

February 2012

# osborne

NORTH WARRANDYTE OSBORNE PENINSULA LANDCARE



OSBORNE  
LANDCARE



## Peninsula NEWS



### John Boyle gets a gong! Hearty Congratulations to one of Our Own

Long time Osborne Road resident John Boyle has received an OAM in the recent Australia Day awards for service to the community, particularly in recognition for being a mover and shaker behind the annual Warrandyte Festival.

Congratulations John. Well deserved!!

#### Our Cover



**Eulamprus tympanum- Water Skink**

Photo: Wayne Rankin

### What a find!

What a find in our Yarra River. While carefully dodging sharp edged rocks, my husband Marcus was fortunate to spot two white claws slowly moving along the riverbed half hidden under a rock. Marcus retrieved a lovely Yarra Crayfish in Osborne Rd.

We noted the vivid blue body with its spiny back; we gently placed him/her back into the beautiful Yarra River. Size was taken from tip of claw to tail to be approx. 13cms. Written by new resident of 40 Osborne Road.

Janine Kupfer



### Waiter. There's a carpet prawn in my mulch

**Amphipods** The days after heavy downpours of rain during November and December, some neighbours reported seeing huge numbers of tiny crustaceans resembling small shrimps in their sheds, garages, homes and even in the gutters down Osborne Road.

Upon investigation these tiny creatures were identified as Amphipods, commonly referred to as Carpet Prawns or Forest Hoppers.

They are land-dwelling crustaceans that look like tiny, light brown coloured shrimps growing up to 7mm long.

Amphipods are found in forests and suburban gardens where they live under logs, mulch, and leaf litter. Each summer, on warm moist nights and following periods of rain, they often emerge in large numbers to invade low-set homes, swimming pools, garages, sheds and other human environments, only to dry out and die with the morning sun.

In their natural environment they feed on micro-organisms in the soil and contribute to the decomposition of the forest floor. They are harmless to both humans and their pets.

Ruth Rankin

## The Working Agenda for 2012

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**The Landcare committee is always busy identifying projects, chasing and applying for possible grant monies to bring them to fruition.**

These are a few of the projects on the hit list for this year.

### **Osborne Peninsula grants:**

**1:** A Parks Victoria grant of \$1835 will be used to revegetate the small gully at the rear of Lowestoft. This grant will also fund revegetation of the riverbank, from the willow tree to the pump shed with native grasses. Some weed control has already been undertaken at this site, with another round of spraying before planting in May 2012.

**2:** Funding of \$12,640 from the PPWCMA (Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority) will revegetate the upper part of Windmill Gully which is all on private land.

Properties from No.5 Osborne to No.21 Osborne and 6 Hamilton- 20 Hamilton Rd will be invited to participate in this project.

This grant seeks to improve the quality of water flowing into the Yarra along Windmill Creek. The water in the gully is mainly stormwater runoff from Osborne and Hamilton Roads, as well as nutrient-rich grey water from private properties.

Weed control within the properties, and planting of local indigenous riparian

species will act as a filter to improve the quality of the water prior to it entering the Yarra.

As part of this grant, Osborne Landcare will build a website and conduct a workshop in photo point photography.

### **Grants applied for but not yet confirmed:**

Nillumbik Council: \$2,000 for roadside weed control and rabbit control on the Peninsula

An additional Nillumbik submission for \$2,000 for weed control and plantings in private properties to assist with stormwater runoff from roads.

Lastly, a Melbourne Water Community Grant of \$7,000 for revegetation of a site in Warrandyte State Park below Miandetta's lower boundary in the vicinity of Windmill Bridge. Weed control and planting of grasses and sedges. ❁

## **Sam's 50th Birthday on the Peninsula**

Wednesday morning weeding group celebrate Sam Eadies birthday. ❁

## **Reasons to Celebrate in the Year of the Bumper Weeds**

The Friends of Wombat Gully have good reason to celebrate 2011. Work has been done on all our sites in the area and bumper crops of Vernal, Erharta, Thistles, and many other weeds have been removed. Despite the phenomenal growth of the weeds, our planted shrubs and native grasses have doubled in size and are looking wonderful.

We have spent a number of sessions working on our new site on the roadside in Osborne Road below Number 24. This is a significant roadside area with a lovely group of *Acacia implexa*, as well as an extensive wildflower population.

Some 585 volunteer hours have been recorded for our group last year, and not one Wednesday morning was missed. This has to be a record! Do come and join us any Wednesday morning from 9 till 11, rewarding work, company and cup of tea. ❁

Shelagh Morton





## Could this be Skinky Malinky

We are all very familiar with the busy little skinks rustling around our garden amongst the leaf litter and the odd one sneaking under the door and darting across the floor.

We are all very familiar with the busy little skinks rustling around our garden amongst the leaf litter and the odd one sneaking under the door and darting across the floor.

The other day I noticed a lizard basking in the sun on the edge of a water feature on our patio. Watching it closely, each time I moved too close it dived into the water. This fascinated me as I had no idea that lizards could swim.

On consulting Melbourne's Wildlife field guide I was able to identify this reptile as **Eulamprus tympanum** - Water Skink.

I also learned that the Scincidae Family-Skinks- are the largest family of lizards in the Melbourne region, with a very diverse range of morphology and ecology.

The Water Skink has the most stunning copper coloured skin which glistens in the sun and black stripes down each side of its body. They are commonly seen sitting on damp mossy logs or rocks.

Growing up to 80mm long they feed on a variety of invertebrates and small vertebrates, such as frogs. What have you noticed in your garden? ❁

Ruth Rankin



## Deadheading Aggies

**Why? Because Agapanthus Orientalis spread so aggressively!**

The beguiling blue or white flower of Agapanthus belies its nasty habit of extensive proliferation and invasion of bushland, roadsides – and even our gardens! They reproduce by their seed and by their growth of rhizomes or fragments. So this is the time to collect their seed-heads after the blue or white has faded, and dispose of them.



**Methods of disposal:** For eradication, they can be chemically sprayed or dug out. It is best to then leave the digging out roots until cooler and damper months as their root systems can be extensive. To minimise their spread by collecting the seed-heads at this time of year, it is best to place the seeds in a black plastic bag and leave in the sun over the rest of summer. Alternatively, put the seed heads into your 'green' bin, but we are not sure how safely they are disposed of, so recommend the black plastic bag method.

On no account throw the seeds into the bush or over your neighbour's fence. And remember that doing nothing will mean extra work next time. As the adage says: "one year's seed = seven years of weed!"

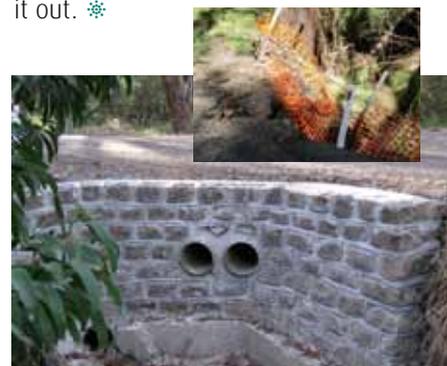
Alternatives to Agapanthus: If it is the vibrant blue colour that attracts, you could consider the small blue flowering plants such as the blue pincushion, Brunonia Australia, or the tall blue-bell, Wallenbergia stricta. As an alternative to the hedge effect of Agapanthus, or for making a boundary using a row of thick plants, you might consider planting Spiny-headed Mat-rush, Lomandra longifolia or Pale Flax lily, Dianella longifolia grandis which has spikes of purple flowers. For more advice, come and join our weeding/ planting group on a Wednesday morning. ❁

Jill Jameson

## The Wombat Bridge

Two devastating storms, in Feb and December of 2011, resulted in a torrent of water rushing down Wombat Gully and over the road in Koornong Cres to the Yarra River beyond. Considerable damage was done to the bridge and the edge of the road became undermined.

Nillumbik council has built a retaining wall as support for the road and we await the next downpour to test it out. ❁





## Windmill Revisited

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Windmill Creek Revegetation Site is a riparian section of the Warrandyte State Park, located between Wombat Gully and Sigma Site. The site was named after the creek that was in turn named after an old windmill that was originally located at the site. The sails of the windmill were found in the creek bed. The creek – which is more of a gully than a creek – flows only after heavy rain.

Work began on the site in 1996 with the control of woody weeds on both sides of the walking track. A couple of years ago erosion control works were carried out by Melbourne Water and a new bridge constructed with funding from Parks Victoria.

The revegetation site has been extended several times and today consists of the original site between the walking track and the river, plantings on both sides of the walking track downstream of the access bridge and more recently the gully itself upstream of the bridge (most of this is on private land).

Thanks to a couple of years of good rainfall, regular working bees by Landcare volunteers and ongoing weed control by contractors, the site is a fine example of natural regeneration, rehabilitation and revegetation.

A number of regionally and locally significant plants occur at this site. Not the least is the expanding population of Tall Club-sedge (*Bolboschoenus fluviatilis*) that grows along the river bank in this section. According to botanist Cam Beardsell this occurrence is the largest population of this regionally significant species in the world! It grows by rhizomes and rarely flowers, however just the other day we saw a couple that had flowered and were in fact setting seed.

Other significant plants include Muttonwood (*Rapanea howittiana*) which is uncommon on The Osborne Peninsula. The existing trees have been enriched by several new plantings last year. Also along the river bank is a small population of Australian Gypswort (*Lycopus australis*) and four species of Knotweed (*Persicaria* spp.), three of which are considered regionally significant.

Away from the river on the drier sites on both sides of the walking track, there is an occurrence of Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*). This is a locally rare and endangered species in the Warrandyte State Park and recent plantings have enhanced the numbers at this site.

Work is only just beginning up the gully with the spraying of a massive infestation of blackberry (Angled Onion and Bridal Creeper control to follow). Surprisingly a rare Sedge has managed to survive despite the weeds. Called Tussock Sedge (*Carex iynx*), this sedge has one of the longest flowering stems I have ever seen and last week the Wednesday Weeders were lucky enough to find ample seed just ready for collection.

And so to the plantings of locally rare and endangered species – all of which have grown astoundingly in the last six to twelve months.

**They include:**

**River Bottlebrush**  
(*Callistemon sieberi*)

**Hemp Bush**  
(*Gynatrix pulchella*)

**River Lomatia**  
(*Lomatia myricoides*)

**Golden Spray**  
(*Viminaria juncea*)

**Golden-tip**  
(*Goodia lotifolia*)

**Forest Germander**  
(*Teucrium corymbosum*)

**Tree Violet**  
(*Meliccytus dentatus*)

**Tassel Sedge**  
(*Carex fascicularis*)

**Forest's Hounds-tongue**  
(*Austrocynoglossum latifolium*)

Great news. So next time you walk along the river track, take time out to admire the inspiring transformation of what was once a degraded weedy creek into what is now a rehabilitation showpiece. 🌱

Pat Coupar



## The Majesty of the Wedge-Tailed Eagle

We'll forgive it the habit of building the untidiest nest in the bush – a large and haphazard pile of sticks and twigs rammed in the fork of a tall tree – because The Wedgie (*Aquila audax*), is Australia's largest bird of prey, or raptor.

We'll forgive it the habit of building the untidiest nest in the bush – a large and haphazard pile of sticks and twigs rammed in the fork of a tall tree – because The Wedgie (*Aquila audax*), is not only Australia's largest bird of prey, or raptor, but also holds the record for having the largest wingspan of any eagle in the world. A Tasmanian female was once measured with a 2.84 metre wide wingspan!

Large, majestic - and in their spiralling hunting methods that can see them soar to heights of 2000 metres - they are the showstoppers of the avian world. You can't ignore a Wedge-tailed eagle on the wing, or lazing on a thermal. You have to look again!

They are also the world's most common eagle and they find viable habitat from Tasmania to New Guinea in areas as diverse as deserts, sea-shores, mountains and forests. The only ecosystem where they are not so common is the rainforest.

They mate for life and rear 1-3 chicks during the winter months. Both parents take on feeding roles, carrying into the nests the carcasses of their favourite food, rabbits or, occasionally joeys and young lambs. They can carry 50 per cent of their body weight.

The nests can become foul from rotting carrion but Wedgies don't seem to mind because their keenest attributes as killers rely on their astounding eyesite and the strength of claws that can crush a man's wrist.

Their eyesight is twice as good as ours and has the facility that allows them to telescope vision to see both near and far objects simultaneously. They can also see into the infrared and ultraviolet band.

For these and many reasons, The Wedgie, so-called because of its wedge-shaped tail, is the top of the winged bird order. The king of the killing birds. ❄️



### Acacia myrtifolia

The Warrandyte wattles were dazzling and profuse last season both in the bush and in our gardens. Their genus is Acacia, from the Greek acis meaning thorn, and this particular species is myrtifolia as it has similar foliage to the European myrtle.

Acacia myrtifolia or Red stemmed Wattle is an ornamental rounded shrub with compact growth about 2 metres high. Like most members of the genus the mature plant does not have true leaves but leaf-like flattened stems called phyllodes. It is frost hardy and benefits from pruning to form a screen.

The flowers are profuse, in cream to yellow balls, arranged in racemes, which combined with its attractive bronze stems make it a worthwhile addition to any garden.

We hope to propagate a large number of this lovely plant so do order some for this autumn's planting. ❄️

Shelagh Morton





## Around the Peninsula

### Look at what you can do with Cucumbers!

**1.** Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins you need every day, just one cucumber contains Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.

**2.** Feeling tired in the afternoon, put down the caffeinated soda and pick up a cucumber. Cucumbers are a good source of B Vitamins and Carbohydrates that can provide that quick pick-me-up that can last for hours.

**3.** Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror, it will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.

**4.** Are grubs and slugs ruining your planting beds? Place a few slices in a small pie tin and your garden will be free of pests all season long. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminum to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy and make them flee the area.

**5.** Looking for a fast and easy way to remove cellulite before going out or to the pool? Try rubbing a slice or two of cucumbers along your problem area for a few minutes, the phytochemicals in the cucumber cause the collagen in your skin to tighten, firming up the outer layer and reducing the visibility of cellulite. Works great on wrinkles too!!!



**6.** Want to avoid a hangover or terrible headache? Eat a few cucumber slices before going to bed and wake up refreshed and headache free. Cucumbers contain enough sugar, B vitamins and electrolytes to replenish essential nutrients the body lost.

**7.** Out of WD 40 and need to fix a squeaky hinge? Take a cucumber slice and rub it along the problematic hinge, and voila, the squeak is gone!

**8.** Stressed out and don't have time for massage, facial or visit to the spa? Cut up an entire cucumber and place it in a boiling pot of water, the chemicals and nutrients from the cucumber will react with the boiling water and be released in the steam, creating a soothing, relaxing aroma.

**9.** Looking for a 'green' way to clean your faucets, sinks or stainless steel? Take a slice of cucumber and rub it on the surface you want to clean, not only will it remove years of tarnish and bring back the shine, but it won't leave streaks and won't harm your fingers or fingernails while you clean.

Pass this along to everybody you know who is looking for better and safer ways to solve life's everyday problems. ❁

### FYI. Building has begun at Number 9!

Ben and Charlotte of Number 9 Osborne Road have finally started to build their house, with the first trucks arriving in mid January to prepare the site.

"We are both very excited about the work finally beginning and hope to have a new home to move into by August. We would like to make people aware that there will be extra traffic on Osborne Road during the build, particularly during the first few months and we would like to thank people for their patience and understanding during this time. If you do have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us directly on 0428 577 058

The new house will be a second-hand brick dwelling with a Colorbond roof and with double glazing, water tanks and sola features that will bring the energy rating to over 7 stars.

Once completed, we will make sure to have a large house-warming where you are all invited to come and celebrate with us!" ❁

Ben Lovell





# Nursery Note

Things are hotting up at the Nursery. Large amounts of seed have been collected and processed.

Over summer we have had soil and water delivered, and new gloves, canes and knives have been purchased in readiness for a busy, productive season of propagating the plants that will be needed for the coming year.

Over 50 species of grasses and shrubs have been sown. Some are already out in the hardening up area and looking jolly healthy.

We have collected seed and sown a rare sedge, *Carex iynx*. We're hoping for a good result to plant in the upper Windmill Gully.

We have three main sites to plant up this year as well as roadside work. There will be plenty of plants available for private gardens, so please make up your orders now. If you have a soggy spot, tell Shelagh as we are growing a lot of wet area plants this season.

Come to Nursery on a Sunday afternoon between 2 and 4pm and join in the fun.



**Shelagh:** 9844 3610  
**Sam:** 9712 0785.



## North Warrandyte Osborne Peninsula Landcare

### Committee

**Ruth Rankin:** 9844 1959 Secretary

**Christine Kearton:** 9844 3737 Treasurer

**Jill Jameson:** 9844 2289

**Jenny Brown:** 9844 2255

**Sam Eadie:** 9712 0785 Nursery

**Shelagh Morton:** 9844 3610 Nursery

**Ann Penrose:** 9844 0934

**Gail Watts:** 9844 2909

**Join Now and help protect your environment.** Membership fees of \$15 are due and payable on 1st July each year, or when joining. Fees accompanied by the form below can be left in Treasurer Christine's letterbox, 36 Osborne Road. **Many thanks.**



### Membership Details for Nth Warrandyte, Osborne Peninsula, Landcare Incorporated.

**Names:** (All household members)

**Address:**

**Telephone No:**

**Email:**

**Signed:**

We wish to join this organisation and agree to pay \$15.00 annual membership fee (includes GST) to cover the persons named above and abide by the rules and constitution of the Nth Warrandyte, Osborne Peninsula, Landcare Inc.