CHUM CREEK LANDCARE NEWSLETTER

No. 23, Winter, 2020

On June 3-5, eleven Chum Creek Landcare members participated in a cleanup of rubbish left beside Chum Creek Rd. from the aqueduct to Heath Rd. Our treasurer and president (left) show some of the rubbish collected, with another couple's collection of recyclables from about 500m of road shown below. Approximately half of the litter collected was recyclable.

Chum Creek Landcare has taken responsibility, under the Keep Victoria Beautiful Program, for removing litter from Chum Creek Rd. from Lowes Rd. to Heath Rd. A total of about 9 bags of rubbish plus a car tyre were collected. VicRoads kindly took away for us a couple of wheelbarrow loads of non-recyclable rubbish that we collected.

You can assist keeping Chum Creek beautiful by removing litter whenever you can.

President's Report

A special thanks to our 11 members who participated in our Chum Creek Road clean-up on June 5th. While Chum Creek Road generally doesn't have huge amounts of rubbish, on this occasion we removed 7 large bags full, a tyre and a discarded resin container. Not surprisingly, most of the rubbish was drink and food containers- all recyclable! While our government finally has plans to introduce a beverage container deposit scheme in a couple of years' time, more public education and enforcement of litter penalties is needed in the interim. We definitely don't need more take-away food places in Healesville that would exacerbate the littering.

Chum Creek Landcare is doing these clean-ups as part of VicRoads' Adopt-a -Road program. Sometimes when doing these clean-ups and seeing some of the dumping that goes on around some of our side roads, it can be depressing. Two days after our clean-up, a mattress was dumped along Mt. Lebanon Road and the bush below Upper Lowes Road had quite a bit of rubbish in it. On balance because we participate in the Adopt-a-Road program, we were invited to attend the 30-year celebration of the Keep Victoria Beautiful program at Government House earlier this year. What was inspiring and motivates one to continue was the opportunity to meet representatives from towns all over Victoria who establish gardens around stations, keep townships attractive and adopt sections of road like us. From a display celebrating the highlights of such programs over 30 years, we can be grateful for the legacy of earlier groups who worked hard to make environmental action and awareness an important issue. Government House does have open days and is certainly worth the visit to see the gardens, rooms like the ballroom, and its historic values.

Our next planned activity will be a planting program on the road verge at the intersection of Ainsworth Road and Chum Creek Road. The council has treated blackberries and Landcare members have cleared the site of the dead blackberry canes and other weeds. VicRoads has had the site brush-cut and once jute mat has been placed, we will be ready to put in 100 plants in mid-July. We will be sending out details about that event soon and it would be great for members to help with this activity. While this is a small area, it has a variety of bird species and it is very close to Chum Creek. Even small projects like this are an important contributor to restoring biodiversity.

Chum Creek Landcare news

The Chum Creek Landcare Annual General Meeting is tentatively in August, depending on COVID-19 restrictions. Details will be provided later

We also hope to have a bird walk once our bird id brochure has been printed, probably this coming spring. The bird id brochure will be printed in July.

Deer control in Chum Creek valley

Beginning this winter, professional shooters will be working on a few properties near Chum Creek to reduce the deer population in the area. If your property has experienced damage from deer and you would like to be part of this deer control program, please let us know – by email (chumcklandcare@gmail.com) or phone Evelyn at 5962 .

Featured Weeds – Sow Thistle and Birdsfoot Trefoil

Sow Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*)

Sow Thistle is native to Europe, Asia and northern Africa. It is an erect, hairless, branched annual or biennial herb growing up to about 1 m tall with hollow stems which have a milky sap. The basal leaves are up to 30 cm long, form a rosette and are soft and lobed or toothed. The stem leaves are somewhat smaller and stem clasping. The yellow dandelion-like flower heads are clustered, each about 2 cm in diameter, with all the florets having a radiating petal-like blade (i.e. no 'eye' to the daisy). These sprays of 'flowers' are at the ends of branches. It flowers for much of the year but mainly in spring and early summer.

It usually flowers in spring and dies after flowering finishes in summer. The tiny fruits are short and flattened, topped by a tuft of fine soft bristles. Seeds germinate from autumn to spring and it grows mainly in the cooler months. Surface seed is short lived but buried seed will survive for 2-3 years. Few seeds will germinate if buried more than 2 cm deep. It is spread by seed that is mainly dispersed by wind.

Sow Thistle is a common weed of pasture, disturbed areas, gardens and waste places throughout Victoria and is also found on swamps and lake edges. It also invades bushland, particularly in damp areas. Plants affected by aphids may cause photo sensitisation in cattle.

Control of Sow Thistle

In paddocks - Establish competitive pastures and graze.
Sow Thistle is sensitive to competition so increasing crop density and reducing row spacing will reduce populations. Manually remove isolated plants or graze the area to prevent seed set for several years.

In bushland - Manually remove isolated plants or graze the area to prevent seed set for several years. Single plants may be sprayed with 5 mL glyphosate(450g/L) in 1 L water or wiped with a mixture 1 L glyphosate(450g/L) in 2 L water at any time before budding. A repeat application may be necessary in late spring if a spring germination occurs.

More information about Sow Thistle is available at –

http://www.herbiguide.com.au/Descriptions/hg_Common_Sowthistle.htm

https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/75640/Management-of-common-sowthistle.pdf

Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)

Birdsfoot trefoil is a low-growing, annual to perennial broadleaf herb native to Eurasia and North Africa. It is leguminous and has trailing-ascending stems to 0.75 m tall. It flowers in spring and summer and these flowers are 10 mm long, bright yellow, and sometimes tinged with red, occurring in clusters of 3-12 attached to a common point. These produce 25 mm long, narrow, cylindrical fruit pods in clusters that resemble a bird's foot. The hairy leaves are alternate, have three, clover like leaflets at the top and 2 more leaflets at the base of the petiole and somewhat stem clasping.

Birdsfoot trefoil produces a long taproot that may extend over 1 m, and also forms secondary roots, rhizomes, and modified stems (stolons) near the soil surface. The plant reproduces by seeds, and spreads laterally by stolons and rhizomes.

It has become a weed along roadsides, in damp pastures and particularly along creeklines. It can form thick mats choking out most other plants.

It may cause cyanide poisoning. Some varieties of the plant are more toxic than others.

Control of Birdsfoot Trefoil

Don't burn as this tends to make the infestation worse. Grazing generally provides little control. Cultivation tends to make infestations worse. Mowing to 50 mm every three weeks provides control in roadside situations.

Improve drainage to reduce water logging during winter.

Herbicides provide the most effective control. Tordon® or Logran® can provide good control but Glyphosate is not very effective.

Replant native trees and shrubs to increase shade.

More information about Birdsfoot Trefoil is available at –

http://www.herbiguide.com.au/Descriptions/hg_Birdsfoot_Trefoil.htm

https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/pastures/Html/Birdsfoot_trefoil.htm

Nest boxes

Nesting boxes are a great way of encouraging more wildlife onto your properties and for monitoring what species are around. In some areas natural hollows are in short supply so artificial homes for wildlife are even more important.

Building nest boxes:

- Choose a box design for the species you'd like to attract to your property (see table below) or you think would most benefit from a nesting box.
- If you are building a box for gliders and phascogales put the entrance hole on the side of the box. This makes it easier for the animals to enter the box straight off the tree.
- A piece of plastic mesh (e.g. gutter guard) stapled to the inside of the box helps the animals come and go, and a 'hook & eye' latch to hold the lid down.
- Once you've built the box you need to securely attach a backing board (a length off treated pine decking works well) through which the box is fixed to the tree.

Installing the boxes:

- Fix the box to the tree through the backing board with either 100mm galvanised flat head nails or 75mm> tek screws using a cordless drill.
- Boxes should be attached to the SE side of the tree so that they are out of the direct sun.
- Installed at a height of around 3.5m to 4.5m off the ground so they are safe from foxes and cats but still able to be maintained safely using a ladder.

Maintenance and monitoring:

- Sometimes bees and feral birds such as Starlings and Indian Mynas will use the boxes. The feral bird nests, eggs etc. should be removed.
- If you place the eggs etc. of feral birds on the ground they usually provide a meal for the native birds such as kookaburras and magpies.
- Bee swarms can be removed by a local beekeeper.
- Monitoring can be done carefully using a ladder or a nest box inspection camera.

Further information:

- Nest Box Tales Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/nestboxtales/?ref=bookmarks
- Use of Nest Boxes in Victoria: https://www.ari.vic.gov.au/research/people-and-nature/use-of-nest-boxes-in-victoria

HABITAT/NEST BOX SPECIFICATIONS

What size box is required?

Considerable research has been done on natural hollows, which have been regularly used by wildlife. The size, shape, wall thickness, depth, height above ground, and aspect of the hollows has been taken into consideration. This information has been standardised and put into this table, supporting the construction drawings.

While the specifications have been developed through scientific research, meeting the specific requirements of individual species is far from an exact science. The needs of wildlife can better be assessed, by the monitoring and recording of what species are using the box, when they are in residence, and if they are raising young. These observations should be recorded on the form, Wildlife Series Number 3.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	A	B	C	HEIGHT	ORIENTATION
BIRDS						
Corella	*Cacatua sanguinea*	200	450	150	5	Vertical
Cockatiel	*Nymphicus hollandicus*	200	450	100	7	Vertical
Cockatoo	*Cacatua galerita*	300	750+	180	7+	Vertical or horizontal Front entry
Dollar Bird	*Eurystomus orientalis*	235	450	100	7	Vertical
Galah	*Cacatua roseicapilla*	200	450+	100	7	Vertical
Grey Shrike-thrush	*Culluricincia harmonica*	175	250	90 square	5	Vertical - hidden
Nankeen Kestrel	*Falco cenchroides*	275	750+	125	5	Horizontal, end entry
Kingfisher-sacred	*Todiramphus sanctus*	130	500	75	5	Horizontal
Kookaburras	*Dacelo novaeguineae*	275	0	125	7	Horizontal, end entry
Lorikeets - Rainbow Scaly-breasted	*Trichoglossus sp*	135	400	65	5	Vertical or horizontal Front entry
Owlet-Nightjar	*Aegotheles cristatus*	150	300	70	5	Vertical
Owls - Barn	*Tyto alba*	250	400	platform	5	
Boobook	*Ninox novaeseelandiae*	235	450	100	7+	Vertical
Pardalotes	*Pardalotus spp.*	120	500	40	5	Horizontal, end entry
Rosella, Crimson	*Platycercus elegans*	200	400	90	6	Vertical or horizontal
Rosellas, Pale Headed & Eastern	*Platycercus adscitus, P. eximius*	200	400	75	6	Vertical or horizontal
Swallow	*Hirundo neoxena*	130	130	platform	3	
Treecreeper-little	*Cormobates sp.*	90	350	60	5	Vertical
Waterfowl, Teal	*Anus* sp.	300	600	100	1.5	Vertical over water
Pacific black duck	*Anus superciliosa*	350	450	120	1.5	Vertical over water
MAMMALS						
Brown Antechinus	*Antechinus stuartii*	130	200	50	1.5	Vertical or horizantal
Brush-tailed Phascogale	*Phascogale tapoatafa*	250	300	60	4	Vertical or horizantal
Brush-tailed Possum	*Trichosurus vulpecula*	350	500	120	4	Vertical or horizantal
Feather-tailed Glider	*Acrobates pygmaeus*	260	200	50	6	Vertical
Greater Glider	*Petauroides volans*	350	300	80	8	Vertical
Mountain Brushtail	*Trichosurus caninus*	400	600	150	4	Vertical or horizantal
Ring-tailed Possum	*Psedocherius peregrinus*	200	450	100	4	Vertical or horizantal
Squirrel Glider	*Petaurus norfolcensis*	200	450	65	4	Vertical
Sugar Glider	*Petaurus breviceps*	260	300	50	6	Vertical
REPTILES						
Carpet python	*Morelia spilota variegata*	250	250	100	4	Vertical
Goanna	*Varanus* sp.	220	200	80	3	Vertical
BATS						
Insectivorous	*Chalinolobus* sp. *Nyctophilus* sp.	320 x 230	0	10 - 15 x 150	4	Approach clear of foliage

These specifications are a collation of current research data from numerous organisations, and individuals.

NEST BOXES FOR LOCAL WILDLIFE

HOLLOWS ARE HOMES

Many native bird and mammal species rely on hollows in trees for shelter and for breeding. These hollows are formed when the centres of tree limbs rot away due to fungal or termite action.
Hollows take many years to form and so are only present in aged trees (at least 60 years old).
It has been common practice to remove old trees from urban parks for aesthetic and safety reasons, thus reducing the nesting opportunities of the native birds.
In Melbourne these birds include Eastern Rosellas, Crimson Rosellas, Laughing Kookaburras, Galahs and Rainbow Lorikeets. Mammals that use hollows include Brushtail and Ringtail Possums, as well as Feathertail and Sugar Gliders.

MATERIALS FOR BUILDING A NEST BOX

Timber is best because of its insulating properties. Ordinary Building (O.B.) or Pressure Treated Pine is suitable. Marine ply is waterproof and durable. Chemically treated pine is TOXIC and should not be used and chipboard tends to warp when wet. Galvanised/nickel plated screws should be used to join all parts. The nest box must be weatherproofed using a lacquer or creosote, the inside of the box should not be painted. A couple of handfuls of woodshavings or shredded bark should cover the floor.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Ideally, the lid should be hinged and slope down from the back to the front of the box. The lid should overhang the front and sides of the box by at least 25mm.

Three small (less than 10mm) drainage holes should be drilled in the floor towards the front of the box. Ensure the box is wind and rainproof.

Roughen the roof and inside walls with coarse sandpaper or notch with a circular saw before construction; this will enable the young to climb out.

PLACEMENT OF NEST BOXES:

- *different species prefer nest boxes at different heights;*
- *nest boxes should be placed where people, cats, foxes or dogs will not disturb them;*
- *nest boxes should be sheltered from the prevailing wind and the hot sun;*
- *some birds (kookaburras) prefer the nest box to be horizontal.*

NEST BOXES FOR LOCAL WILDLIFE

ATTACHMENT OF THE NEST BOX

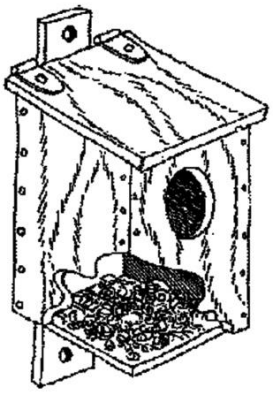
Nest boxes can be attached in various ways. Make sure that they are firmly positioned and stable, with a slight forward lean to assist the young to exit and to help drainage.

Place a strong piece of wire through an old garden hose and hang from a fork in a tree so that the nest box rests against the trunk. Do not tighten the wire around the tree as this will damage the tree.

Fix a mounting strip to blocks attached to the back of the box. Use 100mm galvanised nails to nail the box to the tree.

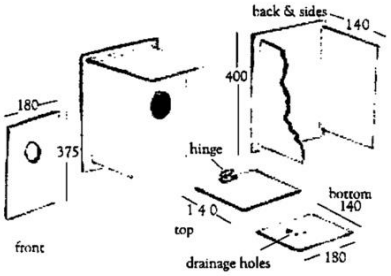
MAINTENANCE OF THE NEST BOX

Avoid disturbing the nest box once it is installed. It may take some time for birds or mammals to 'accept' it and take up residence. Introduced birds (e.g., sparrows, Indian Mynahs and starlings) may nest in the box, and may even commandeer the nest box from native birds. The nesting materials of these introduced species should be removed as their presence in Melbourne has reduced the availability of nesting sites for native species.



NEST BOX DIMENSIONS

These depend on the animal using the nest box. The following table shows the dimensions of nest boxes suitable for a range of Melbourne's birds and mammals.



Species	Height (mm)	Width (mm)	Depth (mm)	A (mm)	B (mm)	C(m)	D	E
Rosella	400	200	240	200-300	70	5	V, H	Aug-Jan
Galah	750	200	200	650	120	6	V, H	Sep-Jan
Kookaburra	150-200	290	600+	Level	80-120	5-10	H	Sep-Jan
Pardalote	150	280	150	60	30-45	5	H	Jul-Jan
Sugar Glider	400	200	240	300	32-35	4-8	V	Jun-Dec
Ringtail Possum	400	200	240	350	70-80	4-8	V	Apr-Nov
Brushtail Possum	500	290	250	400-450	100-120	4-8	V	Autumn/Spring

Key:

A *entrance hole above floor;*
B *entrance hole diameter;*
C *height above ground;*
D *placement (V-Vertical, H-Horizontal);*
E *breeding seasons.*

Yarra Ranges Council's new Community Solar and Battery Offer

The Yarra Ranges Council is one of several participating councils that have come together to drive the The Solar Savers Program in a bid to make it easier and more affordable for you to have a quality system, installed by an accredited and trusted company.

Learn more about the Solar Savers Program at https://www.healesvillecore.org.au/solar-panels-batteries-community-offer-2020/

New biodegradable seedling guard

SureGro has a new guard to protect planted seedlings. It is claimed to be biodegradable and is made from cardboard and not plastic.

The "GreenGuard" - A Naturally better TreeGuard.

Eliminate Plastic Guards

GREENGUARD® is Weather-resistant and durable. These cardboard-based triangular guards are 100% biodegradable and recyclable.

Made in Australia

GREENGUARD® is proudly Australian designed and manufactured in Australia. The weather-resistant board has been custom-made and is only available in **GREENGUARD®** with no plastic coating.

Lower Freight Costs

GREENGUARD® has been designed with packing in mind. Our optimal design enables us to flat-pack 5,000 per pallet to keep freight costs down.

No Retrieve Option

GREENGUARD® is fully biodegradable, so you have the option of no retrieval from field, saving more time and resources.

Activities of interest

Due to social distancing requirements, all forthcoming activities of interest are web-based, with opportunities for involvement.

Webinars to watch any time

Designing and Enhancing Shelterbelts for woodland bird biodiversity
Talks by two Sustainable Farms ecologists.
Dr Mason Crane discussed the role of shelterbelts, their design and how to enhance bird diversity.
Dr Colleen O'Malley spoke about the role shelterbelts play in supporting beneficial insect communities on farms.
A recording of the webinar is available online -
https://sustainablefarms.org.au/fielddays/designing-shelterbelts-webinar

Forest Landscapes in Victoria: Fire, Logging and Fauna
Professor David Lindenmayer's presentation is available to watch for a limited time at -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YCSr7dZKRM&feature=youtu.be

Cosmic Creatures: Linking Animals to the Stars in Australian Aboriginal Astronomy
Melbourne University Associate Professor Duane Hamacher and BSc student and Yorta Yorta person, Jessie Ferrari, share how the animals, seasons and stars come together in Aboriginal Astronomy, at –
https://science.unimelb.edu.au/engage/alumni/pe/cosmic-creatures

The platypus and its conservation needs.
Assisted by a NSW Landcare group, an informative video can be viewed at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5UOWchDoIU&fbclid=IwAR2SJRBm7CygPl8M80ghS5g3Y1fIP_OGkVOUkGVBxohE-I5JfIVHn52ftpc

Powerful Owl webinar – Saturday, 4 July, 10 – 11am

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 webinar.

Nick Bradshaw, a researcher at Deakin

University, will share his insights and findings of his Powerful Owl study including their behaviour and movement through an urban landscape.

To participate in this webinar you will need to register at https://yarraranges-vic.zoom.us/webinar/register/tJcvd-GgqzksH9QEMcmNudb1mchFMdVSyKts

Yarra Ranges Shire Liveable Climate Plan

Learn more about the Yarra Range Liveable Climate Plan at one of the Shire's webinars

Whether you are a resident, business or visitor to the Yarra Ranges, we all have a collective responsibility to respond and adapt to climate change to help lessen its impact.
The Shire is aiming to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent on 2005 levels by 2025
- Achieve net zero emissions by 2040.
- Transition all Council services and infrastructure to 100% renewable energy by 2030.
- Transition to zero operation energy expenditure by 2040.

You can learn more on the website below or register for one of the upcoming webinars:

- Thursday 2 July – 3:00pm - 4:00pm
- Wednesday 8 July – 10:30am - 11:30am
- Wednesday 8 July – 6:30pm - 7:30pm
- Tuesday 14 July – 11:00am - 12:00pm

https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Engage-Yarra-Ranges/Yarra-Ranges-Liveable-Climate-Plan?utm_source=Yarra+Ranges+Local+Monthly+Update&utm_campaign=5f6a036b86-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_15_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_39be686e6d-5f6a036b86-203718513