

September 2020



Your local indigenous nursery 100% run by volunteers

Due to COVID-19 Email orders only for Click and Collect

Tuesdays and Wednesdays
9.00 am to 12:00 pm

Sales day – Refer to our
website for updates on
next sale day

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)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Greenlink's AGM will be held on Wednesday, October 14 at 7:30pm via Zoom due to COVID 19 restrictions. We will be sending out a Zoom invitation to all members via email closer to the date. We invite all to join us and are delighted that our guest speaker this year will be Dr Luis Mata.

Dr Mata is an ecologist and Research Fellow with the Interdisciplinary Conservation Science Research Group in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University. His current research for Gardens for Wildlife Victoria is examining insect biodiversity at 4 different indigenous plant nurseries in Melbourne including Greenlink. (We included an article about Luis's research in our previous Newsletter.)

Luis's research touches on many areas of great interest to us at Greenlink such as: understanding the relationships between indigenous plants and other forms of life, how to bring nature back into cities and how to encourage more citizen science.

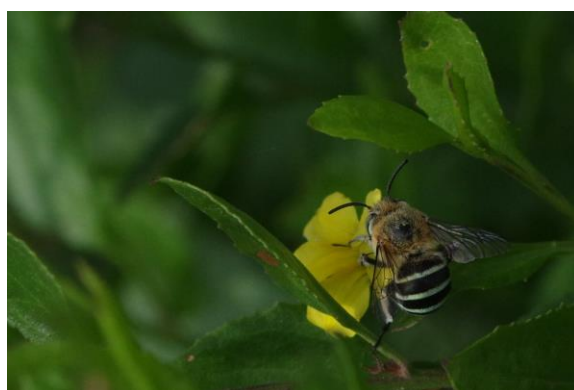
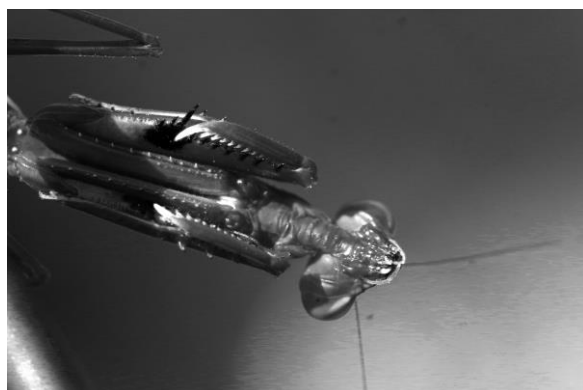


Luis writes "I'm fascinated by insects because I believe that, whether as individuals or aggregated into super-organisms, they are interesting, valuable and aesthetically pleasing life forms. (...) I truly enjoy discovering and learning from nature through photography! I'm convinced that capturing aesthetically pleasing images of living beings is one of the best ways to bring art and science together."

(<https://www.luismataresearch.wordpress.com>)

Luis took the photos (which appear on both this page and the front page) at Greenlink and in the surrounding parkland. The photos show just what a powerful tool the digital camera can be – revealing flowers and insects in microscopic detail. More of Luis's photos can be viewed at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dingilingi>. You will also find here the names of the insects and plants in each photo.

Luis will be giving us a short update on his research findings. He will undoubtedly be showing us some more of his extraordinary photos and there will be time for people to ask Luis questions. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the biodiversity in our own gardens, around Greenlink and in Melbourne generally.

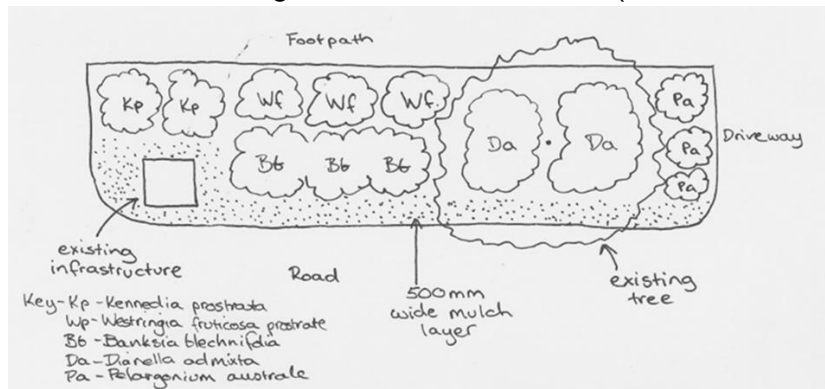


Greening your Nature Strip – How to Extend your Garden into the Street

Whitehorse Trees and Urban Forest Education Program recently hosted a webinar on planting your nature strip with AB Bishop, a horticulturist and author of *Habitat: A practical guide to creating a wildlife-friendly Australian garden*.

Belinda Moody, the Whitehorse Tree Education Officer introduced AB Bishop and discussed the considerations around planting your nature strip to comply with council requirements.

- The nature strip adjacent to your house is public land and in Whitehorse you need a permit to add plants to your nature strip. You can find information about what you can plant and other considerations and the link to the permit application here: <https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/trees-and-gardens/naturestrips>
- One important consideration when planting a nature strip is visibility, so all plants should mature at no more than 50cm high. Indigenous grasses that are under this height for most of the year and put up a seed head that exceeds 50cm are OK
- To ensure that people can get in and out of parked cars you need to leave 50cm as turf or mulch next to the curb and also leave space clear to put your bins on bin pickup day
- No logs or rocks but mulch is important and council is looking into also allowing crushed rock.
- a landscape plan or mud map needs to be submitted with your permit application - see below for an example. This should be done on a large piece of paper to make it easier to read and don't forget scale/measurements (which is missing in the example left).



Graphic courtesy of
Whitehorse Tree Education
Program.

After the webinar Belinda sent out some follow-up notes and commented that if anyone suspects their nature strip might already contain remnant indigenous grasses, see if you can get photos of the seed heads over the next few months and send them in to her. Imagine if all you had to do was stop mowing and add some wildflowers! Where a lawn or nature strip hasn't been watered for years and the turf has died off a common grass that comes back on its own is indigenous wallaby grass.



Nature strip in Rostrevor Parade with indigenous wallaby grass and Wahlenbergia. There are also other wildflowers such as Geranium solanderi and Chrysocephalum apiculatum amongst the wallaby grass.

Photo: Jan Akeroyd

Why Plant Your Nature Strip?

- Provide wildlife habitat which is increasingly important as Whitehorse gets more built up
- Improve the look of your home and possibly its value
- Build relationships with other people on your street – often when you do something like this people will stop and talk to you, maybe they will even plant their own nature strip after seeing yours
- No more mowing
- Reduce rainwater runoff in storms

Preparation

In her talk AB stressed the importance of preparation before planting. The first thing is to remove turf and weeds and if you have couch or kikuyu or buffalo grass it is really important to get out all the runners or they will regrow.

You can use a turf cutter to cut and lift the top 6-8cm of grass and soil for large areas or a spade for smaller areas. This would only be necessary if you have something like kikuyu or buffalo grass with a thick mat of roots and runners. Try and retain as much soil as possible while still getting rid of all the roots and runners.

For other grasses and weeds breaking up the soil with a garden fork and carefully removing the weeds and their roots or mowing very short and covering with cardboard or newspaper with a layer of mulch on top should be sufficient. You could also solarise the area by spreading clear plastic over the area. The soil under the plastic needs to be moist and you need sun to heat up the air under the plastic as this is what will kill the vegetation. Pin or weight it down along the edges so it doesn't blow away and leave it for 6-8 weeks. It is important to be aware that cardboard or plastic can be slippery so if people regularly walk across your nature strip these strategies may not be a good option for you.

Once you have removed the existing vegetation, if you have heavy clay soil it can be helpful to add some gypsum.



Another view (left) of the nature strip in Rostrevor Parade. This indigenous planting shows great sensitivity to the street scape and blends well with the native garden beyond the fence

Photo: Janet Hodgson

Keep in mind that you will need to follow up with weeding out any weeds or unwanted grasses that do come back or it can cause grief down the track if they get re-established. Once your new plants settle in, they will begin to spread out and cover the area and there won't be the same opportunities for weeds to return so all that will be required is an occasional weed check and re-mulching any bare spots. Some Australian plants go dormant or die back when it is too hot, too cold or there is not enough rain so mulch will also help to make up for those fluctuations in coverage.

Choosing plants

If there is already an established tree the area might be quite shaded and the tree could be taking most of the moisture in the soil. What sort of soil do you have? Choose plants that are suited to the soil, light and moisture conditions on your nature strip.

Another consideration in choosing plants is the “look” that you are going for. The ones AB covered are:

- A combination of indigenous grasses and wildflowers and AB showed a photo of a lovely nature strip covered in indigenous grasses with flowering *Wahlenbergia* growing among them.
- A cottage garden look - she listed a range of native plants that would work for this – in terms of indigenous plants that are available at Greenlink, this would be plants like *Brachyscome multifida*, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Craspedia variabilis* and *Leucochrysum albicans*. Greenlink also has a range of other plants that could work quite well depending on your conditions.
- Set and forget – the plants AB talked about for this option were some of the prostrate acacias and grevilleas that are available at commercial nurseries. They are a great choice for a hardy low maintenance planting and provide lovely colour when they flower. Like all plants, pruning back usually after flowering will keep these plants in check and stop them becoming leggy.
- Formal look – there are a few native plants that can be clipped to create low formal hedges or topiary. One participant commented that she had clipped *Goodenia ovata* into topiary shapes!
- Lawn replacement – indigenous options from Greenlink include *Kennedia prostrata*, *Dichondra repens*, *Viola hederacea*, plus there are some other native plant options.

For choosing indigenous plants you can also look up your address on Whitehorse Maps and click on the indigenous plant list at the bottom of the screen to see a list of plants that would have grown in your area:

<https://map.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/index.html>.



Hardenbergia violacea, Pelargonium australe and Brachyscome multifida.

Photo: Jan Akeroyd



Kennedia prostrata.

Photo: Jan Akeroyd

Towards the end of the list are the sections for Groundcovers and for Grasses, Lilies and Tufting Plants and most of the plants in these sections would fit the height requirements. Some of the smaller shrubs on this list may be suitable too (you would need to check the mature height for any shrubs you are considering).

If you are interested in native plants that are not indigenous to Whitehorse AB Bishop works part-time at Kuranga Native Plant Nursery and is very happy to answer questions and help people choose plants that will work for your nature strip conditions. If you want to talk to her it would be a good idea to call the nursery before you go to check when she will be there – after the stage 4 lockdown ends of course!

If Maranoa Gardens is within your 5km exercise radius there are also lots of lovely Australian native plants to look at there and most have labels giving their common and scientific names and there is an area planted with indigenous plants as well.



These two plantings at Maranoa Gardens in Balwyn show indigenous ground covers and other low plants suitable for a shady dry location in the photo (left) and for a sunny dry location in the photo (right).

Photos: Jeff Zehr



If you have any questions about the permit process or requirements or need any other help figuring out plants that might work for your nature strip, you can contact Belinda at the Whitehorse Tree Education Program at Belinda.Moody@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or 0466 556 403.

This article is a compilation of the notes and thoughts from several Greenlink volunteers who participated in this webinar. Thanks to Janet Hodgson, Anne Payne, Belinda Moody, Jeff Zehr and Jan Akeroyd for their contributions.



Jenny and Michael plant out
new bed in parkland –
between lockdowns



Skeleton staff working to keep
operations going during
second COVID lockdown





Wahlenbergia stricta (Tall bluebell)

Perennial herb, 20-50cm X 30-40 cm flowering spring and summer.



Ptilotus Spathulatus (Pussy tails)

Prostrate perennial herb 20cm X 30-80 cm.. Forms a taproot which was eaten by Aborigines



Ritidospermum racemosum (Clustered wallaby grass or Austrodanthonia racemosa)

To 20 cm high, stems 10-80 cm high

The plants above are all suitable for planting on nature strips. They are hardy, low growing, enjoy full sun and once established require little maintenance.

According to Adrian Marshall, Lecturer in Landscape Architecture and Urban Ecology, nature strips make up more than one third of public green space in Melbourne.

<https://theconversation.com/our-land-abounds-in-nature-strips-surely-we-can-do-more-than-mow-a-third-of-urban-green-space-124781>

Adrian Marshall encourages us to replace lawn, which needs regular mowing, with plants which require less mowing and which will support more biodiversity.

Boroondara Council are now encouraging the use of native grasses for which no permit is needed:

“Use of certain native grasses can provide a soft lawn like appearance and drought tolerance. Recommended native species are Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*), Kneel Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia geniculata*) and Clustered Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia racemosum*). These species are indigenous to the area and require only periodic mowing. No permit is required to establish or maintain grassed lawn within the nature strip.”

<https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/naturestrip-guidelines.pdf>



Treasurer's Report



Despite the pressure of COVID 19, we are still in a very strong financial position. The introduction of a Merchant Facility has been a really important addition to our click and collect strategy. Whilst sales are down by around 50% from this time last year which saw a significant number of invoices issued in the first two months, we have seen an increase in Cash Sales meaning we are still trading in surplus and expect to continue along this path. Expenses in August were up slightly due to purchase of soil, plant racks and utilities. We would expect a reduction in income over coming months as we will be unable to open for our normally strong Saturday Spring sales, but we have a solid equity base which will continue to hold us in good stead.

Trevor Eddy



Juvenile tawny frogmouth

This new generation frogmouth appeared this month at Trevor's back garden and seemed happy to be photographed by him. Has she already heard about us at Greenlink?



Well how time does move on and who would have thought that we would be continuing to live with even tighter and longer restrictions due to COVID19? What a year 2020 has turned out to be, living in these challenging and uncertain times. I had once heard that the only certainty in life is that life is uncertain and this has very much proved to be the case for this year.

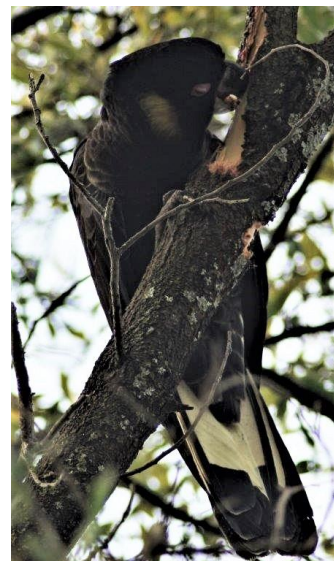
Greenlink has certainly been challenged over the past several weeks with the latest round of lockdowns. Luckily as we are regarded as part of the Horticultural industry, we have been allowed to continue our business operations. We issued required work permits to a limited number of volunteers (4-6) who have been coming in to keep the nursery ticking over. We were required also to produce a several page COVID work safe plan for the nursery and its operations - all to be finalized within a few days of the announced lock down.

Seed sowing and pricking out has continued, although at a reduced rate compared to previous years given the reduced numbers of volunteers. The polyhouse is now full of seedlings which are all putting on good growth with the warmer days we are currently enjoying. In the weeks ahead they will find their way onto the benches to rebuild our stocks. Our cuttings production has been at capacity and stocks of our popular correas and brachycomes are building up ready for spring demand.

With the Nursery being closed to the public for retail sales we ventured into a new world for us and took on to offer a click and collect service which has proved to be popular and very much appreciated by our customers. We regularly have around 4-5 people every Tuesday and Wednesday come and pick up their orders for plants. Simply email us your requirements and nominate day and time that you want your plants and they will be boxed up and ready at the front of the Nursery to be collected.

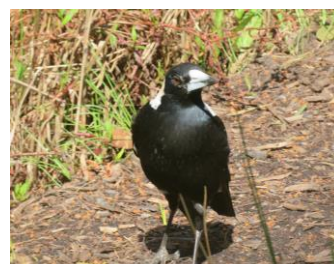
As mentioned earlier our AGM will be held in October via Zoom. It is unfortunate that we are not able to all get together as usual, enjoy the meeting with a guest speaker and a chat over supper. At least with technology to some degree we will all be able to catch up (sorry about no supper, a virtual supper does not cut it!). We do look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at our AGM and be treated to our guest speaker Dr Luis Mata.

Although we will go into this in more detail at the AGM Greenlink ended up for the 2019-2020 year in a very strong position - the biggest year ever for us. Overall sales were up by almost 60% and overall income was up by almost 75% due to the success of us being awarded an environmental grant of \$8,500 and a grant of \$3,000 from the Bank of Bendigo for Nursery signage and bench upgrades. Overall sales were just on \$69K and total income just on \$85K. Both invoiced and weekday sales grew at a rapid pace fully testing us to the max. Overall a very rewarding and fulfilling year for Greenlink with a special thanks to all our volunteers whose ongoing efforts made this possible. With the current situation our expectations for this year are for sales to return to previous levels of around \$40-45K, which would still be a very good result and more manageable for the Nursery.



Yellow tailed black cockatoo attacking Blackwood

Photo: Trevor Eddy



A tough year for this Magpie who built her nest in one of the Blackwoods at the front of the Nursery. We watched her build the nest and sit on the eggs for a few weeks before having them turfed out (we suspect by noisy miners). They were almost ready to hatch when found by Trevor.

Photo: Graham Hodgson

Overall, we are managing to keep the operations of the Nursery moving forward given what we all have to deal with. We are moving into the next 12 months with a positive frame of mind and look forward later this year to having customers back browsing the benches for plants. We also look forward to seeing all our volunteers and members back at Greenlink, even if it is just to call in for a few minutes and say Hi.

Until our AGM or our next Newsletter I again ask that you and your families all stay safe and well and take care of yourself and those around you.

We look forward to catching up once these current restrictions make it possible towards the end of October.

Robert Jones



*Pacific black ducks
enjoy the pond
Trevor captures
these shots from his
great vantage
position near the
Nursery*

Photos: Trevor Eddy



Environmental workshops and videos

The Whitehorse Urban Forest Education Program

This program is underway with free workshops and presentations. The next online Seminar will be on Tues 15 Sept and is entitled Noisy Miners: bullies in your backyard? Noisy Miners are a common sight in our suburbs. They are a native bird but many people are concerned that they have a negative impact on other bird species and have become bully birds. Join Mike Clarke, Professor of Zoology at La Trobe University to hear about the complex relationships between the birds in your own backyard.

For information regarding upcoming seminars see

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/whitehorse-trees-and-urban-forest-education-program-5774470310>



Bell Miner or 'bellbird' on the hunt for lerps

Educational videos

Produced by the Environmental Education Office for the City of Whitehorse are 4 short videos entitled: Winter Spring Wildflowers; Kookaburra; Looking out for our Locals and Spiders. The information in these videos will delight anyone with an interest in bird and animal habitat and environmental issues.

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/world-around-us>



Photos on this article by Ian Moodie who welcomes your feedback to Council on these new videos.

Galah

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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Vice President: Emi Luppino,

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Newsletter editor: Janet Hodgson