



Community Network News

Mid Loddon-CMN & West Marong, Upper Spring Creek, Ravenswood Valley,
Nuggetty, Baringhup, Eddington, Kangderaar/Murphy Creeks Landcare
Groups & other community friends



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MEETINGS & EVENTS- 2013

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th June at the Lockwood South Primary School This meeting will be a general business meeting to catch up on current projects such as the Curlew and monitoring projects, Shelbourne NCR restoration delays, Happy Jack Reserve management and future events.

Please Note: The combined USC Landcare Group & Mid Loddon CMN June meeting will be postponed until the current Agency turmoil is resolved.

West Marong Landcare Group meeting will be held at 8.00pm Tuesday 18th June (3rd Tuesday, by-monthly) at the Woodstock Hall.

Update on current project results and important planning for the continuation of the Sustainable Soils Project.

Presentation: By Telstra regarding the NBN roll out with information regarding current and future communications in the West Marong area. – Definitely happening at this meeting!

West Marong Landcare Group – *Farming for Sustainable Soils project - Green Manuring Workshop*

A light dinner will be provided at 6.00pm on Wednesday 26th June at Laanecoorie Hall Supper Room.

Presentation- ‘Green manure and building soil organic matter’ - Declan McDonald, DEPI- Geelong Christian Bannan will also be attending.

Baringhup Landcare Group meets second Thursday of every second month at the Baringhup Hall Supper Room.

The next meeting is at 6.00pm commencing with a light Dinner on Tuesday 13th June.

Speaker: Andrew Whitlock - who will be assisting members to formalise Farming for Sustainable Soils project’s paddock trial sites, organising members site maps and planning trials and the delivery of trial result reports.

Baringhup Landcare Group– *Farming for Sustainable Soils Project ‘Green manuring/ building soil organic matter’* workshop at 12.30am for lunch, on Wednesday 26th June at the Baringhup Hall Supper Room. Lunch will be followed by a presentation and group discussion. Weather permitting there will also be a local paddock walk - **Presentation** by Declan McDonald, DEPI - Geelong Christian Bannan will also be attending.

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group- meets last Wednesday of every second month. Next meeting 31st July

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest as needed.

Our Curlews live to at least 30 years but are outlived by the bird below -

A wild bird believed to be the oldest in the world is still making babies and flying 80,000 kilometres a year in her seventh decade of life. Wisdom, a Laysan albatross who nests in the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, about 2,800 kilometres northwest of Hawaii, hatched her latest newborn early Sunday morning, the U.S. Geological Survey reported in a news release. Wisdom is at least 62 years old, but could be older than that. She was first banded by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1956 while incubating an egg, so she must have been old enough to breed by then.

Albatrosses typically breed starting at eight or nine years of age. But if Wisdom was an early breeder and started at age five — the earliest possible breeding age for her species — she would now be 62.

Landcare & Community News of the Month.

Lockwood South Primary School News:

The Mad Hatters Tea Party was a wonderful event with many grandparents and special friends attending. There was a large array of fantastic hats and beautiful teapots. Many thanks to the Lockwood South Uniting Church Ladies Guild, who supplied a bag of amazing hats that they had created for the children.

The children were very excited to share their special morning tea and served tea (of course) and other goodies. The house of cards challenge was frustrating for some, to others it was a way to show off their skills.

A total of \$215 was raised for the Cancer Council. Congratulations to children for their fabulous community effort.

Landcare has continued to provide funds for environmental training at the Lockwood South School.. 'Healthy soils to grow healthy food for healthy people' is the theme for this term.

Rosemary Davies has assisted the children set up a new worm farm and re-establish composting of garden and school food waste. The science class has continued the work and is promoting the importance of creating healthy soils for a healthy worm population.

Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve

Restoration Project: This project came to a halt a few months ago due to a long delay in acquiring the necessary permit to begin thinning of the forest. We seemed to have finally worked through the problems that were raised by the local Agency staff and hopefully the project will begin in the next few weeks, depending on weather conditions. As soon as funds can be raised the forest will be fenced along the Newbridge road. Large signs will also be installed warning people. against illegal firewood gathering.

Bush Stone-curlew protected areas.

Signs have been installed on two of the most recently established protected sites.

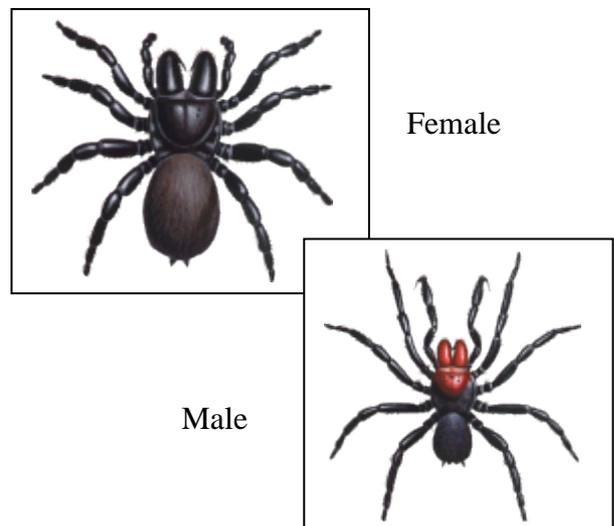


A well known landcare volunteer kindly assisted in positioning and attaching the signs.

Another story about 'small things'

Mouse Spider – although not everyone would agree that they are 'small things'

The recent local sighting of a Mouse Spider proves that they are still surviving in our area.



Mouse spiders are a type of trapdoor spider and are widespread across mainland Australia. They can be found in both coastal and drier habitats but do not occur in tropical rainforests.

Female mouse spiders grow to three centimetres long and are black or dark brown in colour. They are very stocky with short, thick legs.

Males are smaller, growing to approximately two centimetres long. They have longer legs and long palps (an elongated, often segmented appendage usually found near the mouth in invertebrates used for sensation, locomotion, and feeding) which look like an extra pair of legs.

Both sexes have enormous fangs and fang-bases. A diagnostic structural feature is the very steep slope on the back of the head area.

Male red headed mouse spiders, *Missulena occatoria*, have a red head and jaws with a blue abdomen, while male eastern mouse spiders, *M. bradleyi*, and northern mouse spiders, *M. pruinosa*, have a whitish patch on the top of the abdomen.

Mouse spiders live in burrows in the soil, sealed

with a hinged lid. The burrow provides a refuge from predators, parasites, low humidity and high temperatures.

They feed by lunging at passing prey from the burrow entrance. A female mouse spider is long-lived and will spend her entire life in the burrow. Females are rarely seen except when accidentally dug up.

Male mouse spiders leave their burrows at maturity (a couple of years old) to search out a mate, **usually after rain**. Mating takes place in the female's burrow, after which the male dies. A disturbed mouse spider will rear up defensively in a similar way to the funnel-web. Although few serious bites have been recorded, there is some indication that mouse spider venom is very toxic, so the spiders should be treated with caution. Mouse spider numbers are seldom high enough to warrant any concerted control measures. If serious symptoms occur after a bite, funnel-web spider antivenin may be effective.

The venom of the Eastern mouse spider (*M. bradleyi*) was found to have toxins similar to the [robustoxin](#) found in funnel-web venom; and funnel-web antivenom has been found to be effective in treating severe mouse spider bites. Unlike the funnel-web, however, the mouse spider is far less aggressive towards humans, and may often give "dry" bites.

Mouse spiders prey mainly on insects, though they may consume other small animals as opportunity presents. The primary predators of the mouse spider include wasps, centipedes & scorpions. Their role in controlling other scary garden encounters should perhaps be valued.

[Spider Identification Chart - Venomous or Dangerous?](#)

www.spiders.com.au/

It's finally officially Winter with Spring on the way and it's not all scary out there.

The early flowering wattle- have been flowering profusely this season even before the rain, and will soon be followed by Golden Wattles, to brighten our local roadsides and revegetation area.

Before you start complaining -

Do wattles really cause hayfever?

Wattles are often blamed for triggering hayfever, but it seems they may have been unfairly maligned. A Canberra study found that pollen density ranges from three grains per cubic metre of air in July up to 17 in October. By contrast, pollen from grass can reach densities of up to 200 grains per cubic metre. Exotic trees such as elm,

ash and oak also produce much larger amounts of pollen than wattle.

Few people tested directly with pollen grains have a significant reaction. Pollen grains are much larger than grass grains and tend to fall straight to the ground below the tree, rather than blow around in the wind and get up people's noses. The strong scent of some wattles, however, can create an illusion of an allergic reaction in some people sensitive to perfumes.

Information for gardeners & agricultural producers:

Green Manuring/Cover Crops:

Green manuring is producing a cover crop that is incorporated into the soil before maturity. This green material feeds the soil food web. Cover crops fulfil a wide range of uses:

- reduce fertilizer costs
- reduce the need for herbicides and other pesticides
- enhance soil health
- prevent erosion
- conserve soil moisture
- increase soil organic matter
- leguminous crops can add 140kg N/ha within 10 days of plough down
- providing carbohydrates for soil bacteria increases the bacterial population and
- increases the soil nitrogen reserves

Other Benefits of Cover Crops or Green Manures?

Cover crops and green manures are basically the same term. When these plants are alive they are cover crops. When the plants are decaying they are green manures. Green manuring has all the soil benefits of classic composting, plus other benefits:

1. Green manures can fertilize large acres of land (or the vegie patch) cheaper and easier than hauling in tons of finished compost.
2. The roots of certain legume green manures can supply tons of free atmospheric nitrogen per acre to the topsoil after the cover crop plants are tilled, mowed down, or smothered. Rhizobacteria live

inside the legume roots creating a unique relationship that actually converts atmospheric nitrogen into organic nitrogen for the legume to use. This extra nitrogen fixation built up by the rhizobacteria cannot be beneficial to other plants near by, or future crops in the soil next season, until that legume is dead and recycled into the soil by the green manuring process. Compost can't fix nitrogen in the soil.

3. All green manures supply extra organic matter to feed and breed beneficial soil organisms for soil fertility and soil health.

4. The roots of certain cover crops can go down several feet below the topsoil and into the subsoil to break up hardpan and pull essential nutrients up to the topsoil level at green manuring time. After 24 months of continuous growth, alfalfa roots can extend over 20 feet down, that can turn into extra organic matter down into the subsoil! No regular tractor or mechanical tiller can plough that deep!

5. Some cover crops can weed out other plants. Buckwheat, oats, and sunflowers are good types of these allelopathic plants.

6. Some cover crops can attract beneficial insects and repel bad insects like marigolds and crimson clover.

7. Some special cover crops can help control diseases in the soil or on the foliage of nearby plants. They can also control bad nematodes or other soil problems. Some of these cover crops can do these functions as living plants or as decaying green manures.

8. Some legume cover crops, like white clover, can be planted during the warm season to be used as a living mulch.

9. Green manures work best when mixed with legumes and non-legumes. That way you get the nitrogen fixing benefit from the legumes, but also you maximize the fast growth of the expansive root development and tall foliage height that is characteristic of grasses and grains.

10. Did you know that about 95% of all the bulk and biomass of all non-legume cover crops is a direct production from only water and photosynthesis! The other 5% is straight from the soil. Legume cover crops go farther and pull free nitrogen from the air also. That means that all cover crops will add more humus to the soil than what was there before just from energy from the sun and the atmosphere. Since humus is mostly carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen from the air, that means that cover crops greatly benefit the biosphere and the soil microherd, just from above!

Book of the Month:

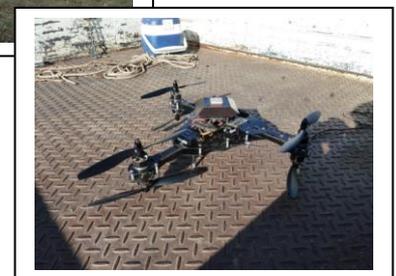
Green Manuring – Principals and Practice
by *Adrian J Pieters, Ph.D.*

First printed in 1927 – reproduced 2006

(Full text available on the web)

The following quote is taken from the book's preface and the words do seem rather familiar:
"Agriculture has been, and as far as can now be foreseen, always will be, the basic industry of the human race. Men must be fed even though they have to do without luxuries. Some recent writers have viewed the race between population increase and food supplies with alarm; others have voiced the thoughtless optimism of ignorance. Neither extreme view is warranted. Mankind will adjust itself to new conditions as they arise, but in order to do so with the least suffering, it is necessary that every avenue of approach to the problem of maintaining or increasing the productive power of the soil be investigated." (1927)

More about local Eucalyptus death;



David Smith, Forest Pathologist from the DEPI Biosecurity Department, visited the Bradford Hills property of James & Rebecca Hamilton recently to gather tree foliage and soil samples from across their property. Hopefully the results from the testing will provide a clearer idea of why so many trees are dying.

David's work van was a treasure trove of high-tech equipment, including a small helicopter with a video camera.

Words of Wisdom:

Jaw Bones: Who talk a lot and do nothing.

Wish Bones: Who wish someone will do something.

Knuckle Bones: Who knock whatever any one tries to do.

Back Bones : Who get under the load, do the works and alter the course of History