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May 2024 Newsletter

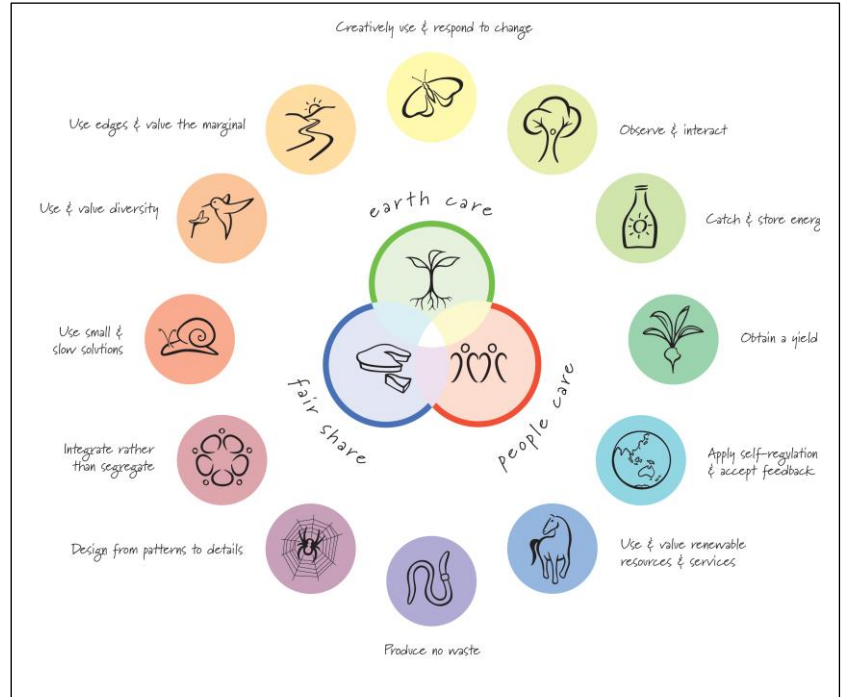
MAY MEETING

Tuesday, 14 May at 7.30 pm.

Venue: Deep Creek Function Room

TOPIC: PERMACULTURE WITH NATIVES

Alison Chatfield is a long-term member of APS and a senior employee at Warner's Nursery, Narre Warren North. Alison is well-placed to identify ways of using native plants when applying the 12 Permaculture Principles (see diagram attached).



June Meeting

We are privileged to have well-known plant pathologist and soil microbiologist, Dr. Mary Cole, speaking at our June 11th meeting.

Dr. Cole runs workshops in sustainable agricultural practices to farmers, students, and consultants around the world. Her talk on Soil Health should be of interest to anyone growing plants as a business or as a hobby.

The National Trust's Heritage Festival this month features a **Domain Discovery** event (16 May), with tours of the Shrine and an Explorer tour of the Botanic Gardens.

The CEC has received a grant of \$11,000 from the 2024 Averley Community Grants Program, which will enable work to commence on the next stage of the Deep Creek Display Gardens.

These Gardens are in a prominent position, close to the Nursery and the golf course.

Not Much Permaculture Here?

There was an extraordinary response to this photo when it appeared on social media in April. It depicts part of a new subdivision called The Ponds, in Sydney's northwest, where block sizes are about 300 sq. metres.



The developers claim they are responding to the demands of buyers from Asian countries, while town planners deplore the creation of an urban heat island effect. They say that in many Sydney subdivisions there is little or no greenery on verges or over footpaths and virtually no backyard trees. If trees are present, they tend to be varieties that will never grow big enough to provide adequate shade.

Tile Flipping Championship

In recent years over 80 local authorities in The Netherlands compete to remove the most tiles (pavers) per head of population. They provide free tile collection services to encourage citizens to replace tiles with greenery. They acknowledge that pavers contribute to flooding and heat stress and are bad for biodiversity.



W. A. Forests Under Threat

Droughts and heat waves are causing die-off across almost 1000 kms. of W. A's unique south-west forests and coastal shrublands. Jarrah and Marri trees are particularly affected. Scientists hope that some plants will recover if conditions improve but many will not.

They say that many of Perth's Street trees started dying in February after a record run of days recording temperatures over 40 C. The city also had its driest 6 months, October to March, since records began.



The Rembrandt of Green Spaces

Dutch designer, Piet Oudolf, is one of the most influential gardeners of modern times. His plantings on public parks in cities such as London, Tokyo and New York have seen a move away from lawns and herbaceous borders; instead, he brings in huge numbers of plants which create a sense of wilderness in urban settings.

One of his current projects involves redesigning the Glasshouse borders which he created 20 years ago at the Royal Horticultural Society's flagship Wesley Gardens in Surrey. The new Gardens will reopen this month.



The ABC's **Landline** program (14 April) reports on a proposal to pay landowners to remove invasive native plants from properties in the Cobar region of NSW. The trees could be used for essential oils, specialty timbers or to create biomass for use in existing power stations. Eventually the cleared land would return to open grassy woodlands, which previously existed before the end of traditional Aboriginal burning practices.

Some residents fear that widespread clearing could see the loss of rare plants.

The main invasive species are *Callitris glaucophylla* (White cypress) and *Eremophila sturtii* (Turpentine bush).

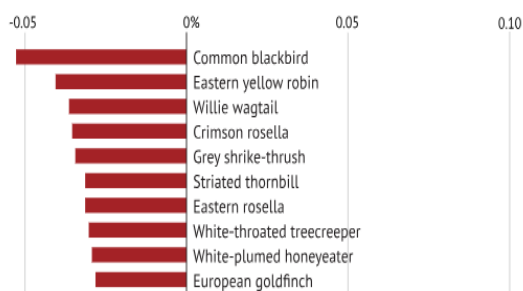


Daniel Flaim, a Biodiversity Officer from the City of Maroondah, was Guest Seaker at the recent Deep Creek Nursery Open Day. He reported that native plants such as *Microlaena stipoides* have become invasive in some of Maroondah's parks. These public spaces are generally small and isolated so protecting threatened species within those reserves can be difficult, due to the absence of pollinators. The Council has established a nursery focussed almost entirely on the protection of threatened species. They also have a Bush Crew working to control weeds.

Daniel says Council now uses Fusilade Forte products to control weeds, instead of Glyphosate.

The Age (26/4/24) reported on changing bird numbers in urban Melbourne. Some pest species, such as starlings and blackbirds, are declining, while larger species are thriving. Smaller, less adaptive species are becoming hard to find.

Popular street, park, and garden plants such as flowering eucalypts, bottle brushes and grevilleas are said to be providing a smorgasbord for some species but leave smaller honeyeaters exposed.



Birds with the greatest relative increase in prevalence across greater Melbourne, 1972-2019

Euroa Arboretum

Millie Ross took viewers to this 27-hectare public park in the 26 April "Gardening Australia" program.

Redevelopment of the Arboretum resumed in 2010 but conventional methods of treating weeds failed, so project workers turned to scalping the top 10 cm of topsoil, to remove weeds and introduced nutrients.

Many indigenous plants re-established themselves, presumably from seeds lying dormant in in the sub-soil. These grasslands are still dominated by pioneer plants, such as *Leucochrysum albicans* (Hairy sunray), but eventually longer-lived plants will become established.



Wiry Buttons. The Deep Creek nursery also has a big range of local daisies, including *Leptorhynchus tenuifolius* from the Beaconsfield area. Flora of Melbourne describes it as being 10-30cm x 30cm in size; a wiry, much-branched herb which flowers from Sep-Jan. Our Deep Creek plants are still in full bloom!



Jeremy Coleby-Williams provided tips on sprays to use in the home Garden (Gardening Australia 5 April). Does anyone have the recipe for the milk-based fungicide he mentioned in that segment?

The Herbarium at the Missouri Botanic Gardens has just processed its 7 millionth plant species, a Bolivian tree unknown to western scientists until April 2022.

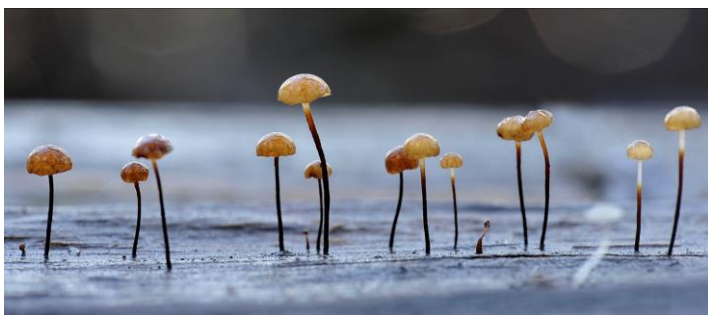
Murray Bail's evocative novel "**Eucalyptus**" tells the story of a father who will allow his daughter to marry, only if her suitor can name all the trees on his land: appropriate material for an opera? Eucalyptus, a new opera by Jonathan Mills and featuring Opera Australia and Orchestra Victoria, will have its Melbourne premiere at the Palais Theatre in October this year.

A Life's Work- A Retrospective pays tribute to the work of textile artist Annemieke Mein, who specialises in Australian fauna and flora. The exhibition runs until 26 May at the Gippsland Art Gallery. Admission fees apply.



A 2023 book by Alison Pouliot entitled “**Underground Lovers – Encounters with Fungi**”, has been widely praised.

“The world of fungi is our world, even if we don’t know it and cannot see most of it- strange, dazzling, spooky, unpredictable, friendly, deadly, sly. And Alison is the perfect guide...” Paul Kelly, songwriter.



Major alterations to the area around the **Beaconsfield War Memorial** were completed in time for the 2024 ANZAC service. The landscapers have used many Australian native plants at the site, including grevilleas.



A journalist writing in the “The Australian” (13 April) warns readers that grevilleas can be toxic. Articles in APS publications over the years advise that allergies can result from contact with *Grevillea banksii* and hybrids such as *Grevillea* Robyn Gordon. Some woodworkers have reported problems after working with timber from *Grevillia robusta* but should all grevilleas be labelled “toxic”?

Activities at RBG this month include an Inspection of the **Wildlife Tunnels at RBG Cranbourne** (May 31) and Sunday Forestry Therapy sessions at both Melbourne and Cranbourne.

The ABC’s ‘Everyday’ website has several articles on Bushfoods. They provide this advice:

1. Look for products made by First Nations people or plants that are harvested by people on country.
2. Use natural plants in home cooked meals as replacements for staple ingredients e.g. mountain pepper is high in antioxidants and even small quantities is an adequate replacement for pepper.
3. Grow your own plants; perhaps start with herbs which require little space.

Please contact Ian Chisholm Ph. 9707 1435, for more information about items in this Newsletter.