



# CHUM CREEK LANDCARE NEWSLETTER

No. 20, Spring, 2019



Vale David Blair



David Blair talks about our ash forests to various dignitaries (top) and describes weeds to Chum Creek Landcare members (below) at the first Chum Creek Landcare workshop in 2013.

Chum Creek Landcare member – David Blair – recently died in a skiing accident on Mt. Bogong. Tributes to him were read out in both the Victorian and Australian parliaments. A celebration of his life in Toolangi attracted many hundreds of people from many walks of life as he was a major contributor to so many things – he loved nature, loved studying it and recreating in it, and was extremely knowledgeable about both flora and fauna, birds as well as mammals, and devoted much time to educating others, from students to politicians, about the ecosystems he loved. He had recently completed his Ph.D. and apologized for not being able to attend our last AGM as it conflicted with his degree-granting ceremony. He has been described as an inspirational Scout leader, revitalizing the Healesville scouts, and leading scout trips as far afield as Tasmania. Despite his numerous commitments to work and causes much greater than our own, he still found time to contribute to Chum Creek Landcare in many ways – giving a workshop, contributing to our forthcoming bird brochure, giving feedback on many issues, and attending meetings. He gave of himself to many groups and causes and was an exemplary citizen.

Dave's formula for a happy and valuable life, shared with us by his wife, Sera, is well worth consideration. It is:

- Be kind. Dave truly was an all-round nice guy.
- Work hard. Participate fully in your life.
- Take on the hills, don't just stick to the flats because they are easier.
- Stand up for what you believe in. Use your voice.
- Head for the top of the mountain but enjoy the effort of getting there and the route along the way.
- Be part of nature. Learn about it, be in awe of it, spend time really in it.
- Get into the wilderness. Fill your lungs with fresh air and take in the view,
- Have fun! Never grow up entirely.
- Get dirty. Build a massive rope swing and give yourself a thrill.
- Stay fit and healthy. Keep moving. Dig lots of holes.
- See the world. Embrace diversity.
- Empathise with people less fortunate than yourself.
- Get to know people from all walks of life.
- Get involved in your community. Pitch in.
- Create opportunities for everyone to thrive.
- Love your work. Do something that makes you proud.
- Surround yourself with people who help you grow and succeed.
- Get up early and make the most of each day.
- Love your children. Spend as much time with them as you can.  
Teach them to look after themselves and to be good people.
- Encourage them, cuddle them, make them feel safe and supported always.
- Find someone to share your life with who helps you to grow, who supports your passions and who lets you be you.
- Bring them cups of tea and pancakes in bed.
- Find happiness in making others happy.
- Don't wait. Make things happen.

David will be sorely missed. He helped to make our world, including that of Chum Creek, a better place. Our sincere condolences go to Sera and her children.

Sera Blair, Sarah Rees and Steve Meacher have set up a memorial fund and state: "Join us in celebrating Dave's quest to understand and protect the forests of the Central Highlands. Your donation will support conservation projects including the Great Forest National Park".

<https://chuffed.org/project/dr-david-blair-memorial-fund>

## **President's Report**

Did you know that under the Yarra Ranges Shire's 'Ribbons of Green' programs over 715,000 indigenous plants were planted between 2007 and 2017. Many Chum Creek Landcare members were among the 435 land-owners and 69 schools whose revegetation efforts benefitted from the program. In a recent 10 year evaluation of the program, 85% of the participants reported high satisfaction and willingness to continue with the program.

Plantings were surveyed and the average survival rate was 76% with trees having a 90% survival rate. The program was originally implemented as an offset program for emissions from council's vehicle fleets. Now the program's goals are more focused on biodiversity improvement and habitat connectivity. What was learned in the evaluation was that there should be more emphasis on middle storey shrubs and ground cover, varying density and distribution of plantings and working with landowners to promote habitat linkages. A reality of habitat restoration is that it is a continuing task. Last winter I was shocked at the poor health of the forests on a drive to the Big River. There was an extremely high tree mortality rate probably due to drought or insects. On our own property we have seen quite a bit of tree and shrub mortality part of which is normal. Some indigenous plants, such as some wattles, have short life spans partly because they are colonizing species. So as we continue our planting programs we need to factor mortality rates in and plant to compensate for this. On a final note, all the rain this spring has been particularly favourable for the endangered Round-leaved Pomaderris which is flowering in profusion in many parts of Chum Creek. While the Pomaderris might appear abundant now, we might remember that it is only endemic to the Healesville-Toolangi area and is classed as endangered after being nominated as such due to the efforts of Steve Meacher and HEWI.

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## Chum Creek Landcare news

### Reducing deer numbers in the Chum Creek valley

We are continuing to work on this. A number of people have expressed interest in assisting. We will be contacting others and also working on getting a more widespread deer control program going through the Northern Yarra Landcare Network.

In the meantime, if you come across deer or signs of them on your property, particularly damage caused by them, please let us know, at [chumcklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com)

### Bird id brochure

Work progresses slowly on this but we hope to have it published by the end of this year.

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## Featured Weeds – Cleavers (Bedstraw) and Angled Onion

These are two weeds which don't feature on many weed lists but which are becoming increasingly prevalent in the Chum Creek area, the white flowers of Angled Onion increasingly covering the sides of a large section of Chum Creek road in the spring, right now as this newsletter is sent off.

### Cleavers (Bedstraw) (*Galium aparine*)

Cleavers are herbaceous annual plants originally native to a wide region of Europe, North Africa, and Asia, but now naturalized in many other countries throughout the Americas and Pacific, including Australia. They have been declared noxious weeds in many areas. They are widespread weeds in many environments in eastern Australia and SW Western Australia.

They have creeping straggling stems which branch and grow along the ground and over other plants. They attach themselves with the small hooked hairs which grow out of the stems and leaves. The stems can reach up to 2 metres long, and are angular or square shaped. The leaves are simple, narrowly oblanceolate to linear, and borne in whorls of six to nine.



Cleavers have tiny, star-shaped, white to greenish flowers, which emerge from early spring to summer. The flowers are clustered in small groups, and are borne out of the leaf axils. The corolla bears 4 petals. The two-lobed globular fruits are burrs which grow one to three seeds clustered together; they are covered with hooked bristles which cling to animal fur, aiding in seed dispersal.

This species reproduces by seed, which can survive in the soil for up to 3 years. These seeds are spread by water, wind and machinery, and in contaminated agricultural produce (e.g. fodder), soil and dumped garden waste. Because of the hooked bristles on the fruit, seeds also very easily become attached to clothing and animals, such as deer and wombats.



### Distinguishing Features

- a short-lived herbaceous plant with a trailing, scrambling or weakly climbing habit.
- its weak four-angled stems are covered in tiny backward-pointing prickles.
- its narrow leaves (10-80 mm long and 2-10 mm wide) are borne in groups of six to nine along the stems.
- its inconspicuous white flowers (about 1 mm long and 1-2 mm across) are borne in small clusters in the leaf forks.
- its two-lobed fruit (2-6 mm across) are held upright and covered in hooked bristles.
- Cleavers is similar to several other species of *Galium*, all of which are non-native weeds. It should not be confused, however, with some of the native bedstraws (*Galium* spp.), but these native species generally have leaves in groups (i.e. whorls) of three to five.

### Impacts

Cleavers is regarded as an environmental weed in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. It invades a variety of native habitats including dry coastal vegetation, coastal sand dunes, rocky sites, open woodlands, temperate rainforests, wetlands and riparian areas. It is thought to pose a very serious threat to one or more vegetation formations in Victoria (e.g. riparian forests and riverine escarpment scrub). In dense mats it can prevent seedling recruitment of some native species.

Cleavers is a common weed of crops, orchards, gardens, and pastures. In pasture situations its prickly stems can cause injury, and so are not readily grazed by livestock. The fruit may also contaminate fleece, increasing vegetable fault in wool. Some people experience allergic reactions or dermatitis after contacting it.

### Control

Cleavers is easily dug up and can be controlled with various herbicides, including glyphosate. Control should be conducted early, before the plants have set seed.

### More information is available at -

[https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/galium\\_aparine.htm](https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/galium_aparine.htm)

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/declared-plants/cleavers-what-you-should-know>

### Angled onion (onion weed) (*Allium triquetrum*)

Angled onion is a bulbous flowering plant native to the Mediterranean basin. It is known in English as three-cornered leek, and in Australia and New Zealand as onion weed. It produces stems up to 60 cm tall, which are concavely triangular in cross-section. Each stem produces an umbel inflorescence of 4–19 white bell-shaped, flowers with a green central stripe on each petal in the spring. Each plant has 2–3 narrow, linear leaves, each slightly channeled and up to 15 cm long. The leaves have a distinct onion smell when crushed. All parts of the plant, from the bulb to the flowers, are edible fresh.



The plant dies back every year to a round white bulb, which is usually accompanied by many smaller bulbs. It regenerates from bulbs and seeds and is spread by water, mud, ants, and machinery. Bulbs and seeds can also be transported in contaminated soil and garden refuse.

### Impacts

Once established, it has the potential to completely smother and replace indigenous ground cover vegetation. It is a very persistent weed and may take extensive time and effort to eradicate.

### Control

**Small infestations** - can be hand-weeded ensuring that bulbs are removed. Removal of flowers by mowing will prevent spread of seeds. It is a very persistent weed and may take extensive time and effort to eradicate. Remove small and scattered plants first and then target outer edges of larger infestations. It is **best** removed prior to seed when plants are fully grown and parent bulb exhausted.



### Large Infestations -

- Remove flower heads prior to seed set, using either lawn mower or brush cutter.
- Cover infested area with dense mulch matting (e.g. old carpet, thick newspaper), topped with appropriate mulch, **after active growth**, and leave to rot down.
- Alternatively, cover with black plastic **prior to seed set**. Leave plants to 'cook' for several weeks or longer if possible before hand-removing or spot spraying the weakened plants.
- As a last resort spray plants with herbicide (glyphosate) during active growth.

Plants can be disposed of by burning in a very hot fire.

### Maintenance

It may take several years to exhaust the bulb food supply. Continue cutting new growth and maintaining dense mulch.

**More information is available at -**

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds/angled-onion>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Get-Rid-of-Onion-Weed>

[https://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/directory\\_record/3758/angled\\_onion](https://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/directory_record/3758/angled_onion)

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## Events of interest

**Healesville Environment Watch (HEWI) 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration**  
**Sunday October 20, 10-15am – 2.30pm, Nan Francis Room, Healesville Memo**

Keynote speaker James Goldie, Climate Change Communication Research Hub, will discuss the programs that the Monash Hub is working on to reach the wider community – a problem that we all face. A brief forum after lunch to obtain people's thoughts for HEWI's future direction, will be followed by the beautiful, meditative film – "The Great Forest" – about our ash forests.

Registration will be open by 10.15am to allow time for meeting and greeting old and new friends – and to enjoy our birthday cake!

To register, email Maureen at [hewisec@bigpond.com](mailto:hewisec@bigpond.com)

## **Aussie Backyard Bird Count** 21-27 October, 2019



The Aussie Bird Count is a great way to connect with the birds in your backyard,



no matter where your backyard might be — whether it's a suburban backyard, a local park, a patch of forest, a farm, down by the beach, or the main street of town. All you need to take part is 20 minutes and your favourite outdoor space. As well as contributing to BirdLife Australia's knowledge of Aussie Birds, you will have the chance to win some great prizes! Head to the website ( <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/> ) and register as a Counter today.

If you've taken part before and are registered for this year, why not spread the word and get your friends and family involved in this fun and simple all-ages event? And if you're a teacher, check out Birdlife Australia's Bird Count curriculum-based to get your students (or the whole school!) involved.

## **Possum spotlighting with Fauna and Toolangi**

**Friday, 18 October, 2019**

Fauna and Toolangi will be conducting some spotlighting on a private property in Toolangi which has some big trees and a beautiful forest. They recently spotlighted in this forest in the school holidays with some children and found two Greater Gliders in an old tree.

Where: Meet at Toolangi District Community House car park at 6.15pm for a 6.30pm sharp departure for spotlighting to start at 6.45pm.

What to bring: Torches, spotlights, warm clothes, drink/snack and something to sit on while waiting for sun to set, such as a small blanket or cushion.

Cost: \$2 donation

RSVP: Wednesday 16th October - Email: [faunatoolangi3777@gmail.com](mailto:faunatoolangi3777@gmail.com) or phone: 0403 071 157

## **Friends of Leadbeater's Possum Annual General Meeting**

**Friday, 25 October, 2019**



# Annual General Meeting

## Friday 25th October 2019, 6.30pm

Venue: Toolangi Tavern - Balcony Room,  
1390 Myers Creek Rd, Toolangi VIC 3777



**Arrive at 6:30pm for light refreshments and catch up with other friends, members and committee!**

**AGM starts at 7:00pm**

**Dinner at 7:30pm**

**8:00pm Presentation: The Possum's Case**

**RSVP NOW for catering purposes**

(Please indicate vegetarian, non-vegetarian and other dietary requirements)

[info@leadbeaters.org.au](mailto:info@leadbeaters.org.au) or call/message 0447 330 863

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### Meeting Outline:

1. AGM including presentation of accounts, brief committee reports and elections;
2. Optional dinner -> \$25: Prepared by the Toolangi Tavern;
3. Guest Speaker: Steve Meacher – The Possum's Federal Court Case against VicForests kicked off in November 2017 and drew in the interest of the State Government and Commonwealth Government along the way. Our President takes us on an enlightening journey uncovering the research, tactics, hard work and machinations that have unfolded from then until now;

Note: If you choose not to join us for the dinner, you are still very welcome to attend the AGM and stay for the presentation.

## **Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – The Dark Side of Night Lighting by Alicia Dimovski.**

**Wednesday 04 December 2019, 7.30  
pm to 9 pm**

Alicia, who is a PhD student in the Department of Ecology, Environment and Evolution at La Trobe University, will describe how artificial light from housing and street lights is impacting our native mammals. She has been working between the Bundoora and Bendigo regions to explore the impacts of artificial light on health and behaviour in a range of marsupials including the tamar wallaby, fat-tailed dunnart and sugar glider. Throughout her research Alicia has been working with the lighting industry to find a solution to this problem by testing “wildlife-friendly” amber LED lighting that allows humans to see at night but reduces the impact of our native animals. In this seminar Alicia will discuss both the effects of light pollution on mammals and suggest some changes we can all make to help our native wildlife thrive in our urban areas.



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

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

### **Powerful owl talk and spotlighting**

**Friday 25th October, 2019, 7.30pm to 8.30pm - Talk**

**8.30pm onwards - Spotlighting tour (please note on registration if you'd like to attend)**

**Mount Evelyn Public Hall, 44 Birmingham Road, Mount Evelyn**

The Powerful Owl, known for its distinctive yellow eyes, is the largest owl in Australia and can be found near waterways in the Yarra Ranges. Discover more about this intriguing species at this free talk and spotlighting tour.

Nick Bradsworth, from Deakin Uni, will share his insights and findings of his Powerful Owl study including their behaviour and movement through an urban landscape.

Following the talk Clare Worsnop will lead a spotlighting tour. Clare, a Mount Evelyn local, regularly works in Mount Evelyn Recreation Reserve as a volunteer and has intimate knowledge of the 'local' owls including where they roost, their behaviour and their flight paths.

Registration at the Yarra Ranges Shire is essential.

