



www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare | Summer 2010

BUSHCARE

Newsletter



Forsyth Park
Broad Burn



Brightmore Reserve
Broad Burn

Hazard Reduction Burns

The bush regeneration team, working in conjunction with the NSW Fire Brigade, has undertaken three prescribed burns within North Sydney's bushland. The burns took place at Primrose Park, Brightmore Reserve and Forsyth Park. Only three weeks later we are already seeing results from these burns.

The first regeneration to show up at Forsyth Park and Primrose Park was *Acacia terminalis* and also the sub-species *terminalis-augustifolia* (Sunshine Wattle). *Acacia suaveolens* (Sweet Scented Wattle) has germinated too. In Brightmore Reserve we are seeing *Acacia terminalis*, *Kennedia rubicunda* (Dusky Coral Pea) and *Dodonaea triquetra* (Hop Bush).

The burns were carried out in accordance with and as part of North Sydney's Bushland Plan of Management and the Bush Fire Management Committee's operational plan for North Sydney's strategic hazard reduction program.

When conducting broad-area burns we are aware that fire intensities may vary according to the amount and depth of fuel on the ground, elevated fuel, aerial fuel in the trees (bark, branches, leaves) and

geographical location. These are the major factors which play a part in the rates of post-fire regeneration.

When burning bushland areas in North Sydney we purposely increase the fuel levels (if needed) leading up to a burn by adding fuel to proposed burn areas, sometimes covering the whole area and at other times in a mosaic (patchy) pattern to try and replicate the layering of fuel that would be found in a less disturbed bushland ecosystem.

When pile burning we make sure the piles are low, spread out and linear for maximum regeneration potential. Adding fuel to the piles at different levels varies the heat radiated from the burn footprint and thus has a differentiating effect on the regeneration occurring post fire. We also sometimes allow the fire to run and spread on the edges, so that it mimics natural fire behaviour which leads to a larger burn footprint and more variation in the heat intensity. This results in better regeneration of the site.

Michael Kelso – Bush Regenerator Team Leader

Coordinator's Update

I can't believe another year has passed. We are currently getting ready for our Volunteer Christmas party, which is a good opportunity to catch up with other volunteers and share experiences. Inspiring others or becoming inspired is what it is all about.

We have been lucky this year with some heavy rainfalls. This has helped to establish the plants that were planted for National Tree Day, Volunteer Week and in schools, Bushcare areas and private backyards (Native Havens), as well the burnt areas in Brightmore, Primrose and other reserves. The wet weather is very important for natural regeneration. So while the wet weather can be irritating on a personal level, when we look back on this period, we'll find it resulted in thousands of new trees and shrubs in our local government area.

I wish to welcome CLANS (Climate Action North Sydney) as a valued addition to the open space volunteer family. The group has been working on the Rawson Street wildlife habitat corridor and the volunteers deserve congratulations for the work undertaken on this project.

Another project under the North Sydney Bushcare banner was set in motion with the Indian Myna Trap Building Workshop which we hosted on 30 October. A number of traps were built by volunteers

to take home and one is now available for use from the bushland management team.

This year some of us were privileged to have a second trip to Boorowa to get all the supplied plants into the ground. This was needed because the weather turned bad during the first trip and the planting had to be called off on the Saturday. For those who may not know, the Boorowa River Recovery project was one of three finalists in the community category of the United Nations World Environment Day Awards, thanks to the thousands of trees that have been planted to provide habitat and fight salinity. Well done to everyone who has participated over the years.

The Natural Area Survey Report has been approved by Council and will be ready for publication shortly. Once published, the report will be available for Bushcare groups to view. The report contains an inventory of our bushland areas as well as recommendations and management priorities.

Last, but not least, you may be wondering why I am writing the Coordinators Report instead of Gareth. Well, don't worry. Gareth is Acting Environmental Services Manager and looking after a larger portfolio of our environmental activities. He will be back soon, I promise!

Ramin Khosravi – Acting Bushland Management Coordinator



feathers, fur & fangs

Twitting and Tweetering

White Browed Scrub Wrens



Scrub Wrens are birds of special conservation concern in North Sydney Council (Smith & Smith)



After many years of twitting and tweetering around the edges of the Tunks Park East Bushcare site, the White Browed Scrub Wrens have finally moved in. During our October Bushcare meeting, while we were weeding through a patch of *Entolasia* intermixed with *Erharta*, I was called with some urgency by a volunteer.

Knowing that the site is full of Jumping Ants, I automatically assumed it was another ant nest. Clambering across the site to investigate I was very surprised at what had been found. A beautifully woven nest, constructed from the wiry stems and leaves of the *Entolasia*, hanging no more than 20cm off the ground among the thick grassy vegetation that we had been tending to and thickening up for a number of years.

Inside the woven nest were nestled four small white eggs, about the same size as small easter eggs. The volunteers and I were ecstatic at the find, which was the first known finding of a White Browed Scrub Wren nest on a North Sydney Bushcare site. Only three years earlier on the site we had also discovered the first known Brush Turkey nest in North Sydney. This laid testament that what we were doing was right and that the regeneration works conducted on the site had greatly improved the amount and diversity of suitable and useable habitat for local fauna.

Works conducted on the Bushcare site over the past five years include:

- working from good to poor condition bush
- creating islands of native plants
- removing annual weed such as Fleabane and Bidens
- managing and controlling, but never completely removing, all weedy groundcovers and grasses (we focus only on seeding or near seeding weeds)
- conducting pile burns on and adjacent to the Bushcare site

- transplanting and direct seeding of grasses, shrubs, vines and canopy species
- creating a frog pond (a water supply will always attract wildlife)

There have been many other works carried out on site, but these are probably the most crucial in transforming a weedy slope into structured and usable urban bushland habitat. The area that the White Browed Scrub Wrens are now using will be quarantined from Bushcare works until the end of the breeding season to allow the best chance for the eggs to hatch and the mother to feed the chicks without fearing, in its eyes, predation from Bushcare workers. The smallest amount of disturbance may cause the nest and eggs to be abandoned.

Finding new native flora and fauna on your Bushcare site is exciting and rewarding for both the volunteers and site supervisor. Examples such as this are what keep volunteers coming back month after month in sun, wind and rain.

Tristram Thomas - Bushland Regenerator

Newly recorded:
Spotted Pardalote in Balls Head Reserve near the Coal Loader Centre.
Bird photos courtesy of Peter Smith, nest photos by Tristram Thomas



Wildlife Watch Update

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

- **Black Cockatoo** (Tunks Park, Cammeray urban)
- **Little Black Cormorant** (Cammeray urban)
- **Sacred Kingfisher** (Tunks Park)
- **Eastern Rosella** (Brightmore Reserve)
- **White Browed Scrub Wrens** (Berry Island Reserve, Coal Loader Site, Tunks East Bushcare site)
- **Golden Crown Snake** (Brightmore Reserve)
- **Brush Turkey** (Brightmore Reserve, Tunks East Bushcare site, Cammeray Urban)
- **Eastern Whipbird** (Smoothery Park, Tunks Park)
- **Pied Cormorant** (Berry Island, Kirribilli urban)
- **Southern Boobook** (Cammeray urban)
- **Tawny frogmouth** (Cremorne, Tunks Park, Waverton urban)
- **Variegated Fairy Wren** (Brightmore Reserve)
- **Masked Lapwing** (Cammeray urban, Berry Island)
- **Australian Pelican** (Berry Island, Long Bay)
- **Superb Fairy Wren** (Tunks Park, Sugar Works Reserve)
- **Spotted Pardalote** (Balls Head Reserve)

Seen any interesting fauna in the North Sydney Council area? Do you have a photo of them? Please call the Bushland Project Officer with details on 9936 8252. You can also submit your photo for Council's Snapped in North Sydney section on our website. Email your photo to photo@northsydney.nsw.gov.au

**Ramin Khosravi -
Bushland Project
Officer**



Brush Turkey visiting a Bushcare residence at Brightmore Reserve photographed by Val Gay, October 2010



Forsyth Park Habitat Protection Area

The Bushland Regeneration Team has been observing areas that need to be retained for habitat protection. These habitat areas are disturbed climax weed communities and are often right next to Bushcare sites. Observations show us that while we are endeavouring to improve our Bushcare sites, we lack the fundamental structure that wildlife is drawn to for protection, food and shelter.

Weedy habitat protection areas are the perfect niche for native wildlife such as small bush birds. Leaving habitat protection areas gives us more time to enhance the quality and structure of the bushland community where regeneration works are being undertaken. Therefore, it is best not to overclear an area and leave a site void of habitat (even if it is weedy).

We have identified several habitat protection areas and no contractor or Bushcare group will be allowed to start working on them. We need to make use of these areas as a refuge until smaller birds and other native fauna using them can move onto our regenerated sites.

Unfortunately some of these refuge areas have already been encroached upon. We are now in the process of mapping these sites and adding them to the management plans for each of the reserves. Selected areas within Primrose Reserve and Forsyth Park are being monitored and mapped for habitat protection.

Michael Kelso - Bush Regenerator Team Leader

WILDLIFE WATCH TRAINING

This year we had another round of Wildlife Watch Training on Saturday 18 September. The workshop focused on understanding the variation of local habitat found in the North Sydney area, showing people where to look and what to expect in different habitats.

A full list of all the fauna ever recorded in North Sydney was given to volunteers. This list is classified by fauna categories, which is easy to sort through and narrow down to species level. Available resources were introduced to volunteers and they were shown how to use the NSW Wildlife Atlas and Birds in Backyards site.

The day was followed by a PowerPoint presentation of common local wildlife. Other information to assist in identifying fauna such as bird beak shapes, markings/colours, calls, scats, tracks, feathers, skeletons and nests were discussed.

Instruction was also given on how to correctly fill out our Wildlife Watch datasheets when fauna is observed. Practical tips for observing wildlife were covered in a walk at Berry Island. Using Wildlife Watch datasheets and maps, wildlife observations were recorded on the spot. If you would like to report wildlife observations too, go to www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Bushcare

Ramin Khosravi - Bushland Project Officer

The Jewel of Sydney's Sandstone Bushland

The Muogamarra Nature Reserve (pronounced Moo-o-ga-marra) has been aptly named as Muogamarra was believed to be an Aboriginal word (Awabakal language group) meaning 'preserve for the future'. The site was founded by John Duncan Tipper in 1934, who was concerned about the loss of Hawkesbury sandstone forest and leased 600 acres (2.4 sq km) to protect the flora, fauna and Aboriginal sites.

Over time Tipper expanded his lease to 2050 acres (8.3 sq km). In 1954 the land was given up by Tipper and gazetted as Muogamarra Sanctuary.

Muogamarra Nature Reserve is managed to preserve its wonderful diversity of plants and animals for scientific and educational purposes. Each spring, it puts on one of Sydney's most vibrant natural floral shows, including a wide range of native orchids, bright pink Wax Flowers, Purple Boronias, towering Gynea Lilies and if you're lucky the beloved Waratah. There are also many Aboriginal sites in Muogamarra, especially rock art carvings and grinding stones.

North Sydney Bushcare took a handful of lucky volunteers to Muogamarra on a beautiful September day. When we arrived at the entry gate we were greeted by the smiling faces of yet more North Sydney Bushcare volunteers collecting the entry fee. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and was captivated with the floral display and vistas of the Hawkesbury. The reserve is open to the public just six weekends a year, on special open days around August and September, so that visitors can experience the magnificent wildflowers.

North Sydney Bushcare will be running another trip to Muogamarra in 2011. Check your events calendar and book in early because spaces are limited. And if you don't believe me, here is what one of the people who visited the reserve had to say: "I wish to express my utmost thanks to North Sydney Council and to the Bushcare program for organising an exceptional excursion last Sunday. Tristram was the best tour leader. It was great to meet other local people of similar interests and the bus was very comfortable. The reserve is outstanding and we all expressed a wish to come back again next year."

Tristram Thomas - Bushland Regenerator



Native Havens Garden Tour



Native Havens Garden Tour participants visit Harry Loots and Lindy Monsoon's native garden

Rawson Street Wildlife Habitat Project

This year Bushcare and Streets Alive worked together with the help of a local community group Climate Action North Sydney (CLANS) to start work on a wildlife corridor in Neutral Bay. The wildlife corridor, which is to stretch between Forsyth Park and Anderson Park, was undertaken through consolidating the vegetation already present and planting a dense shrub layer to provide habitat and food for little birds, butterflies and insects along Rawson Street. Some of you may have already given a helping hand with this new project.

Concerned about climate change, one of the aims of this group is to focus on reducing CO₂ emissions to the safe level of 350 parts per million. Any trees you plant takes us one step closer to this aim. On 10.10.10, people at 7347 events in 188 countries got together and worked on the climate crisis. One of these events was in North Sydney Council. For more information go to: <http://www.350.org/>

Ramin Khosravi - Bushland Project Officer



Climate Action North Sydney, planting day on the 10 October 2010

Past Training & events

BUSHCARE ESSENTIALS ADVANCED TRAINING, VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

- Excellent slides
- Refreshingly different ideas
- Useful day - hope to disseminate new ideas
- Liked the sharing of experience
- Enjoyable, thought provoking and encouraging
- Good-sized group for interaction and personal attention
- Loved the group activities and presentations
- Increased my knowledge about planning how to approach a Bushcare site
- The group activity was helpful and instructive
- Interesting and informative but also interactive so that participants could also share their knowledge and experience
- Most enjoyable day
- Practical and theory - lots of opportunities for questions
- Will be very practical and useful

SCHOOL PLANTING

On 10 September, the Marist Brothers School in North Sydney gave a helping hand for the third year in a row by assisting with planting along the Russell Street edge of Smoothey Park in Wollstonecraft. Planting needed to occur to increase the density and diversity of the strip as well as extending it northward. Species planted mainly consisted of thick prickly shrubs suitable for small bush birds.



Marist boys assisting with planting in Smoothey Park

Indian Myna Trap Building Workshop

On Saturday 30 October North Sydney Council hosted a workshop showing interested residents how to build their own "Pee Gee" Indian Myna trap. Bill Handke (President) and Peter Franklin from the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group provided the technical expertise for this workshop, with participants taking home their



own traps at the end of the day. Council also contacted a local vet and now we have a volunteer vet willing to humanely euthanise these birds for our trappers. I built an extra trap, which can be shared among interested people. If you wish to borrow it please feel free to contact me.

Ramin Khosravi - Bushland Project Officer

LEND LEASE CORPORATE VOLUNTEER DAY AT CREMORNE

On 23 September, a dozen people from Lend Lease came to give a stabilising hand on a steep site at Cremorne. The group carried stabilising materials (logs, stakes and tools) to a difficult-to-access Adopt a Plot site. At the end of the day the slope had stabilising logs in place, and the natives on site had been freed from surrounding weeds to allow for further habitat expansion.

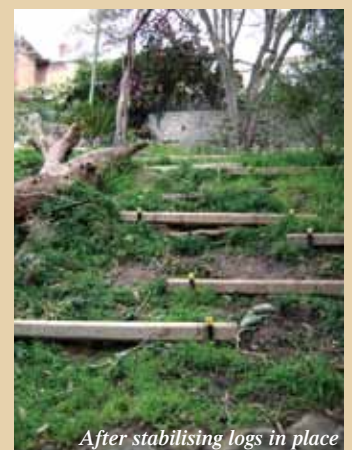
Rachel Gleeson - Adopt a Plot Supervisor



Lend Lease Corporate Volunteer group



Site before work completed



After stabilising logs in place



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.

Banksia ericifolia

(Banksia Burgundy or Heath Banksia)

A dense rounded shrub growing to between 2 and 5 metres. It produces attractive perfumed cones from autumn to winter. The cones are a good food source for larvae of the Double-headed Hawkmoth (*Coequosa triangularis*) and other butterflies. It is considered an important dense shrub for insects and birds, as well as honeyeaters, wattlebirds and parrots which are also attracted to the nectar in their flowers. This is an important feeding plant for birds during winter months. Once seeds are formed in the cones, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos are happy to feed on the seeds.

If you love decorative plants you may consider this:



Banksia ericifolia Flower

"There is, I think no more decorative plant in the bush than this..., when the Bottle Brushes are newly opened and the little hooked styles are deep red with yellow tips. A bunch of them with their own green in a jar is a sight to gladden the whole household..." (Robinson)

References:

- Robinson, L. 2003, Field Guide to Native Plants of Sydney, Kangaroo Press.
- Australian Museum, <http://australianmuseum.net.au>



Coequosa triangularis



Banksia ericifolia



Cone of *Banksia ericifolia*



Glossy Black-Cockatoo Copyright Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

Ramin's Pick for the Garden: *Dillwynia retorta*



Dillwynia retorta is one of the most commonly found pea flowers on Sydney sandstone, growing in both heath and woodland areas. The shrub usually grows to 1m high. As with other members of the Fabaceae family, it grows in very poor soil and is able to fix nitrogen for its growth.

The common name for *Dillwynia* is Egg and Bacon (referring to its yellow and red flowers). The flowers of *Dillwynia retorta* are normally bright yellow with a red centre, but can be orange-yellow. Flowering time is mainly from July to September.

The flowers mass in clusters of up to nine on the upper parts of the stems, growing in pairs from each leaf axils. Smooth seeds are contained in pods 4mm to 7mm long.

The fine leaves, linear to narrow-oblong, 4mm to 12mm long, are twisted, hence the name *retorta* (Latin for turned or twisted). They make nice plants for rock gardens or any little yards with shallow soil.

They also attract birds to your gardens.

Ramin Khosravi – Bushland Project Officer

References:

- New South Wales Flora Online, <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>
- Birds in Back yards, <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>
- Friend of Lane Cove National Park. <http://www.friendsoflanecovenationalpark.org.au/>

Weed to Watch

Cardamine hirsuta

Common name: Flick Weed, Popping Cardamine, Common bittercress, hairy bittercress.

A native of temperate areas of the northern hemisphere. A small, slender, rosette-forming annual herb to 35cm high. Lowest leaves pinnate, the terminal lobe on each being kidney shaped; sparsely hairy on the upper surface and margins. Flower spikes are usually many flowered and its thin fruit stands erectly from the stem at less than 45°. When the fruit is ripe it ejects the seed a considerable distance, hence its common name Flickweed. *C. hirsuta* occurs in cool, moist, shaded habitats as a weed of gardens, nurseries and glass houses.

Double check the plant before you remove it, young Flick Weeds can easily be mistaken for the native herb Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*). The rosette formation of the Flick Weed distinguishes it from Kidney Weed. So if you see something that looks like a young Flick Weed, find its base and look to check that all the leaves are coming out from a central point. Kidney Weed has a creeping formation and its leaves grow along the stems of the plant not from a central point.

Removal: Because it is an annual, the most effective way of controlling Flick Weed is to remove it before it goes to seed. Successive waves of spot-spraying with glyphosate may prove effective, however, if other natives are nearby, hand weeding, though laborious, may prove the most effective method. When hand weeding, the plants should be removed from site as the seeds continue to ripen even after the plant is pulled up.

Rachel Gleeson – Bushcare Officer

References:

- Hornsby Shire Council, 2009, *Look-Alikes: Native and weed plant identification booklet*.
- B.A. Auld & R.W. Medd, 1992, *Weeds: An illustrated botanical guide to the weeds of Australia*. NSW Agriculture
- Richardson, R.G & F.J. 2006, *Weeds of the South-East: an identification guide for Australia*, Everbest Printing.



Cardamine hirsuta - weed



Dichondra repens: Kidney Weed - native

WINTER WILDFLOWER WALK

In August, a small group of Bushcare volunteers gathered at the Field of Mars Wildlife Refuge, North Ryde to take a guided walk examining some of the endangered ecological communities and their species.



Leucopogon ericoides



Phyllota sp.



Olearia microphylla



Platylobium formosum

Calendar & Greendates Reminder

DECEMBER

- 4 **Seed Collection Field Trip** | 9am-12pm | RSVP by 1 December | Bookings: Lane Cove Council 9911 3583
- 5 **North Sydney Bushcare Christmas Party**

JANUARY

- 10 **Bushcare Adventures: Backyard Bugs** | 8.30am-9.30am | RSVP by 4 January | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258
- 11 **Bushcare Adventures: Under the Sea** | 8.30am-10am | RSVP by 4 January | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258
- 14 **Bushcare Adventures: Venture into May Gibbs Nutcote with Bushcare** | 10am-12noon (3-5yrs), 12noon-2pm (5+yrs) | RSVP by 4 January | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258
- 17 **Bushcare Adventures: Let's go Fishing, Twilight** | 6pm-8pm | RSVP by 4 January | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258
- 18 **Bushcare Adventures: Let's go Fishing, Morning** | 8am-10am | RSVP by 4 January | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258

FEBRUARY

Bushcare Groups start back on sites

All Bushcare Groups take a break over the summer months of December and January, starting back on site in February 2011.

If you are getting an itch to keep working over these months, the Adopt a Plot program will continue to work into December around Cremorne Reserve, Brightmore Reserve and Wollstonecraft. Contact Rachel Gleeson, Adopt a Plot Supervisor on 0419 239 126 if you want to give a helping hand on some existing plots.

Some volunteers will also be working on their own Streets Alive areas. If you are interested in helping out please contact the Streets Alive Coordinator, Ralph Forinash on 9936 8248 who may be able to put you in touch with Streets Alive volunteers.

Let's go Fishing, Under the Sea



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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