



Mid Loddon Landcare 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 – 2017

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group

Next general meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th February 2017 at the Lockwood South Primary School.
Agenda: 2017 events & grants

Nuggetty Land Protection Group.

The next general meeting will be at the Nuggetty Vineyard at 7.30pm on Wednesday 1th March 2017

West Marong Landcare Group –

Next meeting to be held at 8.00pm at the Woodstock Hall on Tuesday 21st February 2017 BBQ meal at 7.00pm (Thanks to Howard & Greg who are organising it)

Agenda: General meeting followed by a pictorial presentation about the state of our waterways following our 2016 wet winter.

So much effort and project funds were put into repairing our waterways a few years ago, what is their current condition? Is it time for more repair?

Christian Bannan will join us to talk about the state of our local and the wider area soils following the wet season, and what amelioration may be needed in the 2017 season.

Mid Loddon Landcare Network

The next committee meeting will be held on Monday 27th March, 2017 at 7.30pm at the Lockwood South Primary School.

Agenda: Sharing of ideas and problem solving

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group

Next general meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th March 2017 at the Harcourt North Hall.

Agenda: Paterson's Curse - Jessica Seidel.
Agricultural Services & Biosecurity Operations on management strategies

Baringhup Landcare Group

Next general meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 3rd April, 2017. Agenda: TBA

Eddington Landcare Group- meet seasonally.

Next meeting will be held at the Eddington store or in the Red Gum Forest to share morning tea and current group activities. TBA

Words of Wisdom:

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.
Confucius

Rainfall recording at Shelbourne 2016:

Our weather recorder Irene, reports that the 2016 rainfall at Shelbourne was 610mm (24 inches) with the wettest months being May at 81mm & September at 172mm.

The growing period for April to September was **446mm** together with the early break and warm soil explains why our local crops and pasture were so exceptional for 2016.

How about some rainfall records for 2017 from our southern Groups?

Events 2017

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group

2nd Soil Pit Field Day with Christian Bannan at 8.30am to noon on Monday 20th March.

So much was learnt at the first event and this time we will be investigating more farm production paddocks in preparation for the 2017 planting season.

Sorry there will be no exciting bogging examples as at the previous field day.

Wear strong shoes, hats and BYO water.

Morning tea will be provided.

Venue – Bryan & Tricia Balmer & Tony Cordy.

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Members and wider agricultural productive community knowledge building and sharing Workshops

The second in a series of agricultural workshops will be a Two day Workshop with San Jolly from Productive Nutrition in South Australia.

Day one time: 9.30am Wednesday 1st March

Venue: Laanecoorie Hall

Sheep Nutrition and Management (San Jolly SA)

Providing management advice to producers.

Helping producers optimise livestock productivity,

profitability and sustainability and improve the

resilience of their operations. To be held at the

Laanecoorie Hall. Please bring any 2016 feed testing

results to share in group discussions.

Day Two: Field Day:

Time: 9.30am Thursday 2nd March

Venue: Meet at Laanecoorie Hall and then travel with

San to local farm paddocks to study trial crop/stock

feed and pasture paddocks results and any other

topics raised.

{Please RSVP for catering purposes to

Judy at 0428 506 525

Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday 5th March - Register your event now.

www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

Baringhup Landcare Group

Bus trip to Wimmera Field Day.

Leaving from the Baringhup Community Hall at

7.00am Wednesday 8th March

Bookings: Col Jennings 0409 149 376

Baringhup Landcare Group

Environmental Photography Training Day with

Alison Pouliot

This highly interactive photography workshop

with both theoretical and practical components,

focuses on developing participants skills for

photographing range of environmental themes.

. Please bring your own lunch

Network Fungus Identification and Survey

Training Day in the Shelbourne Nature

Conservation Reserve with Alison Pouliot

10.30am Wednesday 7th June.

The fungi of the Box and Ironbark forests of

central-northern Victoria are virtually unknown.

Only very scant and mostly anecdotal records

exist. Fungi are an important part of these forests

in creating and stabilising soils, nourishing and

interconnecting plants, as a food supply for

animals, recycling nutrients, retaining and filtering water, restoring environmental damage and essentially underpinning their health and resilience. Effective forest 'management' would ideally take into account soil health and the interconnectivities between species and thereby include fungi. An overview of the fungi of these forests would contribute important information to the greater understanding of their biodiversity and function.

This aim of the training day is to equip participants with the basic principles and protocols for surveying fungi in the field. These participants could then further develop their skills to become leaders in engaging the wider community to partake in fungus surveying. The training day would follow the guidelines as outlined by Fungimap in their publication *Guide to Surveying Fungi in Australia*.

Baringhup Landcare Group

Fungi Field Day with Alison Pouliot

The Fungi – An Introduction to a Curious Kingdom

10.30am Sunday 11th June

This workshop will introduce participants to the

diversity, ecology and curiosities of the Kingdom

Fungi, specific to fungi found in the region but

also within a wider Australian context.

It will include an interactive and illustrated

seminar on the major fungal groups, the basics of

fungus identification, fungal ecology, and the

natural and cultural history of fungi. Fungal

specimens from the local area will be displayed,

discussed and examined during the workshop.

The importance of fungal conservation will also

be discussed in the context of local ecosystems.

Participants will also learn to recognise the

various diagnostic characteristics used to identify

fungi in the field.

Following the indoor session will be an exciting

foray through various local habitat types to

search for species of interest. Supplementary

notes will also be provided to reinforce principles

covered in the workshop.

Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine

Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com

We are seeking stories about how Landcare

groups and networks are monitoring, planning for

and responding to the changing climate. Your

story should discuss the challenges, successes

and failures of your project(s). Readers are keen to find out what has worked, what didn't work and what has been learnt along the way. Please contact the editor with your story ideas. If you have an idea for a story, or are considering submitting a story to the magazine, please get in touch with the editor as early as possible. The magazine fills up fast and the editor will be able to provide assistance and advice to help you prepare your story and to put space aside for it. **Carrie Tiffany, editor**

Saving our Bush Stone-curlews in 2017



Very cute Curlew chicks

Curlew Chicks successfully hatched

Our first two chicks have been hatched at the Laing family's enclosure at Lockwood South with the parents and chicks doing well. Congratulations to Ken and family for producing our first chicks.

Project extensions:

As we build our captive bred flock we will need enclosure extensions so that we can continue to breed until we have suitable flock numbers for release. So funds are still being rather desperately sought.

The strong partnership with Jan & Nev Lubke's (NSW) well established Curlew breeding program is continuing to assist with advice and possibly future Curlew release numbers.

To guarantee we have funds to maintain food supplies and the necessary permits, we have been providing metal sculpture Curlews to all who donate \$50 and over. This venture was made possible by our former member Max Jackman. During December 40 Curlews sculptures became displayed in gardens across a wide area promoting the eventual return of our remarkable feathered Curlews. Many thanks to those who have supported our Curlews.

Sculptures exclusively designed and produced by Honeybee Metal design.

Book of the Month:

The Hidden Life of Trees -

What they Feel, How They Communicate

Discoveries from a Secret World

by Peter Wohlleben (Foreword), Tim Flannery (Foreword), Jane Billinghamurst (Goodreads Author) (Translator), Susanne Simard

In *The Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben shares his deep love of woods and forests and explains the amazing processes of life, death, and regeneration he has observed in the woodland and the amazing scientific processes behind the wonders of which we are blissfully unaware. Much like human families, tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, and support them as they grow, sharing nutrients with those who are sick or struggling and creating an ecosystem that mitigates the impact of extremes of heat and cold for the whole group. As a result of such interactions, trees in a family or community are protected and can live to be very old. In contrast, solitary trees, like street kids, have a tough time of it and in most cases die much earlier than those in a group.

Drawing on ground breaking new discoveries, Wohlleben presents the science behind the secret and previously unknown life of trees and their communication abilities; he describes how these discoveries have informed his own practices in the forest around him. As he says, a happy forest is a healthy forest, and he believes that eco-friendly practices not only are economically sustainable but also benefit the health of our planet and the mental and physical health of all who live on Earth.

Published September 2016 Available at Dymocks \$21.06

Cicadas – our noisy neighbours



Did you know that Cicadas are the loudest insects in the world and there are more than 200 species in Australia.

It is thought that the sound produced by some communal species can act as a defense against predatory birds and some are even loud enough (120 decibels) to be painful to the human ear. Cicadas also often sing in chorus, which makes it more difficult for a predator to locate an individual.

Cicadas are so conspicuous that many of their common names were initially given to them by children. As a result cicadas probably have the most colourful common names in the insect world. Some of these include: Black Prince (*Psaltoda plaga*), Double Drummer, Floury Baker, and the Green Grocer or Yellow Monday, *Cyclochila australasiae*.

Most Australians are also probably unaware that the cicada can make a very tasty meal. Dr Moulds said many peoples around the world regularly eat cicadas, usually as an addition to their regular diet.

"They are quite good eating and taste quite pleasant," said Dr Moulds who sampled his first roasted cicada during a field trip in Papua New Guinea.

"The female cicada is usually best because they are the most meaty. First they pull the wings off and then throw them onto hot coals for about a minute. Turn them over once or twice and they're ready to eat. I thought they would be crunchy but actually they are remarkably soft. Their taste is not very strong and is probably closer to chicken than anything else."

What is happening to my soil microbes over summer?

Summer rainfall can have a massive bearing on changes in soil microbial activity, and growers can help to promote greater microbial activity by reducing tillage and soil compaction. Adopting grazed pastures (and crops) can also increase soil organic matter and microbial activity in the long-term.

Above-average rainfall for many areas across the southern region throughout the 2016 growing season produced high-yielding crops with large amounts of plant biomass both above and below the soil surface – and with it, a large microbial population.

Soil microbes – bacteria and fungi – are vital in decomposing plant and animal residues and soil

organic matter to release plant-available nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus.

Principal research scientist with AgriBio (Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources Victoria and LaTrobe University) and leader of the now concluded GRDC Soil Biology Initiative Associate Professor Dr Pauline Mele says both standing stubble and chaff, and underground root biomass is food for soil microbes. If a heavy shower of rain occurs over summer of between 15 millimetres and 30mm then there will be a significant flush of microbial activity in the soil.

"Even small showers of rain over summer of between 5-10mm can boost soil microbial activity, as microbes are more tolerant of dry soils than plants,"

Associate Professor Mele says.

"The optimum water potential for microbial activity in the soil is about -50 kilopascals, but even when plants are wilting and cannot extract any more water from the soil, which is normally at -1500 kilopascals, about 30 per cent of the microbial community is still able to turn over organic matter in soils.

"This is because as the soil dries out and plants wilt, small amounts of water retreat into tiny pores of the soil where microbial communities can maintain their activity and turn over organic matter.

"The microbial communities can also consume and store nitrogen present in the residues for following crops."

Associate Professor Mele says up to 30 per cent of the nitrogen contained in organic matter can be released during summer rainfall events, but that is dependent on soil health. Healthy soils with an optimum pH can release upwards of the 30 per cent of the nitrogen contained in organic matter, whereas acid soils will not achieve the same level of nitrogen release;

A unique feature of Australian cropping soils is that there is a higher proportion of spore-forming organisms – actinobacteria – than comparable soils overseas, making up about 30 per cent of the microbial population in many cases. This portion of the microbial population does not die in unfavourably dry conditions, but is capable of resisting desiccation in the dry soil in a dormant state for extended periods.

Has anyone spotted a Pied Currawong on their property?

