

Calendar & Greendates Reminder

JUNE

June is bring a friend month

5 World Environment Day

5 How Fungi "talk" and other facts | 10am-1.30pm |
RSVP by 28 May | Bookings: Lane Cove Council 9911 3583

12 Introduction to Natural Area Restoration | 9am-1pm |
RSVP by 4 June | Bookings: Willoughby Council 9777 7871

19 Woody Weeds and OH&S Issues | 9am-1pm | RSVP by 4 June
| Bookings: Willoughby Council 9777 7871

20 Common Weed identification | 9am-1pm | RSVP by 11 June
| Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258

20 Habitat Landscape-soil and its inhabitants | 9am-1pm |
RSVP by 11 June | Bookings: Willoughby Council 9777 7871

**26 Natural Area Restoration History, Strategies, Fauna Issues
& Site Assessment** | 9am-1pm | RSVP by 4 June | Bookings:
Willoughby Council 9777 7871

JULY

6-13 NAIDOC Week

11 Native and Weed Look-a-like Identification | 9am-1pm |
RSVP by 2 July | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258

14 Bushcare Volunteer Convenors Meeting

30 Schools Tree Day

AUGUST

1 National Tree Day

4 Wildflower Walk in Harold Reid Reserve | 10am-12noon |
RSVP by 28 July | Bookings: Willoughby Council 9777 7871

5 Weeds and Bush Friendly Garden Workshop |
6.30pm-8.30pm | RSVP by 29 July | Bookings: Mosman
Bushcare 9978 4038

7 Bushcare Essentials-Advanced Training | 9am-4pm | RSVP
by 18 July | Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258

21 Winter Wildflower Walk | 9am-3pm | RSVP by 13 August |
Bookings: North Sydney Council 9936 8258

SEPTEMBER

Biodiversity Month

**3-5 Building Bridges
to Boorowa** Tree
planting weekend
| Register your
interest with
the Bushland
Management
Coordinator at
North Sydney
Council 9936 8224



For more information or to make a booking for any of these workshop's 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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BUSHCARE Newsletter

If undelivered please return to:
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www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare | Winter 2010

BUSHCARE *Newsletter*

First Aid for Jumping Ants



Bull Ant



Jumping Ants



Most Australian native stinging ants are from the genus *Myrmecia*. This group is broadly subdivided into Bull Ants, also known as Bulldog or Soldier Ants (*Myrmecia pyriformis*) and Jack Jumper Ants, also known as Jumper Ants (*Myrmecia pilosula*). Bull Ants are large, around 15mm to 25mm long, whereas Jumper Ants are generally 10mm to 15mm long and often display jerky, jumping movements.

There are different types of allergic reactions to stinging insects. The stings of Jumper Ants, like those of bees and wasps, are very painful. Local swelling is very common, lasting a few days at a time. The more serious reactions are generalised allergic reactions, of which the most severe is anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction in which the person often gets a rash, feels their throat tighten, has swelling of the lips and face and difficulty breathing. Immediate medical treatment is needed.

When suffering anaphylaxis, venom is spread via the lymph system, so applying a bandage (as tightly as you would strap a sprained ankle) slows the movement of venom from the bite site into the lymphatic system. This gives the bitten person more time to reach hospital and medical care, although obviously the situation is still a grave emergency.

Prevention is better than cure. If you know there are biting ants in the area, wear long trousers, thick socks, sturdy shoes, long sleeves and gloves. Although it is still

likely that ants will bite through clothing, the intensity will be lessened. Most Jumper Ant nests on Bushcare Sites are marked with blue-sprayed bamboo stakes so the location is easily identifiable and they are easy to avoid. If you come across an ants' nest without a stake marking it please let your Bushcare supervisor know.

If you have previously had a serious allergic or anaphylactic reaction to an ant sting you should consult your doctor about the need for you to carry adrenaline while working on a Bushcare site. Please ensure that you let your Bushcare Supervisor know if you have been diagnosed with allergies or if you are carrying medication.

If you have previously had a serious allergic or anaphylactic reaction to an ant sting and you are stung by an ant, ring 000 for an ambulance, administer your adrenaline if you have been instructed to use it in this situation, avoid movement as much as possible and wait for the ambulance.

If you have not previously had a serious reaction to an ant sting and you are stung by an ant, wash the affected area with soap and water and apply a cold pack and or Stingose to the area to relieve pain and swelling. If there is persistent or severe swelling and/or itching, take antihistamine tablets for up to three days. Antihistamines are available from pharmacies without a prescription. The pharmacist will be able to recommend one suitable for you.

Tristram Thomas – Bush Regenerator

Coordinator's Update

There is nothing quite like these beautiful mild autumn days! It's a really lovely time to get out into our bushland reserves and look past the weedy edges to the species rich and structurally complex core areas. This is what urban bushland management is about – conserving good areas by consolidating their condition and working towards the more impacted edges.

The Bushland Team has been getting stuck into lots of projects, including new and continuing ones. Megan has recently completed a thorough revamp of our Bushcare Policy, entitled the *Guide to the Bushcare Volunteer Program – Policy & Procedures 2010*. The document is on public exhibition through Council's website and I strongly encourage everyone involved in Bushcare to have a look and provide comment for the final policy.

I'd like to thank everyone who recently provided a submission on Council's proposal to list Gore Cove/Smoothey Park; Balls Head; Tunks Park; Primrose Park and Badangi Reserves as Wildlife Protection Areas. In total, 31 written submissions were received during the exhibition period, of which 28 were in support of the proposal. This result indicates

broad community support for wildlife conservation initiatives, as well as a shift in local attitudes toward responsible pet ownership – especially in the vicinity of remnant urban bushland.

And while we are on the subject of wildlife, Ramin recently completed a condition audit of all 58 nest boxes that are installed throughout North Sydney's bushland and urban parklands. As a result, we're replacing a third of the old dilapidated boxes that had broken lids or missing floors. We have also partnered with a small group of environmental management students from the Australian Catholic University to undertake a survey on nest box usage. The students will use a web-cam attached to an extendable pole to see what wildlife species are using our nest boxes over several months of this year. Stay tuned for the interesting results!

An exciting collaboration between the Stanton Library and Bushcare has resulted in an exhibition on *A Natural History of North Sydney: Exploring our Biodiversity*. This has been a lot of work for us here in Bushcare and we'd love you to have a look at it! The Heritage Centre is on level 1 of Stanton Library, 234 Miller Street, North Sydney.

The exhibition will run from May through to October 2010.

Gareth Debney – Bushland Management Coordinator



feathers, fur & fangs

Fangs, fangs, fangs, fangs

Fangs in North Sydney - isn't this amazing? Over the past few months, the Bushland Team has been rejoicing with reports of scaly species in our reserves and parks. All the reptiles featured in this article are not considered dangerous, but as with all native species, no wild animal should be approached.

The first report that came in was of a beautiful Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota*) in Tunks Park, perhaps the one that was photographed and featured in our Autumn newsletter. This non-venomous nocturnal arboreal species often basks during the day in trees. It feeds mainly on small mammals and other reptiles, but will also eat birds. All those people who complain about possums eating their magnolias or rats in the roof should think about encouraging pythons!

Like all pythons, the Diamond Python kills its prey by wrapping itself around its victim and suffocating it. It then eats its prey whole. The python will not try to strangle anything larger than it can fit into its mouth. In Australia humans are safe because although this type of python can grow up to 3m in length, its mouth is too small to consider us tasty! The female Diamond Python lays between nine and 54 eggs anytime from December to January. She then coils around them to protect and keep them warm. This maternal care, which is uncommon in snakes, ceases once the offspring hatch. So we are hoping there are juveniles slithering around!

A harmless Common Tree-snake species (*Dendrelaphis punctulata*) of slender build with a whip-like tail and large eyes was mistaken for a venomous snake in Tunks Park. Varying in colour depending on its environment, this species can range from grey and olive-green through to various shades of brown to almost black with a lighter belly usually lemon-yellow. This snake is active during the day and we therefore get more reports of this snake from the public.

These arboreal snakes spend most of their active lives in trees or shrubs, but frequently forage on the ground. Tree snakes usually shelter in tree hollows, under rocks in crevices or caves or even in houses. In winter, small colonies are frequently found in caves and rock retaining walls. Although feeding mainly on frogs, it will also eat reptile eggs and small mammals. When disturbed or threatened

this species releases a strong smelling odour from its vent (toileting area). Another of its defence mechanisms is to inflate its body and neck threateningly, exposing blue skin between its scales. The annual clutch is five to 14 eggs; again, we are hopeful there are young ones still out there.

Two other scaly species were found during clean up duties and were left unharmed, however, now in a more denuded environment. These two species were the Golden Crowned Snake and the Burton's Snake-Lizard, both found in Brightmore Reserve.

The Golden Crowned Snake (*Cacophis squamulosus*) is dark brown to blackish in colour with a yellowish (or light fawn to brown) stripe enclosing the snout and continuing along the side of the head to extend well back on the nape but not meeting. Its underbelly can be an orange colour and this leads to it being misidentified by some people as a Red Bellied Black Snake or Brown Snake.

This terrestrial species is normally not found unless clearing debris from an area or dead as it is strictly nocturnal, sheltering under well-embedded rocks and logs during the day and emerging to feed at night. This small (0.5m) animal feeds on lizards and reptile eggs - it is venomous but not regarded as dangerous. It searches for its prey by scent, taking them from their nighttime retreats. It adopts a fierce, raised striking posture when alarmed, but rarely attempts to bite even when it strikes. It gives birth annually of up to 15 eggs, with an average clutch size of six. The eggs are laid in January and hatch in March.

The Burton's Snake-Lizard (*Lialis burtonis*) are lizards which look snake or worm like. They have no trace of fore limbs and the hind limbs are represented by scaly flaps. This species is distinguished by the elongated head and sharply angular snout resulting in a wedge-shaped head which is unique among Australian reptiles. In contrast to snakes they have a broad fleshy tongue with a notch at the tip, they vocalise and have external ear openings.

The tail is long and easily cast off if needed. Their colour and patterning is highly variable from deep brown/black to cream. The Snake-Lizard feeds exclusively on other reptiles, particularly skinks, ambushing them by lying in wait under cover until they come within range. Although active by day and night, they are most likely spotted in the early morning or evening. This species is terrestrial,



Burton's Snake Lizard. Photograph: Valerie Gay



Golden Crowned Snake

Bushcare training workshops and activities

So far this year Bushcare has ran a number of successful workshops and activities. Early in January we kicked off the year with the Summer Bushcare Adventures program. Most activities were booked out. Preschoolers learnt about backyard bugs and sea creatures at Berry Island, while school-aged kids participated in either the twilight or morning fishing activities at Blues Point Reserve where at least two fish were caught at both sessions and returned to the harbour. If you have kids or grandchildren the next Bushcare Adventures program will be held in the Spring holidays.



On Saturday 6 March, Chris Melrose presented the Soils of North Sydney Walk and Talk in Smoothey Park. The day was not dampened by the threatening wet weather, although the walk had to be cut short because of slippery surfaces

on the Gore Cove track. Participants came away with an increased knowledge of what was under their feet and what vegetation thrived in different bedrock derived soils. The morning involved both theory and practical components with a workbook supplied to participants for later reference. If you are considering booking for workshops make sure you get in early as we were fully booked for this workshop two weeks before the event and many people missed out.

A Bushcare convenors meeting was held on Wednesday 17 March. Most convenors reported that their sites were in good condition after the Summer hiatus, with increased native plant growth. If you have ideas that you would like to bring up with the Bushland Management Team, please mention these to your convenor so that they can raise them at the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday 14 July.

The first of the Bushcare Training Workshops presented by TAFE was held at the Coal Loader on Saturday 27 March. A number of experienced North Sydney volunteers were joined by more recent volunteers and a few participants from Taronga Zoo's Bush Regeneration Volunteer program. Mark Walters led an informative day with numerous examples of bushland management planning, techniques and methods.



Soils of North Sydney Walk and Talk

Training/events coming up

A Natural History of North Sydney Exhibition: Ever wondered what the North Sydney area was like in the past? Come and see what landscapes existed, what plants and animals were here previously, and what changes we have made as humans to this environment. The exhibition runs from Thursday 20 May through to 31 October.

Common Weed Identification

Look closely at some of the common weeds you come across on your Bushcare site or in your backyard. Gain further information about their growth, reproduction or spreading mechanisms and think about the best way to control them. This workshop will be presented by Michael Kelso, who has more than 10 years of experience in dealing with weeds in the North Sydney area. Sunday the 20 May, 9am to 1pm.

Weed & Native look-alikes

This workshop will examine the distinguishing features between similar species of weeds and natives. Some of these species can come from the same family and are therefore very hard to tell apart. Learn what to look for when you come across them. Tristram Thomas will provide tips on identifying features and show you how to distinguish some of these tricky species. Sunday 11 July, 9am to 1pm.

National Schools Tree Day

Friday 30 July. Help develop some green thumbs at your school and create a beautiful native garden. For information and to register your planting site visit www.treeday.planetark.org/ Bushcare will contribute 50 free plants to each school in North Sydney that registers a planting site. Register with Planet Ark then call the Bushland Project Officer on 9936 8252.

National Tree Day

Sunday 1 August. Be sure to find your local planting event or organise your own via www.planetark.com/treeday North Sydney Council will again be hosting a site so contact the Bushcare Officer to register your interest.

Winter Wildflower Walk

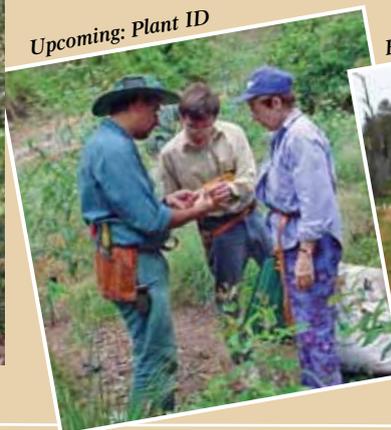
Come on a guided walk through the Field of Mars Wildlife Reserve in East Ryde and see what floral show it will put on during Winter this year. Saturday 21 August, 9am to 3pm.

Building Bridges to Boorowa

3 - 5 September, Celebrate Biodiversity Month and the beginning of Spring with a Tree Planting Weekend. This weekend is for the volunteer who is up for a challenge, with lots of tree planting - rain, hail or shine. Register your interest with the Bushland Management Coordinator at North Sydney Council 9936 8224.

Rachel Gleeson, Bushcare Officer

Upcoming: Plant ID



Boorowa Planting





flora for fauna in your garden

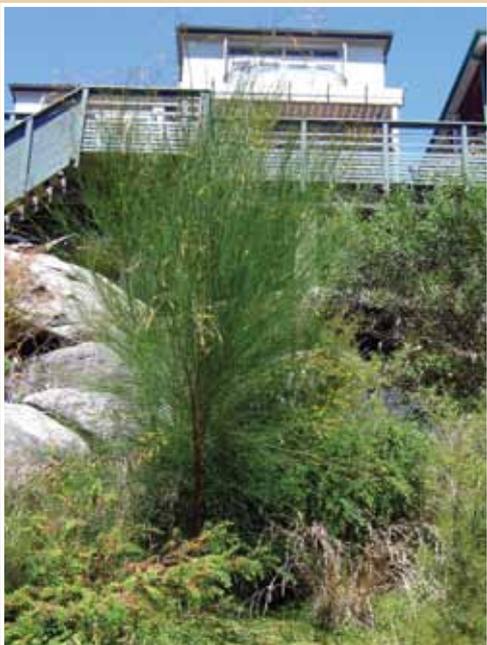
North Sydney Council's Native Havens program provides free assistance to residents who wish to help the environment by using local native plants in their garden. Council offers advice, help and free plants to participants.

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

For two years we continuously sprayed the weeds "at the bottom of the garden". In 2004, we received a *Bush Friendly Backyards* flyer from North Sydney Council. The leaflet provided information about creating a garden with locally indigenous plants that help to combat the threat of invasive weeds entering bushland and provide a wildlife habitat for fauna. The program offered free advice and assistance. This was encouraging for us as we knew very little about native plants, we were new to the North Sydney area and had a limited knowledge of the true conditions of the area to be planted.

Jan Thomas

This is an extract from Jan Thomas's story featured in 'A Natural History of North Sydney' exhibition on at North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library. Showing until 31 October 2010.



2006

Jan Thomas in her Native Haven



Darwinia fascicularis



Darwinia fascicularis flowers, from "Friends of Lane Cove National Park Inc"

The genus is named after Erasmus Darwin (Charles Darwin grandfather). *Darwinia* spp. are small shrubs with crowded leaves.

Darwinia fascicularis is the most common *Darwinia* in the

Sydney region. In the North Sydney local government area it is only found in Smoothy Park. The Latin word "fascis" means bundle. The political term "fascist" was derived from the Roman symbol of authority (a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle). This species gets its name *fascicularis* from its crowded bundles of flowers. Flowering time is from June to September.

Darwinia fascicularis is a spreading much-branched shrub that grows to 2m high. Les Robinson, justifiably says "...a beautiful species which resembles a bonsai conifer because of its clustered branches of tiny pine-like leaves". Even the crushed leaves smell nice "...strong odour like a rather oily eau-de-cologne".

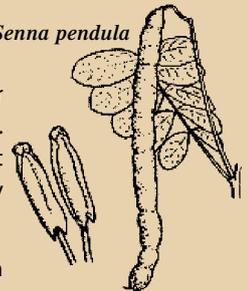
It is a very useful plant for any rockery area you might have. *Darwinia* tolerate shade making them the ideal plant to further improve established gardens.

References:

- <http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp11/darwinia-fascicularis.html>
- Native Plants of Sydney "Les Robinson"
- Native Plants of the Sydney District A. Fairley, P. Moore

Weed to Watch

Senna pendula



Although not highly invasive, at this time of year it's hard to miss *Senna*, otherwise known as Cassia. It's probably best referred to as *Senna* so that it is not confused with the aromatic native variety called *Cassinia*.

Senna is the one you've seen around with a pretty, bright yellow flower and green bean like seed pods. It is popping out of the neglected corners of gardens, in bushland and probably all along the east coast.

There are several varieties that have become weeds in Australia. All are perennial shrubs. Their leaves are divided into leaflets, flowers have a cluster of flowers that have five yellow petals, with a fruit that is the bean-like pod. The seed has limited dispersal mechanism, with seedlings mainly growing within dropping distance from a parent. The seed also has short longevity in the soil, so it is not a long-term problem like some of our other more invasive weeds. The one I've been seeing around North Sydney is *Senna pendula* variety *glabrata*.

Native to: South America

A shrub: growing to 3m high

Leaves: 3 to 6 pairs of broadly oblong leaflets with rounded tips

Removal: Cut with secateurs or loppers at ground level and paint with Roundup (or a similar herbicide)

Disposal: Carefully dispose of the seed pods.

Megan Hughes – Bushcare Officer (Mon & Tues)

Reference:

- Richardson, F.J., R.G., R.C.H. 'Weeds of the South East: An identification Guide for Australia' (2006)
- PlantNET, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Australia
- <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nsfwfl&lvl=sp&name=Senna~pendula>

found in low vegetation or debris on the ground. They lay two eggs and communal egg-laying has been recorded.

To encourage reptiles either on Bushcare sites or in backyards the best thing to do is to ensure there is protective habitat. Reptiles need places to shelter in as well as areas to hunt from and places for their prey to thrive. Having continuous protective layers of rocks, logs, branches, leaf matter and native grasses allow reptiles to travel safely. Thick low- and mid-storey vegetation is also needed for our arboreal species.

As we don't want any further removal of habitat from bushland areas, there are some artificial microhabitat features that reptiles happily live in even old fence posts, concrete roof tiles and piles of bricks provide similar thermal qualities as rocky outcrops. Old sheets of corrugated iron on the ground are also enjoyed by most reptile species. Ideally having a wet area that attracts frogs and other animals is useful for prey and large flat rocks or small open sunny areas provide for basking. Ultimately it would be wonderful if there were habitat corridors linking our reserves so that reptile species could safely disperse.

Many people have a fear of reptiles, particularly snakes. However, reptiles are shy creatures and, if given the chance, will escape rather than attack. Most snakes will only bite humans if hurt or provoked and the majority of bites occur when people try to kill or capture snakes. If you do come across a snake the best thing to do is to just calmly walk the other way. It is likely that the snake will be doing the same!

If the snake is in your backyard or house where you, or your pets, may be in danger (or where the snake may be in danger from your pets) remove pets into the house or front yard, keep an eye on the snake and contact either Sydney Wildlife on 9413 4300 or Wires on 1300 094 737. **Note: All native snakes in NSW are protected and if you harm or remove snakes or reptiles without a licence you are breaking the law and can be fined.**

Populations in decline

Snakes play an important role in many different types of ecosystems. However, their numbers are generally declining. There are a variety of probable reasons for this, including:

- the removal of snake habitat, through such things as the clearing of land for agriculture or urban development; more frequent bushfires; or the taking of bushrock (an important source of shelter for snakes) from the bush
- the hunting of snakes by introduced animals such as foxes, dogs and cats
- the running-over of many snakes on roads
- the indiscriminate killing of snakes by people who fear or dislike them. Many harmless snakes, and even legless lizards, are killed unnecessarily in this way.

Rachel Gleeson, Bushcare Officer

Reference:

- Cogger, H.G. (1996) Reptiles & Amphibians of Australia. Reed Books Australia
- Swan, G. (1995) A Photographic Guide to Snakes & Other Reptiles of Australia. New Holland Publishers
- NSW Government, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/Snakes.htm>.
- <http://australianmuseum.net.au/>

Golden Crowned Snake.
Photograph: Ron Mason



Thanks to all Wildlife Watch volunteers who monitor the bush and keep sending their observations to us. Sightings over the past three months include:

- **Little Black Cormorant** (Lower parts of Mortlock Res)
- **Sacred Kingfisher** (Smoothey Park)
- **Eastern Rosella** (Smoothey Park)
- **Monarch Butterfly** (Smoothey Park)
- **Burtons Snake-lizard** (Smoothey Park, Brightmore Reserve)
- **White-browed Scrub Wrens** (Smoothey Park)
- **Golden Crown Snake** (Brightmore Reserve, Badangi Reserve)
- **Diamond Python** (Tunks West)
- **Green Tree Snake** (Tunks Park)
- **Brush Turkey** (Tunks East Bushcare site)
- **Eastern Whipbird** (Smoothey Park, Tunks Park)
- **Grey Teal** (Rawson Street Channel, Neutral Bay)
- **Powerful Owl** (Forsyth, Smoothey Park)
- **Musk Lorikeet** (Forsyth Park)
- **Willie Wagtail** (Forsyth Park)
- **Tawny frogmouth** (Forsyth Park)
- **Little Red Flying-fox** (Forsyth Park)
- **White Faced Heron** (Forsyth)
- **Yellow-throated Scrub Wren** (Sugar Works Reserve)
- **Superb Fairy Wren** (Sugar Works Reserve)

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

Ramin Khosravi - Bushland Project Officer



Powerful Owl by Alan Kwok

Harry Howard Bushcare Group Profile



1999



2003



2010

Harry Howard Reserve is a small gully area at the lower end of Newlands Lane in Wollstonecraft, consisting of open space and the back ends of properties along Belmont Avenue and Newlands Street on the north, Rocklands Road on the south and the railway on the east.

Eleven years ago, the overall vegetation cover was a mixture of remnant native canopy and introduced exotic species mixed with invading environmental weeds. Some of the area was quite degraded. The remnant canopy species was dominated by *Angophora costata* (Sydney Red Gum), interspersed with *Eucalyptus pilularis* (Blackbutt). There were also some remnants of native shrubs and ground cover species.

Weed species were present in all vegetative layers and consisted largely of Privets, Camphor Laurel, Coral Trees, Chinese Hackberry, Balloon Vine, Morning Glory, *Tradescantia* (Wandering Jew), Impatiens and Lantana. The Camphor Laurels were well established trees (and in some sections still are) which created a dense canopy and restricted light to the ground, inhibiting natural regeneration of both native canopy and shrub species. Along Newlands Lane, there was a row of Poplars almost at the end of their natural life.

In 1998 North Sydney Council arranged for an on-site meeting of local residents at the far end of Newlands Lane to discuss the proposed development of 17 Belmont Avenue – which provided for a driveway in to Newlands Lane. The meeting unanimously agreed to oppose the development in the form presented. During the meeting, a number of the residents picked up on the suggestion of one of the Councillors that Newlands Lane would be ideal for a Bush regeneration site. It was suggested that developing the area in this way would lend more weight to it being preserved as a quiet bush lane for locals to enjoy as well as providing habitat for bird life and native animals.

The Bushcare Group started on Saturday 6 February, 1999. Its convenor, Mary-Lyn Lawrence, is still the convenor today and at least four of the original members are still part of the group. In 2002 the area was officially named after Harry Howard, a well-known landscape architect living in a house in Newlands Lane. The group meets on the first Saturday of the month.

The group initially worked in two zones. Zone 1 contained remnant canopy species with sub-canopy species of *Allocasuarina torulosa* and *Grevillea linearifolia*, while Zone 2 was a mown lawn area adjacent to the railway line. Zone 1 was cleared of woody weeds, supplementary planting was established and native regeneration of Sydney Red Gums was observed as was native groundcovers. Zone 2 was mulched and planted with native species.

The group slowly expanded the site over the years to take in new zones. After primary weeding in 2005, piles of woody material were accumulated for pile burns at a later time. In 2006, previously worked area was sandstone capped and planted. The results of

growth in the capping area have been fantastic, requiring only sporadic maintenance to prevent transported-in weeds. Pile burns were carried out in 2009, with promising results of regenerating native shrub and canopy species.

In 1999, vehicle traffic was restricted on the lower section of the lane. The grassed lawn areas have been modified; some have been maintained as mown lawn, other areas were mulched and replanted, while there are also patches of unmown native grassed areas. Planted shrubs and trees have become established while some original species are regenerating.

Eleven years down the track, many different techniques have been used to promote the revegetation of natives with great success. There is still the ongoing maintenance weeding of those stubborn weeds such as *Ehrharta*, Asthma weed and *Tradescantia*. The shrub layer, where the original lawn was planted out in Zone 2, is going through senescence and the dead shrubs were removed last year to provide additional fuel loads for the pile burns. So the next generation of shrub plantings have just begun in this area.

Today, Harry Howard Reserve is a green oasis in the middle of the concrete jungle, providing an important wildlife corridor link to Badangi Reserve and Berry Island. There is still much work to do, but the remaining weed sources are mostly in the back blocks of the private properties.

Rachel Gleeson, with editing by Jacqui Axford and Eddie Tsui

Volunteer Profile EDDIE TSUI

I moved here in 1986 with two school-aged kids. Both of them are working now. The gully then was rough, green and quite heavily choked with all sorts of weeds and rubbish, but still beautiful. It took three years of Clean Up Australia Day to get rid of the bulk rubbish. In 1998, Mary-Lyn started the Bushcare Group. We dropped over 400 leaflets in the surrounding streets and had seven starters, one of which was Harry Howard. After he passed away, we named the reserve after him.

Every year we have some new people. Some come from quite far-away. The younger members are more transient, but there are always the core half dozen, that have been with us for 11 years.



The Bushcare Supervisors have all been great people. We learn so much from them. Some Sydney Red Gums we've planted are now over 20 metres tall. It's great to see we're gaining ground. The birds love this place. Our reserve is here to stay!

Some members of the Harry Howard Bushcare Group, Left to right: Nobuko, Julie, Eddie, Jacqui, Peter

Mortlock Reserve

The Bushcare group at Mortlock Reserve has been involved in the removal of the bitumen track that runs through the western part of Judith Ambler Reserve. The track previously ran through an area that was burnt last year. It was decided that this dead end track served no purpose other than to give people the illusion that they might pass through the reserve, so the group agreed that it should be removed.

With peter levers in hand, a lot of enthusiasm and much hard work, the removal of the bitumen began. Encouraging "you can do it, hoorays and let me have a go" could be heard by many passing by. In fact, there was more noise coming from Judith Ambler Reserve than the competitions being played on Tunks Park sportsfields just down the road.

The area, now free of bitumen, will be used as an on-site nursery. We'll be cultivating the native seeds dropped by surrounding plants as well as scattering seeds that have been collected by the bush regen team. The area has been fenced off and the track redirected so people can walk past and observe the wonderful post-fire regeneration from the burn.

The track was removed in two stages and over two months because of its size and the amount of energy/labour required. Well done Terry, Janine, Valda and Meena.

Michael Kelso – Team Leader



Janine, Valda, Terry and Meena winning the battle against the bitumen



Review of Bushcare Program and Policy

Many of you may recall a Bushcare program guide that was distributed to all our volunteers in 2001 called *Bushcare in North Sydney a guide for volunteers*. This policy document outlined the procedures for the program to operate smoothly, and to promote and protect the responsibilities and rights of volunteers and Council in fulfilling legal obligations for managing bushland.

This document has now been reviewed, based on several volunteer best practice programs and a draft is now on public exhibition for comment. Please take the time to view the new guidelines and provide some feedback. You'll find it on North Sydney Council's website at: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcaredraft

If you would prefer a hard copy posted to you, please call or email Bushcare and provide your name and postal address.

The exhibition period finishes on Tuesday 15 June at 9am, so please have your submissions in before then.

Megan Hughes – Bushcare Officer

Wet Weather Procedures for Bushcare Group Sessions

In order to eliminate confusion and ensure the onus for contacting volunteers does not fall on one person, we are encouraging the following system for wet weather. In the event of rain or inclement weather on your Bushcare meeting day, we will follow this procedure:

- 1 At least an hour before the scheduled meeting time (could be a day or two before if there has been consistently heavy rain), the Group Supervisor will contact the Group Convenor to discuss and decide whether the meeting will go ahead;
- 2 All volunteers in the group can call the Group Convenor in the hour before the meeting time to find out if the meeting is cancelled;
- 3 Cancelled meetings will not be rescheduled;
- 4 Bushcare volunteers may not work on Bushcare sites if the meeting has been cancelled.

Please note: it is the responsibility of each Bushcare volunteer to call the convenor to check whether a meeting is going ahead. Convenors are not required to ring around the group.

Rachel Gleeson – Bushcare Officer

Database entry volunteer call out

Over the last couple of years Bushcare has had the privilege of having volunteers help us with the task of database entry for Wildlife Watch, which records sightings of native birds and animals in the North Sydney area.

Both Margaret O'Brien and Janet Jeffreys have stuck it out over the tough time of a database upgrade and information overhaul. A huge thanks to Margaret who has recently vacated one of these positions and to Janet for being with us for the next stage when we will start adding flora data. If you think you're made of the stuff we need - for example, computer literacy, Access database experience or feel you're a quick learner and can spare a couple of hours a week/fortnight - we'd love to hear from you.



Janet at her volunteer post

Megan Hughes – Bushcare Officer