



# Bungalook News

Newsletter of the

Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

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## Bungalook under COVID19 – stage 4

During winter, June and July are relatively quiet at the nursery; cleaning seed collected last season; checking seed bank stocks; divisions of some species, particularly juncus and dianella. Unfortunately, because of bans on working in our beautiful parks, some orders from our hard-working advisory committees had to be either cut back, placed on back order, or cancelled. However, many working in their gardens have happily sourced a range of plants to enhance their own patch. Our stock is very low at the moment and the next challenge will be how are we going to build it up in the hope that restrictions will be eased.

Maybe it's time to reflect. Beginning as NIPP (Nunawading Indigenous Plant Project) we morphed into WCIPP (Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project) with the nursery now known as Bungalook. In 1987, a young Geoff Lodge, son of our esteemed Alan, embarked on a project as part of his Burnley University studies. By propagating hundreds of plants and encouraging dozens of local residents to participate in a huge working bee in Blackburn Creeklands the idea of a community nursery was born. With a bi-centenary grant and working in a small area at the back of the council nursery in Jolimont Rd. many of our newly formed advisory committees joined in. Hundreds of local indigenous plants were grown by enthusiastic volunteers supporting both the nursery and the groups protecting, enhancing, enlarging many of our parks. A two-way cooperation.

We hope that in the coming year Bungalook can continue supporting and in turn be supported by the many advisory committees. While what was our initial reason for operating, our vision has now been expanded to growing plants for our local council, schools, community groups, Government authorities and home gardeners. Hand in hand with all the practical aspects of the nursery goes an ever-increasing awareness of the need of education in plants species (indigenous and weedy!) and propagation techniques.

Which brings us to Stage 4. Given that Permits and COVID-19 Stage 4 Work Plans are in place during this extremely difficult time, volunteers wishing to come and assist with the propagation and maintenance is limited. And that is absolutely understandable. Our initial plan now must be to propagate limited numbers of as many varieties as possible.

That said there were some ongoing improvements during June and July. Two new work benches outside the potting shed have been especially useful for storage. The wall above the washing troughs gets extremely hot in summer. Insulation has commenced and will be completed when possible. A new heat bed has been put on hold – but only for the moment.

Propagation and hours volunteered are down of course. Thanks to a few dedicated volunteers the nursery has been maintained whether the weather be warm or cold.

|          |          |             |             |
|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Tubed up | May 1163 | June 974    | July 1172   |
| Hours    | May 206  | June 117.50 | July 212.50 |

Margaret Witherspoon  
26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

After a couple of recent enquiries for educational projects the following information is sourced from our extensive file.

## Indigenous Edible Plants

Some of the plants that we grow at Bungalook Nursery are edible. If you are interested in eating any plants it is important that you can accurately identify the plant and prepare and eat only the appropriate parts of the plant. Collecting plants from the local parks is not allowed and may not be safe as sprays are sometimes used. If you want to eat indigenous plants we suggest that you may wish to grow your own.

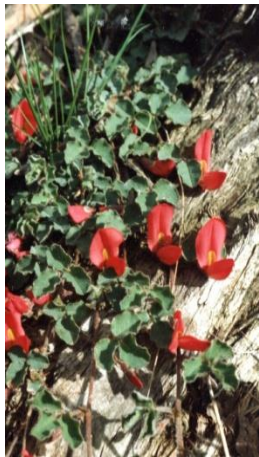
Here are just a few.

Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*), right, is named because the flowers smell faintly of chocolate while the Pale Vanilla Lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*) smells of vanilla. They have strappy leaves which appear in the spring after which a tall flower stem emerges. In the wild they are often found in large groups. The tubers of both can be eaten raw or cooked and the flowers of the pale vanilla lily can be eaten raw.



*Bulbine Lily*

Bulbine Lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*), above, have yellow flowers in early Spring. Underground is a corm which can be roasted and is very tasty. It can take several years for the corm to grow to a suitable size.



Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), left, is a trailing plant which has small bright red flowers the nectar of which is sweet like honeysuckle.

*Running Postman*



*Yam Daisy*

Before European settlement, Yam Daisies or Murnong (*Microseris lanceolata*) were abundant in the Melbourne area. The tuber which is carrot shaped is delicious roasted or fried in butter. It was a staple food of the local aboriginal people. When it is dug up each plant has a group of tubers. When harvesting, it is recommended to take the middle-sized root and leave the largest and smallest to regrow and provide food for the following year.



The Prickly Currant (*Coprosma quadrifida*), left, grows to 2m. It has male and female plants. In Summer, the female plants have hundreds of tiny bright red berries which are sweet and high in vitamin C.

*Prickly Current Bush*



*Victorian Christmas Bush*

Our mint bushes come from the Prostanthera family. The local species is the Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*), right. It and the Balm Mint Bush (*Prostanthera melissifolia*) have aromatic leaves which can be used to make teas or flavour food.



The Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolia*) is a prickly, trailing plant which has edible small fruits which taste somewhat like raspberries although a little less sweet and flavoursome.

*Native Raspberry*

Information has been sourced from Flora of Melbourne by Marilyn Bull, the website of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, the website of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, the Sustainable Gardens Australia website and the Yarra Ranges website. Some of the photographs are courtesy of Ian Moodie.

I would suggest to any enquirers that they do a google search, visit Bunjalika, or Monash Uni Koori gardens, and there is a good link online to that, with refs. to Beth Gotts books at the end of the article.

[https://www.monash.edu/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/542119/Guide-to-the-Aboriginal-Garden-Clayton-Campus.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/542119/Guide-to-the-Aboriginal-Garden-Clayton-Campus.pdf)

Su Dempsey

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee



## Frogs in your garden – from Anne Payne



*Southern Brown Tree Frog*

During this lock down period I have been lucky enough to catch up with some excellent online seminars.

One of which, was a session presented by Richard Rowe, for SGA (Sustainable Gardens Australia) on frog friendly garden habitats. We often get asked on Gardens for Wildlife garden visits about what to plant, to provide a safe and healthy habitat for frogs.

Several details were discussed, such as shade from shrubs and small trees rather than overhanging trees which may drop too many leaves and cause excessive nutrient load in the pond.

But one of the things Richard mentioned was the importance when planting around ponds and creek areas, to consider some plants that may lose some of their foliage into the water, and inadvertently be

detrimental to frogs. Frogs absorb water through their skin and are very vulnerable to toxins, pesticides, herbicides, and fertilisers.

Plants such as Oleander, Pines and Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*) were highlighted as toxic to frogs. It reminded me that I'd read the Indigenous people used the crushed foliage of the *Indigofera* to toss on waterways to stun fish, so it obviously has something toxic that could potentially kill frogs – not just stun them.

Instead consider using around the shallow parts of the ponds, plants such as Tussock sedges (*Carex sp*) & Common Rush (*Juncus sp*)

In the deep-water area - Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*), Running Marsh Flower (*Villarsia reniformis*) & Water Millfoil (*Myriophyllum crispatum*).

On the edges consider using Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*), Mat Rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), Water Ribbons (*Triglochin*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Grevillea and Callistemon to attract insects.

Our water areas show how wonderful our Bungalook & Greenlink plants have grown in the 8 months since we planted them from tube stock.

The *Lythrum*, *Triglochin*, *Bulbines*, *Water Plantain* & other water plants have been thriving.

We now have Southern Brown Tree Frogs calling. Two Pacific black ducks visit twice daily and lots of birds come to bath in the ponds. Not long after the planting, we had beautiful dragonflies, so this year should be even better.

Thank you to all the volunteers for our beautiful plants.



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Susty eNews produced quarterly by Whitehorse Council is a way to educate, inform and promote local sustainability and environment events and initiatives.

Below also find the link to the Whitehorse Sustainability Team if people are interested in subscribing to the newsletter and activities.

[greenercity@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:greenercity@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

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During these last few months of lockdown there have been many reports of considerable damage not only in Whitehorse but to some of the most vulnerable areas all around Melbourne. Many of the remnant indigenous grass and wildflower areas have been damaged, saplings broken to build huts and digging in sensitive areas by senseless trail bike riders, to make jumps. ParksWide is to be commended for its attempts to rectify and repair areas, erect barriers and signage and generally cope with this increased usage by visitors exercising in our bushland parks. Thank you!



*disappointed*