



moonee ponds creek
co-ordination committee

Ponderings

Autumn 2009

Issue 25

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds
Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc



advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

JOIN US TO CREATE A CLEAN CREEK COMMUNITY ON CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY!!!



It's that time of the year again — **Clean Up Australia Day** is fast approaching!

This year Clean Up Day is on Sunday 1st March.

There are seven sites along the creek where you can get involved (see pages 4 & 5 for maps, site descriptions and times).

Be part of Creating Creek Communities — join us after Clean Up for a Multicultural Lunch.

At the Debney Meadows Primary School, Flemington, there will be a special celebration — a multicultural lunch — African and Asian food, and an Aussie barbeque — to say 'thank you' to all the Clean Up Day volunteers along the creek and celebrate the achievements at the culmination of the CityLink Creek Connections Program.

There will be other activities too — if you have come in previous years you will know how much fun it is! There will be a market, henna painting, Waterwatch will be there, and there will be entertainment from the school children and a local community choir.

The celebration starts at 12.30pm, so you will have plenty of time to get down there when you have finished at your chosen site.

**For further information contact MPCCC on
03 9333 2406.**

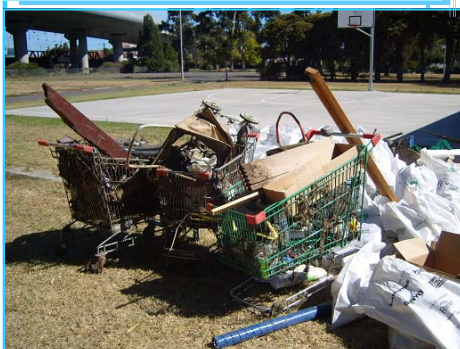
Come prepared:

Please wear sturdy shoes and long pants; bring a hat, gloves and a bottle of water and don't forget to register on arrival!

Sites along the Creek

There are 7 sites along the creek registered for the Clean Up:

- *Gunung Willam Bulluk Learning Centre
- *Westmeadows
- *Gowanbrae
- *Strathnaver and John Pascoe Fawcner Reserves
- *Cross Keys Reserve
- *CityLink Creek Connections Flemington
- *North Melbourne



The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee gratefully acknowledge the financial support of these Councils.





Welcome to the newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc (MPCCC). We are a not-for-profit, environmentally-based, community organisation that acts as a champion for the Moonee Ponds

Creek and its tributaries. Members of the MPCCC include the Cities of Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Moreland and Hume; the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek; and representatives from the community.

Our aim is to: encourage understanding of and connection to the Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries; highlight its values through education, interpretation and hands-on participation; and revegetate and rehabilitate the creek and its tributaries.

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc

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Fax: (03) 9333 2413

Email: coordinator@mpccc.org

Website: www.mpccc.org

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc Staff

Coordinator:

Education & Interpretation Officer: Bronwyn Riddell

Greening Officer: Stephanie Spathis

Greening & Admin Assistant: Stella Blay

Moonee Ponds Creek Coordination Committee Members

President: TBC

Vice President: Terry Mundy (FOMPC)

Vice President: TBC

Secretary: Michelle Gooding (Moonee Valley)

Treasurer: Joe Ficarra (FOMPC)

Public Officer: Elizabeth Donoghue (Hume Council)

Members: Rob Ellis (City of Melbourne) Cr Rose Iser, Nigel Higgins (Moonee Valley), Sam Neidra (Moreland); Vince Aitkin, Frank Kinnersley, and Julie Law (Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek)

MPCCC Inc Member Newsletters and Contacts

City of Melbourne



The Green Leaflet, available quarterly. Please contact City of Melbourne on (9658 9658). For environmental and sustainability queries, please contact the Community Sustainability Officer on 9658 8557.

Moonee Valley City Council



Valley View available every six weeks, please contact Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 8888. For environmental and sustainability queries please contact Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 9142.

Moreland City Council



The Moreland City Council website offers numerous tips and information sources on environmental and sustainability issues. Please contact 9240 1167 or info@moreland.vic.gov.au

Hume City Council



Eco-Tracks Environment Newsletter, available quarterly. Contact Environment Administration Officer on 9205 2473, for the newsletter and any environmental and sustainability queries.

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek



Established in 1997, the Friends Group contribute to the management, protection, development and use of the Moonee Ponds Creek. Contact the

President, Kelvin Thomson at

Kelvin.Thomson.mp@aph.gov.au.

Ponderings ...

Clean-Up-Australia Day is upon us again! The time of the year when people all over the country get together to improve their environment. Over the nine years that Clean Up Australia has been held, the amount of rubbish in the creek has decreased, but unfortunately there is still enough rubbish there to make our efforts worthwhile, so come along to one of the sites — meet other volunteers and help to create a clean creek community!

Since the last edition of *Ponderings*, there have been changes to the make-up of the committee brought about by the council elections at the end of last year. It is not yet finalised — we are waiting for some of the councillors to be appointed and there is considerable uncertainty about our future. See page 3.

The worst piece of news I have to tell you is that Stephanie is leaving! This is a real blow to MPCCC as I am sure you will all agree, but we can understand why she is going (she says through gritted teeth ...). Steph and her partner, Michael, are going to be premature grey nomads and do the round Australia thing.

The planting calendar for the forthcoming season is on the back page. Despite the uncertainty surrounding MPCCC, the planting days will still go ahead, although sadly, without Steph — so mark your diary with the days you would like to come — we'd love to see you there and enjoy catching up with old and new friends.

Stella Blay

A Weed Grass to Watch For

Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) was initially mislabelled and sold as an ornamental in Australia under the names Elegant Spear Grass, Pony Tail and Angel's Hair.

Although Mexican Feather Grass is not yet known to be naturalised in Australia, this grass is a weed in its native range. If this species naturalises in Australia it potentially has a wider range than Serrated Tussock, (a devastating Weed of National Significance).



Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*)

Mexican feather grass is a declared State Prohibited weed.

In New Zealand Mexican Feather Grass escaped from cultivation and has become a weed that is continuing to spread.

It is believed that a significant number of suspected Mexican Feather Grass plants may have been inadvertently sold from the Melton and Sunbury Bunnings stores last year.

Suspected plants were sold in pink pots and labelled *Stipa capillata* or *Stipa lessingiana* under the Regal Sensations line.

If you suspect that you may have purchased or seen a Mexican Feather Grass plant in the ground, please contact DPI on 136 186. For more information please call 136 186 or visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au. (source Dept of Primary Industries).

Farewell Steph



Steph Spathis, the backbone of the MPCCC, is leaving ...

Steph has worked for MPCCC for six years, and in that time has built a wonderful rapport with the Friends groups along the creek. With her gentle manner and immense knowledge she has been an excellent teacher for us all.

Anyone who has come along to a planting day with Steph will, I am sure, value her friendship. We will all miss her enormously.

Good luck Steph in all your future ventures, we wish you well!



A time of re-evaluation for MPCCC

As you know, at MPCCC, we have been without a coordinator for many months. Now, after 10 years of operation, the Committee feels it is time to reassess the organisation's direction and role.

A strategic planning day was organised for early February, but this was postponed — no decisions have been made about our future.

Now Steph is leaving, and until the planning day is held, and the direction of the organisation is determined, no replacements for Steph or the coordinator will be employed. Bronwyn's Interpretation & Education contract ends on Clean Up Australia Day, so after that date it looks like there will be no more MPCCC ...

So if you care about the creek and our contribution to its wellbeing, please contact committee members, or councillors in the four member councils: Hume, Moonee Valley, Moreland and Melbourne, and tell them how you feel and the direction you think the organisation should take.

In the mean time if you have any enquiries, or need to report any creek related information please contact the appropriate council officer:

Hume: Elizabeth Donoghue tel: 9205 2378

Moonee Valley: Nigel Higgins tel: 9243 8888

Moreland: Sam Niedra tel: 9240 1258

Melbourne: Rob Ellis tel: 96589852

Clean Up Sites Along the Creek

These are the registered sites along the creek ...

Site 1) Westmeadows

with the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek

Time: 9am to 11am

Meeting point: Enter site via reserve on Koala Crescent next to house number 40. Meet on the shared pathway.

Melways 5 J6.

Bike: The Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway takes you alongside the Clean Up meeting point.

Car: park on Koala Crescent.

Site 2) Gunung Willam Bulluk Learning Centre

Time: 10.00 am to 12.00 pm

Meeting Point: At the front of Building W, Pearcedale Parade, Broadmeadows

Melways: 6 G7

Site 3) Gowanbrae

with the Gowanbrae Action Group and Gowanbrae Residents Group

Time: 10 am to 12 pm

Meeting point A: The footbridge across the Moonee Ponds Creek near the train trestle bridge. Adelaide Boulevard, Gowanbrae.

Melways: 16 C3

Meeting point B : Gowanbrae Community House. 5 Gowanbrae Drive, Gowanbrae

Melways: 16 B3

Bike: The Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway takes you alongside Clean Up meeting point A.

Car: Park on Adelaide Boulevard or Gowanbrae Drive.

Come prepared:

Please wear sturdy shoes and long pants; bring a hat, gloves and a bottle of water, and don't forget to register on arrival!

Site 4) Strathnaver Reserve and John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve

Time: 10am to 12pm

Meeting point: Meet at the Oak Park Tennis Club car park located on Francis St.

Melways: 16 F6.

Bike: The Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway takes you alongside the Clean Up meeting point.

Train: Oak Park station (16 H6) on the Craigieburn line is a ten minute walk.

Car: park at the North Essendon Athletics Centre, Strathmore (16 E6). Walk across the footbridge. Or park at the Oak Park Tennis Club in Francis St.

Site 5) Cross Keys Reserve Creek Clean Up

Time: 10am to 12pm

Meeting point: Meet on Bridge Street Essendon at the pedestrian bridge over the Moonee Ponds Creek.

Melways: 28 K1.

Bike: along the Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway to the site.

Train: Strathmore Station on the Craigieburn line is a 5 minute walk from the site

Car: Park at the Cross Keys Reserve car park or on Bridge Street.

Site 6) CityLink Connections & Creek Clean Up.

Time: 10am to 12pm followed by lunch from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

Meeting point: Meet at the Debney Meadows Primary School, Victoria Street, Flemington

Melways: 29 A12.

Bike: along the Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway and through Debney Park to the school.

Train: Flemington Bridge station on the Upfield line is a 5 minute walk to the school

Site 7) North Melbourne Sustainability Group Creek Clean Up

Time: 10am to 12pm

Meeting point: Meet along the creek bank opposite Macaulay Station, Kensington.

Melways: 2A C5.

Bike: along the Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Pathway to the site.

Train: Macaulay Station on the Upfield Line is opposite the site

Car: Park on Stubbs St or Bent Street, Kensington.



Site 1

Site 2

For more information contact MPCCC on 9333 2406 or info@mpccc.org

Site 3

Site 4

Site 5

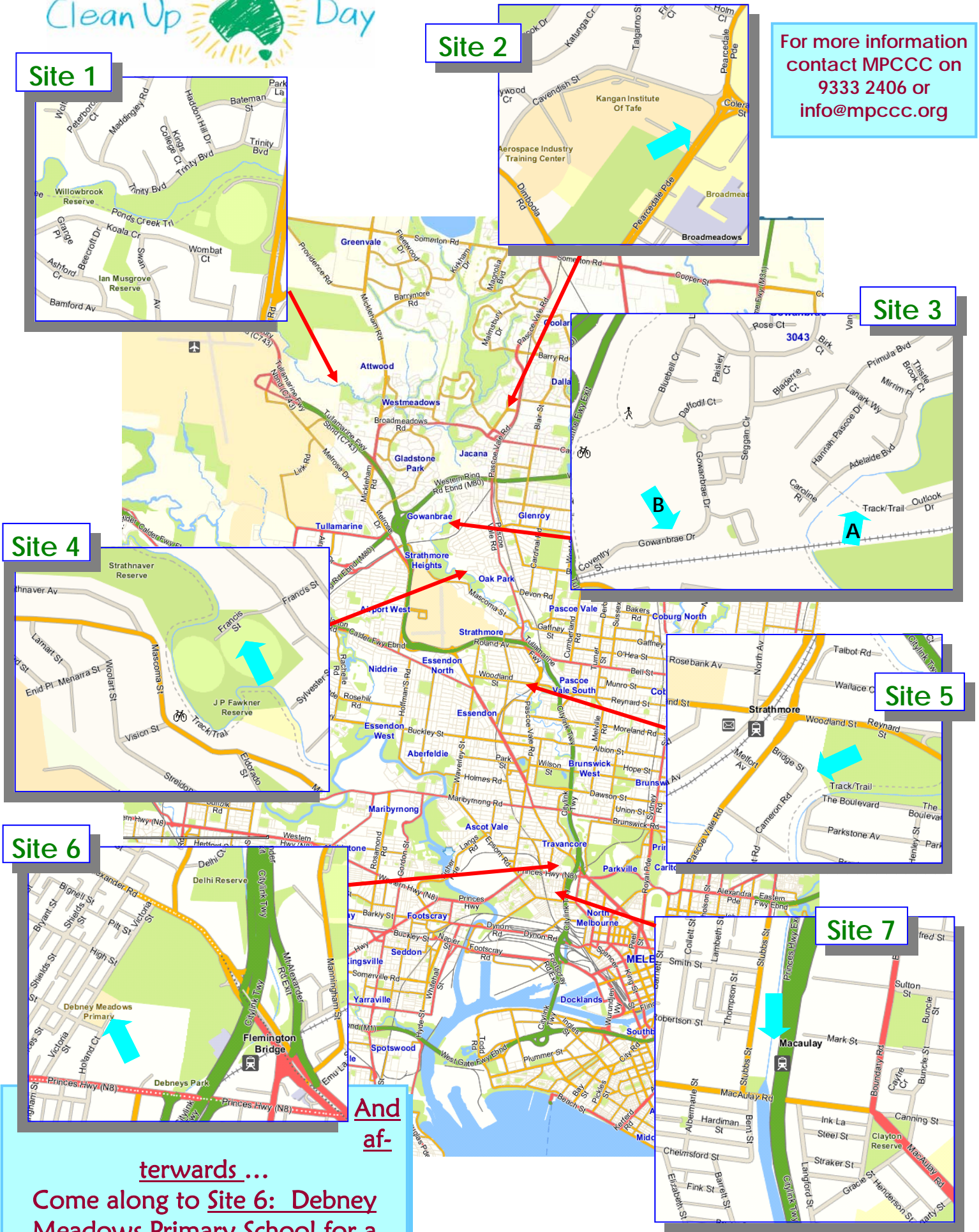
Site 6

Site 7

And af-

terwards...

Come along to Site 6: Debney Meadows Primary School for a



Going to grass ...

It has become fashionable recently to use grasses as a feature in the garden, and some of them are spectacular. But before you dash off to Bunnings or your local nursery, it is worthwhile looking into the appropriateness and suitability of different species of grass. One type of grass that is particularly popular at the moment is *Pennisetum sp.*, the fountain grasses, particularly *P. alopecuroides* and *P. setaceum*. These are beautiful tall grasses with feathery seed heads, and grow into dramatic clumps.



Pennisetum hybrid
at a Gowanbrae house

P. alopecuroides is often promoted as a native, but it is **not native to Victoria**, indeed, it is unlikely that it is native to any part of Australia. It is found 'naturally' in NSW and Queensland, but the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra warns that it **should not be planted** outside its 'natural' range, as it has the potential to become a weed and the NBG is not sure if it is native. It seeds prolifically, and also spreads with rhizomes like *Kikuyu*. Despite these warnings it is widely promoted, both by nurseries and by gardening programs and magazines. *P. setaceum* is **not native** to Australia and is already an environmental weed in NSW but is readily available and promoted.



Pennisetum setaceum
on sale in Bunnings

What's the alternative?

There are cultivars that are supposed to be sterile, but why not use something that is good for the area, and has no potential to do harm — a native grass that grows naturally in this region?

Local grasses are more suited to local conditions, they provide food and habitat for birds, lizards and invertebrates and they are just as beautiful, especially when combined with other grassland plants.



Themeda triandra
Kangaroo grass

There are masses to choose from, from the large and dramatic **Kangaroo grass** (*Themeda triandra*) to the smaller, delicate **Weeping grass** (*Microlaena stipoides*). Kangaroo grass grows in most types of soils from clays to sandy soils, so it is best to source your plants locally to make sure they are adapted to local conditions. It will grow in full sun or part shade, and once established, needs little water. It flowers in summer to autumn, and has purple-tinged seed heads. Kangaroo grass needs to be cut back (or burned) every few years, to keep the seeds viable. It will form large clumps which provide good habitat for lizards. *Microlaena* makes a good lawn for areas with little traffic. It is a beautiful soft grass that grows in a range of conditions.



Microlaena stipoides
Weeping grass



Head of
Dicanthium sericeum
Silky Blue grass

A grass I particularly like is **Silky Blue grass** (also known as Queensland Blue grass) *Dicanthium sericeum*. It is a beautiful blue-grey grass that grows into a tussock about 30 cm high with lovely silky flower heads up to 80 cm tall, from September to February. It prefers a moist well drained soil in full sun. Butterflies like its flowers and its seeds are eaten by small birds. If you want to see what it looks like, there is a clump next to the creek at the FW Olver Reserve.

For a spectacular display, a mass of **Slender Spear Grass** (*Stipa scabra*) gives *Pennisetum* a run for its money! It likes a dry, well-drained soil. It has feathery, silky flower heads from September to November.

And while you are planting your grasses, don't forget to add some of the pretty flowers that naturally grow in the local grasslands: **Sticky Everlasting** (*Bracteantha viscosa*) A biennial multi-stemmed plant, the flowers have a papery texture and the leaves are slightly sticky. It prefers an open position in dry soil and flowers August to April. **Clustered Everlasting** (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*) A tall daisy which grows in dry soil, in full sun, flowering September to January.

And of course the beautiful delicate **Bluebells** (*Wahlenbergia sp.*) which will grow in most soils.



Wahlenbergia communis
Tufted Bluebell

Bracteantha viscosa
Sticky Everlasting



Chrysocephalum semipapposum
Clustered Everlasting



Stipa scabra
Slender Spear grass

Sightings

Fauna observations along the Moonee Ponds Creek. If you see anything interesting contact Stella on 9333 2406 or ponderings@mpccc.org

Some more terrestrial sightings have been reported to us as well as the avian kind...

Julie Law reported seeing a busy **Echidna** snuffling through the leaf litter at the back of Koala Crescent, Westmeadows, just before Christmas.

And she was delighted to see **New Holland Honeyeaters** visiting a young grevillea in her garden.



Did you know ... that the echidna is found all over Australia, from cool mountainous forests to dry woodlands. It is the most widely distributed mammal in Australia. You won't often see one though, because they have very acute hearing and will get out of your way very quickly!



Leigh Mitchell from Melbourne Water saw a **Red-bellied Black Snake** at Jacana in December.



Two of our friendly Parks Vic Rangers, Angelo and Joe, who work here at



Nora Peters sent us these great photos of a male **Red-capped Robin** feeding his offspring. She spotted him at Woodlands Historic Park!

Woodlands, saw a beautiful Peregrine Falcon sitting on a ledge at the old quarry in the southern part of Woodlands Historic Park. She flew off to a dead wattle and waited till they had gone by, then she flew back to her ledge.

When we went back to check later that day we didn't see the falcon, but the lake at the bottom of the quarry was alive with **Long-necked Turtles**, **Pacific Black Ducks** and **Coots**.

Talking of **Long-necked Turtles** ... Teresa Aquino and her neighbour found a long-necked turtle and a **Shingle-backed Lizard** in their back gardens in Pascoe Vale. We suspect they are probably escapees — but wouldn't it be fantastic if they were wild?



BAT COUNT

There was a fantastic turnout of 'bat counters' in January and they counted 21,000 bats.

What a sight that must have been!

The next Bat Count will be on:

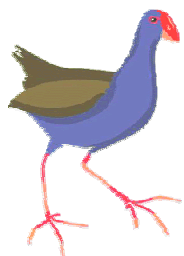
Wednesday 11 March at 7.15pm.

For further information please contact Dr Rodney van der Ree, on 8344 3661, 0412 562 429 or rvdr@unimelb.edu.au



Join the **Friends of Royal Park** on **Sunday 22 February** for the first **bird survey** of the year, around the Wetlands, Skink Habitat and the Bushland Escarpment. Meet at the carpark, Trin Warren Tambore (Bellbird Waterhole) Royal Park Wetlands, Manningham St, Parkville (Melways 29 C12) For more information or to register your attendance, please visit friendsofroyalpark-parkville.org or contact Nicole Spillane on 9381 4179.





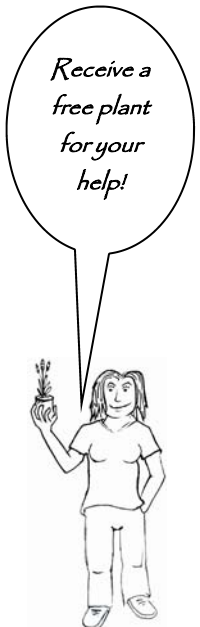
2009 Planting Autumn Calendar

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee

Creating Creek Communities through hands on participation and education.

May

Sat 2 nd	Essendon Residents	10am to 12pm	Meet along Hopetoun Avenue, Essendon near Flannery Court.	29 A4	Moreland
Sat 9 th	Travancore Residents	10am to 12pm	Meet at the end of Fenton Street, Ascot Vale	29 A9	Moonee Valley
Sat 16 th	FO Strathmore Ponds	10am to 12pm	Meet in the creek parkland along Mascoma Street between Strathmore North Primary and Eldorado street, Strathmore.	16 G7	Moonee Valley
Sun 17 th	Friends of Westbreen Creek	10am to 12pm	Meet along the shared pathway at K.W. Joyce Reserve, Pascoe Vale.	17 A6	Moreland
Sat 23 rd	Brunswick South West Planters	2pm to 4pm	Meet along the creek, enter via the reserve on the corner of Balfe and Dawson Street, Brunswick West.	29 B8	Moreland
Sun 24 th	Gowanbrae Residents Group	10am to 12pm	Meet near the northern creek footbridge along Primula Blvd, Gowanbrae.	16 D1	Moreland
Sat 30 th	Friends of Sacred Kingfisher	10am to 12pm	Meet at the end of Pascoe Street, Westmeadows	6 B7	Hume
Sun 31 st	Friends of Lower Moonee Ponds Creek	10am to 12pm	Meet along the shared pathway between Dynon and Footscray Roads on the east creek bank, Nth Melbourne. Follow the flags to the planting site.	2A C11	Melbourne



June

Sat 13 th	Friends of Jacana Wetlands	10am to 12pm	Meet at the Jacana Wetlands, Moonee Boulevard, Glenroy. Enter the wetlands at Moonee Boulevard. Meet under the large, concrete, spillway.	6 E12	Moreland
Sun 14 th	Strath-Oak Planters	10am to 12pm	Meet at the end of Margaret street, Oak Park or at the end of Melissa Street, Strathmore	16 C3	Moreland
Sat 20 th	Boeing Reserve Troopers	10am to 12pm	Meet at the north end of Boeing Reserve at the railway trestle bridge, Strathmore Heights.	16 H8	Moonee Valley
Sun 21 st	Friends of Westbreen Creek	10am to 12pm	Meet along the shared pathway at K.W. Joyce Reserve, Pascoe Vale.	17 A6	Moreland
Sun 28 th	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek	1:30pm to 3:30pm	Wright Street, Westmeadows. Meet at the end of Wright Street. Follow the signs to the planting site.	16 E6	Hume

For further information regarding the planting days please contact the relevant council representatives:

Moreland City Council : **Sam Neidra** (B) 8311-4386 (M) 0403 603 540 sniedra@moreland.vic.gov.au

Moonee Valley City Council : **Michelle Gooding** (B) 8325-1830 MGooding@mvcc.vic.gov.au

Hume City Council : **Damien Harrison** (B) 9205-2376 (M) 0419 536 328 damienh@hume.vic.gov.au

City of Melbourne : **Eamonn Fennessy** (B) 9658 9852 eamonn.fennessy@melbourne.vic.gov.au

The MPCCC "Creating Creek Communities" program is sponsored by:

