



Turning a new leaf for our rarest plants

Sixteen people attended a training session in May to become Seed Production Area (SPA) custodians for our Secret Seven project (funded by Biodiversity On-ground Action – Community & Volunteer Action Grants). We had more volunteers than we needed to tend plants that will produce seed for reintroduction into the Merri environs.

Participants at the training session were given a rundown on the precarious state of the wild populations of the Secret Seven plants and the need to develop a secure and healthy seed supply. Naomie Sunner of the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-operative ([VINC](#)) then described the most critical factors to successfully maintain and collect seed from each of the seven species. Participants learnt that:

- Sunshine duration is critical for choosing locations for an SPA, especially in winter.
- Time commitment will vary! Some species will require only a week to complete seed collection – others will need to be inspected for several weeks.
- A high degree of diligence is needed to ensure watering is effective.

This project has attracted highly experienced participants as well as gardening novices – making the workshop a dynamic learning environment. Boxes of 50 plants will be distributed to participants who will tend and collect seeds. The plants have been grown from seeds that were collected with volunteers under an earlier stage of the project. Species will be matched to participants based on experience.

As another part of the project, Joe's Garden (CERES) planted a hundred Plains Yam Daisies in April, grown from Merri Creek remnants. These plants will be used to grow tubers: some being used in in translocation trials by MCMC, others to be trialled as a niche 'crop' by the Joe's Garden team.

The ultimate purpose of the SPAs is to ensure a supply of seeds and tubers that can be used in projects to reintroduce these species in grassland reserves.

Naomie Sunner of VINC addresses the Secret Seven Workshop



The Secret Seven plants are:

Plains Yam Daisy: A swamp-dwelling daisy that may have been an important food source for Wurundjeri. In the Merri catchment, less than 300 remain in three remnant populations.

Common Everlasting: A very uncommon daisy in the Merri Creek – only a handful of scattered plants remain.

Variable Glycine: A valuable nectar plant, this pretty pea hangs on in a few nature reserves as well as some unlikely urban parkland in the Merri, emerging from a long-lived seedbank.

Arching Flax-lily: An elegant lily – favourite of Blue-banded Bees – occurs in several isolated and precarious locations along railway lines and cliffsides in the Merri.

Scaly Buttons: A little daisy that can indicator of grassland health. Dozens of plants survive at a few Merri sites but it has disappeared from other sites.

Spur Velleia: Sometimes called the Native Primrose because of its frilly pale yellow petals. In the Merri it is known from just a few plants at one location.

Basalt Daisy: A slender daisy of swampy depressions. In the Merri, currently known from just a few dozen plants at one threatened location.

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Merri Musings

Successful grants: FoMC received \$49,537 from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for the Biodiversity On-ground Action grant project: *Growing Galada Tamboore – conserving threatened species and ecosystems in Thomastown through community action*. This will enable weed control, particularly targeting Lobed Needle-grass and Gorse, plus securing the future of Plains Yam Daisy at the site.

We are also acting as the auspice group for a Melbourne Water Community Grant of \$21,356 to our sub-group Friends of Edgars Creek for the project: *Edgars Creek Ecological Vegetation class (EVC) restoration, maintenance and enhancement*, which involves fencing, weed control and planting indigenous vegetation. There's also an additional \$1,100 for administration.

Merri gets muddy – twice! Merri Creek has dramatically changed colour twice: firstly after heavy rain in mid-May; and then again in mid-June, just as it was starting to clear up a bit. The change, from its usual darkish hue to a worrying, pale-yellow was much worse than anything we've seen before. Both Melbourne Water and MCMC investigated, and the MCMC Manager, Luisa Macmillan, traced the pale yellow colour to Kalkallo Creek which joins the Merri near Donnybrook.

Rural parts of Kalkallo Creek have erosion gullies metres deep and most of the sub-soils across the catchment are highly erodible and sodic (sodium-containing). They rapidly lose their structural integrity when wetted. Unfortunately, these soils underlie new residential and employment areas being developed west of the Hume Highway, north and south of Donnybrook Rd. The major source of the problem is that these soils are exposed during construction and if there are any sediment controls in place, they are failing abysmally. See more at www.mcmc.org.au

Merri Creek upstream of Blyth St East Brunswick on 20 June.



Sign on for events notices

If you would like to be notified about events along Merri Creek, sign up at: <http://www.mcmc.org.au/get-involved/subscribe>

You can sign up to receive email notices for all events, for events in a specific area, or for certain types of events. Please note that such notices are only sent to people who have requested them – so they do not automatically go to FoMC members.

MECCARG name change: Our sub-group, which was known as the Merri and Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group, or MECCARG for short, has changed its name to Merri Murnong. The new name is much more succinct and more evocative of nature than the former long version mouthful, and much nicer than the former shortened version. Plus it features the iconic rare species which they've been celebrating with a festival for ten years this year: the Murnong, or Yam Daisy.



FoMC Life member, Tony Faithfull, leads a Nature Safari on the VicRoads land at Leonard St Fawkner in May.

Update on VicRoads land: Congratulations to Moreland Council, which decided on 13 June to make an offer to the State Government to buy land owned by VicRoads at Leonard St, Fawkner. This land is an integral part of the Merri Creek habitat and parkland corridor but has been declared 'surplus' to VicRoads' needs. If not acquired by Council it could be sold off for residential development. It's still not a done deal yet, as the State Government may want more than Council offers, and it will take some time for the negotiations to be completed and land to be transferred. See more at: www.mcmc.org.au

Paul Prentice takes a break: After writing an article for almost every newsletter for many years, Paul Prentice announced that his previous article in the May newsletter would be his last. He said that he's had a marvellous time writing articles, having moved on from only writing about rubbish collection for the first five years, to covering a wide range of topics thereafter – always striving to not repeat himself. Some of his articles were even written in a rhythmic prose. Thanks so much to Paul for all his wonderful work and invaluable editorial help as well. The *Merri Growler* will not be the same without his regular contributions.

Would you like to care for Merri Creek on Wednesdays?

Are you interested in joining a new group of volunteers to gather monthly on a Wednesday morning to help care for the Merri Creek?

No skills required, just a willingness to work! The group would work with skilled Merri Creek Management Committee staff to undertake a range of tasks. Depending on the time of year, activities could include: planting; handweeding; jute mat installation; erosion control coir log installation; search and destroy missions for South African Weed Orchid; weed mapping and vegetation assessment; woody weed removal. If you'd like to be part of this new group, please email: friendsofmerricreek@gmail.com and put 'Wednesday Group' in the subject line.

Indigenous Aussie plants in Venice

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 25 May reported that one of our former representatives to MCMC, Louise Wright, along with her partner Mauro Baracco, have created a field of indigenous Western Victorian plants in Venice, Italy. *Repair* is Australia's entry in the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, one of the biggest showcases of its kind in the world.

The architects, in collaboration with artist Linda Tegg, sourced 10,000 rare indigenous plant seeds for the project. Louise is reported as saying that Australia's biodiverse grassland ecologies are often overlooked because they are "just" grass, and "*by putting it inside a cultural institution, you're asking people to look at it again, to revalue it, to reconsider.*"

The exhibit also features a video which showcases 15 Australian projects, including some by Indigenous Australians, which demonstrate some of the many ways architecture can be used for "repair."



Left and right, architects Mauro Baracco and Louise Wright of Baracco+Wright Architects; centre, artist Linda Tegg, in Venice. Photo: Rory Gardiner, *Sydney Morning Herald* 25/5/18

The 16th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale runs from 26 May to 25 November.

Woody Weed Whackers

Many a warm, sunny, or mildly overcast Sunday has been spent by a small team of volunteers clearing away Gorse at Bababi Marning grassland.

Gorse is a spiky, prolifically spreading, introduced species of shrub; but the unfazed voluntary team manage to remove it from up to an amazing 5m² area of grassland. The work is physical but rewarding, with views of Merri Creek; and our progress is often supervised by the large resident mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos, or the odd swamp wallaby. Bird lovers and other volunteers alike are frequently rewarded with the sight of a local pair of wedge-tailed eagles surfing the skies in the adjacent paddock, and many other birds including quails – requiring thoughtful footwork during nesting season – can be seen in the area. The large pile of removed gorse produced at the end of the day is the biggest reward. The impact of two hours of work is evident when the



The Woody Weed Whackers in front of a huge pile of removed Gorse in May.

stack of gorse is often higher and wider than the group of volunteers could even consider trying to encircle with held hands. **Eveline Collins** Volunteer Woody Weed Whacker



Before (left) and after (right) the Woody Weed Whackers removed a patch of Gorse at Bababi Marning grassland in May.



Assistant Editor wanted

The current *Merri Growler* Editor, Ray Radford, could do with some help with the quarterly newsletters. Ray would like a member of Friends of Merri Creek to help with chasing up articles and photographs, proofreading, and writing or sourcing brief pieces for *Merri Musings*. If you're interested, contact Ray on 0422 989 166 or email friendsofmerriecreek@gmail.com

Articles also wanted

We're always after contributions from members too. Send in your Merri Creek photos; or write about your experiences at one of our events, an interesting sighting along the creek, or observing nature in your garden.

Garden life beside Merri Creek

Some fascinating observations by Angela and Geoff Scollary from their home alongside Merri Creek in Northcote.

Just over 20 years ago, we were able to purchase a block of land facing Merri Creek on the small development created from the former Board of Works depot between the Sumner Estate and the Merri. That block was the only one in the proposed development that did not include a house plan and this allowed us to design our own to blend in with the architecture of the original Sumner Estate.



For many years after we moved in, there was an extensive and varied bird life visiting our garden. These included Thornbills, Scrubwrens, Silvereyes, Superb Fairy Wrens and Wattlebirds. On occasions, Pied Currawongs and Ravens would visit, the latter coming when the chicks were hatching. One unpleasant aspect was to see the Ravens taking apart the chicks after the nests were raided. Kookaburras, Magpie-Larks, Willie Wagtails and Rainbow Lorikeets would be seen every so often and a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike once visited for a few days, seemingly to feed on the insects caught in the spider webs around the clothesline. And of course there were the introduced species: Common Mynas, Blackbirds, Rock Doves and Spotted (Turtle) Doves.

About five years ago, the Bell Miners moved in and that changed the population dynamics dramatically. These highly aggressive birds would attack and still continue to attack any other species. The introduced species have essentially left – one advantage perhaps. The smaller species that populated the low growing shrubs have disappeared although on occasions, a brave Superb Fairy Wren visits to feed on the insects trapped in webs on the window sills. The Bell Miners have a particular fascination with our kumquat trees, much more so than the other citrus trees.



Currawongs still try to feed from the eucalypts along the path beside the Merri. However, as soon as one lands, a 'bell call' goes out and anywhere between five and ten Bell Miners appear to 'dive bomb' the Currawong until it gives up and leaves. Only once recently have I seen Currawong success when about fifteen or more landed and despite the massive influx of Bell Miners, the Currawongs won the day.

All this happens on the rear of our property, on the creek side. There seems to be a clear demarcation between the populations of the front (street) and the rear creek side. Red Wattlebirds and New Holland Honeyeaters appear frequently, especially when the Silver Princess Eucalypts are in flower. Other honeyeaters appear, but are too fast for us to identify them. The introduced bird species have moved from the rear to the front and continue to make a mess of the garden beds.



Summer brings out the Blue-tongued Lizards that wander around as if they own the place – sometimes joining us when we have coffee in the garden. Occasionally one would wander into the house to check us over. Tiger snakes also drop by, fortunately infrequently. One on a summer evening came to join me as I went to use the compost bin. I tried to photograph it, but it was camera shy and left in a hurry (phew!).

We do not agree about spiders. On the positive side, they help to control insects in the vegetable garden, for example by catching cabbage moths in their webs, thereby alleviating the need to spray. However, the downside is that their webs will appear anywhere in the garden and it's a bit too easy to walk into them in the morning.

Like so many suburban gardens, there are rats around, even tunnelling under the bricks around the compost bin. About two years ago, we had a visit for about one week of an Australian Bush Rat. The ears on the Bush Rat are a give-away when identifying them. Unfortunately the visit was short and we have not seen any again.

We presently have a Ringtail Possum family nesting on the side fence just outside our dining room window. There is usually three in the nest – two infants and we assume a parent. There is now insufficient space to accommodate all three (another housing crisis perhaps!) and there is a lot of pushing and shoving, all of which is causing the nest to collapse. Maybe it will soon be time for them to move on.

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Friends' Life Members – Simon D'Alfonso

This is the 21st short history of one of the Friends' newest Honorary Life Members.

Simon's interest in the creek started as a child. He grew up in Epping, between the Darebin and Merri Creeks, and although he lived closer to the former, was more drawn to the latter. He recalls that in his childhood he always looked out of the car window as the family drove over bridges, and in the case of the Merri Creek, it was most often either the Mahoneys Road or Cooper Street bridges when driving towards Sydney Road.

He enjoyed spending time roaming the more northern reaches of the creek, where his father, who had also spent his youth in the region, would take him for walks, mushroom picking and such. His dad gave Simon an awareness and appreciation of the local structures, flora and fauna. Simon liked to spend time around the Craigieburn Grasslands and Summerhill Road region in Wollert/Donnybrook, with one of his favourite patches being where the creek intersects with the railway line. There was also a time when the pond portions near the Summerhill Road bridge had a fair number of Mosquito fish, which he used to catch to put in his home aquarium.

Over the years Simon has visited much of the creek's stretch and he appreciates the contrast between its southern and northern regions. He's not sure how he became aware of FoMC, but it was around the time of the freeway campaign. He had just started tertiary studies in Information Technology and was learning about web development, so he showed up to the FoMC office when it was at the Brunswick Town Hall and volunteered to be the FoMC webmaster. Eighteen years later, he is still in the role and recently played a major part in the revamp of our website, along with a local web development agency. Being the webmaster is his main contribution to FoMC and he has only occasionally attended outdoor activities such as planting events or Streamteam monitoring. However, he would like to do more of these activities.

He now lives in Fawkner, close to the creek, and frequently walks along it, where he says that he benefits

from the great work being done in rejuvenating that area of the creek. He occasionally sees kangaroos and wallabies, which he notes have slowly crept more and more south over the years, and recently he was surprised to see an echidna near Bababi Djinanang. One day he hopes to see a platypus in the Merri.

Work-wise, Simon completed a PhD in Computer Science and Philosophy, and is now a Research Fellow in the School of Computing and Information Sciences at the University of Melbourne, where he also does some teaching. His research looks at how humans interact with and are impacted by the Internet and digital technologies. In collaboration with the Orygen youth mental health centre, he also works on developing digital technological solutions for mental health.

In his spare time, he plays bass guitar in a progressive metal band, Circadian Pulse, which he formed around 2008. They have just recorded a new album, which is due for release soon. Recently, the group did a photo shoot and some of it was taken alongside Merri Creek!



Garden life beside Merri Creek

Many of the outdoor potted plants are in waterwell pots. The reservoirs become a daytime hiding place for frogs, presumably Pobblebonks from their size. This is also a helpful pest control strategy minimising the number of mosquitoes. On warm humid evenings in summer, they can be seen hopping around the garden.

There is an abundance of insect life at different times of the year, perhaps because the garden is essentially organic in its management. One favourite visitor was a dragonfly larger than a middle finger.

As you may be able to guess from this article, there is so much enjoyment living in harmony with the wildlife in our garden. About two years ago, we planted our nature strip over to indigenous plants, inspired to do so after a workshop organised by the Friends of the Merri Creek. Hopefully, as this establishes itself, we will have another area to sustain an additional wildlife culture.

Angela and Geoff Scollary FoMC members

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Birds along the Merri in Early Winter

Our latest round of bird surveys in May produced another set of data that documents the value of the Merri Creek valley and its revegetated bushland as bird habitat.

Surveys at nine sites recorded an impressive total of 79 species – four more than the February surveys. Bumper tallies of 41 and 42 species were seen at Bababi Djinanang and Edwardes Lake.

There was a first-time record of a Scarlet Robin (female) in the Kirkdale-Merri Park survey. At Bababi Djinanang, five Scarlet Robins were seen instead of the Flame Robins that are a more regular winter visitor. Also here, a raptor was seen that was confidently identified from its behaviour (aerial acrobatics) and long, sleek appearance as a Black Falcon.

In Clifton Hill, there were more Pied Currawongs and Grey Butcherbirds than usual, but fewer Noisy Miners. All three species are bad news for the smaller bush birds, and only one Brown Thornbill, one Spotted Pardalote and one Eastern Spinebill were recorded. On the bright side, three roosting Tawny Frogmouths were spotted, huddled together on a slim dead branch in a spindly Red Gum near the Merri Path.

At Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn Grasslands), it was very dry with very little grass cover left; the kangaroos (over 100 seen) are really having an impact.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters are regular winter visitors to Galada Tamboore, and five were recorded this time.

Our forthcoming round of surveys in September will complete ten years of surveys at ten sites along

the Merri and Edwardes Lake. The body of data – 381 surveys, and 138 species recorded – comprises an invaluable scientific resource that is available on the eBird global database. It documents the seasonal and longer-term changes in bird populations in urban and urban-fringe stretches of the Merri. The surveys have also introduced or increased the knowledge of many participants regarding their local birdlife. Friends of Merri Creek could not have done this without our reliable and skilled survey leaders, and we are continually grateful for their active support. Particular thanks must go to Nicole and Paul, Des and Ruth, Trevor and Robyn, who have been leaders right from the start and are still heading out four times a year along their well-trodden circuit!

Ann McGregor BirdWatch Coordinator



Third Merri Birdwatch survey for 2018

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30 am at nine sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants

Surveys at the following seven sites are on 16 September

Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve – Normanby Avenue: Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).

Edwardes Lake: Meet at playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).

CERES – Moreland Road: Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at the rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park and Phillips Reserve: Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).

Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park: Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).

Galada Tamboore: Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn Grasslands): Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).

Note this survey may not be completed until around 12 noon. Please contact the group leader to register beforehand, and receive important information about Galgi Ngarrk and any last-minute changes: Bridget Gardner: 0417 519 251.

Surveys at the following two sites are on 23 September

Coburg Lake Reserve: Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).

Bababi Marning: Meet near the St George Chaldean Catholic Centre (ex Istrian Club), Cooper Street, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus



Since our last update, projects have rolled out across our 2018 planting season; Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC) has added almost 6000 plants to the creek this year. This number was inflated by a private business event we helped to facilitate in June, when this group planted 2000 plants in one day.

June also saw what I am going to call a “defining planting”. If you can cast your mind back to June 17th, the Sunday when we had squalls, rain and hail, about 40 mm of rain – we went ahead and did some planting. We had 13 very, very hardy souls on the creek and managed to get 550 plants into the escarpment area above the Gooseneck site. The plants certainly went into wet ground and hopefully they will flourish come spring. To the volunteers who braved the weather, you are superstars. On a day when it would have been all too easy to stay in, grab a book, paper or ‘device’ and have a lazy warm, dry day in; well you didn’t! And that’s what makes our group so great. I’m sure you would have all woken sore the next day and I doubt if too many of us were still awake after 9PM!! Thank you for your dedication and perseverance on a trying day. I hope that this type of weather never, ever happens on one of our planting days again. We have had 12 seasons of planting now and this was far and away the worst weather we have ever encountered. You would be hard pressed to serve up worse, Mother Nature!

Enjoying a sunny day on the creek! I hope that the ugly boxes in the background are soon obscured by some of the trees we have planted along the creek’s interface with Coburg Hill.

By the time this article is in print we will be welcoming longer days, more sun, more heat and before we know it we will again be feeling the heat of our summer sun. Thanks to the FoEC crew there is now more shade than has been seen along our reserve for many years; I wonder if it has ever looked anything like what we have created? I know the earliest photos I have seen of the area look like standard European-style, treeless farm land. I wonder what the Wurundjeri saw when they wandered around here? No doubt it varied; it would have to over many thousands of years. I know they never saw Coburg Hill, never saw Woolworths and never saw a styrofoam-walled townhouse. If we can get enough trees and shrubs going along the creek reserve, we hope we won’t be able to see any of those things as well. If only we could get Ausnet Services to bury their high voltage cables... I guess we can’t obscure everything with trees, though I’m happy to keep trying.

“See ya on the creek!”

David Pavone President, Friends of Edgars Creek



Befriend our Facebook page

Join over 3,500 others and ‘like’ our wonderful Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek then click on ‘Like’ to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

And we’re on Instagram too

Smartphone users with the Instagram app can share photos with #merricreek #merricreektrail hashtags at Instagram @friendsofmerricreek

Dick’s Witticisms

More witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

Broken pencils are pointless.

*I didn’t like the beard at first.
Then it grew on me.*

AUGUST

Saturday 4: Friends of Merri Park Litter Clean-up

Merri Park Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 30C9. Help look after this wonderful site. Supported by MCMC. Phone Irena 0415 722 653.

Saturday 4: Merri Murnong Adopt a wildflower

Commemorating National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. Meet at the Murnong Patch, Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3PM. Melway 18 A11. Phone Melissa 0417 255 873.

Sunday 5: Friends of Malcolm Creek Elsternwick Edges for Sedges Planting

Elsternwick Way, Craigieburn, 10AM–1PM, Melway 387 B6. Help restore Malcolm Creek by creating more sedgy edges, with a free lunch provided. Registration required – see website calendar.

Sunday 5: Litter Clean Up – Coburg

Bell St Coburg, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 30 A1. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30PM. Melway 30 C10. Phone 0403 100 254.

Sunday 12: Planting at Strettle Wetland

Friends of Merri Creek site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury, 10AM–12.30PM. Melway 30 B3. Help look after the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush Crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Phone Martin 0411 614 198. Funded by Darebin City Council.

Sunday 19: Friends of Merri Park Planting

Same details as for Saturday 4 August, except this is funded by Darebin City Council.

Sunday 19: Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Meet at the Livingstone St easement site – access from Livingstone St, North Coburg, 1–3PM. Melway A7. Stream bank and escarpment restoration. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 1: Friends of Merri Park Hand Weeding

Same details as for Saturday 4 August.

Saturday 1: Merri Murnong Adopt a wildflower

Meet at the Murnong Patch, Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3PM. Melway 18 A11. Phone Melissa 0417 255 873.

Sunday 2: Litter Clean Up – Reservoir

Edgars Creek below Edwardes St Reservoir, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 18 D5. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 2: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Same details as for Sunday 5 August.

Friday 7: National Threatened Species Day – Nature Play

Whittlesea Public Gardens, end of Barry Rd Thomastown (Melway 8 C4), 9.30–10.30AM. Free nature program for two to five year-olds. Bookings essential – see www.mcmc.org.au. Funded by Whittlesea City Council.

Friday 7: Discover Grasslands for National Threatened Species Day

Whittlesea Public Gardens and Galada Tamboore (Melway 8 C4), 11AM–2PM. Visit special sites along the Merri and learn about some local threatened flora and fauna. Bookings essential – see www.mcmc.org.au. Funded by Whittlesea City Council.

Saturday 15: Wildflower Walk & Weed

Meet at the Murnong Patch, Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3PM. Melway 18 A11. Phone Melissa 0417 255 873.

Sunday 16: Merri Bird Survey 3 for 2018

7 sites along the Merri, 8.45–10.30AM. See page 6 for details.

Sunday 16: Friends of Edgars Creek Planting & "Christmas Party"

Meet at the Silurian Cliff site – access via Cnr of Spectrum Way and & Snapshot Drive, North Coburg, 1–3PM. Melway 18 A8. Stream bank grassland restoration at the Silurian cliff site. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Saturday 22: Edgars Creek Meander in Epping North

Corner of Rockfield St and Broadleaf Dr, Epping (Melway 181 G6), 10AM–12 noon. The Friends of Growlers Grasslands will show us around Edgars Creek in Epping, including ponds built to attract Growling Grass Frogs.

Sunday 23: Merri Bird Survey 3 for 2018 (continued)

Bababi Marning and Coburg Lake, 8.45–10.30AM. See page 6 for details.

Sunday 23: 4th Woody Weed Whacking at Bababi Marning

Help rid these grasslands of woody weeds. Light refreshments provided. Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit Campbellfield, 10AM–12.30PM. Melway 180 J12. Supported by MCMC. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

OCTOBER

Saturday 6: Friends of Merri Park Litter Clean-up

Same details as for Saturday 4 August.

Sunday 7: Litter Clean Up – Northcote

Below High St bridge Northcote, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 30 E12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 7: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Same details as for Sunday 5 August.

Saturday 13: Weed out African Weed Orchids

Ngarrri-djarrang, Davidson St Reservoir, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 8 B12. Join the SWOT (Special Weed Orchid Terminators) to remove the invasive South African Weed Orchid (*Disa bracteata*). Light refreshments provided. Funded by Port Phillip & Westernport CMA.

Sunday 14: Weeding at Strettle Wetland

Same details as for Sunday 12 August, except contact is Suzi: 0403 595 466.

Saturday 20: Weed out African Weed Orchids

Same details as for Saturday 13 October.

Sunday 21: Murnong Patch in Spring

Just south of Murray Rd Coburg, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 18 A11. Come and see wildflowers in bloom and a range of indigenous food, fibre and medicinal plants, plus targeting of some weeds Phone Melissa 0417 255 873.

Sunday 21: Friends of Edgars Creek Site Maintenance

Meet behind the Big 4 Caravan Park (access at end of Elizabeth St), North Coburg, 1–3PM. Melway 18 B7. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Saturday 27: Weed out African Weed Orchids & Wildflower Walk

Same details as for Saturday 13 October, except this includes a wildflower walk with MCMC's Michael Longmore.

NOVEMBER

Saturday 3: Merri Murnong Preparation for Murnong Gathering

Same location and phone details as Saturday 1 September.

Sunday 4: Litter Clean Up – Coburg

De Chene Reserve Coburg, footbridge, 10AM–12 noon. Melway 18 A12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 4: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Same details as for Sunday 5 August.

Saturday 10: Secret Seven Bus Tour

Meet at Dennis St Northcote beside the Plaza shopping centre carpark for bus leaving at 10AM sharp to visit three important sites for conservation of our 'Secret Seven' rare plants (return at 4PM). Registration required – see www.mcmc.org.au after 1/10. Funded by Biodiversity On-ground Action – Community & Volunteer Action Grants.

Sunday 11: Merri Murnong Tenth Murnong Gathering

Don't miss this unique cultural event in Coburg, 11am–2pm. See website calendar for details.

Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

ASSOC. NO. A00246451

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