



## **Community Network News**

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



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**Contact information : c/- Secretary, PO Box 2197 Bendigo DC. Victoria**

### **MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2014**

#### **Mid Loddon Landcare Network Committee**

Meeting to be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm. Monday 31st March 2014.

**Baringhup Landcare Group** – Meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April at the Baringhup Hall Supper Room. Agenda - AGM (Note new meeting date – 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month)

**Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group & Mid Loddon CMN** meeting to be held at 7.30pm Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March. Landcare, Agency & Local Govt. partnership project reporting and discussion plus a presentation – Controlling Indian Myna pest birds

**NOTE SPECIAL MEETING** for the West Marong and the Baringhup Landcare Farmers Groups to be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March at the Woodstock Hall.

**Agenda: Presentation and project support from**

- Michael Winzar from Natrakelp Liquid Seaweed Products

Matt Nhill from Driscoll seeds is also keen to work with members to set up trials

Agronomist Christian Bannan will be in attendance to provide advice on trial methods.

To satisfy our current funding support providers (small as it is), We will need to produce some additional detailed credible plans for crop/pasture nutrient inputs and /or machinery trials that can be monitored, documented and shared with group members and wider community via the ground trothed Spring Satellite biomass images workshops at Baringhup & Laanecoorie, with the addition of the season's final production results.

#### **Wise Words:**

**Setting goals is fundamental to all successful management activities on a farm.**

#### **Advance Notice - Upper Spring Creek**

**Landcare Group meeting to be held at 7.30pm Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April** at the Lockwood South School. – Agenda: **Workshop with Alison Pouliot** - The Secret Lives of Eucalypts - The Importance of Beneficial Fungi

Eucalypts are a defining part of Australian landscapes. The quintessential gum tree is deeply embedded in Australian culture, identity and life. Although highly resilient and adapted to the extremes of Australia's climate, large numbers of eucalypts in rural areas are in decline.

While some fungi can be problematic for eucalypts under certain conditions, many fungi support eucalypts through beneficial symbioses and protection from soil pathogens. Other fungi provide vital nutrients for eucalypts via the decomposition of organic matter. This workshop will examine the role of fungi in soils and their interdependencies with eucalypts. It will address the importance of encouraging relationships between beneficial fungi and eucalypts in local forests, farms and remnant vegetation. Participants are encouraged to bring along fungus specimens to the workshop.

**Baringhup Landcare Group Advance notice** for a special event to be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April – All welcome.

**Speaker- Alison Pouliot - 'Visualising the Environment'**

Bring along your cameras for this illustrated and interactive workshop

"How can photography help us document landscape changes on farms, in local forests and other environments? In particular, how can we visually communicate the decline of old growth trees and degradation of local woodlands to bring about positive change?"

Images provide not just snapshots and memories, but are also a powerful tool for recording landscape change over time. They also provide an ideal way to communicate with community groups, funding bodies, politicians and others who may want to visualise environmental issues or see the results of Landcare actions.

Understanding the basics of camera operation and photographic techniques can increase the quality and interpretative value of images. Knowing what to photograph and how best to represent environmental subjects determines the impact and influence of

**West Marong Landcare Group Advance notice** of meeting to be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April at the Woodstock Hall.

**Agenda: Workshop with Alison Pouliot - Saviours of the Soil - Understanding the Role of Fungi in Terrestrial Ecosystems**

From creating soil structure to improving water retention, the value of fungi in soils is greater than we often acknowledge. Fungi also promote decomposition and recycling processes making nutrients available to other organisms. Looking after soil fungi is therefore vital in agro-ecosystems and forest ecosystems to ensure their health and resilience. Understanding the role of fungi in soils and ways to support and maximise their function benefits not just the soils, but all the associated organisms including humans. The session will include both an illustrated seminar and an interactive hands-on session where participants will examine various fungal specimens and resources. Participants are encouraged to bring along fungus specimens to the workshop.

**Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group Advance notice of field workshop with Alison Pouliot** to be held at 1.00pm Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May at the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve. Meet at the cnr. of Maryborough & Newbridge Roads. Picnic afternoon tea will be supplied.

**Workshop - Discovering the Fungi of the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve**

While many people associate fungi with damp ferny gullies, fungi are also a vital component of the dryer Box-Ironbark forests of north-central Victoria. Fungi perform vital functions in these ecosystems including those inhabited by Bush stone-curlews. What fungal species grow in these environments and how are they important to the survival of Bush stone-curlews? Which mammals and other animals rely directly on fungi as a food source?

Little is known about the occurrence and distribution of fungi in Box-Ironbark Forests. Fallen wood and on-ground organic matter are an essential part of these ecosystems in providing habitat and nutrients for all biodiversity. How do fungi contribute to the overall health and resilience of these forests?

images. This introduction to environmental photography will provide an overview of the most important considerations to assist you to more effectively visualise and document environmental issues and change”

This field-based workshop builds on participants' knowledge from previous workshops in discovering, surveying and recording the fungi of the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve. Participants will learn techniques for identifying, surveying and documenting fungi and the vital interactions they have with other forests species. Data collected during the workshop will make a vital contribution to national databases including Fungimap and the Living Atlas of Australia.

**Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group-** meets last Wednesday of every second month.

**Nuggetty Landcare Group** – meets at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month

**Eddington Landcare Group-** meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally as notified (note Maryborough Road signed entrance gate).

**Interesting articles and promotions:**

Don't forget to checkout and contribute to the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group 'blog' [uslandcaregroup.org.au](http://uslandcaregroup.org.au)

Google the 'SWIFFT' website for threatened bird information, including our Curlews.

Google 'FUNGIMAP' for the latest contributions from Alison Pouliot.

**Landcare Environmental Volunteer positions: Rewarding and local Environmental Volunteer work is available:**

Would like to learn more about your local environment and be involved in interesting projects? Then the local Save Our Bush Stone-curlews project could provide you with an interesting distraction from the daily grind? Volunteer native vegetation, fungi, bird and small mammal monitors are needed. Technical books, phone apps and in-field training including organising pitfall traps, mapping and use of gps will be provided. Work as individuals or in partnership. No pressure, gather monitoring data at your own speed. Apply to Judy at 5435 3412

*'The maintenance of biodiversity is critical for productive and profitable farms'.*

### **Wildlife Watching at Dusk:**

Members of the Upper Spring Creek Landcare members enjoyed a social get-together at the property of Frank & Sylvia Robinson and then just on dusk were invited to see a pair of Bettongs emerge from their logs for their evening meal. These wonderful small wallaby-like animals have been absent from our local countryside for many years.



The group then moved on to the Sugar glider enclosure to view a family of Sugar Gliders. These very cute and very small mammals with long brushy tails are rarely seen as they move from tree to tree under the cover of darkness. Members inspected the new Curlew enclosure and all were disappointed that we are still waiting to access our first pair of birds. Many thanks to our hosts for a very enjoyable evening.

### **Clean up Australia Day at Shelbourne.**

Many thanks to the twelve members from the Upper Spring Creek & West Marong Landcare Groups joined forces to clean up the edges of the Newbridge Road from the Maryborough Road turn off to Nuttalls Lane. The Groups were supported by the City of Greater Bendigo Council with the supply of iridescent jackets and a large bin, plus staff members were on hand to monitor traffic and erect warning signs, and also kept members supplied with empty bags.



Frank & Jenny Steele arrived at the event well prepared with their wildlife rescue safety vests and their trusty wheelbarrow.

It would be nice to think that now the roadsides have been cleaned, the wider community would respect the volunteer work completed last Sunday and refrain from throwing all their litter from their vehicles.

### **Fencing protection for the Shelbourne Reserve restoration project.**

A wildlife friendly fence has been installed along the Newbridge Road and all non-official tracks have now been closed by the fence with large and very visible signs attached.



### **Monitoring Wildlife Nest Boxes**

Graeme Barber is a long term member of the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group and has volunteered to monitor our nest boxes installed in the Bush Stone-curlew protected sites



Graeme checking a nest box with the Group's Pole Camera.

### **Check out our new blog posting from Alison *More about Leaf Litter.***

Leaf litter is vital to the restoration of soils following fire.

Litter, is in fact an unimaginably complex world, teeming with a phenomenal diversity of creatures. These are the unseen, largely unknown, often microscopic cryptic creatures that inhabit the realm of darkness; the cracks and crevices, tunnels and caverns, among tree roots, curled up in bark,

hidden from view. The full story is now available at - [uslandcare.org.au](http://uslandcare.org.au)

## **Why integrate pastures and crops?**

### **More N for subsequent crops**

Legumes in a pasture phase fix nitrogen; the higher soil fertility can increase grain quality and yield in subsequent crops. Forage legumes leave much more nitrogen in the soil for subsequent crops than do grain legumes where most of the fixed nitrogen is removed as protein in the grain. Soil-borne diseases can be halted with a crop/pasture rotation pattern. The rotation also helps to cut down in the application of herbicides and pesticides, which will cut down on the disease resistance problem that could occur by planting the same crop over and over in the same soil. This will also help to keep the environment clean.

### **Soil Aeration**

The transformation of soil fertility into a crop is only possible by means of oxidation processes. The various soil organisms -- bacteria and fungi in particular -- as well as the active roots need a constant supply of oxygen. As soon as this was recognized, aeration became an important factor in the study of the soil.

Rain is a saturated solution of oxygen and is very effective in supplying this gas to the soil where percolation is possible.

In an irrigation regime the water is low in dissolved oxygen and the soils can easily lose their porosity as the minute particles run together and form an impermeable surface crust. Only when the humus content is kept high can adequate permeability be maintained.

It follows from the constant demands of the soil for fresh air that any regime or extreme weather which interferes, even partially or temporarily, with aeration must be of supreme importance in agriculture. A number of factors occur which bring about every gradation between a restricted oxygen supply and complete asphyxiation. The former result in infertility, the latter in the death of the soil.

### **Texture and other soil properties and plant growth**

Many of the important soil properties are related to texture. Clayey soils show high water holding capacity, high plasticity, and stickiness and swelling whereas sandy soils are conspicuous by the absence of these properties. The most important way in which soil texture affects plant

growth is water and with it the nutrient supply. The available water holding capacity of soil is related to soil texture. Timely **aeration** can improve soil texture and its water holding capacity.

### **Soil structure and plant growth**

Soil structure influences plant growth rather indirectly. The pores are the controlling factors governing water, air and temperature in soil, which in turn, govern plant growth. One of the best e.g. of the effect of soil structure on plant growth is the emergence of seedlings in the seedbed. The seedlings are very sensitive to soil physical condition so that there should not be any hindrance to the emergence of tender seedlings and there should be optimum soil water and soil aeration. The soil in the seedbed should have a crumb structure so that the roots of the seedling can penetrate it easily.

A hard compact layer impedes root growth.

### **Soil water**

Water is essential for plant growth. Soil is capable of being a storehouse of water and becoming the main source of water for land plants. Soil water plays a significant role in several natural processes- evaporation, infiltration and drainage of water, diffusion of gases, conduction of heat, and movement of salts and nutrients are all dependent upon the amount of water present in soil. Plants meet their water requirement from water stored in soil. Soil moisture can be improved with aeration.

### **Soil Aeration and plant growth**

Oxygen is required by microbe and plants for respiration. Oxygen taken up and carbon dioxide evolved are stoichiometric. Under anaerobic conditions, gaseous carbon compounds other than carbon dioxide are evolved. Root elongation is particularly sensitive to aeration. Oxygen deficiency disturbs metabolic processes in plants, resulting in the accumulation of toxic substances in plants and low uptake of nutrients.

### **Soil compaction**

Soil compaction is the process of increasing dry bulk density of soil and reducing pore space by expulsion of air through applied pressure on a soil body. Soil compaction is a limiting factor in seed germination, water transmission and aeration. Timely aeration and the incorporation of biologicals can prevent soil compaction.