

Greenlink News



June 2020

Your local indigenous nursery 100% run by volunteers

Regular Open Days Saturday Sales Days

Tuesdays and Wednesdays
9.00 am to 12:00 pm
Saturdays 9:00am-1:00pm
22 August, 19 September
24 October

Contact or Visit Us

greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com
41 Wimmera St
Box Hill North 3129
0479 121 653
(Answered 9:00am -12:00pm
Tues & Wed only)

Stay in Touch and Resources

www.greenlinkboxhill.org
[www.facebook.com/
greenlinknursery](https://www.facebook.com/greenlinknursery)
[www.flickr.com/photos/
greenlinkboxhill](https://www.flickr.com/photos/greenlinkboxhill)

Darebin Parklands



Darebin Parklands was the recent destination for 6,000 tubestock (1,500 supplied by Greenlink, 4,500 by Bungalook). The cover photo and photos on this page were taken by Lee McKenzie – Acting Coordinator of Bushland Management for the City of Darebin.



Lee coordinated the planting project at Darebin parklands in April and wrote to us to thank us for the plants " The stock was fantastic..." At a time when Melbourne's parklands have been needed and appreciated more than ever it is great to see the photos of the recent planting.



Plants included Indigenous ground covers, grasses and mid-storey tube stock. This should help improve the biodiversity.



It is hard to believe that in 1973 the Darebin Parklands was bounded by a municipal tip and a weed infested horse paddock! Darebin Parklands has been transformed and is now home to echidnas, flying foxes, native fish, 70 species of birds and the odd kangaroo.

The Darebin Parklands Association (dpa.org.au) is an active group involved in a number of exciting projects, including constructing 'penthouses for parrots' and improving water quality so as to attract platypus.

Study of Insect Diversity at Greenlink



Over the next year you may see a man at Greenlink moving through the rows, intently studying the plants – in particular, the flowering plants. You may also see him using a sweep net. Dr. Luis Mata is a Research Fellow at RMIT University. He and Dr. Laura Mumaw are engaged in a study of the insect diversity within four indigenous plant nurseries representing different bioregions of greater Melbourne. We are lucky to have him carrying out his investigations at Greenlink.



This is a Cuckoo or Emerald wasp, a native insect just under a centimetre in length. While it is pretty easy to see where the name “Emerald” comes from, the “cuckoo’ bit is a mite less obvious.

Like the cuckoo bird, these wasps lay their eggs in other wasps’ nests, often mud dauber wasps. Like the bird, the newly hatched Cuckoo wasp disposes of the mud wasp offspring, either by starving it of food or simply just eating it!

One of the areas of Luis’s research is to survey participants in the Gardens for Wildlife program in order to explore the socio-ecological benefits of wildlife gardening. The survey will invite respondents to participate in additional research including plant-insect surveys of their own gardens and citizen science.

For volunteers working each week at Greenlink Luis is happy for the citizen science to start now! If you see an interesting insect on an indigenous plant at the nursery please get out your phone or camera and take a photo. Your findings can help to contribute to Luis’s and Laura’s research.



The more you look, the more flies there seem to be (...) very small, only a few mls long

"With more than one million described extant species, insects represent the most diversified animal taxa on planet Earth. Unsurprisingly, insects account for as much as 66 percent of all known animals. The core importance to humanity, however, does not reside alone in their diversity, but in the ecological roles that they play in structuring mutualistic and trophic networks in almost all terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems throughout the biosphere. Moreover, through their capacity to structure and fertilise soils, disperse seeds, pollinate flowers, regulate weed and pest populations, and provide food, insects are arguably the World's most important contributors of biodiversity-delivered ecosystem services."

The above quote is taken from a summary of 'The Little Things that Run the City' a survey Luis conducted in 2015-2017 examining insect biodiversity in the City of Melbourne. Luis contributed to the final project report subtitled 'How do Melbourne's green spaces support insect biodiversity and promote insect health? Follow the link to this report at <https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/the-little-things-that-run-the-city-201115-lowres.pdf>

Luis's photos, including those recently taken at Greenlink, can be viewed at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dingilingi>



Yellow Dart Butterfly. We are just about at the end of Butterfly season for now. More in Spring!!. This small butterfly is having a drink of nectar.



Mistletoe Moth Caterpillar. The adult moth is very pretty with black and white markings and red 'socks'. The caterpillar is also quite striking, and as the name implies, eats mistletoe

Thank you to Ian Moodie for permission to use his photos of insects and the accompanying text.

iNaturalist training



iNaturalist is a free app which enables people to share biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. The app is a powerful tool with many features. Whitehorse Council's Tree Education officer Belinda Moody organised a training session on using iNaturalist on 12 May for a group of interested Whitehorse residents. Dr. Luis Mata conducted the presentation via Zoom.

Luis showed how you can upload photos of flora and fauna via the app. In most cases the app will be able to identify the species or at least the family it belongs to. It allows you to share this information with a community of over 750,000 scientists and naturalists who can help you learn more. When you upload your photo you also record the date, time and location (you can choose to obscure location if you wish). Sharing your observations can contribute to scientists' knowledge and understanding. It can also help amateur naturalists learn by submitting their photos and having them identified through a data assessment process. People can make an initial attempt at identifying the species and then others, including experts, may make their assessments based upon the data. A positive identification may not always be reached. More data might be needed or experts may disagree. This process ends however with many species receiving 'research grade' identification.

This data is then fed into the Atlas of Living Australia (ala.org.au) which is a repository of Australian biodiversity data from multiple sources. So your post on iNaturalist can ultimately help give a more detailed picture of Australia's biodiversity to scientists and researchers.

If you are interested in learning more about this powerful tool for citizen science just login to iNaturalist. You will find plenty of information on the website <https://www.inaturalist.org/> about how to use the app including video tutorials on how to add observations on your mobile, how to add photos or sound to your observations, how to geotag photos etc. Thank you to Belinda and Luis for helping us to gain more understanding of this powerful new app. It should encourage many more people to become interested in all forms of life on this planet.



Sugar Glider



Cruentomycena viscidocruenta

(Photos – Ian Moodie)

Sequestering Carbon in Your Backyard

Growing trees is one obvious way we can sequester carbon in our gardens, and filling our garden with plants has the added bonus of creating habitat for local wildlife. But that's not the only way we can sequester carbon. In the bush, leaves and branches drop to the ground all the time, and this natural mulch provides habitat for insects, lizards and other small critters, as well as holding moisture and insulating the ground from the summer heat. As it breaks down over time it feeds the soil life which in turn releases nutrients that plants can use, and carbon in the form of humus or organic matter builds up in the soil. In the same way we can keep the carbon and nutrients that our gardens generate in our gardens to enrich the soil and feed our plants.

Chop and drop, pluck and plop: Many things that we clean up in the garden – small branches that you would normally chop up and put in the green bin, young weeds without seed heads – can be chopped up and left in place to add to the mulch layer on our garden beds.

Hugel mound: If you already have enough mulch in your garden or like the look of a more formal garden with a more orderly mulch layer, a variation on the permaculture hugel mound might be the answer. Essentially you create a compact pile of branches somewhere out of the way that slowly rots from the bottom. The key to this technique is to break or cut the branches so all the branches lie parallel to each other in the pile. You can also incorporate large logs.

Examples below use a raised garden bed to contain the branches, or two rows of metal stakes. The raised bed in the photo below has been filled to 20cm above the top several times in the last couple of years - the bottom layers break down, the pile settles and we add more branches – I have been surprised how much of the pile “disappears”. Eventually when the raised bed is full of rotted branches and is no longer settling, we will add a layer of compost on top and use it as a vegetable bed. The staked pile is situated under a grapefruit tree and the humusy organic matter that is forming at the base is feeding the tree, and is also be easy to move to other parts of the garden if too much accumulates.



You can also create a true hugel mound by using your pile of logs and branches as the basis for a raised garden bed, see <https://www.fairharvest.com.au/hugelkultur-fair-harvest-garden/>

Compost heap: Your compost bin or a compost heap is also a great way to process non-weedy green waste. Chopped up branches can add carbon to balance out the nitrogen in your compost heap, and will also create airspaces the heap providing the oxygen needed to help your heap to compost properly. If you have the space, a 1m x 1m x 1m compost heap works more efficiently than smaller bins.

Worm farm: Most worm farms can't deal with a lot of weeds, but my worms love young green weeds so don't forget to put aside some choice morsels for your worms if you have a worm farm.

Weed tea fertiliser: Seed heads, weeds with runners, ivy, kikuyu etc., can be problematic to compost, but with care they can be recycled into the garden. An effective strategy is to make weed tea from them by submerging them in water for 6-8 weeks. You can find more info here: <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/weed-tea-fertiliser/9428830>

Carbon rescue: If you are converting from lawn to garden or have just moved into a newly built house on a "moonscaped" block, and your garden isn't yet producing its own carbon, you can rescue unwanted carbon from elsewhere – yard waste compost or leafy woodchips from an arborist (ask for mulch quality – no seeds, ivy, blackberries) are a good place to start. After a storm there are often fallen branches on nature strips, recently we rescued most of a fallen tree from neighbors, and in the autumn there are often drifts of autumn leaves on neighborhood streets just waiting for someone to scoop them up and take them home!

Green bin: Lastly, if you don't have the space or the time or the desire to manage your carbon yourself, the council will do it for you when you put your green waste out for collection in a Green Bin. You can always buy a load of yard waste compost from your local landscape supply company or snag some woodchips from an arborist to add back to your garden as mulch as needed. A green bin is also a great solution for weedy stuff like ivy, kikuyu and weeds that have gone to seed, so if you only need one occasionally, why not share one with your neighbours?

And lastly, while this is not true carbon sequestration it could count towards reducing our carbon foot print a little as we stay closer to home - our gardens are wonderful places grow food and spend time with family and friends and the work and time involved in creating and maintaining a garden keeps us active and connects us with the natural world.

Jan Akeroyd



Mont Albert Station

Enchylaena tomentosa (ruby saltbush) has naturalized in the garden beds and is taking over the station platform

Mont Albert Station indigenous plantings

Mont Albert Station volunteers have done a wonderful job in establishing indigenous plants on what was previously barren ground between the station platform and the road.



Volunteer of the season



One of the benefits for Greenlink of the current COVID-19 restrictions has been that we have been seeing a lot more of Robert Ham as he has been unable to attend university as normal. We thought this would be a good opportunity to interview him.

Q.: How long have you been volunteering at Greenlink?

A.: Five years. I started when I was 15.

Q.: How did you find out about the Nursery?

A.: I live in the area and was walking past. The Nursery was open and I walked in and met some of the volunteers who showed me around. I signed up for membership and straight away received 10 free plants. I cleared a garden bed at home and started to fill it with indigenous plants. Since then I have planted about 400 indigenous plants.

Q.: What has motivated you to do this?

A.: I have hiked since I was 10 and have always been interested in wildlife and native plants. I like birds and I realised that birds are attracted to native plants. I'm interested in restoring habitat.

Q.: Has your involvement with Greenlink from such a young age had an influence on you?

A.: It kicked off an interest in plant physiology and native plant biology. I ended up doing a course in native plant biology over summer which has formed part of my course. I am currently studying my second year of a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Melbourne.

Q.: Are you interested in any particular lines of research?

A.: I would be interested to try propagating orchids from seeds by experimenting with culturing fungi and finding out which orchids have associations with which fungi.

I would also love to be able to propagate cherry ballarts but more research is needed.



**Robert Ham
(working
while
socially
distancing)**

Q.: You have lately got into making nesting boxes. How did that start?

A.: It started because I wanted one for my own yard. I was not impressed by the quality of what was on offer and did not want to pay the price. I thought I could construct a better box myself. I have been woodworking for a while and I have the tools.

Q.: How did you go about it?

A.: I researched designs and dimensions on the internet and looked at photos. The first one I made was awful. I needed better quality wood and purpose built screws. I have now made boxes for: possums, antichinus, microbats, and small to large parrots.

Q.: What are you getting out of volunteering here today?

A.: I find working with plants very therapeutic. I also enjoy the social interaction. It is a bit limited at uni at the moment.

*If you are interested in ordering a nesting box please see the Greenlink website for details.
<https://greenlinkboxhill.org/nesting-boxes/>*



Robert Ham positions a nesting box for rosellas in the large eucalypt at Greenlink. Will the tawny frogmouths now vacate their favourite spot on a nearby branch?



Tawny frogmouth

Has she woken up to the frogmouths now fact that there is now a nesting box nearby? (Photo – Ian Moodie)



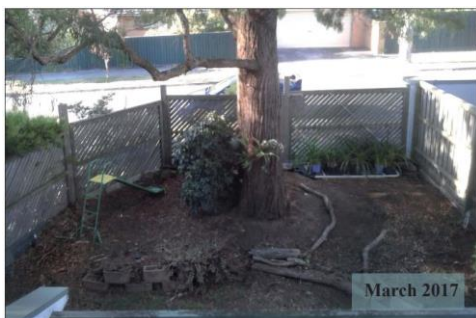
Treasurer's Report



As a result of strong sales both through orders and walk-in customer purchases, we have seen a significant lift in revenue over the past three months, which when combined with lower levels of expenditure has produced an outstanding trading result. COVID-19 has in fact had a very positive impact on our sales over the past two months as people have reworked their home gardens choosing to use indigenous plants from us. From a historical viewpoint, I believe that this financial year will be the best ever seen at Greenlink, with a strong combination of Sales, Grants and Membership driving revenue and this will be despite significant investment in technology and Nursery infrastructure. Greenlink is in a very strong financial position which can be attributed to all the hard work by our volunteers and excellent support from all of our valued customers.....Trevor Eddy

One of our lovely customers recently wrote to us to share her project and said: "I've bought plants from you before and have developed my front yard, (attached a before and after photos for your enjoyment and to see what you've been part of!)"

She is going to focus on her backyard now and is seeking our help with plants selection which would be suitable and attract birds, bees etc.



Greenlink welcomes emails and photos of projects worked on with before and after shots. We have some very talented volunteers at the nursery who would be able to help and give suggestions of which plants to use for your project should you need it.

Another quarter has come and gone and no one could ever have imagined earlier this year what we would have all had to manage or that such challenging and disruptive circumstances would come into our lives – basically, everyone staying at home for several weeks to support the reduction in the spread of COVID-19. Luckily modern technology has enabled many of us to keep in contact with family and friends via video conferencing etc., so that we were not completely isolated.

Greenlink luckily was regarded as operating a business which allowed us to keep working albeit with a very reduced number of volunteers and with strict guidelines of social distancing, hand washing and cleaning routines. This enabled us to keep the Nursery ticking over although with only a few of us in attendance it became a holding pattern of what we could manage. We have been able to use this time to update our website with photos and information about every plant we have at the Nursery. Customers can use this information to enable them to email us their order requirements and simply call in and pick up their plants.



One of our members Robert Ham has taken on making to order bird nesting boxes and boxes for micro bats, the information of which is also on our web site. If you would like to order a bird box for your garden simply email us and we will have Robert be in contact with you.

On the flip side we have been extremely busy with several large unexpected orders and a dramatic increase in the number of daily customers coming in giving us one of the busiest quarters we have ever seen at the Nursery. We have had a constant stream of plants going out the gate, far in excess of what we have been able to pot up. On rough calculations our overall sales are up more than 50% on the same period last year which has more than tested our resources, especially as we have not been taking cash as payment during the current situation. On a good note this pushed us into finally arranging with our bank to now be able to provide credit card/EFTPOS options as payment for our customers which is a win/win for everyone.

With restrictions gradually easing more volunteers are now returning to the Nursery and the months ahead will keep everyone busy catching up on pricking out and taking cuttings to replenish the empty spots on the benches and doing some much needed work in the parkland around the Nursery.

With the grant funds that we received earlier in the year we have purchased a new fridge for storage of our seeds. All the seed stock from the old fridges has been sorted, repacked, and moved into the new fridge with a full audit of what we have in stock now complete. We have also purchased an additional tablet to support our efforts in mapping, GPS'ing and identifying the locations throughout the various parklands of all the plants from which we collect seed. This will be an ongoing process over the next couple of years as we have many hundreds of locations/plants to be keyed in eventually providing us with an enormous data base of information for the future.

Looking back to the start of this year we had expected it to be a busy year for Greenlink and who would have thought everything would end up being "turned upside down" with the onset of a hidden/silent enemy. However all of us have got through this crisis and supported one another and let's all trust that when life gets back to some level of normality we come out of this situation with a gentler and more caring world.

Over the months ahead we again look forward to seeing you at the Nursery although with social distancing we cannot promise you for the time being to join us for a morning tea. I ask that you all stay safe and well and take care of yourselves. Until we catch up again on our next newsletter.

Rob Jones

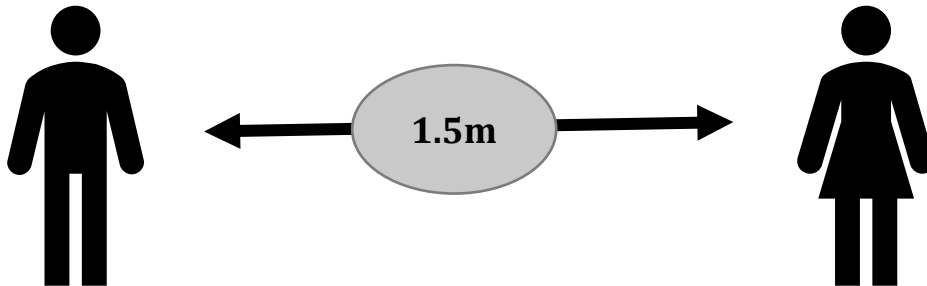
COVID-19

We hope that all of our valued members and customers remain safe and well at this time and continue to help STOP THE SPREAD of COVID-19 by:

- Staying more than 1.5 metres from another person
- Cover a cough with the inside of your elbow instead of your hand
- Where possible wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – do this after you cough, sneeze, go to the toilet and before you make any food
- Avoid touching your face with dirty hands – especially your eyes, nose and mouth. This is where the virus can enter your body
- Remember to **stay home** especially if you feel unwell



If you think you might have Coronavirus or may have been in contact with someone who has the virus please contact **Coronavirus Hotline** 1800 675 398



Greenlink Box Hill Inc

At Greenlink Box Hill, we value:

- every customer who deals with us and provide exceptional service
- a happy, safe and enthusiastic workplace
- 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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