



Spotted Tailed Quoll

The Spotted Tailed Quoll is one of Australia's few carnivorous marsupials. It is related to the Tasmanian Devil and Antechinus species, which all belong to the family Dasyuridae. As with all marsupials, quolls have a pouch but it is quite small. After a couple of weeks the young are too big to fit in the pouch and are left in a den.

Localities in the Blue Mountains where this animal has been recorded include Blaxland, North Springwood, Faulconbridge, Linden, Lawson, Megalong Valley, Centennial Glen, Victoria Falls, Mount Wilson, Bell (Smith, J & P. 1990) with significant populations occurring in the past at Blackheath, Wentworth Falls and Woodford. Numbers in Blackheath and Wentworth Falls appear to have fallen in recent years following large fires in the adjacent National Park.

Quolls are rarely seen as they tend to hunt in the late evening or early morning. However if you have a chicken coop you are much more likely to see a quoll. Unfortunately Quolls are very efficient raiders of chicken coops and are excellent climbers. In the past, the Quoll's fancy for chicken led to large numbers being killed. Happily now with increased appreciation for this rare and beautiful animal, it occurs rarely. The Spotted-tailed Quoll is listed as Vulnerable under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and as Endangered under the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999.

If you see a quoll please contact either Marg Turton mturton@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or Michael Hensen mhensen@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 47 805 471. Sightings of these species are being mapped across the Blue Mountains.



Your Newsletter: This newsletter is compiled by Lyndal Sullivan and Erin Hall (assisted by Sharon Huxley) from Blue Mountains City Council with contributions from Bushcare volunteers and Council's Environmental Management Staff. It is sent to Bushcare volunteers and other interested people. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome, as are requests for alterations to the mailing list. We can be contacted at Blue Mountains City Council, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780., or (tel) 47 805528 or (email) bushcare@bmcc.nsw.gov.au



If undelivered please return to
Locked Bag 1005 Katoomba NSW 2780



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Issue 43

GECKO Autumn 2010

The Newsletter of the Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Program



Welcome to the Autumn edition of Gecko. Your invitation to the Bushcare and Landcare Volunteers Thank You Picnic is inside. We hope you can come, and enjoy the opportunity to meet volunteers from other groups. Please let us know if you are coming.

I hope you enjoy reading about what's happening around the groups and also about ideas on land management. Special thanks to Bruce Howlett and Bob Cantwell for your articles.



Lyndal Sullivan
Bushcare Team Leader

DATES TO NOTE

see inside for details

Saturday 1st May Annual Bushcare Picnic Sun Valley
12 noon—3.30pm. BBQ lunch, bush band, photographic exhibition, children's activities, interpretative walk and awards.

Friday 7th May Sustainable Gardening Workshop - Hot composting. \$10 donation. By Kat Szuminska at the Blue Mountains Organic Community Gardens, Harold Hodgson Reserve, Victoria St, Katoomba. Contact Supapon 0410 262 930 or just come along.

Wednesday 12th May Bushcare Network Meeting 6pm Lawson library meeting room All welcome. Light dinner provided. RSVP by Friday 7th and for details of discussion topics, contact Lyndal Sullivan 4780 5528 lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Saturday 15th May Reconnecting to Country Walk/Talk Megalong Valley

15-16 May 2010 Capertee Valley Tree Planting Weekend.

Saturday 29th May Remote Area Bushcare - Sassafras Gully Creek Springwood . Meet at 8.30 am . A day of weeding and short walk through the bush. Contact Lyndal Sullivan 4780 5528 lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Saturday 5th June Leura Bird Walk 9am-12pm with Lone Pine Bushcare Group and Jill Dark. Come along and learn more about the birds out and about in June! Bookings are essential to Erin Hall (ehall@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 4780 5623) Please bring walking shoes, water, a thermos and binoculars. All Welcome!

Tuesday 15th June Reconnecting to Country Walk/Talk The Gully, Katoomba.

Saturday 26th June Reconnecting to Country Walk/Talk The Gully, Katoomba.

Wednesday 7th July Reconnecting to Country Walk/Talk in lower mountains

Saturday 17th July Reconnecting to Country Walk/Talk Megalong Valley

Saturday 14th August Frogs Hollow National Tree Day
Blackheath 9:30-12 pm. Contact Erin Hall on ehall@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 4780 5623.



Deadline for contributions for next Gecko Thursday 1st July

Interpretive Walk by Jill Dark

If you would like to learn about the flora and fauna of the rare Cabbage Gum community at Sun Valley, join Jill Dark for a short walk at this year's Bushcare Picnic



Hyacinth orchid at Sun Valley photo: Sonya Stanvic

The walk will go from 1pm to 2pm, starting at the picnic area.

Restoring Natural Areas

The new book from Robin Buchanan is out and we have two copies available for loan at the Bushcare office. Please ask your Bushcare Officer to arrange a loan or contact Lyndal Sullivan 4780 5528 or lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.



The book covers key principals in managing bushland sites and natural areas. It is well written, clear and well illustrated. It expands on ideas and practices introduced in our Bushcare training materials given to new volunteers for their induction.



Highway Water Issues Working Group

Is your Bushcare site affected by highway works? This group, comprising local Government, state agencies and community members, has been formed so local people can be involved in the process of minimising adverse impacts on the waterways and catchment areas in the Blue Mountains affected by highway upgrades. The community members volunteered in response to the Blue Mountains City Council advertisements. The Group will act as a central point of communication between Blue Mountains City Council, key agencies and the Blue Mountains community with respect to protection of natural water systems. You are invited to contact Councillor McCallum, the group convenor regarding issues on hmccallum@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Alternatively you can contact the community members of the Group:

Paul Richardson PaulR@lmc.nsw.gov.au
Cesidio Parissi – 4759 2058, or email C.Parissi@uws.edu.au

Robert Cantwell – tel 4751 3215, email cantwell@eftel.net.au

Bob Cantwell

An apology.....
the photo of the *Pratia purpurascens* printed in the last (Summer) Gecko was taken by Darren Post, a friend of bushcare volunteer Craig Loydell. Our apology to Darren for the misunderstanding.



To all our valuable Bushcare and Landcare volunteers
You are invited to your
16th Annual Bushcare "Thank You" BBQ

At Sun Valley Reserve
Saturday 1 May at 12:00 noon
(Marquee provided in case of rain)

- **Photography Exhibition**
- **Music from the Gang-Gangs Bush Band**
- **Children's Activities**
- **Awards and Prizes**
- **Interpretive Walk**

vegetarian food available

what to bring:
Family and friends, Plate, mug, cutlery
also a chair and musical instrument - if you wish

RSVP by 23 April to Lyndal Sullivan
4780-5528 lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Community Bus available and Bookings are essential by 23 April. RSVP to Tracy Williams 4780-5623 twilliams@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Eucalyptus amplifolia photo courtesy of Chris Dewhurst and the sun valley Bushcare Group



MARGARET JOYCE BRISTER
(KNOWN AS JOYCE)
B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc.
2/5/16 - 24/2/2010

Joyce Brister recently and suddenly passed away after a long and adventurous life. Joyce was the driving force behind the formation and continuation of Centenary Reserve Bushcare Group, Blackheath. Joyce set ongoing goals for the Reserve to not only improve the health and vitality of the bushland, but also for visitors and local residents to visit and enjoy. These plans will continue well into the future.

Although small in stature, Joyce was always full of energy. She had a strong work ethic and a great enthusiasm for life and travelling and exploring the world, even in her later years. She kept up with modern technology, with world events and national and local politics. Joyce will be greatly missed by many in the Blue Mountains community.

Joyce had a long career in teaching, with a focus on science and geology. She married and was a mother to three children and a grandmother to four grandchildren.

Edited version of full obituary compiled by Keith and Joyce Brister, of which a copy is available on request or from page 44 of "The Gazette" of 10 March 2010.

After retiring in 1976, while living at Turrumurra and Normanhurst, she learnt as much as possible about native plants and their propagation. Joyce took an active interest in the Society For Growing Australian Plants, setting up an educational programme in the Kuringai Wildflower Garden. She also became interested in Bushcare, which was then in its infancy.

After her husband's death in 1991, Joyce moved to Blackheath. Having spent much time in Blackheath at her holiday home, Joyce continued with the activities she had already established in the area. These included an active role in the Rhododendron Society since the early 1970's and her Bushcare work continued at Centenary Reserve, where she worked for over 20 years. Joyce also continued with plant propagation work at the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's Nursery at Blackheath from its early years.



Joyce Brister receiving the 20 yr award for Centenary Reserve at the 2009 Bushcare Picnic. Photograph courtesy of Paul Vale .

For several years Joyce taught at the University of the Third Age (U3A) on environmental issues.

Reconnecting to Country – Conversations with Bushcare

Due to great interest, a winter Reconnect to Country program has been prepared. A special feature of this program will be an opportunity to hear Gully Traditional Owners talk about their life in The Gully, Katoomba. Aboriginal people from our local community will share their knowledge and culture in a series of walks and talks across the Mountains.

Morning Walks & Talks: Please bring a hat, drinking water, rain jacket, sunscreen and wear sturdy shoes. Children are welcome with the supervision of an accompanying adult. **Bookings are essential, numbers are limited.** For more information and to book your place on a walk or at an evening talk, please contact Elly Chatfield at BMCC (Thursdays & Fridays) Tel: 02 4780 5726 or echatfield@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Saturday am	15 May	Megalong Valley	Sharyn Halls & David King
Tuesday am	15 June	The Gully	Gully Elders
Saturday am	26 June	The Gully	Gully Elders
Wednesday am	7 July	Lower Mountains	Wayne Brennan & Graham King
Saturday am	17 July	Megalong Valley	Sharyn Halls & David King



Introducing New Bushcare Workers



Peter Christmas

Hello Bushcarers. I am very pleased to introduce myself to the extended family of our network. I come to Blue Mountains Bushcare with the experience of many years in the bush regeneration industry. I was lucky enough to grow up in the Blue Mountains. Some of my earliest and best memories are exploring the seemingly endless bushland. I feel privileged now, that I can share what I have learned in a way which will help the beautiful environment I grew up in. I extend my thanks for the warm welcome I have received into Blue Mountains Bushcare from volunteers and colleagues. I look forward to all that our future holds.



Monica Nugent

Hello fellow Bushcarers! Many of you may know me from my Bushcare involvement over the past few years. I first discovered Bushcare when I arrived in the mountains 10 years ago as yet another Sydney escapee looking for a tree change and the right space to complete writing a thesis about the connections between environmental and Aboriginal world-views. The positive experiences I enjoyed at Gordon Falls/ Lone Pine Bushcare, Brahma Kumaris Landcare, Valley of the Waters and as a keen Great Grose Weed Walker led me to the Conservation and Land Management course at Wentworth Falls TAFE, and on to contract bush regeneration. I've also been working for NPWS as acting Volunteers Co-ordinator in the Blue Mountains Region. I'm very excited to be on the Bushcare Team and looking forward to working with you all to help our precious Bushcare sites regenerate from the impacts of human behaviour.



Planting Weekend in Capertee

The next Capertee Valley tree planting weekend will be held on 15-16 May. Come along and be part of this fantastic project to replace habitat for the endangered Regent Honeyeater on previously cleared land. Some volunteers are also needed on Friday 14th for laying out the plants.

Since 1994, over 75,000 trees and shrubs have been planted in the valley as part of this project, with volunteers planting two weekends each year. This time we will be planting 3000 trees and shrubs to extend and enrich an area of woodland at the foot of Mt Gundangaroo near Glen Davis. There has been excellent rainfall in the Valley over the summer which has provided a welcome boost for the seedlings planted last August and which should make for ideal conditions for planting in May.

For registration or more information please contact Pixie at Birds Australia on email: basna@birdsaustralia.com.au or phone 02 9647 1033. After you register, you will receive detailed directions to the site and accommodation will be allocated in various cottages throughout the valley or if you prefer, camping is available. The Saturday night dinner at Glen Alice is always a great social event.



The Truth about Coreopsis



outside his box at the old level crossing. One or two coreopsis struggled for a foothold in the hot sandy soil. Then came a wet season, and some adventurous seeds sailed down a gutter and started life down the embankment. And so it has gone on till now; people in cars rounding the bend see a blaze of gold, and stopping to gather armfuls make no appreciable difference. There at the old crossing and near the station are sheets of gold, loveliest of all on a grey day against the dim blue of the distant mountains.

The article implies that coreopsis was limited to the Woodford area in 1929. However, to account for the present spread of the weed, the various accounts of the seed being spread from the trains should not be discounted.

You can access these articles on the National Library of Australia's TROVE website using the links appended to the reference below.

I am often asked how long the seed remains viable. I have been removing Coreopsis in bushland around Woodford for seven years. At my original sites I am now only removing a handful each season, usually spending more time looking for them than I do weeding them. So I would say that seed lasts at least seven or eight years. If you have information that indicates a longer period of time please let me know.

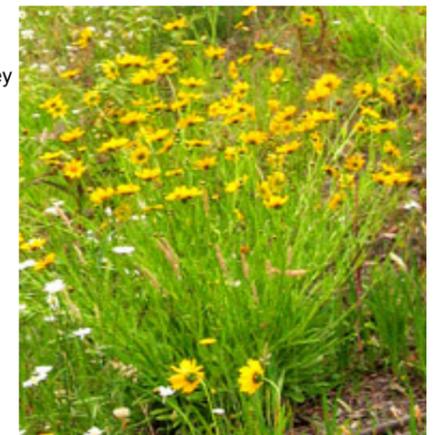
If anyone has other stories, or articles, about Coreopsis that they would be willing to share – please contact me by e-mail at: bruce_howlett@yahoo.com.au

Bruce Howlett
Wilson Glen Bushcare

References:

1. "Gum trees in blossom. Remarkable season. Calliopsis on railway lines." The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 26 November 1938. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17541142>
2. "Calliopsis blooming". The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 5 December 1939. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17630494>
3. "A golden harvest". The Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 30 November 1945. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17961422>
4. "Seeds were thrown from trains". The Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 1 December 1950. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18189445>
5. "Mountain gold". The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 14 December 1929. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16610207>

Also: "Pictures on the mountains". The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 1 February 1934. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17044400>



The 'Coreopsis season' is almost finished, although I have noticed it flowering somewhere all year round, but I thought other Gecko readers may be interested in a number of articles from the Sydney Morning Herald that I recently came across.

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), also known as "Calliopsis", is as you know, a weed that grows prolifically beside the roads and railways of the Blue Mountains. The most commonly accepted story about its spread is credited to an unknown person who used to scatter the seeds from the back of a steam train, apparently believing that the Mountains could benefit from a splash of colour. One person told me that they could remember a woman selling the seeds on Central Station, for passengers to scatter as they travelled up the Blue Mountains line.

The Herald articles 'wax lyrical' about the "Darling flowers!" and the ribbon of colour through the mountains. The story which claims that the seeds were spread from the back of a train was first mentioned by "Waratah", the Herald's gardening writer in 1938 [1]. "Waratah" repeated the same assertion with slight variations in 1939 [2], 1945 [3] and 1950 [4].

An earlier article by "H.L.O.", dated 1929 [5], offers a different explanation, and seems to fix a more definite location, and date, for the origin of the present infestation. The following is from that article:

But what should put Woodford into the papers just at present is its coreopsis. One would think that the cloud-burst had brought down captive and buried in the ground solid sunlight, which is now finding its way out again, and transforming the Blue Mountains into gold. But what really happened is this: Years ago a youthful gatekeeper, bored perhaps by lack of traffic, started a tiny garden



BACK FROM THE BRINK AND BEYOND

There has been considerable debate over Peter Andrews' ideas on landscape management (from *Australian Story* fame, ABC TV). His ideas about 'weeds' have been controversial, amongst ecologists and bush regenerators.

However, two of his basic premises are shared enthusiastically by bush regeneration practitioners:

- Plants are the key to ecosystem function; loss of vegetation is the prime cause of landscape degradation, and weeds are better than bare soil.
- Groundwater and wetlands or swamps are the key to healthy natural systems in most landscapes.

Andrews' Objectives

Andrews has developed his theories based on his own observations of hydrological and landscape processes and the results of his own experiments in the Upper Hunter region of NSW. His concern is to restore 'productivity' to the landscape and he believes that a productive landscape is more important than the landscape that has evolved in isolation prior to white settlement

Andrews (2006, p. 146-7) believes that the Australian landscape is so altered by foreign plants and animals that there is no point in trying to preserve its biodiversity. As bush regenerators we take the view that Australia contains a number of unique landscapes each of which have value in themselves beyond our immediate human needs. Here in the Blue Mountains where we are fortunate to have extensive natural areas it is possible to preserve it if we exercise

proper practices.

Andrews sees the lack of fertility as a problem (Andrews 2008, p. 220), whereas ecologists recognize the non-utilitarian value of landscapes regardless of their fertility, and this is an important distinction. The research primarily demonstrates higher biodiversity is associated with low fertility (LeBrocq and Buckney (2003))

Creeks

In the Blue Mountains, we share the same principles in our efforts to stop creeks becoming eroded channels. Slowing and spreading water, and re-instating vegetation is critical.

Whilst Andrews uses rocks and willows, we would use a range of materials including rocks, logs, jute logs and plants depending on the situation. We would be looking to re-establish local native plants particularly rushes and sedges, but certainly not willows.

Weeds

Andrews advocates the use of 'weeds' in many situations. Sometimes he uses the term to mean plants with tap roots (in contrast with grasses), and other times to mean native shrubs and grasses which are traditionally seen as of no value to farmers. There are therefore more points of agreement, than it first appears.

We would all agree on the view that weeds can play a useful role in the environment and are far better than bare soil.

Use of Willows in Streams

Andrews is a strong advocate for the use

of willows in streams (2006, p 139). He argues that natives could not have done the job of holding creek-beds by citing just **one** native tree (swamp oak, *Casuarina glauca*), in just **one** location.

It does not appear that he has assessed the work done by Bill Hicks in developing the long stem tubestock method. This method was developed to assist native plants adapt to eroding creek-bank situations, in order to be effective in holding banks, and avoid the use of willows.

Jeff Cottrell visited a property in the Widdon Valley as a member of the National Willows Taskforce, where Peter Andrews demonstrated his ideas. Whilst Andrews showed 3 sites which he considered to be proof of why willows could be used in creekline restoration, Task force members saw evidence to support a case against the use of willows.

We agree with Andrews' objections to some of the methods used to remove willows. Unfortunately he hasn't considered the availability of a bushland restoration approach with gradual removal/treatment being paced to match the growth of replacement native plants.

Our observation of the behaviour of willows in the Blue Mountains do not support Andrews' claim that 'natives will usually take over of their own accord and in their own time' (ibid p.145).

Continued on Page 5.....



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Conclusion

The fundamental principles that Andrews has espoused from his close observation of the Upper Hunter area provide the foundation for a thoughtful consideration of options to rehabilitate this particular landscape.

However, his recommended practices need to be adapted to each particular landscape in a case specific manner. There is no 'one size fits all' solution. The adoption of many of his practices in the farming areas of the upper Hunter will surely make a substantial contribution to the rehabilitation and better management of that landscape. We can all be inspired by his years of careful observation and experimentation.



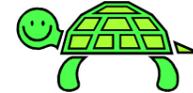
Willow removal on the Cudgegong River at Mudgee Sept09

References

- Andrews, P. 2006. *Back from the Brink*. ABC Books,
 Andrews, P. 2008. *Beyond the Brink*. ABC Books, Sydney
 LeBrocq A. F. & Buckney R.T. (2003) Species richness–environment relationships within coastal sclerophyll and mesophyll vegetation in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, New South Wales, Australia. *Aust. J. Ecol.* **28**, 404–412

Linda Thomas & Lyndal Sullivan (with contributions from Jeff Cottrell, Ian Baird, Peter Christmas and Peter Smith)

A more detailed version of this article is available on the website or from the Bushcare office.



HAPPY TURTLE

Pam Gardiner is a staunch member of the Valley Heights Bushcare Group. She has also been a devoted member of WIRES (Wildlife Information and Rescue Service) for 20 years. Occasionally she lets me know that she'll be running late for Bushcare because she will be feeding a flying fox/ringtail possum/blue-tongue lizard, or some other hapless creature that has fallen foul of a dog or car, or just become sick. On Sunday 7th March I walked down to some rock pools with Pam to watch her release an Eastern Long Necked Turtle that had been rescued from a nearby road, with some damage to its shell. Pam cared for it until the damage was healed, then released it into a natural area. I'm not sure that I can read turtle expressions, but I thought this little turtle looked happy as it swam towards a ferny rock overhang.

WIRES is a volunteer organization concerned with the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned native wildlife. These animals are then released back into bushland. Part of our aim in Bushcare is to improve habitat for our local fauna. Our work in restoring and maintaining biodiversity on our sites gives animals a greater chance of sustaining healthy and safe populations.

If you have an interest in caring for wildlife, or in some way helping WIRES to do so, or if you find an injured animal, ring WIRES on 47542946. Blue Mountains WIRES volunteers provide a free 24-hour rescue service 7 days a week.. Regular training courses are run for new volunteers..

Jill Rattray



Pam releasing our little friend

