

August 2022

Cardinia Environment Coalition
Bush Telegraph



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Environmental News for the Cardinia Shire

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Aug 5 - Sep 11 2022

Emerging from Fire Exhibition

Cardinia Cultural Centre

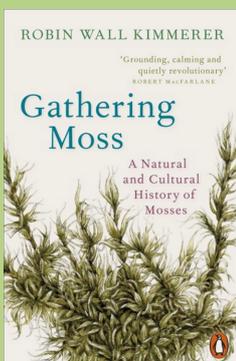
A photographic exhibition of the 2019 Bunyip Complex Fires which affected the communities of Tynong North, Garfield North, Bunyip North and Tonimbuk. Having come through the adversity of the 2019 fires, this exhibition is an opportunity to reflect on the community's resilience.

Book Plug

A blend of science and poetry, 'Gathering Moss' explores the fascinating world of mosses. In this delicate dialogue, Robin Wall Kimmerer illustrates the value of nature - highlighting the critical everyday lessons we can take from it.

In this fast-paced world, it is easy to forget to pause and reflect, and its importance cannot be overstated. Only with reflection can we truly appreciate the natural beauty around us, taking the right steps forward.

Learn about the history of mosses in this beautiful book that will reconnect you with yourself and the planet.



Introducing Orchids

Orchids are the largest family of flowering plants. An estimated 35,000 species of orchids live worldwide. All orchids share some key properties: bilateral symmetry of the flower, a modified third petal and small seeds. They are found on every continent except Antarctica and can live in nearly every habitat - except for glaciers! Occurring naturally throughout all of Victoria, in almost all habitats, from coastlines, to mountain ranges, inland and the semi-arid north-west of the State, the form of Victoria's orchids is very varied and some species have just a single flower, while other have an inflorescence bearing up to 100 flowers.

Orchids often have an important survival-based relationship with their surrounding systems, only growing in association with various fungi and specialized pollinators. Despite being the most numerous in species, orchids are also among the most threatened groups in Australia due to the intricate nature of these relationships, so please don't pick these from the wild!

Please see our September newsletter celebrating Spring; including a beautiful guide to local reserves in Cardinia, where to spot local spring orchids and wildflowers and ways of connecting with our community to discover, protect and enjoy these gems (and more!) in nature.

Look out for the Nodding Greenhood, making an appearance in bushland reserves now! Known for its drooping, translucent flower, specially evolved to attract male fungus gnats for pollination! Flowering from March to October, they can form large colonies and grow to approximately 30cm tall. They look great in pots as a striking addition to Spring gardens and patios, and are currently available at the CEC community nursery.



Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*)
Photo Credit: Meghan Lindsay

The Cardinia Environment Coalition acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Cardinia Shire area, the Bunurong People and the Wurundjeri People, and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



Nursery News

The CEC nursery team dedicated their time and expertise to a Landcare project aimed at restoring habitat for the Southern Brown Bandicoot (SBB) on a section of Crown Land in Koo Wee Rup North. The area around Koo Wee Rup and Bayles represents an important stronghold for the species, with numerous recent sightings in the area. The Bunyip River is an important corridor in this area for SBBs and is less than 200m from the project site.

Requiring dense habitat that consists of 50-80% foliage cover for protection, species planted includes sedges and grasses. Site preparation and weed matting was included to slow the growth of paddock grasses and a rabbit-proof fence erected to protect the new seedlings as they establish. The revegetation plan was created and implemented by the nursery team and the CEC committee continue working to fund future projects replicating the revegetation design for the reserve. Look out for more information on how to plant your own patch for bandicoots (and other wildlife!) available soon on the CEC website.

Planting days were coordinated by the nursery team over the past month, a huge thank you to all who attended and provided their support - 5000 indigenous plants are now growing in the reserve to provide important habitat. SPECIAL thanks to Beaconhills College, working with the CEC on their Common Good Project, the students and teachers generously gave their time over 2 days to planting out and caring for the reserve. We are very grateful for your great work! And another BIG thanks to St Peter's College, who reached out to volunteer, the team are so impressed by your initiative! Thank you to all for helping to conserve, restore and protect our precious flora and fauna species.



Previous revegetation project at the reserve showing established tree cover species



Densely planted grasses and sedges will grow to provide cover



The planting area prepped before planting

Featured Fauna

Southern Brown Bandicoot

Isodon obesulus

The Southern Brown Bandicoot is a small omnivorous marsupial, currently listed as endangered under the EPBC Act 1999. Known as 'ecosystem engineers', they are involved in fungi distribution and litter breakdown, assisting with plant growth. However, these sweet critters are faced with significant threats including habitat loss from urbanisation, feral and domestic predation, and inappropriate fire regimes.

CEC are actively involved in their conservation, managing the 'Bandicoot Corner'. The reserve, located in Bayles, provides a safe haven for the Bandicoots - enabling easier movement among vegetation remnants across the landscape. If you are interested in learning more about the reserve, please get in touch with us!



Featured Flora

Heath Wattle

Acacia brownii

Found throughout the heathy woodlands and forests of Eastern Australia, the Heath Wattle is a small spreading shrub. Throughout July to November, this native can be found covered in bright golden flowers, making it appealing to many gardens. Its prickly nature makes a perfect protective habitat. Among its residents are a myriad of insect, bird and mammal species, including the Southern Brown Bandicoot.



Eco Tidbit

Worm farming is a great way to convert your food scraps into a nutrient-rich fertiliser for the garden.

But how does it work? A process called 'vermicomposting', worms digest and break down the organic matter, excreting it in what is known as worm castings. These castings contain high amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, creating an efficient fertiliser that can improve the health of your plants. In addition, worm farms reduce greenhouse gas emissions by keeping household waste out of landfill.

here are many ways to make and buy your own worm farm, but here is a quick and easy DIY to start your new fertiliser factory.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Two large plastic containers
- A small pot/brick
- A drill
- Old, shredded newspapers
- Household food waste
- And of course, worms! These can be found at your local Bunnings.

SETTING IT UP

1. Drill a series of holes along the top and bottom of one container.
2. Place your pot/brick in the undrilled container, and place the other on top.
3. Set up some damp bedding with the shredded newspaper, laying out the food scraps throughout.
4. Add your worms! To protect them and maintain the moisture level, it is important to place a few more sheets of newspaper on top of the bed. Don't forget to place the lid of your container on top.
5. Now it is time to wait and see what happens. In a few weeks' time, you should begin to see your new vermicompost - enjoy!

Don't overfeed your worms - only add more food after they've finished eating. It is also important to note that some scraps cannot be used. These include meat and dairy products, and acidic foods like orange peels.



The Friends of Cardinia Creek Sanctuary

Cardinia Creek is connected to many significant nature reserves along its course and it is a coordinated effort between local and state government agencies and the community to enable its continued management as important habitat and corridor for flora and fauna. The Cardinia Shire natural resources and land management team members liaise with the group, along with Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria. The creek is at the heart of the Beaconsfield Flora and Fauna Reserve, a popular community park, where the Friends are based.

The remnant riparian vegetation is home to many flora and fauna species and over a 100 bird species have been recorded in the reserve, including Superb Fairywrens, Satin Bowerbirds, Eastern Whipbirds, Bell Minors and Southern Boobooks. Kangaroos roam the surrounding bushland. Recognising the importance of the habitat and recreational value to residents, the Cardinia Creek Regional Parklands plan has been implemented by the Victorian State Government, to support protecting the area for all to enjoy.

The Friends group started up in 1998 and at the time, the reserve was heavily infested with weeds, including Sweet Pittosporum, Japanese Honeysuckle and Tradescantia. Working bees organised by the group helped remove weeds and revegetate the banks of Cardinia Creek throughout the reserve. The groups aim is to continue restoration work with community into the future.

Friends working bees welcome all to connect with the reserve. To continue the great work achieved by the group members, both past and present, the Friends are calling for new members to rejuvenate and support opportunities for the community to be involved in environmental projects. Not all roles with the group require being at the reserve or planting. Seeking volunteers for FOCCS committee roles, working bee supervisors (to over-see safety, sign-ins and tool- use), a library manager, schedule coordinators, grant writing, natural resource management liaison and social media posts! The group welcomes new ideas and collaborations to grow the group and the health of Cardinia Creek.

For more information on how you can join in as an individual, family, group or organisation, please contact the CEC Landcare Facilitator: facilitator@cecinc.net.au



Working Bee with the Community



Volunteer Opportunities

The CEC welcomes volunteers of all ages and capabilities for numerous projects, roles and opportunities - with something to suit everyone! Thank you to everyone already signed up and been in contact, we will be in touch with more details soon!

CEC Indigenous Plant Nursery

At the not-for-profit community nursery, we 'sow and grow' the amazing native pollinator plants needed for local habitat revegetation. As a volunteer you can learn, develop and share skills in indigenous plant identification, pricking out seedlings, re-potting stock, weed identification and removal, seed cleaning + sowing and propagation.

Conservation Projects

If you're looking to experience hands-on conservation, revegetation projects are another great option. The CEC, along with its member groups, facilitate and assist on a range of conservation projects, including habitat revegetation for endangered fauna and re-establishment of threatened flora.

Please email volunteer@cecinc.net.au for more information on how you, your school or organisation can participate at the nursery and other exciting projects. Or, if you're looking for some advice on your own project, including bush-food gardens, gardens for wildlife or how to add local plants to your landscaping plans and designs, please visit the community nursery on a Friday morning between 9am - 12pm to speak with one of the team.

For larger projects and orders, please email: nursery@cecinc.net.au.

Friends and Environmental Groups

Are you looking for an opportunity to join experienced environmental groups working to protect our amazing flora and fauna? Conservation goals are made possible through a range of roles, skills and capabilities that work together to achieve great outcomes for the environment. As a volunteer you can contribute by getting involved in group governance and committee guidance, community and stakeholder engagement, bush-care activities, flora and fauna monitoring, coordination and planning, funding strategies and more!

All are welcome. To discuss opportunities for yourself or your organisation/ group and connect with local environmental initiatives, please contact the CEC Landcare Facilitator: facilitator@cecinc.net.au or call 0487 066 320.

Quick Tip: Apply for a free volunteering Working with Children Check: www.service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children



CEC Nursery



Volunteers have helped grow many projects with the CEC

Farewell.. and Welcome!

A big thank you to **Kobi Van Raay**.

Over the past year Kobi has done an amazing job supporting the transition of the nursery to Deep Creek Reserve, inducting and coordinating volunteers, organizing and working on planting projects for local reserves and running community events [...and so much more!].

A hugely supportive member of the team, Kobi's bubbly enthusiasm will be dearly missed by everyone! We wish her all the very best with her future adventures!



Welcoming **Mahra Villis** to the Volunteer Coordinator role!

Already a valuable CEC Nursery specialist, Mahra has jumped right in by running fantastic planting days with schools and keen students.

Mahra will work on behalf of CEC volunteers until the end of September 2022. Thankyou - we are very lucky to have you onboard.



Have an event to share? A working bee? As the blooming wattle announces Spring is on the way, let's head outdoors! Send your event information to facilitator@cecinc.net.au to be included in the September newsletter.