



CHUM CREEK LANDCARE

NEWSLETTER

No. 5, Summer, 2015-16



Events schedule

January - March; evenings : **Stagwatching for possums**, ash forest areas (see below).

February 3-4: **Seminar and field trip on butterflies**, Warrandyte area (see below).

March 3: **Seminar on invertebrates**, particularly leaf litter ones, Warrandyte (see below).

President's Summer Letter

I would like to wish Chum Creek Landcare members a wonderful and safe summer. As I watch platypus at dusk in Chum Creek and enjoy seeing the many native birds and animals in the area, I know we are very lucky to live in such a biologically rich area.

Chum Creek Landcare has had a number of accomplishments this year with our Chum Creek ecological survey. I hope that the knowledge acquired from this has been helpful to members in understanding and managing their properties. We are continuing the survey along another section of the creek this summer and monitoring the water quality more systematically this year. We have worked hard to improve our communication - our website, Facebook page and now this newsletter. We were also thrilled that Rob

Fallon who was our inaugural facilitator was awarded the Australian Government Landcare Facilitator Award for 2015.

We are looking forward to 2016 and running workshops for our members based on the interests identified in our survey.

Don't forget as you purchase items for your properties and gardens to use the discount opportunities available to members. There are also resources available to borrow from our new equipment shed. (see details on our facebook or website).

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for all their hard work and efforts in 2015.



Rob Fallon receives his award.

Best Wishes, Evelyn

Chum Creek Landcare news

1. We are producing newsletters again

Your committee has decided to produce newsletters again to facilitate communication and inform you about relevant happenings. Newsletters are currently planned to come out quarterly and each will feature information (including identification and control) about 2 of the most important invasive weed species in our area. Full information can be obtained from website references provided.

2. Landcare signs are available

Metal Chum Creek Landcare signs are available free to Chum Creek Landcare members. The signs can be obtained by phoning Debbi Weaver at 5962 2019 (after hours) to arrange pickup.

2. Chum Creek stream monitoring

In 2015 we purchased equipment to monitor the physical, chemical, and biological quality of the water in Chum Creek. We began monitoring in January. If you are interested in helping out, please let us know by email (chumcklandcare@gmail.com) or phone Michael Feller (5962 5227).

3. Can you assist us?

If you know something about weeds, would you be able to assist Chum Creek Landcare by helping out at a market stall answering questions about weeds? If so, please let us know by email (chumcklandcare@gmail.com) or phone Debbi Weaver (5962 2019 after hours).

4. Results of our member survey

Our November survey had 13 responses (~20% of our household membership).

Respondents indicated that the key land management issues they faced on their land, as well as those facing the entire Chum Creek area, were – weeds, pest animals (including rabbits and deer), and managing for/after fire. Maintenance of the Chum Creek waterway was also considered a key issue for the overall area.

The main problems confronting landowners in managing their properties were lack of time and knowledge about weeds and weed control methods. Cost, particularly of fencing materials, was also noted as an issue.

Activities people would be most interested in attending were: 1) rabbit and fox control; then 2) identifying and controlling weeds. There were very similar levels of interest in attending all the other activities we had listed (identifying and monitoring fauna, waterway management/water quality monitoring, Indian mynah trap construction, deer control, wombat mange, native seed collection, and identifying birds).

Different times were considered best for workshops although a slight majority favoured Saturday afternoons.

There were few suggestions about how Chum Creek Landcare could improve activities to better suit member's interests, although a couple of people mentioned site visits to see what works or doesn't work.

Featured Weeds - Montbretia and Spear Thistle

Our new newsletters will feature 2 weed species per issue. These species will be those considered to present the greatest threats to the Chum Creek area. It is our intention to briefly describe the species and their impacts. Further information about methods of controlling them, and alternatives for planting, if the species is likely to have been planted can be obtained by clicking onto the websites given. Our first 2 species are widespread in the Chum Creek area and have the potential to spread rapidly.

1. Montbretia (*Crocosmia × crocosmiiflora*)



Montbretia is a perennial herb, originally from South Africa, which dies back annually. It has strap-like flat leaves up to 90 cm long and 2 cm wide. It has bright orange trumpet-shaped flowers from December to April which form in 2 rows along each stem, and is often mistaken for Watsonia. It grows from a bulb from which new small bulbs develop so that it can spread rapidly underground. It is best

removed in spring and summer just before full flowering, digging out bulbs when the soil is still moist.

More information can be obtained at <http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Property/Trees-vegetation/Weeds> and clicking on the Montbretia Fact Sheet.

2. Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)



Spear thistle is a painfully prickly plant with rosettes of leaves that usually persist until a tall stem with purple flowers is produced in late spring of the second year. A single plant can produce up to

200 flower heads and 8000 seeds which are spread by wind. It is necessary to kill the plant before flowers are produced as flowers can rapidly produce seeds even after a flowering plant has been dug up. Slashing is unlikely to kill a thistle plant although it will set back its flowering and seed production.

More information can be obtained at <http://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/weeds/weeds-index/non-declared-weeds-index/spear-thistle/spear-thistle-control-guide>

Assistance with blackberry removal

As you know, one of the advantages of being a member of Chum Creek Landcare is that we can offer rebates for costs incurred in controlling blackberries using chemical or physical removal techniques. Chum Creek Landcare is part of the Northern Yarra Landcare Network which has formed the Northern Yarra Blackberry Action Group (NYBAG). NYBAG has hired a Blackberry Project Officer, Rob Fallon, who can be contacted at nybagprojectofficer@gmail.com or phone 0417 471 009. Rob is available to discuss how NYBAG might assist you with any blackberry control activities.

For properties on a waterway, if you have an active agreement with Melbourne Water, NYBAG can support blackberry control outside your protected waterway. If your property is not on a waterway, NYBAG may still be able to provide financial support for blackberry control.

The rebates NYBAG offers for blackberry control actions, either chemical or manual, are -

Blackberry control rebates for 2015/16 are -

Contractor works - For a payment by you to an accredited contractor for the control of blackberry, NYBAG will pay two-thirds of the cost to a maximum of \$400.

Owner action - For 4 or more hours work done by you, rather than a contractor, to control blackberry NYBAG will recognise that effort to a maximum of \$150.

Bigger rebates for larger works are available at the discretion of the NYBAG steering committee. Talk to Rob about how to get additional assistance from NYBAG if you need it.

To claim a rebate

The agreed blackberry control work gets checked by Rob once it's done, and you can then submit a rebate form. Confirm the rebate amount with Rob and then send a completed rebate request form to Landcare at PO Box 16 Yarra Glen 3775. Please include a copy of your receipt if you used a contractor. Rebate request forms are available from Rob or from Michael Feller at Chum Creek Landcare (michael.feller@ubc.ca or ph 5962 5227)

Do you have projects for volunteers?

Do you have projects suitable for small groups of secondary school students to work on?

Ann and Phill from Heath Rd. recently did. They reported:

“The crew from Billanook School were great!

A good bunch, enthusiastic and eager to jump in.

As they say, many hands make light work! We got heaps of clearing done, running many trailer loads of pine needles, leaf litter and prunings up to the top paddock for burning later. It would have taken us a fortnight to do that much by ourselves. Looks terrific!

The guys with the pruning saws were pretty competitive, scorning our efforts with the chainsaw and preferring to do it the hard way! Add wheelbarrow time-trials to the mix and they had a lot of fun as well. We'll be happy to see them back next year, please!

We have arrangements (through the Northern Yarra Landcare Network) with several schools for small groups (up to 10) of their students to work on volunteer projects on private land. Note that this is NOT a free gardening service. Projects have to be related to some aspect of Landcare – regeneration after fire, control of invasive weeds, tree planting etc.

We don't always get a lot of notice about when school groups are coming, so we are developing a list of suitable projects and can contact the relevant landowners when we have appropriate groups available.

If you have a suitable project, please let us know the following details:

- Contact person (name and phone)
- Property address
- Description of work required
- Is this work seasonal?
- What equipment is required? (we have sets of gloves etc. for most common tasks)
- What hazards are involved? (e.g. working in the bush means danger of snakes or ants etc.)

Please send your details to: **chumcklandcare@gmail.com**, for your project to be added to our list. Note that there is no guarantee that we will find a group for your project, but we'll do our best to spread the volunteers around our membership.

Any questions? Contact Linden Danks at lindendanks@hotmail.com or phone 5962 4219 (leave a message if not home).

Free equipment hire for spraying weeds

For blackberry program members wishing to undertake blackberry control themselves, the Northern Yarra Landcare Network has this equipment available: -

- 2 x 50L units with 10m hose, 12v battery and charger
- 2 x 20L knapsack sprayers
- 1 x 600L spray rig with 2 x 100m hoses on remote control reels

Please note: demand for equipment can be high so it is subject to availability.



Farm chemical training

The Landcare Network has previously organised free training for several people in the safe and legal use of restricted herbicides. It is a 2-day course run by local training providers and normally costs about \$300. This course allows you to apply to DELWP for your Agricultural Chemical Users' Permit (ACUP).

The Landcare Network is hoping to organise more Chemical Users Courses for Blackberry Action Group members (subject to funding).

Landcare Membership

You must be a member of your local Landcare Group to receive the benefits of the blackberry program. In your first year on the program, Landcare membership was free until 30th June (in the financial year you joined).

Is there a Fireguard Group in your area?

The CFA assists groups of landowners to set up a local Community Fireguard group to assist with bushfire safety. According to the CFA website -

Community Fireguard is all about taking control of your own bushfire safety. It's a practical program designed to help you:

- Plan for a range of scenarios
- Make informed decisions when it counts

- Maintain a fire smart house and garden
- Work together with your community to reduce everyone's bushfire risk

If you are passionate about keeping your home and your family safe, get together with a group of locals and CFA will come to you.

Getting started

Contact your **CFA Region headquarters** and ask for the Community Education Coordinator. Alternatively, text your name and location to 0429 423 692. A local coordinator will be in touch within a few days. It only takes one person to get the ball rolling!

How does community fireguard work?

- The program contains around eight hours of material (including group discussion and hands on activities) that can be covered in around four to six sessions.
- CFA fire safety specialists work with your group to keep things on track and make sure all the important information is covered
- Meetings are held in people's homes, at a time that's most convenient for the group — usually on weekends or in the evening.
- CFA also offers a practical "Stay and Defend" workshop as part of Community Fireguard – this is optional (but recommended) for anyone considering defending their home.

Are you interested in looking for possums by stagwatching?

The Australian National University continues to conduct possum stagwatches. Stagwatching involves quietly watching possums emerging from habitat trees with hollows ("stags") at dusk.

What might I see?

In the spectacular tall Mountain Ash forests, different species of gliders and possums, large forest owls and other birds, small forest bats and ground mammals.

What is the possum data used for?

The data you collect on the night will become part of a 30 year long term monitoring program, used to understand possum biology and population trends which then informs government.

How do I sign up to participate?

If you wish to assist, please register at <http://wildmob.org/stagwatch-program-registration-of-interest/>

Please provide your

- Mobile number
- General area/suburb/town you are from (this helps with carpooling and deciding where to meet, but is not critical)
- If you are willing to drive (and if you can take passengers)



Manningham Environment Seminars and Field Trips (Warrandyte)

Seminars are conducted at Bull&BushRoom GrandHotel Warrandyte. No bookings are required for the evening talks; however, RSVPs must be provided for the field sessions.

Seminar (730pm Wednesday 3 Feb, 2016): A bit of colour in a grey landscape – butterflies in the urban matrix presented by Jesse Kurylo

An ever increasing human population and a desire to shape the land to suit our modern needs often comes at a price to the many species which call that land home, but what about butterflies living within the urban matrix?

How many butterfly species use urban environs and what do we know about these species? What resources are they using and how beneficial are wildlife gardens for butterflies?

These are some of the many questions Jesse Kurylo has been trying to answer during her PhD research in Melbourne. Join us to discover the answers to these and other butterfly mysteries within the urban matrix.

Field Trip (10am-noon Thursday 4 Feb, 2016): The Great 2016 Butterfly Frolic with Jesse Kurylo

If we have a few weeks of heat, February will be a great season to get out and about with a butterfly net.

Join Jesse to learn some of her field research techniques in butterfly habitat identification, appreciation and monitoring methods. Bookings are essential as places are limited.

The date for this field trip may be changed if the weather is not favorable for butterfly flight.

Seminar (730pm Wednesday, 2 March): An Introduction to Invertebrates with Special Reference to Leaf Litter Fauna presented by Maxwell Campbell

This seminar focuses on the myriad of small invertebrates that live in leaf litter and the importance of this habitat in the ecosystem. Collectively referred to as cryptozoa, they constitute a major part of biodiversity and occur in numbers beyond census.

Maxwell Campbell is a biologist, an educator, and has been an active naturalist for five decades.

Bookings now open. You must attend the corresponding seminar to keep your field trip booking. Meeting point provided at time of booking.

Book/Information: Lyn Meredith 03 9840 9326 or seepadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au
