



Broken Catchment Landcare Network

Newsletter

December 2012-January 2013

Upcoming Events

25 December 2012 Christmas!

21 January 2013 Molyullah-Tatong Alternative Fertiliser information evening

5 March 2013 Pasture Cropping one day course

16-18 April 2013 Pasture Cropping bus trip

Contact Details:

Landcare Project Officer

Melanie Addinsall
PO Box 124
Benalla 3672
Ph: 5761 1560
Mob: 0439 040 955
landcare1@iinet.net.au

Landcare Project Officer

Kerri Robson
208 James Rd
Warrenbayne 3673
Ph: 5763 2465
Mob: 0418 140 710
landcare2@iinet.net.au

Gecko Clan Chairperson

Ian Herbert
Ph: 5768 2342
limaeaster@bigpond.com.au

Pasture Cropping

Project Chairperson

David Dore
Ph: 5762 4672
daviddore@optusnet.com.au

Pasture Cropping

Project Officer

Jacci Campbell
Ph: 5828 9278
office@campbellfarms.com.au

Manager Landcare & Communities

Tony Kubeil
Goulburn Broken CMA
Ph: 5761 1619
tonyk@gbcma.vic.gov.au

Regional Landcare Facilitator

Charlie Sexton
Goulburn Broken CMA
Ph: 5761 1506
charlies@gbcma.vic.gov.au



Chairman's Report

By Ian Herbert

I'm looking forward to the Christmas break after a very hectic end to the year. The reason for all this activity is clear; I was re-elected as Gecko CLaN Chairman in October and some new projects started up around that time. We've been reviewing our existing and future projects and the admin functions that are needed to manage them. Expressions of Interest for some of these projects were due to the GBCMA in December.

It's also been busy around Swanpool. Did you here that the Bald Archy Prize Exhibition is coming to our little village next August? The Swanpool Cinema takes a winter break in July and August and will be installing a new digital projection system too so we won't get much of a rest in 2013. They are planning an Environmental Film Festival to take place around June and we hope to see many of you there. The Gecko CLaN and Benalla Sustainable Future Group are helping to plan this event.

On the Landcare front Swanpool and Warrenbayne-Boho groups are participating in the Strathbogie Ranges CMN's Farm Wetlands' Project which is quite exciting. We're planning to do some work on our own property to create a chain of ponds – but maybe not as grandious as that at the Euroa Arboretum! See <http://www.strathbogierangescmn.com/euroa-arboretum-wetland-construction/>

There is much to read about in this newsletter. Thanks everyone for your support. Thanks in particular David Ince for his term in office as past Chairman and to our three Landcare Project Officers – Melanie, Kerri and Jacci – for their efforts to get projects completed and reported on in time, and I know they too will be looking forward to a holiday break. May it be a happy and peaceful one at your household.

We look forward now to a productive and enjoyable 2013 Landcare year and hope to see you at one of our meetings or field days.

Ian

Molyullah-Tatong Alternative Fertilisers Project Information Evening

Monday 21st January
Molyullah Hall
6pm start
BBQ dinner provided

The Molyullah Tatong Tree and Land Protection group are kicking off their alternative fertiliser project with an information evening featuring:

Cathy Botta
and
Don Cook

Farmright Technical Services

The project involves using alternative fertilisers and other techniques (growing deep rooted perennials and using a Yeoman's plough) to increase soil carbon levels.

Please RSVP to:
Frank Fisher 0407 842 478

Chilean needle grass: The new hot topic

Across the catchment people are talking about Chilean needle grass, and the call is that we need to work together to combat the spread of this 'Weed of National Significance'. In November the Gecko CLaN rolled out a series of information sessions on Chilean needle grass hosted by Landcare groups, which received a great response attracting over 150 attendees, despite being in the middle of harvest. The sessions were presented by Barry Oswald, who has been a driving force behind Chilean needle grass action in the region for nearly 10 years.

So what is it about this seemingly inconspicuous weed that is causing such a fuss? Chilean needle grass is a vigorous competitor in native grasslands and pastures and will easily take over large areas, posing a major threat for biodiversity. Its resilient reproductive system produces three types of seed, the main seed head, seeds within the flowering stem and seeds in the base near the roots, making it highly difficult to eradicate once established. Being a 'restricted' weed Chilean needle grass is a major threat to agriculture as products contaminated with the seed cannot be traded or transported.

The Gecko CLaN's 'Ute Guide' to Chilean needle grass was launched alongside the information sessions and has been highly popular. A reprint has already been completed due to high demand. If you would like a Ute Guide please contact Melanie as soon as possible.

The Gecko CLaN continues to work closely with local shire councils; Benalla, Wangaratta and Shepparton on Chilean needle grass. Through raising awareness about Chilean needle grass within the community and involving the shire councils, the weed has gained a greater priority within these organisations. We hope that this attention continues into the future.

The Gecko CLaN would like to thank all Landcare groups who have hosted information sessions and for their work in promoting Chilean needle grass. Sheep Pen Creek Landcare group are taking the next step, and taking it upon themselves to map all new infestations of Chilean needle grass in their region. This information will make the next step of controlling Chilean needle grass much more streamlined and accurate.

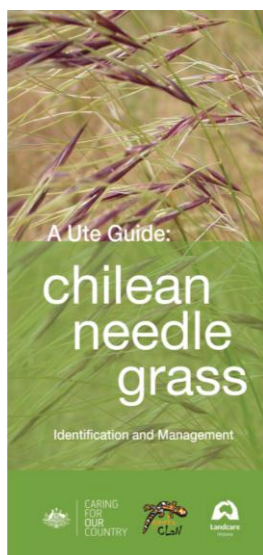
The next phase of the project will be information sessions in autumn, to allow landholders to learn how to identify the weed when it is green and not in seed. These sessions will focus strongly on control methods and management.

For more information go to:

www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/Chileanneedlegrass/



Tom Wallis (Peter Davis Rural), Rod Graham, Terry Taylor and David Dore inspecting an infestation.



Do you know your inflorescences from your racemes? Native Grasses Courses with Dr Graeme Lorimer

'Inflorescence, ligule, spikelet, nodule and raceme,' are just a few of the terms that were mastered by participants of the native grasses courses with Dr Graeme Lorimer. Three enjoyable and informative courses were held by the Gecko CLaN; a two day course at Thoona hosted by Bob Baird, a two day course at Avenel, and a one day course at Swanpool.

As participants got their minds around the grand and tongue twisting language of botany and its scientific names, Dr Graeme Lorimer guided participants through methods of grass identification. Hand lenses were essential as samples of various species of grasses were circulated, and participants learnt about different forms of branching and arrangements of hairs. Once the basics had been conquered, participants learnt how to use a grass identification key which allowed everyone to become a master in grass identification.

Field walks at the conclusion of each day gave the opportunity for participants to apply their newly found skills and identify species in the natural environment.

For more information the following resources were suggested by Dr Graeme Lorimer;

- Grasses of New South Wales (4th Edition) by Jacobs, Whalley and Wheeler (University of New England)
- AusGrass software by Sharp and Simon (CSIRO Publishing)
- AusGrass2 (website that has been developed from the Sharp and Simon publication)
- Flora of Victoria Volume 2



Graeme Lorimer with participants at the native grasses course at Thoona.

PASTURE CROPPING ONE DAY WORKSHOP with Colin Seis

DATE: Tuesday 5th March 2013

TIME: 9:00am to 5:00pm

WHERE: Violet Town Community Centre,
Supper Room

Topics covered:

- Management and function of grasslands and pastures (C3 and C4 plants, forbs and herbs)
- Profitability of "Pasture Cropping"
- Restoring ecological function
- Grazing management
- "Pasture Cropping" seeding machinery
- "Pasture Cropping" advantages including profit, grassland restoration, ecological function, soil health, increasing soil organic carbon.
- Soil health including how to build top soil, organic carbon, soil food web, water holding capacity, and increase soil nutrients.
- Day includes a paddock walk to look at grass and weed species and discuss management options.

COST: Free

RSVP: ESSENTIAL by Monday 19th February 2013

TO: Jacqui Campbell

Ph: 5828 9274

Or email office@campbellfarms.com.au

PASTURE CROPPING BUS TRIP

Tuesday 16th – Thursday 18th April 2013

The trip will cost approximately \$200pp for accommodation. The bus trip will visit Colin Seis, Danny Flannery and others.

For more information contact Jacqui Campbell 5828 9274 or office@campbellfarms.com.au

Easy \$\$\$ for Landcare Survey

The Goulburn Broken CMA is producing its annual Natural Resource Management Report Card and needs all Landcare groups to participate. Groups who participate will receive a small financial reward. (Please note only one survey per group will be accepted).

To complete the survey go to:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GBCMA_CNRM_Report_Card_2011-12

or contact Tony Kubeil on 0408 597 213

tonyk@gbcma.vic.gov.au

Survey closes on January 31st 2013



Indian Myna – 'The Flying Cane Toad'

The Indian Myna bird is a major threat to Australian Native birds. It is chocolate brown in colour, with yellow eye-patch's that highlight its head appearance.

Labeled as one of the World's Worst 100 Invasive Species the Indian Myna is responsible for driving away many of our native birds; they take over other birds' nests and will go to hollows and throw out native bird's eggs and young.

They flourish wherever humans live, with large populations around garbage tips, factories, schools and shopping centres. The only known contender for Indian Myna's is the Australian Noisy Miner. People often confuse the two birds, but although they have similar facial markings, they belong to different families. The Indian Myna is chocolate or brown in colour is from the starling family, while the Australian Miners are honeyeaters and grey in colour.

The Yarrowonga Mulwala Men's Shed in co-operation with the Gecko CLaN is on a mission to eradicate Indian Myna's from NE Victoria, which are killing our native birds and marsupials.

Funding applications have been placed to help with construction of a number of 'Pee Wee' Indian Myna trap kits. These kits would include a trap, handbook on Indian Mynas, trapping tips, gloves, disposal instructions and recording sheet for numbers caught. Volunteer trappers are now required!

Similar Indian Myna Control projects currently operate in Hawkesbury, Canberra, Yarra Ranges and Gippsland.

If successful with funding traps will be constructed by the Yarrowonga Mulwala Men's shed and will be available to Landcare groups and interested individuals.

To help or wishing to join this project, please contact:

John Shorten - Project Coordinator YMMS Inc.

PO Box 520, Yarrowonga VIC 3730

03 5744 1840

0438 533 289

shorten@alphalink.com.au

Or contact Melanie Addinsall, Landcare Project Officer



Indian Myna



Noisy Miner



“What do all these tests mean?” with Declan McDonald

Are we getting maximum bang for our buck for our soil tests? On the 7th November the Gecko CLaN’s Pasture Cropping project hosted Declan McDonald for a soil test interpretation day at Violet Town, to allow pasture croppers and others to get the most from their soil tests.

Declan took the group back to basics by looking at the chemistry of soil structure, water holding capacity and macronutrient availability. Soil profiles were discussed in depth and the various subsoil constraints which may restrict plant roots. Declan also informed the group on interesting research DPI is undertaking on how to grow your soil by injecting organic matter where the top soil meets the subsoil, however there are no clear results so far.

Declan then went through various soil tests and provided advice, without bias. The session was followed by a site visit to a soils pit at Earlston, where Declan and Brad Costin conducted tests. Surprisingly plant roots were found 1m down the profile in seemingly hostile subsoil.



Brad Costin in the soil pit at Earlston

Secrets to Successful Groups training: Are you on the winning team?

Recently ‘Secrets to Successful Groups’ training was held in Shepparton and Wangaratta. Hosted by the Farm Tree and Landcare Association, the day provided some great insights into how groups work together, and why groups are successful or otherwise. The day focused on some key issues within Landcare at the moment; recruitment of new members, legal duties of committee members, effective decision making and meeting process, and managing the books.

Recruiting new people is often thought of as the answer to all the problems with Landcare. As with many community organisations, the same people within a community do much of the work and are not replaced, which often leads to the ‘burnout’ of committee members.

First, the group was urged to consider whether recruitment is really what the group needs, as ultimately more people involved means more work for committee members. If the answer is yes then the **TOTAL** method of recruitment was suggested;

Target – Find people who you want to be involved in your group.

One on one – Invite those people to events personally, and make sure you have a talk with them about what they can expect from their first event, giving some background information. We all know that feeling of being new to a group and sitting in a meeting without any idea about what is going on.

Turn up – When you are recruiting make sure you ask the magic words, ‘Can I count on you to be there?’ If a person has verbally agreed to attend, then they are far more likely to turn up. Asking with confidence has a huge impact on how someone will react.

Action – Make sure that new people get what they want from volunteering (knowledge or enjoyment), and ensure that they are being assigned tasks that they can successfully achieve.

Lasting – Ensure people return to the group through continually addressing the reasons why the members joined and provide opportunities for growth and change. Celebrate the successes of a group as everyone wants to be on the winning team.

Alternative methods of finding volunteers was suggested, such as using people with a connection to the area, such as those who holiday in the area or who are from there and return occasionally eg: summer working bees, or utilising university students skills.

Effective decision making was discussed and the importance of a clear purpose and detailed 3-5 year strategic plan, which will make the process much easier. Determining the correct levels of decision making is another issue which was discussed, and the need to be realistic and practical about it.

Meeting procedure was also covered in the training, including timed agendas and the role of the chair, who doesn’t necessarily have to be the president of the group. The question of who gets a vote and who is a member can be quite difficult for Landcare networks as there is no monetary sum paid for membership. Keeping a budget including assets and liabilities is very important for any organisation which turns over more than \$5-10,000 annually.

It was a highly informative and relevant session, with all attending coming out with a great deal of useful knowledge. I encourage you to have a good talk to anyone who attended the sessions or contact Susi Johnson at Farm Tree and Landcare Association for more information on 03 9207 5527.

Warrenbayne Plant Tissue testing

On Thursday the 15th November the Warrenbayne Landcare group hosted a plant tissue test interpretation morning with Don Cook from Farmright technical services. Don Cook demonstrated the process of how to interpret tissue tests in a logical and easy to digest way, and provided unbiased advice on how to ensure sufficient uptake of nutrients from soil to ensure the health of animals.

What's living in your Backyard?

Wildlife surveys with Goomalibee Landcare Group

Goomalibee Landcare group are conducting a new project surveying wildlife populations in local the area. The group is seeking community members with a keen eye for wildlife to be involved.

The project kicked off with a dinner and spotlight walk on Friday 30th November. The evening featured activities including how to conduct wildlife surveys and monitoring activities with local ecologist Lance Williams. The event was the first part of a long term project that aims to gather information about populations of possums, gliders, babbler and other birds and animals in the



Goomalibee or Baddaginnie areas. The project aims to raise awareness about Macrofauna in the local environment and engage the community in activities to restore and create habitat for wildlife. For more information please contact David Dore on daviddore@optusnet.com.au

Lance Williams showing participants how to record wildlife sightings.

From the Project Officer's

Melanie Addinsall & Kerri Robson

Chilean needle grass sessions, biodiversity spring, Pasture Cropping events, numerous field days, AGM's and grants season; it has been a very busy spring!

Spring has also seen the debut of some new projects including the Landscape Restoration Trial, a project being delivered in partnership between the Gecko CLaN, Goulburn Broken CMA and Deakin University. Rowan Mott from Deakin University attended the Gecko CLaN AGM and presented the experiment behind the project and how revegetation levels really can make an immense impact on wildlife levels. Bird surveys have already been conducted and many of you may have been contacted by Rowan and had surveys conducted on your properties.

Grants season has nearly come to an end, and there are some great projects being developed within Gecko CLaN groups. Finally, Kerri and I wish you all the best for a very merry Christmas and happy New Year, and we look forward to working with you to complete some fantastic projects in 2013!

Melanie

Strathbogie Alternative Fertilisers Field Day

The Strathbogie Tablelands Landcare group are endeavoring to clear up the mystery around alternative fertilisers. A field day for the project was held on Monday 10th November at the demonstration site on David Hamilton's property at Strathbogie.

Vicmill, Bioag, Bactivate, Hi-fert, Calsap, Beaulieu Rum, Nutrisoil, Seasol and Env.2100 have been used since 2010. Application rates and details including costs were presented to the group. Soil tests have been taken before and throughout the project. Pasture cuts were taken along with feed analysis tests, the results of which were also presented to the group.

The field day provided the opportunity for attendees to walk through plots and determine for themselves how successful the products have been and how appropriate they may be for their own business. For more information contact David Jamieson on 5790 5236 or 0423 328 321.



David Jamieson and John Day at the Strathbogie Alternative Fertiliser field day



For all Gecko CLaN & Pasture Cropping information:

<http://goulburnbroken.landcarevic.net.au/mgbclan>

Please Submit Newsletter Items to:

Melanie Addinsall

PO BOX 124,

Benalla, VICTORIA, 3672

Email: landcare1@iinet.net.au