



Greenlink News



September 2019

Your local indigenous nursery 100% run by volunteers

Regular Open Days Saturday Sales Days

Tuesdays and Wednesdays
9.00 am to 1:00 pm plus
Saturday 14 September
and 26 October
9:00-1:00 pm

Contact or Visit Us

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Box Hill North 3129
0479 121 653
(Answered Tues & Wed only)

Stay in Touch and Resources

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Parkland Community Forum

Whitehorse Council hosted its annual Parkland Community Forum on Tuesday July 8 to thank volunteers from Whitehorse Parkland Advisory Committees and the two Community Nurseries for their contribution to the city's parks and reserves.

Volunteers are invited each year and this year we were well represented by about 12 Greenlink members. It was a good opportunity to meet with members from the other community groups, council officers, councillors and the Mayor of Whitehorse.

Steve Tierney, Manager of Whitehorse's Nursery, ParksWide, gave us a summary of the Nursery's achievements over the past year. These are also printed at the back of the booklet *Parkland Community Forum 2019*, handed out on the evening. There are copies of this booklet at the Nursery. It contains updated information about the parkland advisory groups and nurseries.

The guest speaker this year was Dr James Fitzsimons Director of Conservation from the Nature Conservancy of Australia. Dr. Fitzsimons was a very engaging speaker and gave us an insight into many of the conservation gains which have been achieved through Nature Conservancy's partnerships with private individuals, corporations, indigenous groups and different levels of government.



Dr. Fitzsimons was one of the key figures behind the idea of creating an urban forest for the whole of Melbourne. The City of Whitehorse is one of the 31 out of 32 Councils which have adopted an Urban Forest Strategy. Whitehorse Council aims to increase the tree canopy in Whitehorse from the estimated current 20.9% to a tree canopy of 30% by 2030.

This event is a good opportunity to meet Council officers and put questions directly to them such as Bronte's pertinent question regarding Council policy in relation to plantings on nature strips!

This is an enjoyable and interesting evening and Council put on a very good buffet style meal before the presentations. If you are interested in attending next year on behalf of Greenlink be sure to let Robert know.



National Tree Day – Sunday 26 July

During the week leading up to National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day (Friday July 24) we sold hundreds of plants to groups who were keen to get their communities involved in planting indigenous vegetation.

Virginia Bowley is the Kitchen Garden Coordinator at Camberwell South Primary School. Virginia was the driving force behind the establishment of the kitchen garden and chickens at the school which last year won the VSGA (Victorian School's Garden Award) for the 'Best Edible Garden'.

Congratulations to Camberwell South Primary for this outstanding achievement!



Flourishing kitchen garden with 95 year old mulberry tree



Virginia clearly knows how to gain the trust of the staff and principal at her school and so when she proposed to get the students involved in National Tree Day, she found plenty of support. I asked Virginia about how National Tree Day went from her perspective.



Students in front of the chook shed with tools ready for planting

Q. What were your overall aims?

A. I had heard about National Tree Day and decided that it was an opportunity for the students to get involved in planting indigenous plants to green up the school.

Q. What planning did you need to undertake?

A. I had to decide on a suitable site and get the approval of the school. As I am a member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee I was able to put the case for planting in the bed alongside the basketball courts.

Q. How does the process work?

A. We registered online and were then contacted by Boroondara Council who supplied us with vouchers to pick up 150 plants from Greenlink free of charge. We visited Greenlink Nursery and selected our plants. Greenlink also lent us some Hamilton diggers, a tool which is specially designed to help with planting tubes stock. This proved to be a great hit with the Students!

Q As Toyota are a major sponsor what involvement did they have?

A Toyota provided us with gardening gloves and a National Tree Day T shirt for each student.

Q How did you organize the big day?

A We have about 430 students at the school from Prep to Grade 6. All children from every class were involved in the tree planting. The planting started at 9:15am and finished at 12:30pm. We organized students into groups of 3 or 4 and allowed about 20-30 minutes for each group. We were helped by 3 other mums and all of the teachers. It was a whole school effort!

Q. What do you see as some of the benefits of getting the students involved in National Tree Day?

A. It is good to get students outside doing physical work in collaboration with each other and for the benefit of the community and the environment.



Preparing to plant – wearing new T shirts and gloves!

Some Grade 4 kids have never got their hands dirty. It is good to get them away from their screens, get closer to nature and experience digging in the soil!

Students have the opportunity to learn more about indigenous plants and watching how they grow.

Hopefully the students will see their efforts rewarded by seeing an area of their school yard transformed.



It was great to meet Virginia and to visit South Camberwell Primary to see their established kitchen garden and their new indigenous plantings which will add great beauty and biodiversity to their school grounds.

In 2020 National Schools Day will be on Friday, July 31 and National Tree Day will be on Sunday August 2. If these dates do not suit Tree Day activities can take place on any date.

See the Planet Ark website <https://treeday.planetark.org> for information about support available and how to get involved.

Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker: Stephen Brend

Greenlink AGM

We had 39 people attend our AGM at Clota Cottage on August 13. This was a good opportunity for our President to summarise Greenlink's achievements over the past year and to thank all of the volunteers who have contributed their efforts into helping Greenlink achieve outstanding results overall.

Conserving Threatened Species in an Urban Environment

Zoologist Stephen Brend from Parks Victoria was our guest speaker after the AGM. Stephen has had extensive experience working with endangered animals overseas and is currently Project Officer for the grey-headed flying-fox.

Stephen spoke initially about the need for biodiversity if our species is to survive the impact of climate change. The climate has already become unstable, with 2 degrees of warming the best case scenario. We are going to lose species. The more biodiversity we have the greater our resilience. Our organization has a part to play through growing approximately 35,000 plants per year. Trees in particular are valuable in providing canopy and shade and also in sucking out CO₂ from the atmosphere. This is particularly important given that Melbourne's South Eastern suburbs have lost an estimated 2,000 hectares of trees since 2014.

Stephen then spoke about the grey-headed flying-fox. He spoke with urgency and passion about the role of these endangered mammals. The grey-headed flying-fox is Australia's largest fruit bat. There has been a 95% reduction in their population since white settlement. They play a vital role as pollinators and seed dispersers with all commercial hardwoods being pollinated by them. As the grey headed flying fox can travel 30-40 kms in one day they help greatly to ensure the genetic diversity and health of the forests.

Species level threats to the grey headed flying fox include habitat destruction and heat stress. At Yarra Bend Park approximately 80 % of babies are born in October. They are particularly vulnerable if we experience extreme heat before Christmas.

Other threats include: persecution by fruit growers, power lines, barbed wire, fruit tree netting and poor public perception. One of the more challenging aspect's of Stephen's role is to educate the public about the grey headed flying fox. Stephen has to counter some of the prejudices held by people – for example, that the species rather than being endangered is in plague proportions; or that bats are dirty and spread disease.

Stephen encouraged us to be prepared to share our fruit with these animals and



emphasized the importance when netting fruit trees of using densely woven netting to avoid causing harm. As eucalyptus blossom is the preferred food of the flying fox perhaps the answer is also to plant more eucalypts!

A grey headed flying fox just getting a few rays on one of the rare occasions lately where the sun has poked through. These large fruit bats are often seen over Whitehorse but their main camp is in Yarra Bend NP (Photo and notes by Ian Moodie July 2019)

During his short talk Stephen gave us a fascinating insight into these ancient mammals which we are lucky enough to have living in Melbourne. Stephen encouraged us to read the 2003 book by Stephen Wise – *Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights* which explores animal cognition and justice. Stephen answered many questions on the night and had some requests from people interested to see the bats at Yarra Bend Park. He is happy to be contacted by email to arrange a suitable time at:

stephen.brend@parks.vic.gov.au



Pterostylis nutans – Nodding greenhood



Our most common Greenhood, this is the **Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis nutans***. This orchid can form very large colonies and they can be found in many of our better quality reserves. This group is in Dagola Reserve.



The little Trim Greenhood, *Pterostylis concinna*. It is a widespread and common orchid in much of Eastern Melbourne, but until recently I was unaware of any growing in Whitehorse. It can be found in at least two of our reserves.



The *Pterostylis curta*, the Blunt Greenhood can be found in at least 3 of our reserves with the biggest (known) patch to be found in Charles Rooks Reserve. A strong visual clue to differentiate this orchid from a number of similar species is the twist in the 'tongue' (labellum) in the 'hood'.

Thank you again to Ian Moodie for the photos of different species of greenhood orchids with accompanying text.



Probably like all of you I cannot believe another year has rolled past since I presented last year's report on the status of Greenlink. Regular volunteers will know that we have had an extremely busy and successful 12 months thanks to all the efforts you have put in each week.

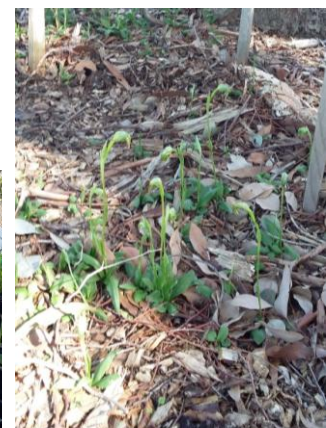
Our volunteers have put in just on 4,800 hours of work and pricked out 34,000 plants. Similar to other years our popular varieties continue to be Poa Lab, Lomandra, Viola, Brachyscome and Chrysocephalum Apiculatum. No amount of planning is able to ensure enough stock of these varieties on our benches to cover the growing level of sales. This year we were successful in tendering for a 3 year contract for the supply of Indigenous plants to the City of Boroondara which resulted in us obtaining orders for almost 4,000 plants for them and with good feedback from their parklands staff on the quality of the plants we supplied we expect to obtain ongoing orders for larger quantities over the coming couple of years.

Overall, we have had a very successful year. Sales to our regular client base have been comparable to last year however sales to the public have had a dramatic increase which overall has led to a more than 20% increase in total sales on last year's performance. Overall sales/income for the year was just over \$50,000 with profit being \$33,000 - one of the best years ever for Green link. Our treasurer Trevor Eddy will give a more detailed report next on our finances.

Some of the highlights of the year have been:

- Given away \$ 2,840 worth of plants through the voucher in the Council Calendar (buy 5 get 5 free) and the Gardens for Wildlife program
- Celebrated our 30th Anniversary
- Participated in the City of Whitehorse Spring Festival
- Increased our volunteer activities and plantings in the parkland surrounding the Nursery
- Held another planting day at Jill Hammond's farm in Kilmore. This was the final planting for us as she has downsized her farm and has no more areas that require revegetation.
- Put on a successful Christmas party for our volunteers
- Held 5 popular Saturday sales days
- Sponsored a public event at Blackburn Lake Visitor Center for over 70 people on designing an Indigenous Garden
- Put in a submission to the North East Link Authority about our concerns regarding the impact of the widening of the Eastern Freeway on Elgar Park.
- Participated at 2019 Aust/New Zealand Botanical Gardens Open Day at the Maranoa Gardens.
- We then topped off the year with a visit by the Governor of Victoria to our Nursery. The Governor met our volunteers at work and over morning tea and was interested to learn about the history of the Nursery and the current activities of Greenlink.

Overall a very busy and rewarding year for Greenlink.



Greenhoods on display at Greenlink: display bowl; tubes and racks; and adjacent parkland.

Our challenges for the coming year are:

- To expand our knowledge base of our seed collection sites and GPS'ing the sites into a tablet for quick reference.
- Upgrade all the benches in the polyhouses as many are in a state where they are about to collapse from rust
- Improve forward planning to ensure we are able to maintain sufficient stocks on our shelves to cope with the growth in demand.
- Move to an independent supply of our potting and seed raising mixes (Council will no longer be providing these to us as their production equipment is old and does not meet OH& S standards. In addition, they have moved away from using any mulch, which was the feed stock for the potting mix, on their site.).

In closing I would like to express our thanks to the City of Whitehorse's Parkswide team for their ongoing assistance and to also express our thanks to Bungalook for their ongoing relationship and partnership with Greenlink.

To my fellow committee members I thank you for all your support and the hours you have all contributed to the running and success of the Nursery.

Lastly to all our volunteers my deepest thanks and acknowledgment to each and every one of you for your efforts as without your contribution and dedication Greenlink would not be where it is today.

It has truly been a privilege to be the President of Greenlink for these past 12 months and again I extend my heartfelt thanks to you all for your amazing contribution and giving so much of your time so freely, thank you.

Robert Jones - President



Maroon hoods, *Pterostylis pedunculata*. These are found in a few of our parks. This rather nice little group is in Charles Rooks reserve. (if you look closely at one of the flowers on the right you can see a Fungus Gnat. These very small members of the Fly order (Diptera) are the principle pollinators of all our local Greenhoods

(Photos and text – Ian Moodie)



The Tall Greenhood *Pterostylis melagramma* is considered under threat in eastern Melbourne. Fortunately, we still have good numbers of this orchid in a few of our reserves.



Overall result – A trading surplus of \$33,635.72

Income from sales, investments and memberships – Total \$51,301.15

- Sales Revenue increased by around \$9,200 YOY before plant purchases of \$1,900. Invoiced and Tender Sales represented 47% of Revenue, Weekly Sales 41% and Sales days 12%. Total sales of \$45,500
- Membership Fees totalled \$1,060 (73 members)
- Our cash surplus has allowed us to invest a further \$35,000 into Term Deposits and timing of these meant a slightly higher interest return of \$4,558 – Our equity at year's end was \$250,803.11

Expenditure - \$17,665.43

- Continuing account rebates from Yarra Valley Water meant we again had a zero sum water expense for the 2018/19 financial year.
- The key expense items for the year related to electrical re-wiring of the shed, external plant purchases, training for volunteers, public seminars and our 30th Anniversary celebrations.

Plant of the Season: *Acacia genistifolia*



Acacia genistifolia is also known by its common name Spreading Wattle due to its open spreading habit. It is a fast growing, hardy shrub H 1-3 m W 1-3 m.

It has prickly foliage making it a good refuge for small birds. It produces perfumed flowers in August/September and attracts nectar eating birds and insects. It will grow in full sun or part shade.

The specimen in the photo (left) is from a Greenlink planting in the Gawler Chain parkland (Mont Albert North) - just over 2 years old.

Acacia Blooming

Early spring (or is it sprinter?) is a good time of the year to distinguish between some of the different species of wattle. Here are some recent wattle photos taken by Noela from Bushy Creek



Acacia pycnantha (Golden wattle)



Acacia verticillata (Prickly Moses)



Acacia paradoxa
(Hedge wattle, kangaroo thorn)



Acacia acinacea (Gold dust wattle)



Acacia Myrtifolia



Acacia leprosa

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

President: Robert Jones, **Vice President:** Emi Luppino,

Secretary: Janet Hodgson **Treasurer:** Trevor Eddy,

Committee Members: Karin Godfrey, Noela Locarnini, Gabrielle Bradley

Newsletter editor: Janet Hodgson.