

May 2013

osborne

NORTH WARRANDYTE OSBORNE PENINSULA LANDCARE





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



20th Anniversary Celebrations

In November 1993, "Meet your neighbours" was the theme for a lunch following a street planting to celebrate the formation of the landcare group. And now 20 years later we are celebrating the last twenty years of caring for the Osborne Peninsula with a "Meet your neighbours" party.

The date is Sunday 27th October.

Put this date in your diary now.

Our Cover



Photo: Wayne Rankin

If you hear a low chuckle in the bush it could be.....

This beautiful little Crested Shrike

Tit who was sighted recently after a long absence from Osborne Road.

They are seldom seen as they prefer to nest and feed in tall eucalypts.

Their strong beak is used to lever bark from trees where they feed on insects, beetles, and spiders. Their call is a low pitched chuckle. ❁

Rabbit Program

Our annual rabbit baiting program is now complete. The program was confined to the Hamilton Road and Koornong area because rabbit numbers in other areas, eg. Osborne Road, are still relatively low.

A total of 17 bait stations were put on private land and more were placed in the adjacent State Park. The program was once again subsidized by Nillumbik Shire Council and Melbourne Water, which greatly reduced the cost for us. There was excellent participation by residents so a big thank you to those residents ❁



A cautionary Tale:

Take extreme care when working around wombat holes.

One day many years ago, Lawrie and I were doing a bit of Landcare work down along the Yarra riverside.

One day many years ago, Lawrie and I were doing a bit of Landcare work down along the Yarra riverside. We were on our own and armed just with our knives to dig weeds to bring them home for disposal. This day, Lawrie tripped over a short stump. His knife shot out of his hand and disappeared down a deep wombat hole.

The wombat holes along the Yarra near here are perhaps hundreds of years old. They are big, wide, erratic burrows, as deep - ceiling to floor - as a living room, and as big. They're dug into soft sand where the river once flowed and have sloping entry tracks. Some are all clogged up. Others are still used by the current wombats.

Well, your knife is your knife! You don't just wave it goodbye! We stood and looked down at the hole and Lawrie said, "I reckon... Yep... I reckon I could get my knife if I had a magnet on a piece of rope. Peg, duck home and get a bit of rope and my magnet. It's on the middle bench, I reckon."

So home I went - all uphill and a 10 minute walk. But I couldn't find his small magnet, only his very large one and Wow, it was so heavy! Then I found a bit of rope and trudded back to him.

Lawrie said, "I reckon, I reckon that if I lay down on my stomach on the edge of the wombat hole, and you lay down and hold onto my feet, I could reach my knife."

So, I lay down and held onto his feet. I had my toes dug in to take his weight. Suddenly, the edge of the wombat hole collapsed! Lawrie's feet shot out of

my hands and he went down! Down! Down!

"I've nearly got my knife" he yelled triumphantly. "But...but how am I going to get up again?"

"I know", he answered himself. "You go home again, Peg, get a long, long rope and bring it back! When you're back, tie it to a branch of a big tree and toss the other end down to me. Then I'll get my knife And you... you...you just pull me up!"

So, home I trudded again, got a long, long rope and came back.

"Hi", I called, "I'm back! I've got the rope! How are you going?"

"I've got my knife!" he yelled. "Now, find a stout gum tree, tie the rope to a low branch. Toss the other end down to me. Then, just pull me up!"

Well, it wasn't that easy! Lawrie tossed his knife up over the edge, and I got it. Then he went to toss up the heavy magnet, but I yelled "No! No! No! It might not reach the top! It might go back down further, way past you!

Tie it onto the end of the rope and I'll haul it up with you."

So here I was, pretty tired, a bit concerned and faced with the job of hauling Lawrie up and out, the heavy magnet with him.

So, I pulled. I went around the tree to take the weight and not have the rope pull out of my hands- my shaky hands! I Pulled slowly and surely and went around the tree again, and again, till, at last I could see Lawrie's head above the rim of the wombat hole.

"Wow! Wow! Wow!" I yelled, "One more pull and you're out!"

I pulled and up and out he came! And we hugged and yelled and hugged. "Wow! Wow! Wow!" We slowly walked back up the hill to home, quite forgetting the weeds we'd collected, but laughing, and singing, and crying tears of joy all the way home.

"Hey," said Lawrie, grinning, "Why don't we write this all down and why don't we have fun telling our Landcare friends how they nearly lost their best workers down a wombat hole!" ❄️

Peggy Safstrom

Wow!
Wow!
Wow!



Around the Peninsula



Gynatrix-pulchella
Hemp Bush

In the coming August, keep your eyes peeled for this pretty (pulchella is Latin for pretty) shrub that is found in shady spots beside watercourses.

It grows to about three metres and has hairy, heart-shaped leaves and small fragrant, greenish-white flowers.

Gynatrix is dioecious, which means the male and female flowers are on separate plants. It is certainly a female shrub as gyno come from the Greek word for woman, and trix is a suffix for feminine nouns.



If you have a suitable spot in your garden we have Gynatrix available from the nursery. ❁

Autumn? Just a little bit...

This year I thought we were not going to see autumn. In mid-April, it seemed like summer was still here. Then all of a sudden we were digging out the winter clothes! Even though we don't see a lot of the wonderful variegated colours of the autumn in our road, I was very pleased to see our ornamental grapevine finally changing from vivid green to the warm reds, oranges, browns and yellows.

As much as I tire of the leaves falling and of being walked into our outdoor living area, I love the colours, and always hope that this tonal explosion will sustain my need of colour stimulation until next season, or at least thru the winter months. ❁

Gail Watts



Looking after our unexpected pollinators

The vulnerable Brush-Tail Phascogale. A nesting box has hung empty on one of our Manna gums for several years, until recently when I noticed scratches at the entrance hole. A closer inspection revealed that a Brush Tailed Phascogale had taken up residence.



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Phascogales are an arboreal, carnivorous, nocturnal marsupial, related to the Tasmanian Devil. They spend most of their time in the tree tops. Their colouring is deep grey with a cream underbelly. And they have a very distinctive black bottlebrush-shaped tail.

Their diet is mostly about insects; beetles, bull ants, spiders and centipedes, but they have been known

to attack poultry. Eucalyptus nectar, particularly Box and Ironbark, is also an important food source which is how, in return, they assist with pollination.

The male mates and dies within the first year of life. The female seldom lives longer than two years after producing one litter of between two and eight young.

These little creatures are listed as vulnerable in the Threatened Species Conservation Act. They are particularly vulnerable to cats and to fox attack. It is therefore very important that everyone in the North Warrandyte area keeps their pet cats indoors. ❁

Ann Penrose

Rehabilitating the garden after a long dry Summer

Now is the time to survey the damage done to our gardens by four months of no rain at the hottest time of the year.

Many shrubs that I thought were completely dead have miraculously revived after rain and are sprouting new growth. One particular plant which has done this in my garden is *Olearia lirata*-daisy bush. I have now pruned back the branches and foliage to assist the plants as they recover from the harsh summer.

The native mint bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos*, took a real beating and I have had to pull out several very large bushes that didn't survive. Whilst *Dianellas* and *Lomandras* also appeared to have died, after the first shower they are also showing new growth and are now thriving.

By planting local indigenous species in my garden I was quietly confident that they would make it through the tough conditions and eventually flourish to see another summer. But I must admit there were times when my confidence was tested.

On the whole, however, our local species have resilient root stock and regardless of what is happening above ground level, the roots can survive in even the toughest of conditions and will sustain the plant against the weather odds. Pruning back the dead growth, mulching, and feeding will further assist your gardens to rejuvenate.

Happy gardening!❁

Ruth Rankin



Nursery Note

Our soil bin has been renovated and we have a new delivery of soil, ready for pricking out the plants for the year ahead.

Many thanks to the power shovellers, Janine, Ann and Ian who cleaned out the bin and laid the new weed mat. We are confident this will keep the tree roots at bay.

We are having more success propagating *Microleanea* by using green seed, so there should be plenty available very soon.

Plenty of other shrubs are also ready for planting in gardens now.



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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.