Control of both manna ash and strawberry tree can be by –

1. digging up and removing if plants are small;
2. If stems are larger - cutting the stem or trunk of the plant completely as near to the ground as possible, then immediately dabbing or painting an appropriate herbicide on the freshly cut surface;
3. For larger trees, drilling holes or cutting frills (an angular incision with a sharp tomahawk) into the trunk of the plant to just below the bark at 5-7cm spacings around the entire trunk as close to the ground as possible, then immediately filling with an appropriate herbicide.

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### **Weed Wipeout**

Did you know that you are eligible to receive 4 free tipping vouchers from the Yarra Ranges Shire to dispose of invasive weeds, such as Agapanthus, Arum Lilies, English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, Montbretia, Periwinkle, Tree Tobacco, and Wandering Trad?

You can take up to one cubic metre or the contents of a 2-wheel trailer to the nearest waste disposal facility in Coldstream. Vouchers are available at the Healesville Community Link or at the Shire offices in Lilydale.

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### **Interested in knowing more about platypus?**

An excellent recent (August 2016) publication 'Understanding the environmental water requirements of platypus' by Jacobs Group, Australian Platypus Conservancy and CESAR for Melbourne Water reviews key water requirements for platypus as well as making other related recommendations for Melbourne Water to better manage streams with platypus. In the process of discussing the results of the review, the authors document many aspects of platypus life and breeding.

Did you know?

1. Platypus can live up to 21 years.
2. Platypus mating generally occurs in spring with young hatching about 25-32 days later.
3. Optimum platypus foraging conditions are streams with cobbles, overhanging riparian vegetation and medium to large native trees.

4. The main causes of mortality are predation by dogs and foxes, entanglements in litter and poor water quality for food such as invertebrates.
5. Environmental flows should be maintained to ensure adequate flows for food and to protect platypus from predation. Low flows make platypus more vulnerable.
6. Dams, billabongs and backwaters become important platypus refuges in dry seasons and it is important to maintain plant cover around the refuges.
7. Sadly, healthy platypus populations in the lower areas of the Yarra Catchment have declined due to the impact of urbanization and the millennium drought. Thus, it is vitally important to protect the headwater catchments of the Yarra, such as Chum Creek, which appear to have platypus populations.

This report certainly indicates the importance of work by environmental groups and Landcare to fence off riparian areas from stock, replant adequate stream buffers and remove weeds like willows. Well worth reading. You can find it on our website ([www.chumcreeklandcare.weebly.com](http://www.chumcreeklandcare.weebly.com)) on the "resources" page.

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### Events of interest

**Film - "Before the flood" with Leonardo DiCaprio. Friday, 21 July, 7.15 - 9.30pm at the Memo, Healesville. Sponsored by Healesville Environment Watch**

Leonardo DiCaprio meets with scientists, activists, and world leaders to discuss the dangers of climate change and possible solutions. A discussion will follow the film.

**Psychological First Aid training in Yarra Ranges. Saturday, 22 July from 12noon - 4pm in Healesville, organized by Shire of Yarra Ranges.**

Volunteers are vital to a community recovering from a natural disaster or other emergency situation. The Yarra Ranges Shire is offering free training in Psychological First Aid to all community members with the aim of building skills & knowledge in potential volunteers.

This 4 hour introductory session will give you an understanding of the effects of a traumatic situation and a basic framework in how best to assist people. Follow-up training will be available at a later date if you are keen to explore this topic further.

This workshop is free however bookings are limited so register as soon as possible to ensure you gain a place.

For further information and booking call Lisa Keedle or Janette Scott on 1300 368333 or email Janette at [janette.scott@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:janette.scott@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

**Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – The Social and Natural History of the Hawkesbury River - Lessons for the Yarra, by Professor Paul Boon. Wednesday, 2 August, 7.30- 9pm.**

Professor Boon from the Institute for Sustainability and Innovation at Victoria University will speak about the social and natural history of the Hawkesbury River, the longest coastal river in NSW. He will discuss the river in the context of the English settlers and Aboriginal history going back at least 42,000 years. Hear about how the river has been modified by humans, but equally importantly, how it has influenced us. The lessons learnt of the Hawkesbury have significant implications for our own Yarra River, and these will also be discussed.

Seminars are conducted at River View Room, Grand Hotel, 110 Yarra St., Warrandyte.

For information or booking: phone 03 9840 9326 or email [csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au](mailto:csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au)

**Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Frogs of Manningham - Biology, Ecology and Citizen Science, by David De Angelis and James Frazer. Wednesday, 6 September, 7.30 - 9pm, with field trip on Thursday, 7 September 6.30 - 8pm.**



Ecologist David De Angelis will speak about identifying the frogs of Melbourne's north-east and distinguishing between local species with similar calls or appearance. Aspects of their breeding behaviour and habitat preferences will also be covered. Then hear from James Frazer from Melbourne Water and learn how you can use your mobile phone to record frog calls and contribute data to Melbourne Water's Frog Census, a citizen science program monitoring the health of frog populations in

Greater Melbourne.

Seminars are conducted at River View Room, Grand Hotel, 110 Yarra St., Warrandyte.

If you attend this event, you may also book to attend the field trip: [Frogs of Manningham - Biology, Ecology and Citizen Science](#) with David De Angelis. David will share his knowledge and experience on this field trip with attempts to locate and identify the frogs living in the north-east green wedge. He will educate attendees on distinguishing between local species with similar calls or appearances and on their breeding behaviours and habitat preferences.

Please note, you must attend the [Frogs of Manningham Seminar](#) on Wednesday 6 September to be eligible to attend this field trip. Venue: Will be given at time of booking

Bookings are essential. For information or booking: phone 03 9840 9326 or email

[csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au](mailto:csadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au)

**Community Based Emergency Management Forum & Networking Event. Saturday, 9 September, 10am – 4pm, at Box Hill Institute Lakeside Campus – Jarlo Drive, Lilydale, organized by Shire of Yarra Ranges.**

Designed to celebrate and support you as leaders in making a valuable contribution to safer communities in Yarra Ranges and beyond. The Forum, including food, fabulous speakers and workshops, is free and will be an annual regional event.

More details will be available later.