



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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MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2015

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group

Next Meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th May at 8.00pm at the Lockwood Sth. School.

West Marong Landcare Group next meeting to be held at 8.00pm on Tuesday 16st June 2015 at the Woodstock Hall. **Agenda:** TBA

Baringhup Landcare Group - next meeting to be held at 7.30pm at the Baringhup Hall Supper room on **Monday 1st June.**

Nuggetty Land Protection Group next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 6th May at the winery meeting room.

Grant Writing & Group re-energising Workshop at NCCMA Huntly at 9.30am Tuesday 12th May RSVP by 8th May 54487124

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally - Next meeting TBA

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group.

Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 24th June 2015

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Management Committee - to be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm on **Monday 29th June 2015. Please note change of date.**

Agenda: Annual meeting which will include an activity and financial report, confirmation of group's representatives and the election of a new Chair for the next two years.

Bendigo Tafe 1080 course dates.

Tuesday 25th August & Tuesday 17th November 9am to 1pm at the Charleston Road campus. Cost \$260 all inclusive. Enrol at 1300 554 248.

Words of Wisdom:

Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.. *George Brown*

Baringhup Landcare Group celebrated their 21st birthday with fine food, historical speeches, great socialising and a birthday cake.



Fungi Foray in the Shelbourne NCR



Bendigo Tafe Conservation and Land Management Diploma students and local Landcare members spent an interesting afternoon with Alison Pouliot in the forest hunting for fungi, which due to the lack of rain proved to be rather futile but there were signs that this will change for future forays. The logs on the ground are definitely assisting with moisture retention and all the hollows were found to be filled with damp soil and rotting leaf litter. The thinned catchments are already showing signs of providing an increase in food and shelter for our

local wildlife. The forest and all of our local landscape, would benefit from a decent rainfall event. A different story in the burnt section where the ground is baked hard and cracking and already showing signs of future erosion.

The Future of Scattered Trees in Agricultural Landscapes

— Extract Gibbons, Lindenmayer, Fischer, Manning, Weinberg, Seddon, Ryan & Barrett

Mature trees scattered throughout agricultural landscapes are critical habitat for some biota and provide a range of ecosystem services. These trees are declining in intensively managed agricultural landscapes globally.



The abundance of mature trees could decline to zero within 90–180 years under existing agricultural practices in the landscapes. By implication the ecological values (e.g., wildlife habitat) and ecosystem services (e.g., soil conservation) provided by scattered mature trees in these landscapes could also decline under existing management. On its own this information is not new. There is a sufficient body of literature that establishes the values of scattered trees in agricultural landscapes; that scattered trees are generally declining in agricultural landscapes; and that there are negative consequences of this for biological conservation and agricultural productivity. Recruiting new trees is not a sufficient strategy on its own with which to perpetuate scattered mature trees because the diversity of age classes in these stand has become so reduced that the period it takes for new recruits to reach maturity is now typically longer.

Vanishing large trees could also leave our cities bereft of wildlife

Source: CEED

Urban development usually results in the ‘clean-up of existing trees for construction access, neatness or reducing the risk of damage to surrounding property from falling branches or bushfire. Now researchers are warning that, as the world’s cities lose their large old trees, native wildlife that depend on those trees for food and shelter will also be in jeopardy.

Ionic urban wildlife, such as parrots and kookaburras, as well as bats, possums, insects and even certain plants may follow the decline of the big trees. The loss of old trees, along with other critical habitat structures in urban landscapes, is largely due to ‘tidy-up’ practices driven by negative public attitudes. Large old trees, dead trees and branches, woody debris and shrubs that support naïve wildlife are often removed because structures appear untidy or pose a bushfire risk. We are far too quick to remove habitat like large trees without first considering alternative ways to retain these structures that won’t risk people’s lives and property.

Small trees have less peeling bark, dead branches, woody debris, flowers and nectar compared with large established trees. These features may favour anything from fungi and insects to mistletoe, bats, birds and possums. Instead of cutting down large old trees or removing logs. Landscaping techniques can be used to separate people and public facilities, such as footpaths, playgrounds and benches from these so called riskier structures and ensure the safe retention of vital wildlife habitat. Even ground dwelling animals can benefit from rocks, litter and logs that accumulate under tree canopies.

How we manage our trees now will in turn determine what urban wildlife we’ll still have in the next few hundred years.

The Shifting Baseline Syndrome:

Shifting Baseline Syndrome refers to a gradual change in our accepted norm for ecological conditions. The phrase describes an incremental lowering of standards that results with each new generation lacking knowledge of the historical, and presumably more natural, condition of the environment. Therefore, each generation defines what is 'natural' or 'normal' according to current conditions and their personal experiences. With each new generation, the expectations of various ecological conditions shift. The result is that our standards are lowered almost imperceptibly.

Conservation scientist Dr. E.J. Milner-Gulland, and colleagues have examined two different types of shifting baselines, referred to as generational and persona amnesia, The word amnesia is pertinent in that it implies the loss of information, without awareness of loss. The difference between them is essentially about time and scale.

Generational amnesia occurs when knowledge is not passed between generations.

Personal amnesia is a more accelerated form occurring within one's lifetime. For example, one may not remember that a species once frequently sighted, such as the Bush Stone-curlew and a multitude of other birds, small mammals, and reptiles (and even the worms that I have been told once dangled like spaghetti from machinery), are now never seen in our agricultural landscape.

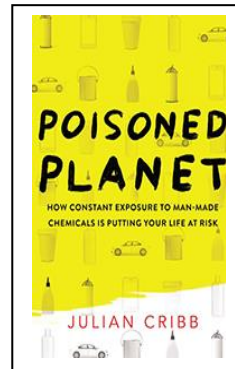
The same could be said about the deteriorating health of our soils, vegetation and waterways. If the change is not recognised, the new infrequency of a total lack of species and landscape condition becomes the baseline. It's as if we lack the fine tune-tuning knob to detect this creeping disappearance. Our short lifespans and faulty (and sometimes selective) memories mean we are poorly equipped to detect the extent our local landscape has changed.

Implications for conservation

If we don't realise what we are losing we stand the risk of sleepwalking through the destruction of the natural world without taking action to remedy the situation.

Book of the Month: Poisoned Planet

How Constant Exposure to Man-made Chemicals is Putting your Life at Risk- Julian Cribb



From morning to night, we are surrounded by man-made chemicals, most of them untested, many of them toxic. It's the price we pay for convenient, cheap products. The effects on our health are just now becoming known. In this wake up call for all consumers, Julian Cribb argues that we cannot rely on governments or industry to clean up the mess: it's up to us to repair our poisoned planet.

We want things to be cheap, convenient and useful. Our food arrives contaminated with pesticides and wastes, wrapped in plastic made of hormone-disrupting chemicals. We bathe and dress our children in petrochemicals. Even our coffee contains miniscule traces of arsenic, cup by cup adding to the toxins accumulating in our bodies.

Man-made chemicals are creating a silent epidemic. Our children are sicker; cancer, obesity, allergies and mental health issues are on the rise in adults; and, frighteningly, we may be less intelligent than previous generations.

A poisoned planet is the price we pay for our lifestyle, but Julian Cribb shows in his book that we have the tools to clean it up and create a healthier, safer future for us all.

Sugar gliders

Wildlife can have a tough time crossing roads. Noisy, fast vehicles and wide, open gaps in habitat make it an uninviting and risky venture. Sugar Gliders can glide for only 30-40 m, this means

some animals are cut off from food, shelter or loving company on the other side of the road, young have trouble dispersing to find new territories and populations can become small and genetically isolated.

This can also happen in our agricultural areas where there are wide gaps between our forest and large old trees and remnant woodlands, and may explain why they are no longer sighted away from our local forests and are even becoming rarer in these areas. What can we do about it? In some areas sugar glider poles are being installed and some even with ropes attached so that these small animals can begin to travel and expand their habitat areas once again, without trying to traverse open spaces on the ground which usually results in their death either by predators or vehicles..



A pole with a rope cap & a rope to travel on if the distance is too far to glide between poles..

Integrated Weed Management in Lucerne is the integration of good livestock and pasture management plus a wide range of weed control methods to achieve productive Lucerne stands that are resilient to seasonal variability and invasion by weed species.

Prevent existing weeds from setting seed

Enhance the reproduction of desirable species and reduce reproduction of weed species by grazing, topping, harvesting as silage etc.

Maintain a vigorous stand by allowing the Lucerne plants to recover well before re-grazing or cutting

Prevent incursions of both new and existing weeds into the stand.

The logic behind weed control in Lucerne pastures is very convincing

It requires a high investment to establish, and failure is costly.

Usually, Lucerne stands gradually decline with age, so it is critical to start with a weed free stand

Weed competition will reduce Lucerne yield and quality, increase the incidence of disease and insect problems, cause premature loss, and create harvesting problems

Uncontrolled weed growth reduces productivity and profit and that of following crops through competition and lower yields.

Non-chemical weed management options:

Weed management strategies in Lucerne pastures should focus first on non-chemical options (e.g. management practices to minimise weed infestations) before considering chemical-based options. Non-chemical weed management practices that promote a highly competitive Lucerne stand prevent many weed problems.

Vigorous, dense Lucerne stands have fewer weed problems and rely on –

Liming and fertilizing paddocks based on thorough soil test recommendations to match Lucerne requirements.

Sowing well adapted, vigorous, long lived varieties

Sowing weed-free certified seed

Inoculating the seed with the correct rhizobia bacteria before sowing and ensuring it is sown before the effectiveness of the inoculant is reduced.

Sowing into a moist, uniform, level firm and fine weed-free seed bed which is slightly crumbly (not powdery).

Grazing and cutting Lucerne at the correct growth stage.

Regular monitoring and timely control of insect and disease problems, particularly in the year of sowing.

Rotating crops to interrupt the build-up of certain weeds.

Despite these preventative efforts, some weed species are aggressive and may still establish and require chemical treatments. The use of herbicide may help improve the quality of a thin, weedy stand of Lucerne, but not help rejuvenate it.

DEPI information sheet