



An 8 m high rock cliff, close to which flows Chum Creek, was encountered while surveying Chum Creek and its adjacent riparian vegetation in January, 2017.

## Events schedule

**FREE FILMS – “The Great Forest” and “Black Hole”** Friday, February 24, 7.30pm The Memo, Healesville, Organised by Healesville Environment Watch. For further details, see P 5.

**Leadbeater’s Possum Awareness Week** – Monday, 27 March – Sunday, 2 April. Organised by Friends of Leadbeater’s Possum. For further details, see P 6.

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

## President's Report

Best wishes to all our members for 2017 and hope that finally there is some respite from repairing the spring storm damage. We now face the challenges of fire season. I would like to thank the Healesville CFA for the excellent workshop they held for the Chum Creek Community in early December. The intention of this event was to increase resident's awareness of basic fire behaviour and preparedness. The simulation of how fire moves through different environments vividly demonstrated how we should better protect our properties from fire destruction. Hopefully this workshop was a great fire safety reminder. An excellent point made by the facilitator was to get important documents and photos digitally copied so that in a forced evacuation they are easier to quickly locate and transport.

In November we were lucky to attend the 30 years of Landcare celebration held in Coldstream. David Lindenmayer's presentation about the results of research and work with farming communities in habitat restoration in the southern NSW highlands was a message of hope. Often we wonder if our own habitat restoration work achieves improvements in biodiversity. The research certainly affirmed the value of these efforts in terms of increases in bird species numbers and biodiversity. Particularly good improvements occurred where revegetated areas joined at corners.

This year if you have any weed or feral animal management techniques that were successful or insights and knowledge about indigenous plants and animals that you would like to organize a field trip or workshop about please let us know.

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## Chum Creek Landcare news

### **Second Chum Creek Survey report is now available**

The report from last summer's survey of Chum Creek and its adjacent vegetation, from where it crosses Chum Creek Rd. up to its source near Toolangi, is now available. If you would like a digital copy, please let us know via email (to [chumcklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com)). The survey and its results were presented at our AGM.

We are also pleased to report that we have obtained funding from Melbourne Water to complete our survey of the main Chum Creek from Lowes Rd. down to where it meets the Watts River. The survey is being conducted this summer.

### **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](mailto:chumcklandcare@gmail.com), or ph 5962 5227) as we now have several litres of it and can provide it free to Landcare members.

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

Your Chum Creek Landcare committee has decided to organise a short walk through the headwaters of Chum Creek catchment from the topographic divide along old tracks down to where Old Chum Creek Rd. crosses Chum Creek, so you can see the diversity of fungi and vegetation present, all of which we will try to identify. The walk will be in the afternoon with times to be given in our next newsletter, and will be subject to weather. Bad weather might cause this event to be rescheduled for the following weekend. We will finish with afternoon tea.

### **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. These were all rapidly snapped up, so we give you advance notice that we hope to have a similar number of free seedlings this winter. More details will be provided in our next newsletter.

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## **Featured Weeds – Briar Rose and Arum Lily**

### **Briar Rose (*Rosa rubiginosa*)**

Sweet briar is a native of Europe that now grows throughout the world. Sweet briar can reduce the carrying capacity of land, harbour rabbits, restrict vehicle access and restrict stock movements, especially where it occurs in clumps or patches. The plant is more common in the cooler, high rainfall areas.

Sweet briar is spread mainly by birds or animals eating the fruit and distributing the viable seed. Fruits and seeds can also be spread by run-off in steep country along creeks and streams. The seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 4 years. Root pieces and disturbed crowns of sweet briar can also produce new growth or suckers.

Sweet briar is an erect perennial shrub, commonly growing 1.5 to 2 m high but can be up to 3 m.

Many stems arise from a shallow, perennial rootstock. They are smooth when young and become rough and woody as the plant ages. They arch towards the top and have numerous backward curving flat thorns up to 1.5 cm long.



Briar Rose flower and leaves (left), and fruit (right).

The leaflets have serrated margins and short prickles on the leaf stems. Pink or white flowers usually appear in late spring. The fruits are orange-red in colour, oval shaped with short spines and contain numerous, yellow, irregularly shaped seeds.

Sweet briar often invades unimproved grasslands and disturbed bushland. It prefers well-drained areas of moderate fertility with little competition and light grazing. The weed can grow on most soil types.

The effective, long-term control of this weed may require the integration of a number of techniques including mechanical removal, pasture management, grazing management, herbicide application, regular monitoring and replacement with appropriate plants.

For invasive, woody weeds such as sweet briar, control is more effective and economical if done when the plants are young.

The control methods used will depend on the infestation size and location. Established plants can be removed by digging. However, it can be difficult if the bushes are large or dense. After the initial removal, further cultivations in summer will ensure the remaining root system is exposed and killed. Normal autumn cultivations before sowing pastures or crops will kill any remaining seedlings.

The site should be monitored regularly and any regrowth should be treated with repeat cultivations or by spraying with an appropriate herbicide once it is a sufficient size.

Vigorous perennial pastures provide competition to reduce the invasion of sweet briar. In suitable sites, they should be established as soon as possible after the removal of the weed infestation but not after the application of residual herbicides.

Grazing management is also useful in controlling sweet briar. Sheep and goats, but not cattle, will readily graze young seedlings and help prevent their establishment.

Further information is available from – <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/137>

### **Arum Lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*)**

It is a perennial, deep green plant with large arrow-head shaped leaves in clumps to 1.5m high, and has large, showy white (or sometimes green) flowers with a protruding yellow spike in the centre on a tall fleshy stem (see photo to right). The roots can appear similar to a large ginger root. All parts can cause irritation to the mucous membranes of the mouth, throat and eyes.

It invades gardens, waterways, irrigation ditches, pastures, bushland and roadside areas. A widespread

weed of damp areas. Takes over and chokes out indigenous plants, impeding water flow. Considered poisonous to people and all animals.

It spreads by seed and vegetatively (rhizome growth or fragments), by being transported by soil movement and wind, and by dumping garden waste in bushland areas.

The only practical way to remove small clumps of the plant is by digging. It is important to remove all roots from beneath the soil. Alternatively, cut the flower heads before seeding to help prevent spreading. Brush cutting or mowing can also be done regularly. It is important to avoid dumping the soil from around arum lilies elsewhere on your property as this will further distribute the weed.

More information can be obtained from –

[http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/webdocuments/environment-engineering/parks-environment/environment-parks-environment/arum\\_lily\\_web.pdf](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/webdocuments/environment-engineering/parks-environment/environment-parks-environment/arum_lily_web.pdf)



### **European wasp – control**

Your Chum Creek Landcare committee had considered organizing a workshop on European wasp control, but the lack of European wasps around this summer has prevented it. However, Phill Hipwell has obtained an excellent description of how to reduce wasp populations through the use of simple wasp bait stations made from milk cartons. This complete description of bait station construction, location, and use, is available on our website (<http://chumcreeklandcare.weebly.com> – click on Resources page, then scroll down to Invasive species – European wasp control do-it-yourself bait stations)

There are three perfect periods within the wasp life cycle for baiting (food laced with a wasp insecticide):

- Unfertilized queens looking for sugars to build fat in Summer and Autumn.
- Workers looking for protein to feed larvae, in late spring/ summer.
- Water stress during drought.

Bait ingredients should suit the life stage of workers:

- Unfertilized queens love apples for fat deposition for hibernation and future egg laying.
- Workers love apples as fuel to power flight for foraging.
- Workers love meat to feed larvae. Meat can only be digested by larvae. Meat or liver is best liked as large chunks.

European wasps have a genetic predisposition for apple which means baits are not attractive to other insect pollinators such as bees or predatory wasps.

- Wasps will locate bait faster if they are in an area with a bait station.

**Bait placement:** Workers forage 200 m from the nest but will NOT leave the flight path for at least 20 m.

*Preferred nesting sites are creeks, dams embankments, logs, old rabbit burrows, houses and stored machinery. Place stations around these areas throughout the year. As workers are not good at recruiting others to a food source. They need at least a day for nest mates to find the station. This means that **pre-baiting** is very important.*

- First place a station **free** of insecticide dust at the chosen site.
- When more workers visit the site, **renew** apple or meat and add wasp insecticide dust in the evening.
- If wasp numbers are high, place a treated station within 2m of the original. Attaching the new station should be safe as it will take the wasps some time to find it.

Baiting throughout the year, when the temperature is right for flight (even in winter/early spring, Queens will fly when outside temperatures are above 12°C but only in the warmest part of the day), should be easy, not expensive and be capable of nipping infestations 'in the bud'. The bait station can be a simple detection and elimination tool to ensure European wasps never reach damaging populations at any time of the year.

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## **Bushfire conferences and workshops - report**

Bushfires are a fact of life in the Chum Creek area so it is important that we inform ourselves about all aspects of bushfires and prepare for them, even if the fire season, like the current one, does not appear very severe. We can inform ourselves by attending relevant conferences and workshops. Every spring the Yarra Ranges Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee organises a "Living with Bushfire" conference. The last one, advertised in our winter newsletter, was held in Lilydale, and was attended by committee member Phill Hipwell. Phill's report of this conference follows.

This year's conference was held on Friday and Saturday the 7th and 8th of October. The conference isn't free but is always very worthwhile. Both mornings had great sessions around bushfires. Of great interest was a discussion on the Wye River fires of last Christmas. In the afternoons there were 4 rooms with 3 varied sessions in each so there were lots of choices for your particular interest.

Of great interest on the Friday was a talk by Victor Steffenson on Looking After Country: New approaches to sharing ancient fire knowledge. Victor is inspired by the heritage of his mother and grandmother's people, the Tagalaka people of Northern Queensland.

On Saturday there was a field trip to some bushland in Montrose where Victor talked at length about the state of the bushland and how traditional burning is used to remove introduced plants and give native grasses the right conditions to provide balance in the understory. The stringybarks were examined and the signs of stress identified. Victor was adamant about how traditional burning involved very low "cool" fires with flames about 10 cm high in a mosaic at varying times rather than the more common hotter fuel reduction burns. A cool fire allows insects and small animals to escape the fire with the smoke alerting them to it. Because the fire isn't hot, even cracks in the earth can provide refuge. A traditional fire is lit from a single ignition point, not by drip lines, which also reduces the intensity of the fire.

It was very interesting to see the Parks people totally absorbed in what Victor had to say. There have been several partnerships with indigenous fire experts and parks people in other states and there may be more in the future.

Michael Feller was present at the very well attended CFA-organised event at the Chum Creek primary school mentioned above in the president's report. He considers that this excellent event was unfortunately marred by one CFA member advocating the illegal cutting down of trees to reduce fire hazard. This is something that no Landcare group could ever support or condone.

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## **Events of interest**

**FREE FILMS – "The Great Forest" and "Black Hole" Friday, February 24, 7.30pm The Memo, Healesville, Organised by Healesville Environment Watch**

"The Great Forest" is a beautiful and sensitive local documentary by Marli Lopez-Hope. Annotated by the ancient words of local indigenous language, through Senior Aboriginal Wurundjeri elder, Aunty Joy Murphy

Wandin we marvel at the complex symbiotic nature of this ecosystem, from the forest floor to the canopy above.

"Black Hole" examines the future of coal, corporate responsibility and the rights that governments afford to people versus polluters. The film is a collective narrative of first person accounts with characters that thread throughout the film, from 2013 to the present. It deals with water security, agricultural land, endangered flora, fauna and significant indigenous cultural sites.

**Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Botanical geography and history across Bass Strait, by Dr. Matt Dell. Wednesday, 1 March, 7.30- 9pm, with field trip on Saturday, 4 March, 10am – 12pm.**

Matt will discuss the influence of Bass Strait on the distribution of plants in Victoria and Tasmania, including species local to Manningham which have origins or relationships with Bass Strait. His presentation will summarise research in this area and provide numerous colour illustrations. Matt is a Principal Botanist at Ecology Australia and completed his PhD in 2009 on aspects of plant ecology in north-eastern Tasmania. If you attend this event, you may also book to attend the field trip: Plant ecology tour with Dr Matt Dell. On the field trip Matt will share his knowledge of plant ecology during a walk in the Jumping Creek Reserve.. He will lead us through different vegetation types and habitats to identify both vascular and non-vascular plants, and discuss how these groups interact. 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](mailto:eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au)

**Manningham Environment Seminars (Warrandyte) – Our wildlife neighbours, by John Harris Wednesday, 5 April, 7.30 - 9pm, with field trip on Saturday, 8 April, 7.30 - 9pm –**



John will discuss the results of fauna surveys undertaken in Currawong Bush Park and 100 Acres Reserve in 2016. More than 70 species of wildlife were recorded during the brief survey including many birds, frogs, reptiles and ten species of mammals, including microbats. John is the Director and Principal Zoologist of Wildlife Experiences. If you attend this event, you may also book to attend the field trip: Night time spotlight and microbat survey walk with John Harris. John will lead a spotlight walk around 100

Acres Reserve, looking for some of our wildlife neighbours and in recognition of Australasian Bat Night, he will attempt to trap some microbats to educate the attendees about these fabulous local animals and allow for a closer look at them.

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](mailto:eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au)

**Leadbeater's Possum Awareness Week – Monday, 27 March – Sunday, 2 April. Organised by Friends of Leadbeater's Possum**

In this significant year, LbP Awareness Week will start on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March and culminate on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April with Friends of Leadbeater's Possum's usual picnic at Cambarville, where Eric Wilkinson saw the first living Leadbeater's Possum in 1961. It is hoped that Eric will once again be able to join us to share his amazing story. There will also be a walk through the Tall Trees and visits to the waterfalls. Further details can be found at [www.leadbeaters.org.au](http://www.leadbeaters.org.au)

