



GECKO Spring 2011

The Newsletter of the Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Program



Welcome to this Spring edition of Gecko. It contains articles about some matters that may help your group— with plant recognition, with kneeling to weed, and recruiting members. There are also opportunities for events to get involved in and talks to attend. Happy reading



Lyndal Sullivan
On behalf of the Bushcare Team

DATES TO NOTE

Saturday 29th October Katoomba Creek Remote Bushcare 8 am– 5pm

Off-track walking, searching for weeds, walking through and crossing creeks.
Contact Lyndal Sullivan 47805528 or lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Saturday 29th October TAFE Open Day, Wentworth Falls 10am – 2pm

A range of information about environmental courses. Talk on conservation work being undertaken by Blue Mountains City Council and potential career paths at 11 am.
Contact Susan Edmonds 4753 2157 or Susan.edmonds@tafensw.edu.au for full program details

Friday 4th November Waste & Resources Reference Group

Closing date for expressions of interest. *see details on p 8*

Saturday 12th November Kedumba Valley Remote Weeding 8.30am - 4pm

A spectacular trip to Kedumba Valley to weed along Jamison Creek. Catering provided. Limited numbers. Contact Arthur Henry NPWS on 4787 3104 or arthur.henry@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Saturday 12th November Introduction To Bushcare at Blaxland 9.30am - 1pm

Never been to bushcare? This course is for beginners who want to know what bushcare is and to learn basic techniques of bush regeneration. You will learn some weeds and how to treat them, so this course is ideal to tell your friends about but there are limited numbers so current volunteers excluded. FREE of charge with morning tea and lunch provided. RSVP essential to Erin Hall BMCC Bushcare 4780 5623 or ehall@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Saturday 12th November Connected Waters Symposium, Katoomba YHA

10am - 3 pm *see details on p 5*

Saturday 12th November Glenbrook Street Fair

BMCC Environmental Sustainability stall showcasing a range of community programs. Contact Michelle Henry 4780 5726 or mhenry@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Wednesday 16th November Bushcare Network Meeting 6pm Lawson library

meeting room. All welcome. Light dinner provided. RSVP by Friday 11th November to Lyndal Sullivan on lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au 4780 5528
Topics to be discussed include: funding for weed spread following fire, information for residents living near the bush, weeds sold at local markets, alternatives to weeds for gardens, ideas on recruiting new volunteers, developments impacting bushcare sites and future of Lawson Golf Course site.

Deadline for contributions for next Gecko Tuesday 2nd January 2011

DATES TO NOTE continued.....

Saturday 19th November 10am - 2pm Coal Seam Gas Mining in the Blue Mountains, Workshop, Warrimoo.

Environment Defenders Office is running a FREE workshop to explain how the exploration and extraction of coal seam gas is regulated in NSW, with a focus on landholder rights and advocacy strategies. The workshop will address current CSG exploration titles that apply to the Blue Mountains area. Warrimoo Hall, Eley Hawkins Drive. *A light lunch will be provided*. Bookings essential. For information and bookings contact the EDO on 9262 6989 or education@edo.org.au

Saturday 19th November Love Lawson Festival

BMCC Environment Sustainability stall showcasing community programs. Contact Michelle Henry 4780 5726

Saturday to Monday 26th-28th November Blue Gum Forest Great Grose Weed Walk (rescheduled)

An opportunity for those who love the Blue Gum Forest area to help control the weeds that have regenerated after the 2006 fires. Numbers are limited. Contact Vanessa Richardson 47873112 or vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au

Advance notice for 2012

Thursday 2nd February The Blue Mountains: Changing Landscapes Evolving Plants. Talk by Margaret Baker 7pm – 9 pm Santa Maria Centre Lawson.

The dedication in November 2000 of the Greater Blue Mountains as Australia's 14th World Heritage Property, focused international botanical interest on this region. Some of the criteria chosen as support for the nomination included the long and continuous evolution of living plant groups, the presence of primitive species alongside modern families, and the role of the region as a centre for the diversification of eucalypts. While the plants and their communities were evolving the landscape itself was undergoing constant change. Major geological events that moved our continent around the globe, and localised forces that sculpted the landscape so familiar to us today, paralleled important developmental steps in the botanical world. In this talk Margaret will trace the long and continuous thread of plant diversification over some 400 million years of changes in scenery, in the Greater Blue Mountains, highlighting those characteristics that make the region worthy of World Heritage listing.

Saturday 29th April Annual Bushcare Picnic Sun Valley

Native Flora Identification for Bushcare Groups

Would your bushcare or landcare group like help in identifying native flora in your work area?

The keen amateur botanists of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Plant Study Group are seeking some plant identification projects so we are offering our assistance to bushcare groups within the Blue Mountains.

The Group has a wide range of knowledge and experience of Blue Mountains plant communities and can also help with birds, insects and fauna scats. We can particularly help with the identification of uncommon or lesser known plants that require botanical keying and also with preparing species lists, tasks that can be time consuming for a bushcare group.

There are several ways of working with your group. We could come and prepare a species list of the site ourselves, or we could come and identify the native flora with the members of your bushcare group. Whether we came on one of your work days or at some other time suitable to both groups will be entirely up to your group. Sundays are a good day for us, however we can be flexible. Weeds are not our specialty – so we will leave that up to you! Inquiries ring Peter Ardill on 4784 1229



Plant Study Group members on an expedition
photo Robin Murray



Weeding Aids



Whether it is getting up and down to weed or being on your knees for a long time that you are finding difficult - we may just have the answer!

Bushcare currently has 4 types of kneelers/stools available for volunteers to try. We are on the lookout for anything else that would assist with weeding, so please let us know if you have found anything else.

For those people who find working at ground level just too difficult even with 'technical aids', there are often jobs that can be done standing, just ask if you can't see a suitable job. Scraping ivy and other vines threatening trees can be done standing.

However not all sites have a range of standing up jobs to do. If this is the case and you would like to get involved in sites which need lots of this sort of work, or form a roving specialist "Standing Bushcare Group" please let me know on 47 805528 or bushcare@bmcc.nsw.gov.au



*Try the new tool
Reach for a stool*



Recruiting and Keeping Members



In August over 30 local Bushcare and Landcare members attended a one day workshop on recruiting and keeping volunteers in their groups. The Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority organized this workshop in Lawson, as well as others in Picton and Hornsby. A total of 102 Landcarers and Bushcarers attended, as well as several council, NPWS and CMA staff.

Les Robinson is well known to many in the landcare/bushcare community for his field guide to Sydney basin plants. His work as a trainer, speaker and facilitator has established him as one of Australia's leading change consultants. The following outline of Les's approach has been taken from his notes.

“The basic idea is simple: increasing the membership of volunteer groups can't just be about better marketing. In fact marketing has generally been found to be ineffective. Volunteers come because an activity is important and interesting and they stay because it is enjoyable and satisfying, and communication along social networks is the key”

“Therefore a better approach is to reinvent what the group does so the activities are inherently more engaging, rewarding and buzz-worthy, and then refocus marketing on person to- person communication.

“One kind of reinvention is mashing unexpected passions, say ‘kayaking’ and ‘bushcare’ to create a new concept and a new experience. Passion mashing generates original ideas, that people want to talk about.”

Some bushcare ‘passion mashes’ suggested were:

- * Tea in the Trees (Bushcare + tea with native leaves)
- * Coffee Lovers Bushcare (campfire and real coffee tasting)
- * Le Bushcare (speaking only French)
- * Bushcare + “yarn bombing/guerrilla knitting”
- * Masterchef Fans Go Bush (camp dinner after)
- * Bushcare with antique tools + tool restoration
- * Bushcare + family heritage plantings
- * Bushcare Harvest (collecting and cooking edible weeds)
- * Bushcare Jazz (or other music etc)

“The secret is delight – something that happens when seemingly unrelated passions are mashed together. Delight is attractive, motivating and contagious. People love to be pleasantly surprised. And they love to pleasantly surprise others by talking about it. As a result, delightful mashes travel very well by word-of-mouth and it's easy to get these stories covered in the media.”

The Woodford Glen Landcare Group has already implemented its “Billy Tea and Poetry” idea. Every month the group enjoys a cup of billy tea with a poetry recital by Ivor Morton. That is something worth talking to the neighbours about!

Les explained how very few people change in a bubble. Most of us change through interactions with people we know and trust. He outlined the art of behaviour change, in the following steps, to apply to getting people along to Bushcare :

- 1) Don't pressure people - don't argue or talk about the environment; don't even ask them to join at first, instead ..
- 2) Inspire them with your personal story- engage their emotions
- 3) Lower their fears by giving;
 - a clear picture of what's involved
 - a chance to become familiar, without commitment
 - some evidence that members enjoy themselves
 - a chance to ask questions, one to one
 - a chance to make decisions about where, when, how, who with and whether.
- 4) THEN a clear, simple, invitation to come along



Lenny Dewhurst welcoming members to Beefarm Rd Group



Some further words of wisdom were:

“Bushcare has always been dominated by people who've retired...which is not surprising, because they're the people who have the time and perseverance to do bushcare work.

Young people, on the other hand want sociable, constantly-changing, high-energy activities. That's just not what most bushcare is about. In any case, we're not the right people to invite young people into bushcare, because we're not young people. There are youthful Landcare groups out there, but they've been created by young people for young people, to suit young people's energy and short-attention spans. Instead it makes sense for us to focus our invitations on people like ourselves.”



For more on Les's approach, see his web site: www.enablingchange.com.au



Connected Waters Symposium

Katoomba Youth Hostel, 207 Katoomba St

Saturday 12 November 10:00am - 3:00pm



A range of informative presenters from Streamwatch & Bushcare Groups, University Researchers and Industry Practitioners. The topics will cover Blue Mountains stream health and ecology, Swamps and threatened swamp species, Stormwater impacts and management including Creek Restoration soft-engineering work, stormwater quality analysis and Water Sensitive Urban Design at residential and local government scales.

Dr Ian Wright, Post Doctoral Research Fellow, University of Western Sydney, on findings from his analysis of BMCC's Macroinvertebrate sampling program; what are the major trends and influences on stream biodiversity in the Blue Mountains?

Peter Christmas, Popes Glen Bushcare Officer and Professional Bush Regenerator will be presenting on the Soft Engineering works that have been done at Popes Glen by Bushcare volunteers, BMCC and contractors.

Alan Lane, from Popes Glen Streamwatch/Bushcare talking about water quality of the stormwater in Blackheath's drains and if improvements in water quality have been seen after the soft engineering works in the head waters of Popes Glen creek.

Alexa McAuley, Equatica, the company responsible for the design and construction of the Stormwater re-use Raingarden at Echo Point, will give us a tour of the workings of the Raingarden as well as a presentation on stormwater management via Residential WSUD.

Ian Baird, PhD Candidate, University of Western Sydney, speaking on swamps and threatened swamp species such as the Giant Dragon Fly; Ian is a PhD researcher specialising in habitat and ecology of the Giant Dragon Fly.

Free of charge with morning tea and lunch provided and a short bus tour to the award winning Echo Point Raingarden. **RSVP** essential by 7 November: Christina Day, BMCC Aquatic Systems Officer 4780 5521 cday@bmcc.nsw.gov.au



Relocating A Possum From Your Roof

Two years ago a male brush tailed possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* moved into my roof at Mt Riverview. There were no trees in my backyard for a nesting box; many possums die when relocated because they cannot find a safe nesting place or new territory. They are very territorial - when one leaves another will claim its space. Consequently I put up with this "pest" for 6 months until I asked my neighbour if I could put a nesting box in her tree. She said "Yes, I wondered where he went after we cut down the Grey gum."

Once I had a suitable tree, I built a nesting box based on recommendations from WIRES and Birds Australia and hung it from the tree. It cost me \$23 in materials (unpainted). The other options were (1) pay a pest control person \$70 for a box plus \$50 to install or (2) purchase a box from Katoomba WIRES (4754-2946) for \$30 and install it myself. Note: The Katoomba and Mt Riverview "Men's Shed" will make boxes for community projects <http://www.mensshed.org/page13287/Shed-Locator.aspx>. Most nesting boxes are built to NPWS specifications e.g. size, thickness, exterior plywood, non toxic paint and glues. If you buy or build a box put some drainage holes in its base and an exterior cloth or vinyl in front of the entrance hole to prevent local birds from moving in.

Next I enticed the possum into the box because I do not have a license from NPWS to handle them. I had planned to move the possum's nest from the roof and place it in the habitat box. As my roof has no crawl space, I made the nesting material out of soft, sappy bark and gum leaves. Every night the possum left the roof cavity around 10 pm and returned at 7am so every evening for 2 weeks I placed a trail of banana in and around the box - you can also use apple. I found 2 cracked tiles on my roof which the possum kept lifting, plus 7 other gaps it could use to lift a tile so each night at 10:30 pm I filled one gap with chicken wire. Then I replaced the cracked tiles and scrunched chicken wire underneath them to possum proof the roof. The possum did not move into the box straight away - probably because I kept climbing the tree to look for him and leaving my scary scent all over the branches (doh!).

One year later I climbed the tree to check the condition of the box and refit the hanging wire so it did not cut into the tree. As I climbed the tree I let the possum get a good whiff of me so when I got to the box he had already escaped to higher branches. This made my "box maintenance tasks" safer and easier to perform because possums can be aggressive when they are afraid. 30 minutes later the possum returned to his box for another year of peace and tranquillity...

The Bushcare website now has the instructions from WIRES on how to make a possum box as well as information on living with possums. Pittwater Council also has produced an excellent booklet, now available on another website http://www.anteater.com.au/Portals/6/PDF/Living_with_Possums_booklet_2009.pdf

For information on nesting boxes for birds it is best to go to Birds Australia, <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/resources/info-sheets.html>.

Louise Mc Ardle

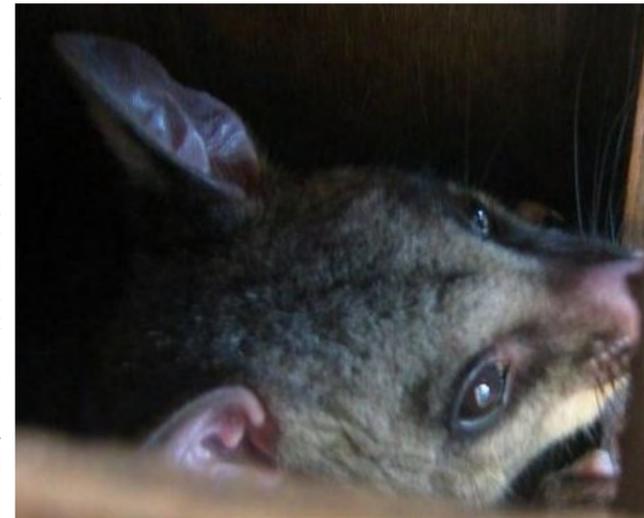
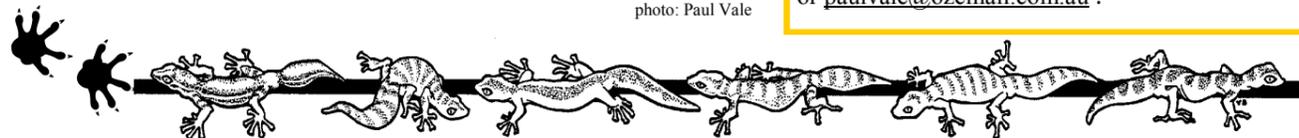


photo: Paul Vale

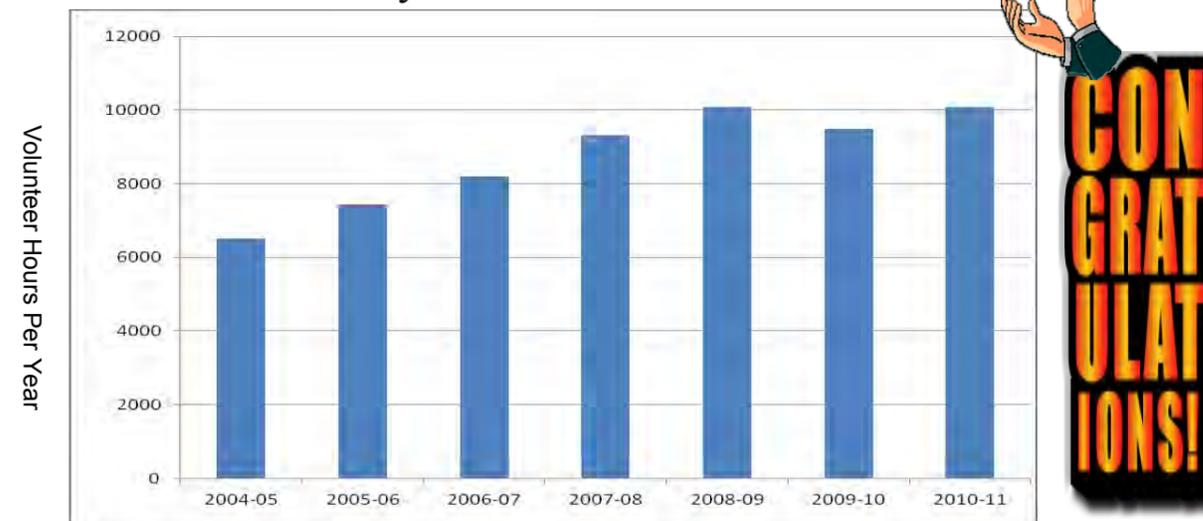
This dense and colourful plume of flowering broom plants are advancing on the Three Sisters! Two and a half years ago a hazard reduction burn was carried out in this area, adjacent to the Sublime Point Reserve in Leura.

Bushcare groups who have experienced the rapid spread of weeds following fire have raised the issue of the need for funding as an integral part of fire planning and remediation. Unfortunately there is a lack of scientific data to guide government authorities in determining the amount of funding required.

The Blue Mountains Bushcare Network is assisting members of the Centenary Reserve Bushcare Group to monitor the changes in weed spread following a planned fire this year. The Reserve is in a residential area of Blackheath. The monitoring project is interesting and relatively easy work. More hands are needed! Anyone interested in assisting with the project should contact Paul Vale on 4787 8080 or paulvale@ozemail.com.au.



A Busy Bushcare Year - 2009/2010



The Bushcare Annual report for the year 2010-2011 is now available and covers the range of activities that volunteers have been involved in. In the last Gecko, I incorrectly reported the volunteer hours contributed as being only 9815 - it was actually 10,082 hours! This is the highest ever level of participation through our program. Congratulations and a big thank you to everyone for a fantastic effort.

Rather than reporting hours worked, we would really like to report the excellent achievements made on each site. Unfortunately the means just don't exist to measure that in any simple way with a number. Even photos just don't tell the full story.

Landcare participation has increased steadily with 19% more time contributed this year to last. The remote bushcare program is also increasing in popularity (by 120%) with 85 people days over the year.

The report also covers the workshops we have held and the range of interesting issues that the Bushcare Network has made a contribution to.

Copies are available from the Bushcare office or from the website www.weedsbluemountains.org.au

What's your favourite place?

Residents of the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment are being asked to identify the significant places that are important and should be protected.

A website myfavouriteplace.net.au has been launched by the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (HNCMA) for residents to register their opinions by mid February 2012.

The HNCMA is hoping to get thousands of responses and has made the process simple to encourage people to add their favourite place to the list. By logging on to the website, it takes only a couple of minutes to mark the place on the map and to add a few words to explain why it is so important.

The information will be used to develop the next 10 year Catchment Action Plan and will influence how government investment in environmental management will be allocated across the region in the future.

Information provided is confidential and all individuals that participate in this process are in the draw to win their choice of National Park entry passes or Three Year Fishing Licenses.

For more information, contact Bill Dixon, Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA on bill.dixon@cma.nsw.gov.au or phone 4725 3042



You are invited to make a submission to be a part of the
Waste & Resources Reference Group (WARRG)

This is your opportunity to:

- Share your opinions on waste and recycling
- Provide input into how Council manages waste for the whole community



Your submission need only be a few lines detailing your connections to the community. Meetings are held 3 or 4 times a year.

An information package on the WARRG's purpose and how to make a submission is available from: www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au under 'Your Community/Waste Management/Reference Group' or phone 4780 5000 to have one posted to you

Submissions close Friday 4th November 2011



For more information contact: Dindy Boutagy 4780 5566 dboutagy@bmcc.nsw.gov.au



Your Newsletter: This newsletter is compiled by Lyndal Sullivan (assisted by Sharon Huxley and Jaki Lee-Lynn) from Blue Mountains City Council with contributions from volunteers (with special thanks to Shirley Brown) and Council's Environmental Management Staff. It is sent to Bushcare & Landcare volunteers and other interested people. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome, as are requests for alterations to the mailing list. Contact: Bushcare, Blue Mountains City Council, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780; phone 4780 5528 or email bushcare@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.



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