



# NEWSLETTER

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## B U S H C A R E

WINTER 2011 – ISSUE TEN

### THE GORE COVE PLANTING DAY

The Gore Cove Planting Day was made possible through a Sydney Metro CMA grant to rehabilitate the coastal littoral rainforest, an ecologically endangered community that spans the North Sydney and Lane Cove Council areas. The Smoothey Park Bushcare group applied for the grant in early 2010 in conjunction with North Sydney Council.

The revegetation project, located behind 74 Milray Avenue, was coordinated by Council's bush regeneration team. The site was stabilised with treated pine slabs by a bush regeneration contractor, mulched with a Hills Bark Blower (an amazing exercise from all accounts) and then planted out with the help of the Smoothey Park Bushcare group, other Bushcare volunteers and a few local residents.

The final result was extremely satisfying. Some 1500 tubestock, representative of the Gore Cove littoral rainforest community, were planted along the mulched slope and in a degraded drain line leading to Berry Creek. The efforts of all volunteers were acknowledged at lunch with a traditional Aussie BBQ.

Tristram Thomas – Bush Regenerator



*Bark Blower, Gore Gove Planting Day, 4 March 2011*



*Volunteers, Gore Gove Planting Day, 4 March 2011*

Photos: Tristram Thomas

### BUSH FOODS DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability will be formally opened on 10 July. To complete this local landmark, we will be creating a bush food demonstration garden and a habitat corridor to link up with the Balls Head Bushcare site.

Bushcare enthusiasts are welcome to participate in this planting on 19 June. Check out our new nursery and enjoy a BBQ lunch overlooking the harbour after the event. See the events calendar on the back page for further details or call the Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258.



### COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

Autumn is a lovely time of year with mild, sunny days. Bushcare volunteers have enjoyed these conditions while participating in a variety of activities. On 12 May, the bushland management team, Bushcare volunteers and local residents contributed to Gore Cove (Milray Ave) Planting Day. The Middle Harbour Boat Cruise set off on the rescheduled date of 10 April and the Trees for Mum planting, on 8 May, proved to be a success.

There are some exciting events on the horizon. A one-off bush food garden planting day at the The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability is planned for 19 June and the Centre's official opening will be held on 10 July. See dates for other activities on the calendar of events, backcover.

The search for Megan Hughes' replacement is finally over. The new Bushcare Officer is Andrew Scott our friendly ex-Bushland Project Officer. Native Havens participants may have met him on a property assessment. You can learn more about Andrew's professional experience on page 5. We welcome his participation in our activities.

Ramin Khosravi – Acting Bushland Management Coordinator



# feathers, fur & fangs

## STOP! THIS IS BAT COUNTRY!

Sydney Harbour is frequented by three species of bat: the Grey-headed Flying-fox, the Little Red Flying-fox and the Large Bent-wing Bat (a species of micro-bat).

Flying-foxes often roost in the Botanical Gardens and micro-bats are known to inhabit the cellars of Elizabeth Bay House, the North Sydney Railway tunnel, the Coal Loader, Primrose Park and the Balmain Power Station. While some bat species are able to reside in urban areas, it is the native woodlands around the harbour that provide crucial feeding and roosting sites. This is yet another reason to protect Sydney's remaining bushland. The community can help supplement micro-bat roosting sites by erecting bat boxes in their backyards. This is a sure way to see a bat close up.

### Large Bent-wing Bat, *Miniopterus schreibersii*



*The Bent-wing Bat*

The Large Bent-wing Bat utilises caves, old mines and a variety of structures such as buildings and stormwater culverts as diurnal roosts. They forage on flying insects, particularly moths above and below the tree canopy, and use a range of habitats including moist and dry forests. The Large

Bent-wing Bat will travel up to 320km between roost sites according to seasonal and local needs (Hoye, 2000). Different roosts are utilised for different activities such as mating, birthing, raising young and acclimatisation.

### Grey-headed Flying-fox, *Pteropus poliocephalus*

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is easily identified by its size, wide collar of golden-orange fur and leg fur that extends to the ankles. They also have large eyes which are highly adapted for day and night vision and particularly suited to recognising colours at night. Flying-foxes are nomadic animals; their movement patterns and local distribution are determined by variations in climate and the flowering and fruiting patterns of their preferred food plants. The Grey-headed Flying-fox has adapted its behaviour to take advantage of new habitat and reliable food supplies. Permanent camp sites have been established close to or in suburban areas where planting and watering of trees has produced a year-round food supply of native nectar, blossom, fruit and leaves.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes roost (rest hanging upside-down) in a wide range of warm and moist habitats, including gullies



*The Grey-headed Flying-fox*

in lowland rainforest, coastal forests and mangroves, often beside a creek or water.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes prefer blossom, nectar, fruit and occasionally leaves of native plants, particularly eucalypts, tea-trees, grevilleas, figs and lilly pillys. The Grey-headed Flying-fox is listed under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as vulnerable due to a significant decline in numbers as a result of loss of prime feeding habitat and secluded camp sites. All species of Flying-fox play a major role in the regeneration of native hardwood forests and rainforests by pollinating as they feed and dispersing seeds as they move throughout the forest.

### Little Red Flying-fox, *Pteropus scapulatus*



*The Little Red Flying-fox*

The Little Red Flying-fox varies in colour from reddish-brown to light brown. They are found in northern and eastern Australia and are common in rainforest and *sclerophyll* forests extending inland to semi arid areas. Their diet primarily consists of the nectar and pollen of Eucalypt blossoms. Little

Red Flying-foxes have some interesting differences from Australia's other flying-fox species in that they breed at different times of year and roost closer together than other flying-foxes.

Tristram Thomas - Bush Regenerator

#### References:

- R & A Williams, copyright Australian Museum
- [www.stickeebatz.com](http://www.stickeebatz.com)

## WILDLIFE WATCH UPDATE AUTUMN 2011 (FEB 2011 – APRIL 2011)

Thanks to all Wildlife Watch volunteers who monitor the bush and keep sending their observations to us. The highlights of recent sightings are:

- **Barn Owl** (Cammeray)
- **Little Black Cormorant** (Willoughby Bay, Brightmore Reserve)
- **Red-bellied Black Snake** (Gore Cove)
- **Crimson Rosella** (Cammeray)
- **White-browed Scrubwrens** (Cremorne Reserve)
- **Eastern Whipbird** (Smoothey Park, Gore Cove)
- **Brush Turkey** (Cremorne Urban, Tunks Park, Cammeray)
- **Green Tree Snake** (Gore Cove)
- **Tawny Frogmouth** (Brightmore Reserve)
- **Spangled Drongo** (Wollstonecraft)
- **Australian Pelican** (Willoughby Bay, Brightmore Res)
- **Eastern Water Dragon** (Balls Head Reserve, Cammeray Urban, Cremorne Reserve)
- **Albino Sting Ray** (Cremorne Wharf)



*Albino Sting Ray  
Photo: Wendy Paige*



*Tawny Frogmouths  
Photo: Anthony Meggitt*

Seen any interesting fauna in North Sydney Council area? Do you have a photo of them? Please call the Bushland Project Officer with details on 9936 8252.

Ramin Khosravi – Acting Bushland Management Coordinator

## THE MIDDLE HARBOUR BOAT CRUISE REVIEW

The Middle Harbour Boat Cruise is an inter-council event organised by North Sydney and supported by Willoughby and Mosman Councils. The purpose of the cruise is to offer local residents a better understanding of the extent of bushland in our municipalities, its particular heritage values and the issues that impact on them.

The Aqua Queen set-off from Balmoral Beach on 10 April without a hitch.

The weather was spectacular, clear skies and calm waters, which was welcome relief since the cruise had been rescheduled due to previous undesirable weather conditions. Chris Williams from Willoughby City Council orated with enthusiasm throughout the day, detailing the historical events and the natural features of Middle Harbour. Vicky Gordon from the Aboriginal Heritage Office informed passengers

of the many interesting aspects of Aboriginal life. Guests enjoyed pleasant refreshments and good conversation. The overwhelming response to the event was positive. We did not see a lot of fauna, however, the weather certainly made up for this.

Please book early in 2012 to be a passenger on the next Middle Harbour Boat Cruise.

Andrew Scott



*Middle Harbour Boat Cruise vista, 10 April 2011*



*Middle Harbour Boat Cruise passengers, 10 April 2011*

## EVENING WALK & TALK REVIEW

In February, skilled ecologist Andy Burton led an evening Walk & Talk targeted at Adopt-a-Plot participants along a section of Cremorne Point Reserve. The guided walk was followed with a wonderful digital presentation highlighting some of our local fauna. Andy will be hosting an invertebrate presentation on 26 June. Be sure to book in early as the last event was booked out. Contact the Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258.

## THE COAL LOADER CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY OPENING

**10 am to 3pm Sunday 10 July**

The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability will be officially opened on Sunday 10 July with a Sustainability Festival featuring eco living stalls, talks, tours, free bike tune ups, giveaways, native animals and film screenings.

There will also be a free community BBQ - 12pm to 2pm. (Who said there's no such thing as a free lunch?).



## A FAREWELL

*Margaret Ryan receiving Bushcare Award from the Mayor Genia McCaffery at the Christmas Party 2007*

There are a few tear-drops as I write this farewell to my Forsyth Park Bushcare Group of 13 years!

One chilly Winter's morning in 1997 I fronted up for my first go at helping to plant out natives, all fired-up after completing the four training sessions sponsored by North Sydney Council. I wondered what I had let myself in for when I surveyed the patch of rubble and weeds that we were supposed to be working on. How on earth would anything survive in such conditions, I wondered.

Despite this inauspicious start, by the end of the first day, I had decided to stay. I was made so welcome. The then convenor, Doug Matheson and his wife Dot, were there, their four-year-old grandson, Sammy – now 17 years - Council officer, Brenda Madden and no doubt others whose names now escape me.

Today, that same patch is every bushcarer's dream come true – there has been a complete transformation into lush, mature-growth bush. The site has expanded over the years and there are signs of the long-term plans for it at last taking shape. It takes many years to see results and that's keeping at it!

In recent years, Michael Kelso has been our excellent leader. Morning teas are his forte: the truck doors are swung wide open and to the very latest compilation of Beatles tunes – volume up loud and feisty - we sipped our teas and coffee and told him what we thought of his latest choice of biscuits. Woe betide him if they were not up to scratch! We never let him forget that he walked in the shadow of his predecessor, Michael Day, who was famed for his apple tart, bought specially for us from a gourmet shop on the Central Coast.

What you don't hear bending over a trowel digging out weeds is nobody's business! And what if you miss a sequel? The social side of Bushcare is reason enough to keep coming back. All the laughs we have shared - even on a more serious

note when someone got bitten by a jumping ant. Our volunteer could feel it inside a trouser leg and in a frenzy to try and get it out, was prepared to shed clothes. (The ant was never found - it probably *jumped away!*)

Luckily, there haven't been snakes. But there's often been a cry of *oh, look!* as someone has sighted something unusual. At Forsyth, that has included a King Parrot, some Fairy Wrens who took a fancy to the *Pomaderris* regenerated after a pile burn and a Tawny Frogmouth brazenly withstanding assaults from Currawongs who objected to its presence.

And never mind the hazards of the job! One look at the fierce array of tools – knives, loppers, saws, poison – a bushcarer's stock-in-trade – is enough to scare off any faint-hearted newcomer. Ours is one of the most dangerous occupations, they say. But in all my years at Forsyth, I think the worst that happened was slithering down a slimy slope, and just missing a rock, after flooding rains.

What I came to learn is that bushcare is but a toe into the wider and entrancing world of nature. We try to lovingly restore the bush. And in the scheme of things, it is miniscule. But it's the hope that sustains us. That something we are doing will turn out for the good of all, including other plants and animals and ourselves. Because in the end, we are all interconnected with the natural world.

Bushcare has enhanced my life. Bushwalking now means that I look at plants with a more knowledgeable eye. Council workshops have developed my awareness. I have met so many new people; been on the Boorowa excursion and got the rural perspective on things; been on a Streets Alive tour and seen what local residents do to beautify their landscapes; the wonderful Christmas parties. And for all this and more, I have North Sydney Council, the Bushland Management Team and my dear friends in the Forsyth Park Bushcare Group to thank. I shall miss you all. Good luck for the future.

By Margaret Ryan



*Ball's Head track wren habitat*

## HOW'S YOUR STRUCTURE?

How's your structure? I'm talking about the structure of your Bushcare site, of course! Structure can be defined as a construction, configuration, shape, composition, system or framework. In bush regeneration terms it refers to the various vegetation strata in the bush, living and dead.

The structure of your Bushcare site is extremely important to fauna and flora. The shrubs and vines that make the mid-story vegetation strata provide safe foraging and nesting sites for White-browed Scrub Wrens and refuge to many other animals.

It can take up to 15 years to create this environment. But do you think we take notice or even realise this?

The structure of bushland is also defined by its non-living entities such as dead trees, fallen branches, logs, sticks and leaf litter. Bushcarers can negatively affect these elements of structure as we have been conditioned to clean up every little twig as though we were working in a manicured garden.

Folks, bush regeneration is based on sound ecological principles, it is not gardening. If we intend to protect native fauna and flora we need to be aware of the niches created by bushland structure and consider the way we manage it. The principles of horticulture and bush regeneration could not be further apart. When you next work in the bush remember: 'clean isn't green man, you dig!'

Michael Kelso

## NEW STAFF MEMBER

Hello, my name is Andrew Scott. You may have met me during a property assessment for Native Havens. I have enjoyed facilitating this program over the past six months and am delighted that I have recently been appointed as Council's Bushcare Officer.

I have 10 years experience in natural area management. I started my career as a trainee bush regenerator for the National Trust of Australia and progressed to become a bush regeneration supervisor and bushcare supervisor. I have worked for several councils in the past, including North Sydney Council. I have also worked for Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation - La Perouse and worked with Gandangara Aboriginal Land Council at Liverpool.



I gained valuable experience designing and delivering bush regeneration training to participants during my three years with Wesley Uniting Employment as a Training and Placement Coordinator. In recent years, I have been employed to manage contract bush regenerators for a landscape firm and as a bush regeneration supervisor for a private bush regeneration company.

I plan to use all of this work experience and my recently acquired graphic design education to assist North Sydney Council's Bushcare program. I am sure we will meet at a workshop or Bushcare event in the near future.

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or questions about our Bushcare program. See you all soon. Please contact me on 9936 8258.



## flora for fauna in your garden

North Sydney Council's Native Havens program provides free assistance to residents who wish to help the environment by using local native plants in their garden. Council offers advice, help and free plants to participants.

To become involved in the Native Haven program, contact the Bushland Project Officer on 9936 8100.

## ADOPT A LOCALLY RARE PLANT: *Eucalyptus haemastoma*



### Description

Scribbly Gums (*Eucalyptus haemastoma*) are spectacular Australian trees with smooth, whitish yellow bark. The bark has a prominent feature - "strange looking scribbles resembling some form of mysterious ancient writing" (ref: Snuggle Pot & Cuddlepie). These trees grow 10-15m high. Adult leaves are green or grey-green and glossy. The fruit has a conical shape, 6-9mm in length and diameter. It has a disc that is flat or slightly raised with valves that are enclosed or at rim level.

### Distribution and usage

Scribbly Gums are restricted to sandstone areas in Sydney. It is generally a common species in dry sclerophyll woodland, on shallow sandy soils along coastal plateaus. In North Sydney it is locally reduced to a few individual trees (remnant species). This has occurred largely due to development on ridge tops over the past 200 years. *Eucalyptus haemastoma* is the hardiest tree in our local area.

It is also a very fast growing tree. If you have a small garden on a ridge line this could be the species for you. There is no need to worry about the height of these trees, in small gardens you can group plant. The competition will turn the saplings into a mallee form that has attractive twisting branches. These Gum Trees can create a very low maintenance garden for years to come.

The well known scribbles on the bark of *Eucalyptus haemastoma* are caused by an indigenous moth first described as *Ogmograptis scribula* in 1933.

In 2005, CSIRO (Entomology section) found a tiny larvae and pupae of Scribbly Gum Moth in Canberra. The moth that emerged, was not *O. scribula* but a new species, yet to be described and named.



Scribbles from one species of scribbly gum moth on the trunk of a eucalypt



Photo: Natalie Barnett, CSIRO

A scribbly gum moth - one of several species of these tiny moths that have now been found.

How are the scribbles formed? Eggs are laid between layers of old and new bark in Autumn and the larvae develop in the bark through Winter. The scribble patterns are created when the larvae emerge and feed on the tissue just below the epidermal cells of the tree trunk. The diameter of the tunnels increases as the larvae grow. When the larvae verge on maturity they emerge from the bark to form an elongated ridged grey cocoon. Adults emerge from their cocoons during the night in Autumn the following year attracted by the light.

Ramin Khosravi

#### Reference:

- <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Scribbly-Gum-Moth>
- <http://www.csiro.au/resources/ps28j.html>
- <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>
- Field Guide to the native plants of Sydney "Les Robinson"
- *Snuggle Pot & Cuddle Pie* by May Gibbs

## ENVIROTUBE

Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby and Willoughby Councils with funding from the NSW Environmental Trust have set up a YouTube channel called Envirotube [www.youtube.com/user/greenstylenorth](http://www.youtube.com/user/greenstylenorth) Jump on to see some interesting videos about native wildlife and what other residents and councils have been achieving in Sydney.

If you have any biodiversity or sustainability videos that you would be happy to share please contact the North Sydney Council Bushcare Officer, or if you have skills, experience or interest in digital footage please contact the Bushcare Officer to discuss projects.

# PLANTING TECHNIQUES AND TIPS

Native Havens participants will be well aware that planting tube stock successfully is not as easy as it may first seem. The most important action for success is to dig a hole deep enough to cover the entire root stock of the plant. This is essential because plant roots have a very different physiology to plant stems. The outer layer (epidermis) of a root is required to be semi-permeable to facilitate osmosis, while the epidermis of a stem has evolved to prevent the loss of water with a woody and/or waxy epidermis. This observation explains why plants perform poorly or die when they are planted in a shallow hole with their roots exposed to the atmosphere. The plant basically dies of thirst.

## STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLANTING

### Step 1

Dig a hole the same depth or slightly deeper than the plant's pot.

If you are having difficulty digging a hole with your favorite trowel, try switching to a light hand mattock. A hand mattock utilises your biceps and shoulder muscles while a trowel is worked by the muscles in your wrist. When using a mattock remember to face the direction of the digging, secure your footing or kneeling position, make sure your swing does not harm anyone, swing the mattock up next to your head and let gravity do the rest.

### Step 2

Remove the plant from its pot/tube with out damaging the roots.

Tap the pot firmly against a hard surface. Place the stem of the plant gently between your index and middle finger. Turn your hand over with the plant in place and quickly sweep your arm downwards, the root stock should now be free of the pot. If not, repeat process. If all else fails, cut the pot open.

### Step 3

Place the plant in the hole at ground level or just below and fill the gap. Seal the gap around the plant's root stock by gently tamping the excavated soil down vertically with your fingers. This action will prevent water escaping from the roots. Form a shallow basin around the base of the plant with the excess soil.

### Step 4

Gently water the plant in to displace any air pockets.

### Step 5

Mulch around the planting.

Mulching helps to conserve water in the soil and prevent weed infestation in your garden. Use a hard wood mulch rather than a pine wood mulch to maintain a healthy carbon to nitrogen ratio in the soil.

Try these tips and techniques when you receive your next delivery of native tube stock from the Native Havens Project Officer. Look for a light hand mattock at your hardware store.

Andrew Scott

Thank you to our Adopt-A-Plot supervisor Joseph Kielniacz for hand modelling.



Photos: Andrew Scott

# Calendar & Greendates Reminder

## JUNE

- 4 Natural Area Survey Presentation** | Saturday 4 June, 9.30am-1.30pm | RSVP by 27 May | **Bookings:** Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258
- 19 Bush Food Garden Planting** | Sunday 19 June, 9.30am-12pm | RSVP by 10 June | **Bookings:** Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258
- 26 Invertebrate Presentation** | Sunday 26 June, 9am-1pm | RSVP by 17 June | **Bookings:** Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258

## JULY

- 10 The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Opening** | Sunday 10 July, 10am-3pm | Free Community BBQ 12pm-2pm
- 23 Angophora and Eucalyptus Tree Identification** | Saturday 23 July, 10am-1pm | RSVP by 15 July | **Bookings:** Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258
- 31 National Tree Day** | Sunday 31 July | [tuesday.planetark.org](http://tuesday.planetark.org)

## AUGUST

- 6 Muogamarra Volunteer Regeneration Day** | Saturday 6 August, 8am-3pm | RSVP by 29 July | **Bookings:** Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258
- 21 Willoughby Fauna Fair** | Sunday 21 August, 10am-3pm
- 25 Ecological Benefits of Hazard Reduction Burning** | Thursday 25 August, 10am-12pm | RSVP by 22 August | **Bookings:** Meg Convey on 9777 7710



*Coal Loader and Centre for Sustainability nursery shade house construction April 2011*

The Bushland Management Team has been preparing an area at the Coal Loader for the Community Nursery. We have assembled a shed, green house, hot house and office space to date. We will build hardening off benches in the near future. The Community Nursery will eventually service a number of programs including Bushcare, Native Havens, Streets Alive and Community Gardens.

**For more information** or to make a booking for any of these workshops or special events please contact the Bushcare Officer on 9936 8258.

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Gratitude to all our contributors who take the time to put ideas and research into words so we can learn. Thank you.

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