

WINTER ISSUE · JUNE 2026

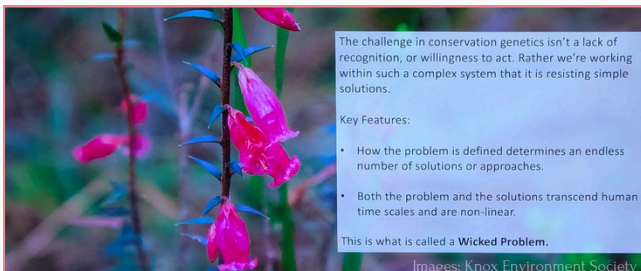
GREENLINK NEWS

Your local indigenous plant nursery

CINERG Workshop: Conservation Genetics

On Saturday 18 April, representatives from Greenlink Nursery joined other members of the CINERG collective of eastern suburbs indigenous nurseries at Knox Environment Society (KES), for a presentation “Conservation Genetics In Our Rapidly Changing World” by Rylee Argoon, a Conservation Officer and Indigenous Nursery Manager.

Rylee addressed the rapidly changing conditions and challenges that community nurseries are encountering. She emphasised the importance of collaboration to maintain the genetic health of indigenous species and the adoption of best-practice seed collection. There are no easy answers to the complex challenges before us, and this topic will remain a continuous conversation for the collective over the coming years, but it was very encouraging to see a good turnout of people willing to learn and work together on this most important issue.



Greenlink acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of the land that the nursery conducts business on, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This issue:

Who is ready for winter? After an unusually warm autumn, the weather is finally getting cooler, and our minds turn to layering up in our favourite winter woollies and enjoying the crisp, fresh air! Bushwalking at this time of year can be quite magical, don't you think?

In this June edition, we explore some exciting topics: Shifting Baseline Syndrome, and Garden Microclimates, authored by two of our own Greenlink volunteers.

Our new polyhouse has finally been built and we are so pleased with the outcome - it was a long wait, but well worth it. We share some photos of the journey.

In May we hosted a wonderful intergenerational event as part of the City of Whitehorse's Positive Ageing program, and we were absolutely thrilled to contribute plants to a nature strip garden design that was entered into the Melbourne Flower and Garden Show.

So, settle in with a warm cuppa and enjoy!





Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show

GREENLINK FEATURED IN NATURE STRIP GARDEN

Back at the end of March, several species of indigenous plants grown by Greenlink Nursery were used in a beautiful nature strip display garden at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show - a contribution that we take great pride in.

Greenlink had worked closely with Jen from Jen Martin Landscape Architecture in the months leading up to the show, providing some suggestions and advice on suitable plant species for her to incorporate into the design.

Some of our volunteers stopped by to look at the finished garden, and gave it a big thumbs up!!



SGARS Update

You may recall in our December 2025 edition, we mentioned the impact Second-generation Anti-coagulant Rodenticides, or SGAR poisons, were having on native wildlife and other non-target species, including household pets.

Back in March, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) recommended that SGARS be certified as restricted chemical products. This means that they will only be available to people who meet specific licensing requirements.

You can read the full story [here](#). Find a list of what products to buy and what to avoid [here](#).

From Birdlife Australia: "As Australia transitions away from these poisons, many people are discovering unused SGAR products at home.

PLEASE don't put them in your bin.

SGARs remain active for long periods, and rats can access rubbish, in effect sending us straight back to square one.

INSTEAD: contact your local council about chemical or poison disposal options, use council clean up days and drop off services, or (in Victoria) programs like Detox Your Home, via Sustainability Victoria which accept rat bait specifically. Safe disposal is a simple but powerful way to stop these poisons from entering the food chain and doing their damage."



Image: ABC News



When Generations Connect

BY TREVOR EDDY

We were delighted to recently run our very first “Intergenerational” project at the Nursery in conjunction with the Positive Ageing team from the City of Whitehorse. We brought together 20 grade 3 students from Kerrimuir Primary School with culturally diverse backgrounds, along with 13 Seniors who booked online and a further seven from Box Hill Views (Opal Age Care).

Their task for the day was to explore their generational differences through a series of “buddy” activities which included ceramic pot painting, propagating *Correa glabra* cuttings and exploring the life cycle of seeds to mature plants. The Kerrimuir kids had been practicing their questions for a few weeks whilst the “oldies” were excitedly waiting for the day.

Everyone had so much fun and discovered that whether you are 93 or eight, age doesn’t matter when it comes to learning and making new friends. Filled with excitement, smiles, curiosity, adventure, laughter, and discovery, as well as the usual sumptuous Greenlink morning tea the day proved to be an absolutely wonderful experience and success, perhaps a precursor to possible future events of this nature.

Thank you to our Greenlink Team: Noela, Janet R, Emi and Gabrielle for their support and direction during the day, along with Luke Van Koll, Grade 3 Teacher at Kerrimuir and Josie a Parent Volunteer, the City of Whitehorse Positive Ageing Team of Lisa and Stacey, together with Sue Ann from Urban Greening, and Elgar Ward councillor Blair Barker.

****Editor’s Note:** We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Trevor for the tremendous effort and commitment he provided over the past six months in planning and coordinating the "When Generations Connect" workshop, in partnership with Council. His dedication to bring this valuable initiative to life, contributed to its success.



Image: Noela Locarnini



Polyhouse Update

FINALLY!!

It feels like ages since that eventful November morning last year when a very large branch from our *Eucalyptus rubida* brought down our polyhouse!

In the process of planning our rebuild, we took advantage of the additional space created by the extension of the eastern boundary, which allowed us to expand the footprint of the new polyhouse, significantly increasing our capacity.

Now that it is finished, we couldn't be more thrilled!

Here are a few photos capturing the journey, beginning (top right) with the culprit who started all of this (and who we still love very much!) and finishing with the completed polyhouse below.





President's Report

BY ROBERT JONES

These past three months since my last report has flown by in what seems like a blink of the eye. Summer has turned to cooler weather, and we have been blessed with a few good downpours of rain, although much more is still needed.

Work at the nursery again continues at a hectic rate, with several thousand plants being propagated each month and around 20,000 plants going out the gate in May/June that have been on order. As well as these, orders for National Tree Day are rolling in once again, maximising our holding capacity.

With the fence being moved 3.5 metres into the park to give us additional space for storage and seed production areas, we are now finalising new benches, the expansion of our watering system, and gravel to cover the area. To assist with the costs, we have applied for a community grant from the Suburban Rail Loop Authority, which hopefully will be finalised in the weeks ahead. It will then be full steam ahead to get this work managed and transform the extra space into a functioning area for the nursery. We are hopeful that this work can all be completed around mid July.

In our last newsletter we mentioned the damage caused to our main polyhouse from a limb falling off the Eucalyptus rubida in the nursery. Finally, we have completed the installation of a new polyhouse which is 1.5 metres wider than the old one, giving us an additional 1,200 plant capacity. It ended up being more advantageous for us to completely replace the polyhouse instead of repairing the damaged one. Thus, out of what was originally a disaster for us, we have ended up with a good outcome.

On current indications we once again will end the financial year on a very strong note with growth in plant numbers and finances.

Our park team have continued their work outside the nursery, completely replanting the area along the new boundary fence and doing some amazing plantings in other areas of the park. Next time you are around the nursery, have a wander through Bushy Creek and see the transformation.

This year we have been doing some experimental work with seed production from plants that are now becoming more difficult to find in the reserves, due to population growth, climate change etc. So far this is proving to be very successful for us, and will be a way for us to provide a buffer for seed sourcing going forward.

Wurundjeri Seasons

Guling Orchid Season
(August)

- Cold weather is coming to an end. Guling (orchids) are flowering.
- Ae-noke (caterpillars) of Common Brown butterfly feed on grasses at night.
- Muyan (Silver Wattles) are flowering.
- Bulen-bulen (Superb Lyrebird) males perform the last of their courtship displays.
- The star Arcturus is seen on the northwestern horizon soon after sunset.
- Gurrborra (Koalas) begin mating. Males bellow at night.

Source: museums victoria.com.au



Caterpillar of Common Brown Butterfly image: Butterfly House



President's Report...cont

From some of the species we are growing, we have been able to collect in one season what would have taken us 3-4 years of collection from the bushland reserves. We will be looking increasingly into this as a way of securing seed.

If you have not been into the nursery for some time, please call in a join us for morning tea and have a look around at the changes.

Treasurer's Report

BY TREVOR EDDY

Despite outlaying almost \$29,000 on replacing our polyhouse and the necessary realignment of the area surrounding it, we have had a very strong quarter recording sales of almost \$37,000.

This means that not only have we compensated for the damage, but we have also far exceeded sales expectations which places us in a very strong position. We will have record sales and investment income for the plan year and even though we have spent heavily on nursery infrastructure and technology, we will return an above plan surplus.

We will continue supporting our local community again this year with donations approaching \$15,000. This result could not have been achieved without the amazing contribution from our volunteers who keep producing high quality plants for our community.

I am looking forward sharing our end of year result with you.

Congratulations Emi!

2026 MENZIES VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Greenlink Vice-president Emi Luppino was a recipient of this year's awards, presented by Gabriel Ng MP, Federal Member for Menzies, for her contributions to the local community. Congratulations!!



“We often talk about saving the planet, but the truth is that we must do these things to save ourselves”

SIR DAVID
ATTENBOROUGH





Landscape, Weather and Memory: Shifting Baseline Syndrome

BY JANET RUSSELL

What is the normal weather where you live? What is the normal vegetation? What is the normal number of animals both in population size and variety? I would struggle to answer any of these questions. But I do know what the normal weather conditions were in this area when I was a child no longer exist. And I also know that it is highly likely that 200 years ago the local conditions were different again than what I was familiar with when I was growing up, and the local animals would have been very different in number and variety.

What we recall, either through lived experience or through the memory of relatives or people we know and trust who've lived in the area for a long time, becomes our baseline. If we've just moved to an area and we don't know anyone who's shared the memory of past weather conditions, that baseline can be extremely short, as my baseline was when I moved from Melbourne to Canberra.

But even if we have access to the knowledge of past generations, once previous conditions slip from living memory, people's associations with weather and landscape generally shift to the conditions that are now within living memory. Indigenous cultures, and especially Australia's indigenous people, are notable in being able to preserve memories of shifts in weather and landscape over much longer periods of time.

Back in the 1970's...

But even the memories of how Melbourne's weather has shifted within living memory are valuable. The climate and weather patterns of Melbourne's middle eastern suburbs that I grew up in are increasingly different from those today. Four examples: first frost was an annual occurrence. Every year I recall crunching across frosty grass on my way to school. Now frost is unusual. The bottom of the valleys would become wet, often boggy and water puddled; all the children I knew owned gum boots.



Continued...

Second: the hottest time of the year was in January: that was when the 40-degree days occurred. There were still some days in the 30s and hot enough to swim after the return to school, but the hottest time was January. Now the hottest weather often sets in around the end of January when schools returns and extends through March, sometimes into April. Andrew Hardy remembers it being unusual to have warm, rather than cold wintery, weather on the Anzac Day weekend. And there were so many cicadas in summer that you would find not one but many cicada shells on the trunks of the trees and the rather gruesome sound of them being caught by the local birds several times an hour was part of the ordinary background soundscape of a summer day.

Third: a string of hot days would usually be followed by a cool change accompanied by rain, often heavy rain. Andrew Hardy also remembers this: each day being slightly hotter than the day before until the rain came. Summer storms occurred just about every year around the Christmas New Year period with lots of branches down in the streets. Now the rain accompanying the cool change can be missing.

Fourth: the hottest time of day was between 4-4.30pm. I had just enough time to get home from school, change into bathers and put out the sprinkler and then the cold change would arrive: the Southerly. A friend who lived by the coast at Edithvale noted that it became blustery after 2pm which was why they had a swimming pool despite being so close to the beach.



Image: Melbourne University

Landscape, Weather and Memory: Shifting Baseline Syndrome...cont

What has changed between then and now...

Many of the suburbs between Edithvale and the suburbs along the Belgrave Lilydale lines, the eastern suburbs, had yet to be built and were farmland. Even stretches along Warrigal Rd were open land. This was a cooler landscape for those winds off the bay to traverse. It still gets blustery at the bay around two. But now that blustery southerly wind doesn't reach Whitehorse and the temperature keeps climbing. The hottest time of the day is around 5-6pm, when people are commuting and preparing dinner. The landscape heats and dries for an additional hour or two. This makes an impact, especially when the hot weather can now linger into April.

These changes to our weather patterns are something that, even for our own health, we should care about: heatwaves are Australia's most deadly natural disaster, not to mention their role in exacerbating illness. And our flora and fauna cannot go inside to air-conditioned spaces to get a drink and escape the heat.

There are many factors involved in why the weather patterns in Melbourne have altered. Climate change is important but the way we build has also had a significant impact: our natural air conditioners are vegetation, especially trees, and water in the soil, the water table, and in waterways and wetlands.

The removal of vegetation on both public land for infrastructure and private land with the decrease in the size of green space required on a house block, the increase in built surfaces, especially unshaded built surfaces which store and radiate heat has and is continuing to heat our suburbs.

This is compounded by the way we treat rainwater. Most houses direct their stormwater straight into the gutters from where it has no opportunity to enter the local environment. Most of Melbourne's stream network is in pipes or concrete channels. The remaining creeks are often channelized, limiting the storage of water in the environment. Most wetlands and flood plains have been drained and often built over. There is an absence of water-slowng landscaping on private and public land. In fact, in most parks the surfaces have been contoured to direct runoff into the drains.

Continued...

It is not surprising when you add up all these factors that our local plants struggle to survive without additional water. Nor that a [Melbourne University Vegetation map](#) found some areas of Whitehorse to be just as hot as the Western suburbs.

If we were able to go back 200 years and talk to the Wurundjeri peoples they would describe a landscape that was different again, and in ways that we are only now beginning to appreciate.

The Wurundjeri [calendar](#) had controlled burning occurring late summer, sometime around February and March, to improve the fertility of the soil for tuberous plants with the arrival of cool winds and rain in March. It is hard to imagine controlled burning being possible in those months with Melbourne's current weather patterns, let alone the arrival of rains and cool winds in March.

The lowlands often flooded in June and July, it began to get warmer in August but in September and October more water would move into wetlands and billabongs linked to rivers and streams that were fed by snowmelt from the high country. The land would begin to dry out between November and January. Fish, eels, water plants and waterfowl were all important parts of the Wurundjeri diet.

So while the Wurundjeri also recognised a seven year drought and twenty eight year flooding cycle, the landscape was generally not water stressed at the start of summer putting the flora and fauna in a better position to weather drought.



Landscape, Weather and Memory: Shifting Baseline Syndrome...cont

It would also be interesting to know if there is any ongoing oral record of what the soil was like. The Whitehorse Booklet – ‘Gardening with Indigenous Plants’, describes valley floor soils as ‘sandy stream deposits’, and certainly we know that our marginal plants require friable soil, rather than clay, to survive. Slopes and hilltops are described as having ‘a very shallow, often stony, clay loam topsoil layer above a subsoil of yellow clay’.

But it may be worth keeping an open mind about the depth of that topsoil prior to white settlement. This is because Whitehorse, like most of Victoria, has lost its eco-system engineers: [the bandicoots](#).

A [single Bandicoot](#) can move approximately 3.9 tonnes of soil per year through their digging for insects, fungi and other food in the soil. Their holes stay more moist than undug soil, are not hydrophobic and the litter in them breaks down faster into smaller pieces.

In areas where Bandicoots are re-introduced soil fertility is improved and it is considered that fire resilience is also increased through the reduction of leaf litter and increase in moisture in the soil. Given the impact of bandicoots in other locations it is arguably more likely than not that the topsoil would have been more fertile and quite possibly deeper as well. In consequence, the flora could also have been more healthy and lush than what we see today. And certainly the areas which were cool burned would have had more fertile soils and allowed the tuberous plants to grow larger.

Conclusions about the shifting baselines...

If we treat conditions as they are now as our baseline of ‘normal’ we will likely drive more plant and animal species to extinction in Melbourne, including Whitehorse. If we treat the conditions in living memory as our baseline of ‘normal’ we will need to have a smaller building footprint and greater amount of greenspace on the block, use water slowing techniques on public and private land, restore waterways and wetlands where possible, and plant more indigenous species on private land to replace some of those that are missing. If we want to treat pre-settlement Melbourne (as best we can determine the conditions to have been like) as our baseline of ‘normal’ for climate and soil conditions, then we’ll need to do still more to build soil fertility as was done with cool burning, and the activity of Bandicoots.

Continued...

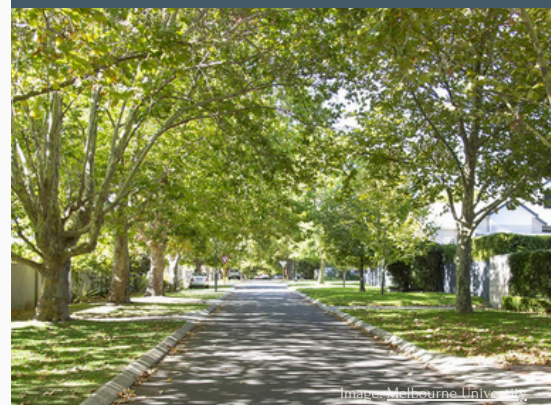
From this you can see what we know about the history of weather and landscape and where we draw the baseline of ‘normal’ makes a difference to how we think we should treat the landscape to maintain or improve livability for us, our flora and our fauna:

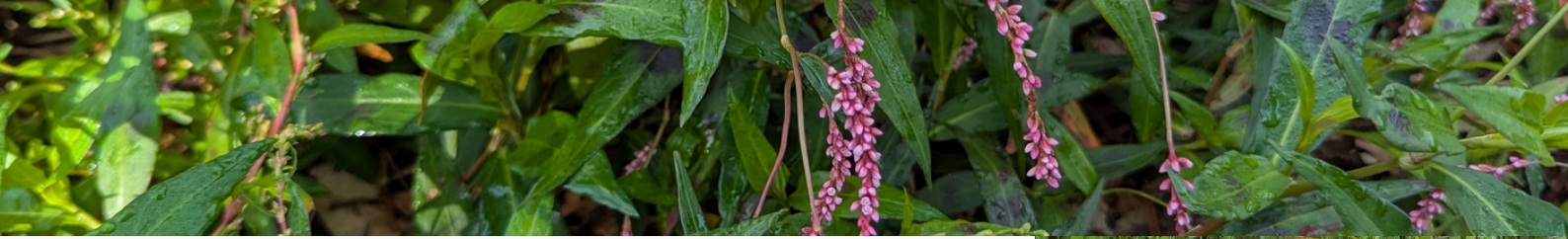
‘With ongoing environmental degradation at local, regional, and global scales, people’s accepted thresholds for environmental conditions are continually being lowered. In the absence of past information or experience with historical conditions, members of each new generation accept the situation in which they were raised as being normal. This psychological and sociological phenomenon is termed shifting baseline syndrome (SBS), which is increasingly recognized as one of the fundamental obstacles to addressing a wide range of today’s global environmental issues.’

Mashashi Soga, J. Gaston from [Shifting baseline syndrome: causes, consequences, and implications](#).

Let’s raise awareness...

I think a good start would be to raise awareness by talking with others about how our weather and landscapes have altered in living memory. Do you have recollections which we could add to a follow up article on this subject perhaps?





Garden Microclimates

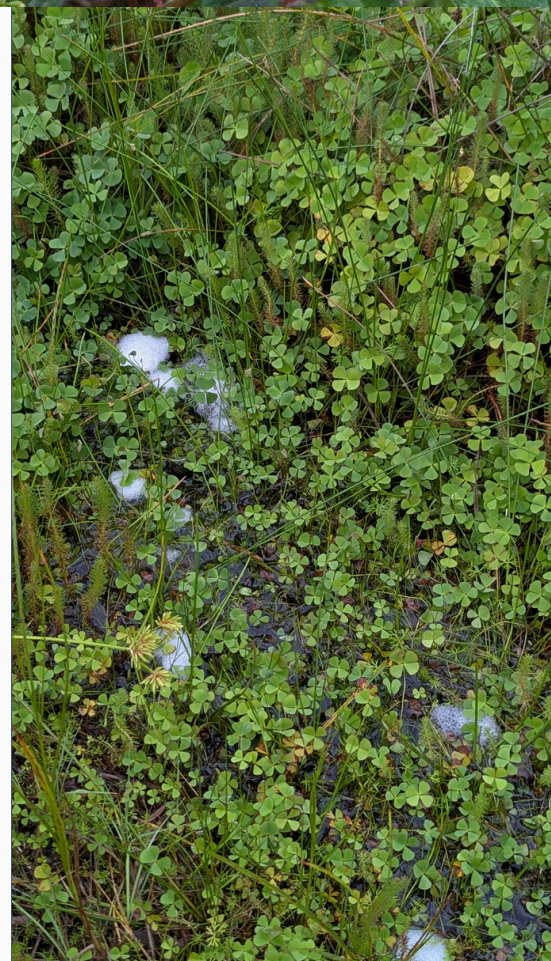
BY AUGUSTINE DORONILA

Walking around the parkland adjacent to Greenlink Nursery, the different landscapes created by our volunteers have certainly showcased the biodiversity of our indigenous plant communities in the City of Whitehorse. In the 4 years I have lived a stone's throw from the nursery, I have had the chance to wander many times through Bushy Creek Reserve and get reinvigorated by the beauty of our native flora, as well as the many animals living in these reconstructed native habitats within our suburban built environments.

The different landscape features that our garden volunteers have been recreating to give urban gardens a more natural look has impressed me so much, and I would like to describe some of the outstanding settings that are on show. Each one of these are very good examples of creating microclimates, which are small scale and localised areas that have different atmospheric conditions to the surrounding landscapes. These have ambient (air) temperature, humidity and wind.

I will start with our little frog pond next to the back entrance of the nursery. The pond has a regular supply of runoff water from the nursery drainage system, hence even this small water body acts as an air conditioner that cools the surrounding areas. The flourishing pond ecosystem has various species of aquatic plants that provide shelter and food for the frogs, dragonflies, perhaps tiny fish, and of course large birds like ducks and other species that come to feed, drink and cool down in this small ecosystem.

Our grassy beds are a good example of plants that live quite readily in dry spaces in a garden. Our native grasses are drought tolerant, and their presence reduces the heating of otherwise bare areas. A sunny area with shallow topsoils can be an appropriate habitat for warm season perennial native grasses like Wallaby, Kangaroo and Spear grasses. My research and that of my colleagues from the Botany and Ecology departments at our universities have demonstrated that air temperatures within these grass areas were often 10°C lower than on barren soils, and certainly on footpaths and roads.





Garden Microclimates cont.....

The trees in the reserve create a shaded microclimate, certainly lowering the air temperatures through the cooling effect of the shade from the leafy canopies and from the evapotranspiration that they do by releasing water vapour during photosynthesis. Moreover, they protect the plants growing in the understory from strong winds that can buffet the reserve. These shaded environments are suitable for ground covers and shrubs that do not grow in full sunlight.

Over the years the volunteers have observed what grows best in the different areas, so this has informed and enhanced the natural look of the gardens around the nursery, and has led to the creation of new feature plant beds. A good example has been the creation of a Kangaroo Grass bed in a north facing dry section of the reserve, while on the south-facing side of the path which was shaded, a cool season grassy area of Weeping Grass has been established.

Hence a simple appreciation of a microclimate opens up further possibilities for us to recreate habitats in which our indigenous plant species can grow successfully in our built ecosystems, and we can contribute to conserving our indigenous plant biodiversity in Whitehorse.

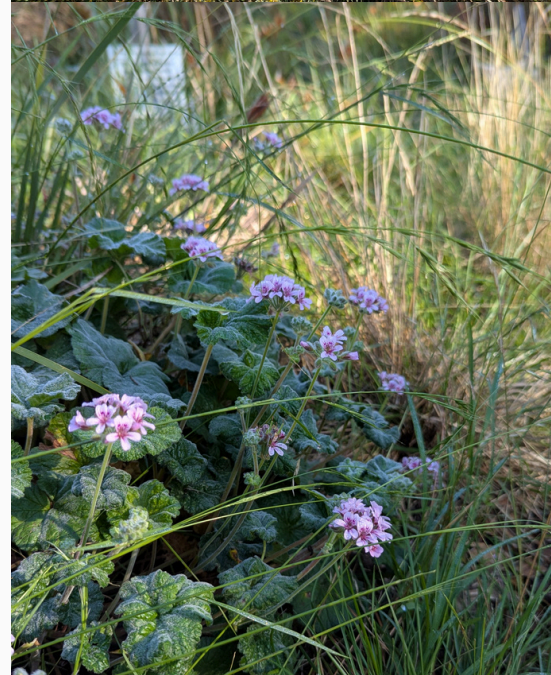




Image: Canva.com

Hey Kids!

DID YOU KNOW....?

Have you ever thought about how our eucalypts look after themselves in such a dry country like Australia? Next time you are in your local park, or out in the bush, find a big eucalypt and look for these features in the illustration below, created by the people from National Tree Day.

You can get involved in the next National Tree Day, either through your school on Friday 24 July, or with your family on Sunday 26 July. Check out their [website](#) to find a planting site near you.

Greenlink Nursery is helping out by growing some of the trees that will be planted on the day.

AMAZING ADAPTATIONS

THE ICONIC EUCALYPTUS

Eucalypts have a range of adaptations that make them masters of surviving dry climates.

Leaves hang vertically to reduce sunlight exposure and prevent water loss via evaporation.

Bark is thick to insulate from fire and prevent dehydration.

Roots are deep and expansive to search far and wide for water, which is often scarce.

Waxy leaves reflect sunlight & prevent water loss

Leaves hang vertically to reduce sun exposure

Thick bark to insulate

Extensive root system to search for water

The infographic features a central illustration of a eucalyptus tree with callouts pointing to its leaves, bark, and roots. A magnified view of the leaves is shown above the main tree. A small leaf icon is in the bottom left corner.

Source: National Tree Day

Fungi Season!

We are now getting into the time of year when fungi spotting is in full swing. Send us your photos of unusual fungi you have found around your neighbourhood!



Image: Janet Russell



Greenlink Box Hill Inc. is on

For those members on LinkedIn, you can join and follow us using this link [Greenlink Box Hill Inc](#)

Or follow us on Instagram: [@greenlink_nursery](#)

At Greenlink Box Hill we value:

- Every customer who deals with us.
- A happy, safe, and enthusiastic workplace that embraces all volunteers and makes them feel welcome, respected, and honoured.
- The high quality of our plants.
- The contribution that everyone makes to our success.
- Honesty and ethics in all of our dealings with customers and each other.



Greenlink Box Hill Inc. Reg No. A0018547D

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Newsletter Editor: Gabrielle Bradley

BE A CONTRIBUTOR

If you have any stories, news, photos, or an upcoming event that you would like to share with Greenlink for publication in our next newsletter, please write to the editor at greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com

GOOD TO KNOW

Regular open days:
Tuesdays & Wednesdays
9.00 am - 12.00 pm

Saturday sales days:
22 August 2026
3 October 2026
7 November 2026

Contact:

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(Answered 9am - 12pm Tues & Wed only)

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