



ponderings

winter 2006 issue 14

Seasonal newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee



inside

page 2
Welcome

page 3
Ponderings is evolving

page 4
Misunderstood mistletoe

A summers morning

page 5
Creating creek communities

National Tree Day

Winter nature news

page 6
Mail list update

Waterwatch

page 7
Clean up Australia Day

page 8
Seasonal sightings

Upcoming events

educate * rehabilitate * community * revegetate * interpret * policy

connecting our creek communities

The MPCCC recently held its first CityLink Creek Connections activity. It was aimed at breaking down barriers to environmental education and introducing the joys of the

Moonee Ponds Creek to residents along the Western Link, who might not otherwise get involved with their local environment. It was launched by CityLink CEO Brendan Bourke and MPCCC President, Kelvin Thomson.



"The part of the day I liked best was making the creeky creatures. I had a great day. Thank you Bronwyn."



Brendan Bourke, CityLink CEO; "Cheesy", the CityLink mascot; Bronwyn Riddell, MPCCC Education & Interpretation Officer and Jane Calvert, CityLink Media & Community Relations Officer at the official launch of the new project.



To read more about the fantastic day everyone had at the CityLink Creek Connections official launch, turn to page 5.

The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee and "Ponderings" gratefully acknowledge the financial support of these councils.





Welcome to the newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee (MPCCC). We are a not-for-profit, environmentally-based community organisation that acts as a champion for the Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries. Members of the MPCCC include the Cities of Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Moreland and Hume; the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek; and representatives from the community.

The Moonee Ponds Creek flows 68km from Yuroke in Melbourne's north-western suburbs past Melbourne Airport through the municipalities of Hume, Moreland, Moonee Valley and Melbourne, along the Tullamarine Freeway, through the Docklands and into the Yarra River to Port Phillip Bay. Greenvale, Attwood, Yuroke, Westbreen and Five Mile Creeks are the five tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek.

Our aim is to encourage an understanding and stewardship of the Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries; to highlight its values through education, interpretation and hands-on participation; and to revegetate and rehabilitate the Creek and its tributaries.

The MPCCC co-ordinates various programs. "Creating Creek Communities" invites and encourages the community to become involved in revegetation and other fun activities along the banks of the Creek. "CityLink Creek Connections" aims to engage and inform groups that don't traditionally get involved in environmental education. The Bushland Team maintain, restore and rehabilitate various revegetation and remnant sites along the Moonee Ponds Creek within the City of Moreland. The MPCCC also participate in Clean Up Australia Day and community festivals.

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee
PO Box 2170, Greenvale 3059
Phone: 9333 2406
Fax: 9333 2413
info@mpccc.org
www.mpccc.org



Acting Co-ordinator: Tony Faithfull
Education & Interpretation Officer: Bronwyn Riddell
"Ponderings" Editor & Bushland Team: Debbie Farmer
Community Liaison & Support Officer & Bushland Team: Stephanie Spathis

The Purple Swamphen is our logo. The 'Swampies' love to call the dense, reedy creek edges and wetlands their home. Their long red legs and feet carry them across golf-courses and ovals, whilst constantly flicking their tail. With their scarlet red bills and deep-blue feathers, this waterhen is quite a sight.

This newsletter is proudly printed on M.Real Evolve 100% Recycled paper. Made from 100% recovered paper (post consumer waste), de-inked and bleached (chlorine-free process).
Go to www.evolve-papers.com.

Kindly printed at the electorate office of Kelvin Thomson MP, Member for Wills.

For all mailing list, article contribution or editorial enquires, contact Debbie Farmer on 9333 2406 or deb@mpccc.org



welcome

This issue of Ponderings marks a significant point in the evolution of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee. We are still looking for a Co-ordinator, and the mixture of environmental awareness and understanding, and business management skills is proving hard to find. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please encourage them to check out the position description on our website at www.mpccc.org.

The MPCCC has been successful in applying for a Community Water Fund grant for \$39,799 for planting with Friends groups along the Moonee Ponds Creek. This grant will supplement the four member Councils' contributions to our planting program, and significantly increase the area which can be planted. A total of 11,000 plants will be planted at a range of sites. A focus of the project is to improve the quality of water in the Creek by filtering the water coming into it. To find out more about the project, call myself or Stephanie Spathis, *Community Liaison & Support Officer* on 9333 2406.

As I write, the shared pathway from Westmeadows through Woodlands Historic Park is under construction, funded by the Tullamarine Landfill Community Consultative Committee (TLCCC). This extension of the path allows people to travel along the Creek all the way from Docklands to the heart of Woodlands. The extension is the first part of implementation of the Westmeadows and Upper Moonee Ponds Creek Interpretation Strategy which was developed by the MPCCC for the TLCCC. Other actions include the design and installation of interpretive signage along the Creek in Westmeadows, and the renaming of the Wright Street Retarding Basin to something which better reflects its environmental values. Bronwyn Riddell, *Education & Interpretation Officer*, is co-ordinating the implementation of the strategy on a part-time basis, funded also by the TLCCC.

-Tony Faithfull, *Acting Co-ordinator*

Members Newsletters



City of Melbourne

The Green Leaflet, quarterly, available via post or email. Mailing list: City of Melbourne on 9658 9658. Environmental and sustainability queries: Gabrielle Stannus, Community Sustainability Officer at gabsta@melbourne.vic.gov.au or 9658 8557.



Moonee Valley City Council

Environmentally Speaking, quarterly, available via post or email. Mailing list: Damien Connell at dconnell@mvcc.vic.gov.au or 9243 9142. Environmental and sustainability queries: as above.



Moreland City Council

The Moreland City Council website offers numerous tips and information sources on environmental and sustainability issues. Contact 9240 1167 or info@moreland.vic.gov.au



Hume City Council

Eco-Tracks Environment Newsletter, quarterly, available via post or email. Mailing list: Anna Kruk, Environment Administration Officer at annak@hume.vic.gov.au or 9205 2473. Environmental and sustainability queries: Carol Jadraque, Community Environment Officer at carolj@hume.vic.gov.au or 9205 2466.

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

Established in 1997, the Friends contribute to the management, protection, development and use of the Moonee Ponds Creek. Contact the secretary, Andrew Gemmel at gemmel@a1.com.au or 9387 6133.



Ponderings Is Evolving..

Your latest edition of Ponderings is now proudly printed on 100% recycled paper.

Evolve is a 100% recycled paper product that is manufactured in the United Kingdom. The manufacturing process diverts up to 180,000 tonnes of waste paper from landfill every year. The energy efficient manufacturing process, which uses biodegradable detergents, pumps the pulp directly to the manufacturing plant, thus eliminating transportation. Waste water is recycled back into the manufacturing process.

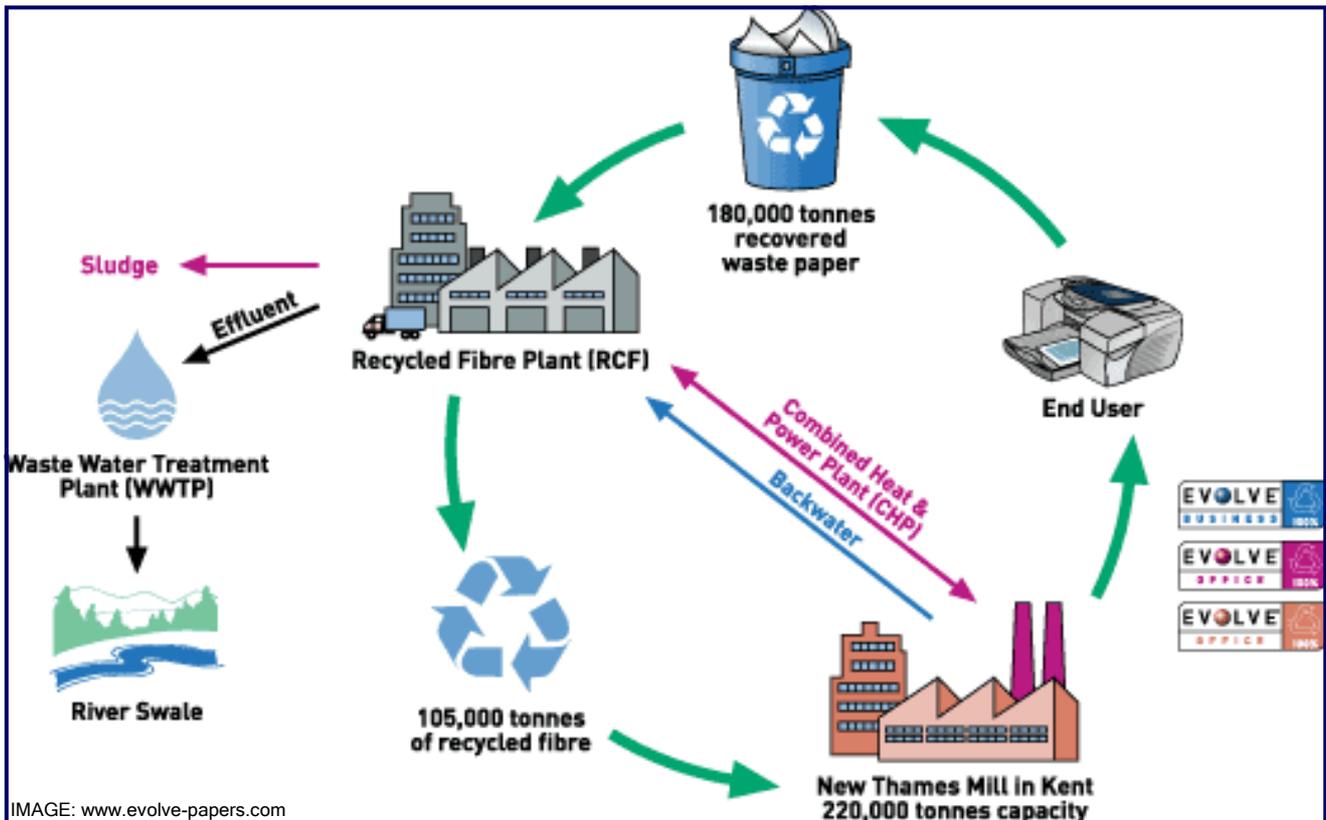


IMAGE: www.evolve-papers.com

This diagram explains the environmentally-friendly paper-making process.

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Evolve use post-consumer waste in their recovered paper mix. Post-consumer waste is the paper recovered from offices. They are finished products that have served their useful lives and would otherwise end up in landfill. They do not use any pre-consumer waste which includes: converting scrap (essentially scrap from all processes occurring once the paper has left the mill, e.g. printing, cutting and box making); newsstand returns and printers' overruns; obsolete inventory from mills, printers and other sources; and also any damaged stock.

Chlorine Free Bleaching Process

It is necessary to remove any colours before the recycling process can begin. A reductive bleach (dithionite) is used to strip the colour from the fibres. An oxidative bleach (hydrogen peroxide) is used to brighten the fibres. Both process are totally chlorine free. The majority of the peroxide (around 90%) is used up in the bleaching reaction. Any un-reacted peroxide either oxidises other components in the pulp, or breaks down to form water and oxygen.

If you would like to learn more about Evolve Recycled Products, go to www.evolve-papers.com. The M-Real company who produce these products have a commendable environmental policy.

You can source Evolve Recycled Products through Pedigree Paper at 67 Gower St, Preston. Contact them on 8470 2299 or pedigree@kwdoggett.com.au.

Turn to page 6 to discover how you can save even more paper by receiving Ponderings via email.

-Debbie Farmer



misunderstood mistletoe

Australian Mistletoe species often get bad press, but in this story, Judy Allen explains that they are not always a “killer of trees”.

The seed of these plants germinates on a tree branch, and puts roots into the host tree. The mistletoe then takes minerals and water from the tree, even though it can photosynthesise to produce its own food. Because it takes, without giving back anything, but is capable of producing its own food, it is called a quasi-parasitic plant.

Most mistletoes can be found on Eucalypt trees. They have thickened olive-green leaves that hang down and can be hard to spot amongst gum leaves because of their similar shape and colour. Their dark brown branches wrap around the host tree branches. However, sometimes mistletoe can be seen in deciduous trees such as Desert Ash and Flowering Plum trees.



Mistletoe bird

When all the other leaves have dropped in autumn, there is a patch of leaves left hanging. These are mistletoe leaves. They may even be flowering.

Mistletoe plants are an important part of our biodiversity, with their own role to play. For example, Mistletoe Butterflies only lay their eggs on mistletoe plants, so without

these plants there would be no Mistletoe Butterflies with their striking red, black and yellow markings.

The preferred food of Mistletoe Birds is the seeds of the mistletoe.

These birds look like Robin Red-breasts. Some of the seeds stick to the Mistletoe Bird's bottom, as they are very, very sticky. To remove the seeds the bird has to wipe its bottom on a branch. This is how the seeds are spread around.

Mistletoe comes into flower when the host plant isn't flowering, therefore many birds are attracted to the host tree for the nectar. While they are at the host tree the birds will also eat insects. This increases the health of the tree. Also consider that as more birds visit a tree, more fertiliser is being deposited at the base of the host tree! Another health advantage.

At Westbreen Creek, a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek in Pascoe Vale, mistletoe seeds often fall to the ground. Pick one up and squish it between your fingers. A green sticky glue emerges. 'Snot too goeey'.

-Judy Allen



a summers morning

The beauty of the remnant patch at Brens Drive, Parkville within Royal Park is expressed in verse by Sandy Simpson.



If you have a poem or story about a special spot along the Creek, why not send it in for others to enjoy too.

A realm of rolling clouds float by on a summer's morning at dawn. A glimmer of light appears in the sky and Weeping Grass arches its awns. *Stipa* and Silky Blue Grass sway gracefully in the cool caress of the breeze. Leaves are rustling in the River Red Gum trees. A purple pea flower of Vanilla Glycine appears as the sun's rays sparkle like diamonds on dew. Rainbow Lorikeets are ablaze in an iridescent hue and *Enchylaena* and *Einadia's* ruby fruit are lit like luminous lanterns.



connecting our creek communities

Brendan Bourke, CityLink CEO; Kelvin Thomson MP, Member for Wills; Bronwyn Riddell, MPCCC Education & Interpretation Officer and Jane Calvert, CityLink Media & Community Relations Officer, joined 30 students from Debney Meadows Primary School to learn about some of the natural wonders the Creek environment has to offer.

Students made "CityLink Creek Creatures" out of seed pods and natural materials, before learning how to weave Cumbungi from an Indigenous representative, Fay Ball. Fay began the day with an acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the land.

The appreciative audience was treated to a

performance of "Rumble in the Jungle" by the grade six students. The Melbourne Water ACE trailer demonstrated to the students the importance of where our water travels to once it leaves our homes.

The students, the majority of which live within the nearby Flemington Housing Estates, really enjoyed the day, as revealed in the twenty two thank-you letters that Bronwyn received from the grateful Debney Meadows Primary School students.

The CityLink Creek Connections program will run at least 12 activities throughout 2006 and 2007, targeting community members who face barriers such as language, old age or disabilities.



Kelvin Thomson watches how Cumbungi weaving is done by the professionals!



National Tree Day is Australia's biggest community planting event. The event is organised by Planet Ark in association with Toyota and the AMP Foundation.

National Tree Day 2005 helped to repair, revegetate and restore Australia's landscape, with people of all walks of life coming together to help green up Australia. More than 320,000 volunteers helped to plant one million native trees and shrubs at 3,800 sites across Australia! The total number of trees planted since 1996 is almost 9 million. Wow!

Look Out For MPCCC At National Tree Day 2006!

The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee staff will once again be part of the annual National Tree Day activities held at the Wright St Retarding Basin Reserve in Westmeadows. The event is run in conjunction with the MPCCC, Hume City Council and Melbourne Water.

Directions: Go to the end of Wright St in Westmeadows and follow the signs towards the site. Melways: 5 G6.

More information required? Visit: the fabulous Planet Ark site at www.planetark.com.au or ring 1300 885 000 and speak to the lovely Tinker Duffy. Or contact Stephanie Spathis at MPCCC on 9333 2406 or steph@mpccc.org.

-Debbie Farmer

Winter Nature news

Hawk Moth caterpillars can be found on plant foliage. There are 65 species of Hawk Moth in Aust, with 4 common species found in our suburban gardens. In Qld, this moth is a significant pollinator for Paw-paw crops.

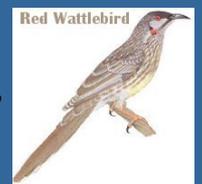


Doubleheaded Hawk Moth



Bowl-shaped nests sitting on shallow platforms of trampled-down reeds and rushes are the careful handiwork of Purple Swamphens. They are nesting at Jacana Wetlands now.

Our nectar-feeding friends, the Red Wattlebirds, are building their untidy nests. It looks like a saucer of sticks, leaves and grass lined with bark-strips, fur and hair. Look for them in the fork of trees.



The month of July brings the sunny yellow flowers of Golden, Hedge and Silver Wattles, and Prickly Moses. Look out for them along the creek. Can you see any spiders amongst the dense foliage? The flowers provide a safe haven and feeding places for many species of spiders.

-Debbie Farmer



The MPCCC postal list for "Ponderings" and other correspondence is currently undergoing some changes.

We ask you, our readers, to assist us in implementing these changes.



postal list update

MPCCC Friends Group Updates

Are you a member of a Friends Group along the Moonee Ponds Creek or its tributaries? Do you sometimes forget when your favourite Friends Group planting day is? Would you like to be reminded when your favourite planting days are on? A new email list is now available to Friends Group members where a reminder email is circulated two weeks before the planting date. The email will inform you of the date, time and location of the planting, and specific details about the days activities and outcomes. If you are interested in receiving a reminder via email, contact Stephanie Spathis, *Community Liaison & Support Officer*, on 9333 2406 or steph@mpccc.org.

Receive "Ponderings" Via Email

The mailing list for "Ponderings" has expanded remarkably quickly over the past few years. We now mail out over 1,000 copies every season. The postal costs for the mail-out have become significant, not to mention the reams of paper that now go into the production of our quarterly newsletter. To assist with the reduction of the amount of this precious resource, "Ponderings" is now available via email. You will need the Acrobat Reader program to access this. We strongly encourage all of our regular readers who wish to receive "Ponderings" via email to contact the MPCCC office on 9333 2406 or email deb@mpccc.org with your details. You will be placed onto our new email list and your details removed from our postal list. Plus, an added bonus, your issue of "Ponderings" will be in full colour. Beautiful!

Receive "Ponderings" Via Australia Post

We are also in the process of updating our postal list. If you would prefer not to receive "Ponderings" anymore, please contact the MPCCC office on 9333 2406 or email deb@mpccc.org with your details, and we can remove your name from our postal list. If your details are incorrect or you would like to join our postal list, please contact us via the details above.

-Debbie Farmer

waterwatch

seasonal changes



The Moonee Ponds Creek Water Monitoring Group (MPCWWMG) water-monitoring kit had its maiden voyage this April! We used our new equipment in the field for the first time. As a comparison, we also ran the same tests through the old equipment. Thankfully, both kits gave the same values, so this reassures us that our new equipment is functioning correctly.

Our Group has welcomed the return of one beastie, the Common Galaxias (a native fish), sampled at Jacana Site 2. We have been awaiting the return of the Galaxias to this site since we spotted them in Autumn last year. It is possible that the fish did return earlier, as we did expect to see them in Summer, but we did not sample between Dec 2005 to Mar 2006. The adults start to make their way back downstream again to spawn in the estuarine environment around this time of the year (see Spring 2005).

The MPCWWMG water-monitoring schedule has been changed from monthly to seasonally, due to time constraints. This sampling year has been rather interrupted so far, except for April (Autumn). The current seasonal schedule is to hold a water-monitoring day on the second Sunday of the middle month of each season.

In other news, our sampling site numbers have decreased from four to three. The Jacana Site 1 has now been removed, due to an increase in disturbance over the past few years from the construction of the new northern wetlands and litter traps. The creek at this point is now higher than it used to be and appears to be staying that way. The original purpose of this site was to determine the effects of the wetlands on water quality at Jacana Site 1, by comparing the results against Jacana Site 2. However, the two sites are now so different in their habitat values, that it was not surprising to sample different invertebrates at each site. These sampling results were due to the different habitat values, rather than the impact of the wetlands. We have observed no significant changes in water quality between the two sites. After a new wetland system is constructed, it is generally a couple of years before any impacts of the new wetland is observed on a riverine system. We may be too early in our sampling.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in this years water monitoring, please contact me on helensuter@pacific.net.au or MPCCC on 9333 2406.

-Helen Suter



clean up australia day sunday 5th march



The things you find! John Pascoe Fawkner Clean Up.

Westmeadows Clean Up with the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek

Fourteen volunteers assisted the Friends, with 5 members representing the Apex Club. A total of 11 bags of rubbish were collected overall. There are always some funny things collected. This time we had an old netball hoop, a toilet cistern and 10-15m of plastic pipe. Thanks to Julie Law, site organiser.



Chris, Carolyn, Stephanie and the umpires box roof! John Pascoe Fawkner Clean Up.

Westbreen Creek Clean Up with the Friends of Westbreen Creek

A great day was had by the Friends, with a total of 9 volunteers willing to assist in the Clean Up. The group banded together to collect a fantastic 25 bags of rubbish, mostly plastic bags and glass. Thanks to Jude Larkin, site organiser.

Broadmeadows Valley Park Yuroke Creekline Clean Up

A fantastic turnout of 18 people helped clean up the Yuroke Creek. The majority of the volunteers were from the Turkish Senior Citizens Club. The rubbish bag collection tally came in at 20, what a great effort! Thanks to Karen Toirkens, site organiser.



Russel, Brett and the Melbourne Water contractors pick up some of the bags of collected rubbish.

Clean Up On The Creek with Nth Melbourne Sustainability Group

An umbrella, 2 tyres, a shopping trolley, 3 mattresses, television motor and a rubbish bin! The total of 23 bags of rubbish and 8 bags of recyclables included some unusual items! 38 local residents attended the clean up efforts. Bronwyn Pike, MLA for Melbourne, also helped collect rubbish. Local resident, Richard Marbury, conducted informal sessions on macro-invertebrates, which the kids really enjoyed! A duck followed many of the helpers as they moved along the Creek. Perhaps he was a former pet, who had escaped or been dumped. Thanks to Gabrielle Stannus, site organiser.

John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve Clean Up

Twelve local residents, some were a family who happened to be passing by, helped Stephanie clean up the Reserve in Oak Park. The volunteers collected 23 bags of rubbish. They unearthed many different kinds of balls: tennis balls, table-tennis balls and soccer balls! And the corrugated tin off an umpires box! Polystyrene, plastic drink bottles and McDonalds drink containers where the most commonly found items at this site. Steph's volunteers commented on how satisfying it was to help clean up their local area. Thanks to Stephanie Spathis, site organiser.

Clean Up The Wetlands with the Friends of Jacana Wetlands

The Friends of Jacana Wetlands had a great turnout with 9 people attending. The perennial shopping trolley made an appearance, as well as 6 car tyres. The most common items were plastic bags, bottles and glass bottles, with a total of 13 bags of rubbish. Thanks to Andrew Cremona, site organiser.



The days collection at Jacana Wetlands.



seasonal sightings

We welcome all of your interesting wildlife observations, be they big or small! If you have any wildlife sightings, don't forget to forward them onto Debbie Farmer, "Ponderings" Editor, at deb@mpccc.org or 9333 2406.

Mel spotted a King Parrot in Gladstone Park in February. Perhaps he was a refugee from the Kinglake bushfires. Thanks Mel.

Stephanie has been a busy wildlife watcher this month. Here are her sightings. A White-necked Heron flew over Attwood Creek at the Friends of Attwood Creek planting site. Four Common Garden Skinks in Pascoe Vale in great habitat –



rocks, grasses, etc. Two Whistling Kites chasing a Wedge-tailed Eagle in flight in

Woodlands Historic Park. She saw how huge they are in comparison to the rather large Whistlers. And an Australian Hobby flying low over Bulla Rd in Essendon.

Christine Matthews has a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets visit her West Brunswick garden and bird feeder. Six New Holland Honeyeaters are fond of her Chinese Lantern shrub. Musk Lorikeets also visit, though they destroy the ripening plums! A Willie Wagtail is a regular visitor. Thanks Christine.

The Jacky Lizards are back. Joe, from Woodlands Historic Park, found a baby Jacky Lizard in the shed in March.

Mal has sent us in his sightings for Jacana Wetlands and Yuroke Crk. A pair of Black Swans (also saw them last year), they

managed to raise 5 little ones. The last time he saw them in late Jan, the littlies were nearly adult size. He saw a Pelican in the wetlands for the first time in late Jan; he/she made a couple of appearances but haven't seen it since. Used to see up to 6 or more Growling Grass Frogs in the Yuroke Crk near the Johnstone St Bridge, seem to have disappeared over the last few weeks though. Thanks Mal.



Andrew Cremona, Friends of Jacana Wetlands, has kept an eye out for all things feathered. After spending some time on id (the juveniles are quite different in appearance to the adults), he has recorded a juvenile Nankeen Night Heron at the southern wetlands in April. This indicates that the two adults he has observed over a long period of time may be breeding. A Flame Robin has been spotted at the Southern Wetlands also. Thanks Andrew.

-Debbie Farmer

...other upcoming events

"Plants, Mulching and Compost" Sustainable Gardening Australia
Sunday 18 June
10am-12noon

Diana Cotter of SGA will be delivering this workshop on Plants, Mulching and Compost.

@ Kensington Neighbourhood House
89 McCracken St
Kensington

Contact:
Carolyn Webster
9376 6366

Conservation Volunteers Salt Creek Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary
Mon 10 & Mon 24 July

Salt Creek runs adjacent to the Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary and is the focus of rehabilitation through the reduction of invasive plants. This regular planting project aims to increase the effectiveness of Salt Creek to filter pollutants before they reach the Yarra River.

@ Melb Wildlife Sanct.
LaTrobe University
Wildlife Reserve
Bundoora

Contact:
Conservation Volunteers
9686 5554

www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

Green Gardeners Training Program
Tues 8 & Tues 15 Aug
6.30-9.30pm

This program teaches horticulturalists and professional gardeners waterwise and environmentally sustainable gardening practices.

This free TAFE accredited course enables participants to become an accredited Green Gardener.

@ Hume Global Learning Centre
1093 Pascoe Vale Rd
Broadmeadows

Contact:
Elaine Shallue
9850 8165

www.greengardeners.com.au

Permaculture Melbourne Heritage Fruits Group Grafting Days
Sunday 13 August
1-4pm

Apples, plums and pears! Have a new tree grafted, learn grafting techniques or buy a scion for home grafting.

The Heritage Fruits Group has been finding, documenting and conserving old varieties of fruit. They are a special interest group of Permaculture Melbourne.

@ Collingwood Childrens Farm
St. Helliers St
Abbotsford

Contact:
Peter Allen: 9751 2491

www.heritagefruits.org

Acacia 2006—"Knowing and Growing Australian Wattles" conference
Sat 26—Mon 28 Aug
9am-5pm

Acacia, with almost 1000 species, is our largest, most diverse and widespread group of plants.

The aim of this conference is to bring together people interested in different aspects of Acacia, including horticulture, conservation, weed research, taxonomy, or any other topic related to Acacia. Also enjoy a tour of gardens around Melb.

@ Karralyka Centre and Royal Botanic Gardens

Contact:
Sue Gymer: 9872 3583

www.rbg.vic.gov.au/acacia2006