

February 2013

osborne

NORTH WARRANDYTE OSBORNE PENINSULA LANDCARE



OSBORNE
LANDCARE



Our website is now live so check it out at www.osbornelandcare.com.au

Activity dates for 2013

Sunday 5th May: planting in Windmill Gully

Saturday May 11th: 10am-4pm workshop: Fungi - an introduction to a curious kingdom. Alison Pouliot will conduct this workshop. Some of you will remember Alison from our Photography workshop. As well as a world renowned photographer, she is also a fungi expert.

Sunday 23rd June: planting at Windmill Gully near bridge

Sunday 28th July: National Tree Day-planting at Sigma site.

August: date to be determined depending on weather

Put the above dates in your calendar. More information will be sent by email and through the newsletter closer to the dates.

Our Cover



Photo: Common Brown Butterfly

Regionally endangered species flourishes

Imperata cylindrica or Blady Grass is a significant weed in many parts of the world but in Warrandyte is classified as regionally significant and locally endangered.

Osborne Peninsula is home to a small population, found on both sides of the walking track near the Windmill Creek bridge.

Blady grass is a rhizomatous perennial grass and the seed heads are extremely ornamental but are mainly seen after fire.

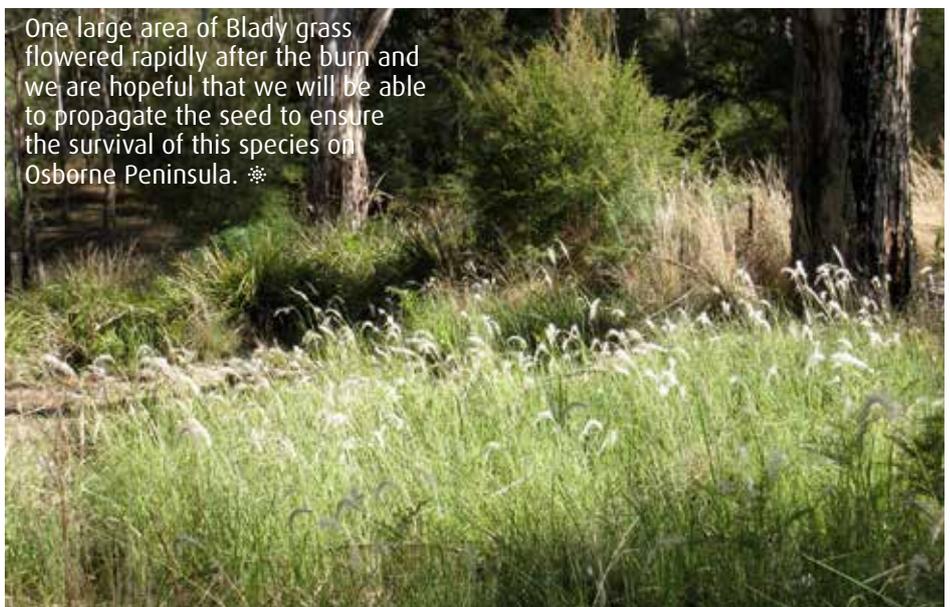
What a bonus when Parks Victoria rangers decided to burn the small site along the track to eradicate grassy weed which was proving difficult to treat using other methods.

One large area of Blady grass flowered rapidly after the burn and we are hopeful that we will be able to propagate the seed to ensure the survival of this species on Osborne Peninsula. ❁

Rabbit Control Program

The very dry conditions and vegetation will help make our rabbit control program very effective this year. So if you know where there are rabbits in the area or believe they are on your property, please join in the program. From observations, it seems that the main problem area is near Hamilton Road and the Koornong so it is likely that the program will be focussed there. PLEASE complete the survey that will soon be in your letterbox as it will ensure the program is properly targeted. Any questions? Please call me 9844 0934. ❁

Ann Penrose





Butterflies as a Free Lunch

Those of you who regularly walk the Osborne track are used to being surrounded by hoards of Common Brown butterflies dancing in the sunlight and seemingly unperturbed by human presence.

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What a surprise when one cool overcast day recently, we walked the track and saw not one butterfly flittering in our midst. Instead, the track was littered with single butterfly wings, most still apparently in perfect condition.

We had never seen this occurrence before and pondered what might have caused the sudden and simultaneous demise of hundreds or possibly thousands of butterflies?

Was it the sudden change in weather? If so, where were the bodies of the butterflies? Could they have all expired at exactly the same time?

Time for some research!

Experts tell us that the culprits could well have been a flock of Willy wag tails, or perhaps Blue wrens. These birds will snatch the butterfly's body in mid-air, leaving the wings to fall gently to earth. Sometimes several bird species will work together to secure a meal. Tree creepers will join the manoeuvre, lying in wait on the trunks of nearby trees for butterflies trying to escape the mid-air massacre, to alight on the branches.

What a smorgasbord these birds must have had! ❁

Ruth Rankin



Vale Laurie Safstrom

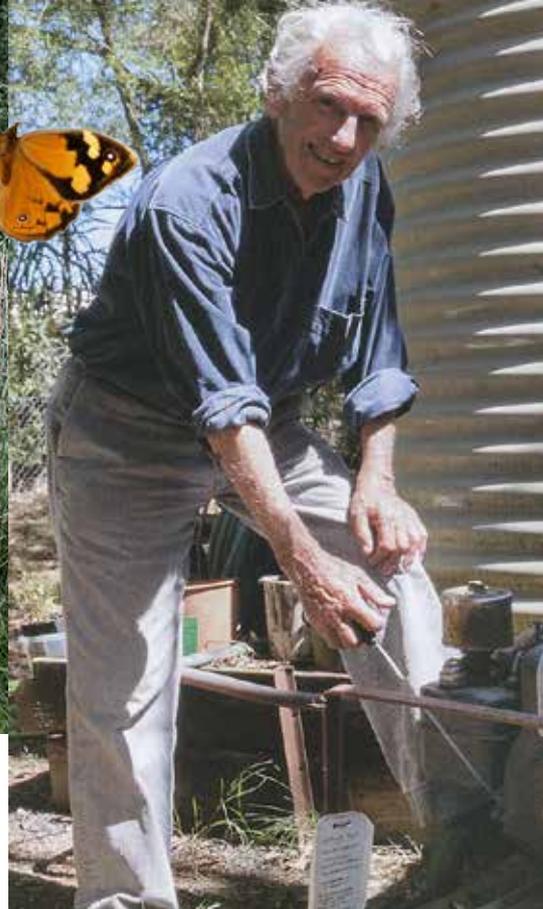
Laurie Safstrom, long time resident of Osborne Road, passed peacefully on Tuesday January 22.

Raised on the Yarra River in Kew, Laurie thought that his childhood stretch of the river was the only place to live. But with their children grown up and no longer living at home, Peg and Laurie started dreaming of another place; an acre block, again, hopefully on the river, with a brick house, a workshop, and space for a cricket pitch where the grandchildren could play.

Peg found what she called "a little bit of heaven" at No. 2 Osborne Road where they lived for 20 years. In one of his writings, Laurie described this move of only a handful of kilometres from Kew to Warrandyte as akin to "Moving to Heaven".

Peg and Laurie were destined to move house again. But this time it was just a stone's throw, down the road to No. 21 Osborne Road where the owner they had been assisting to maintain a large garden had decided it was a property requiring too much work. The Safstroms bought it and resided with enviable views down the river for the past 15 years.

Laurie, together with Peg, was a member of the inaugural committee of the Osborne Landcare Group which was elected at the AGM in 1994. His understanding, appreciation and love of



the environment was entirely evident in everything he did.

Laurie was a great teller of stories and delighted us over many years with recollections of his childhood and his experiences of interacting with the natural world.

Trained as a plumber, he had incredible practical skills and could turn his hand to most tasks. He was instrumental in the Landcare nursery being established within the grounds of the Lowestoft property, and managed to turn old water pipes into table legs, old gates into benches, and moved the occasional tap from A to B. Laurie had the knack of finding a solution to any problem seemingly effortlessly.

Whenever a problem arose, particularly around the nursery, it would be solved, sometimes overnight and always with little fuss! Laurie was our Mr Fix-it who just knew what to do and when. Sometimes before we even knew that there was a problem, Laurie would have identified it and already found a solution.

He took great delight in making breeding boxes for a variety of little creatures such as Sugar gliders, Phascogales and, of course, possums. At one stage, he supplied boxes to several wild life carers.

We all miss him dearly, our dear friend, our neighbour and our much loved fellow Landcarer. ❁



Appreciating Plants

Our bush looks very dry and unattractive, but luckily, we suddenly see a gleaming shrub covered in masses of fragrant creamy flowers.



Bursaria spinosa or Sweet Bursaria

Our bush looks very dry and unattractive, but luckily, we suddenly see a gleaming shrub covered in masses of fragrant creamy flowers.

From the species name, spinosa, we know it will be prickly, and from the Bursaria labeling we know there will be a mass of brown, purse-like capsules that hold the seeds after a summer flowering.

Bursaria is widespread and is a sturdy shrub which can re-sprout from the woody base after a bushfire.

In Tasmania it is known as Tasmanian Christmas tree.

Of great interest is the complex symbiotic relationship formed with the Eltham copper butterfly and the ants on Bursaria spinosa. The butterflies lay their eggs on the underside of the leaves and the caterpillars feed on the leaves before pupating in the soil at the foot of the plant where the ants take over.

They are a slow growing plant but it is well worth your while putting some into your garden later this year. ❄️

seems to be attracting more and more birds and other creatures.

Although the Blue-tongued lizard and the echidna are regular visitors at this time of year, there have been many more King parrots, Rosellas, Kookaburra and, of course, Noisy miners! However, although we planted out many small bushes over the years in order to attract the smaller birds, we have been recently delighted to see an Eastern spinebill quickly feeding on the kangaroo paws before being chased off by the Noisy miners.

And today there has been a graceful White ibis flying down to the pond's edge, no doubt to sup on the tadpoles in the shallows!

One other surprising phenomenon – along with a shower of rain maybe a month back - was a flotilla of snails, which emerged from the garden bank in front of our house, and that then proceeded to cross the veranda towards the house where the sounds of a Mozart string quartet was playing. There has been no rain since to test other possible musical responses! ❄️

Jill Jameson



Visitors to our garden this dry January

Many of our well-established plants, raised in the Landcare nursery over the last 10 years, are succumbing to the prolonged heat and lack of rain. While we are trying to occasionally water the 2012 plantings the rest are on

their own....and hopefully their innate survival strategies will pull some of them through. It is so sad to see, but the 2012-13 dry will provide valuable insights as to what plants might be more viable for the future.

Despite the predominance of the straw colour amidst the trees, on our block we are fortunate to have a frog pond which



Nursery Note

The summer season has been such a bad one and we have all lost plants in our gardens. As well many of us have lost a huge amount in our sites through the lack of rainwater.

That being the case, we will be sowing many grasses and shrubs in the Nursery that will become replacement stock later in the year. So please put your orders in as soon as possible.

On the bright side, we have replaced some shelving and now have well protected spacious shelves that will hold more boxes.

The good news is that thanks to the devoted waterers the plants in the nursery still look good.



Shelagh: 9844 3610
shelaghm@primus.com.au

Ruth: 9844 1959



North Warrandyte Osborne Peninsula Landcare

Committee

Ann Penrose: 9844 0934 President

Ruth Rankin: 9844 1959 Secretary

Christine Kearton: 9844 3737 Treasurer

Jenny Brown: 9844 2255

Sam Eadie: 9712 0785 Nursery

Shelagh Morton: 9844 3610 Nursery

Gail Watts: 9844 2909

Jill Jameson: 9844 2289

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.