



BUSHCARE LINKS

November – December 2009 Edition



Thank You and Congratulations...

Well what a year it has been! Hope this finds you well and fit. Spring is now behind us and summer is well on the way. The wattles have blossomed and seed is falling. There are many native species either setting fruit or flowering and it should be a joy to be working on your Bushcare sites at the moment

This time of the year is also a time for reflection on what we have achieved and on that note I would like to give a big thank you to all Bushcare Groups who have been extremely busy this year. All those boring Bushcare activity log books that you have been filling out and sending in have been worthwhile as here at Council we get busy tallying up all your efforts. The results of these efforts are that since 1st January 2009 Bushcare groups have spent 21,674 hours regenerating and improving the health of the Shoalhaven bushland reserve. This is huge effort of which you all should be extremely proud. The monetary contribution of this Bushcare volunteer labour equals \$650,220, at \$30 per hour which is the standard volunteer in kind rate per hour, according to Volunteering Australia.

Some Bushcare groups that have really been putting in the big hours are:

1. Basin Walking Track Bushcare Group - 1259 hours
2. Callala Bushcare - 1559 hours
3. Shoalhaven Heads Bushcare - 1393 hours
4. The Grotto Walking Track Bushcare Group - 1885 hours
5. Vincentia Bushcare Group - 1082 hours

On top of this Shoalhaven Bushcare Groups have planted 5,323 groundcovers, shrubs and trees and treated/rehabilitated 76.4 hectares of public reserves.

Thank you and congratulations on this huge effort to all Bushcare Groups. In particular to those groups who made the effort to keep your Bushcare log books up to date and send them in so that we can collate all these statistics. It may seem at the time a laborious administrative chore but it is the only way that we can show the Council and others, the collective effort that is put in every year by all Bushcare volunteers. Once again thank you for all your efforts.

SAFETY FIRST - DONT FORGET THE WATER!

Now that summer is upon us and the days are heating up, it is vital that you make sure you keep the fluids up whilst working on your Bushcare site. It is very easy to get distracted and forget about drinking whilst being busy on site.

Always make sure that your Bushcare Group carries 2 litres of water between you and takes breaks to stop and re-hydrate. Even if you are working in a shady area the body can lose fluid through the air and by sweating. If anybody complains off dizzy spells, dry throat or nausea make sure you lay them in a cool area and give them small amounts of fluid regularly

BUSHCARE HINTS- STEM WIPE

For Bushcare Groups that are dealing with weeds that have underground bulbs and large leaf areas, such as Montbretia, Formosan Lily or Watsonia, an easy and effective method of control for smaller infestations is the stem wipe method. This method involves using a sponge soaked in neat Glyphosate and wearing a pair of PVC elbow length gloves. Take the soaked sponge and wipe down the entire leaf areas starting from the top and working down to the base of the plant. This has been tried by several Bushcare Groups with promising results and it is easier then digging all the bulbs out.

WEED ALERT - SPINY RUSH (*Juncus acutus*)

A large rush that has been appearing around many estuaries, creek and other brackish riparian areas is *Juncus acutus* or commonly known as Spiny Rush. This is a classic sleeper weed as it looks like a native rush. It grows up to 1.6 meters high and is a perennial plant, the stem like leaves arise from the base at various angles giving the plant that classic tussock look.

Fruits occur in 3 celled brown capsules and seeds are 1 -2 mm long. It can be distinguished from the native *Juncus kruassi* by its pith filled stems and leaves, which are long and have distinctive sharp terminal points on them. Small plants can be hand pulled however larger ones should be treated with Glyphosate as a rate of 1 part glyphosate to 75 water.

one of the key species that represent the Ecological Endangered Vegetation Community known as Swamp Oak Forest on NSW North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East.



It ranges from Mt Dromedary in the south, up to the Queensland border and on the eastern side of the Great Divide. The adult leaves are large (4 to 25 cm long) growing opposite each other, hairless, thick, shiny above and dull underneath with strong reticulation and undulating margins. The flowers are found in dense clusters and are pink to cream colour. The fruit is quite unique. They are long (15cm 20cm) finger-like green pods that hang from the stem in groups. The adult plant is completely different to the juvenile plant. The juvenile plant has tiny soft leaves that are purple beneath unlike the large hard leathery leaves of the adult plant.

Bushcare plans – community consultation

Recently the Bushcare Group Action Plans, which at least 60% of Bushcare Groups have a drafted plan completed and/or a plan that has been adopted by Council, have had some changes regarding the level of community consultation these plans will need to go through before being adopted.

The recently reviewed Bushcare/Parkcare policy has had a point added in regarding community consultation. Part 6 in the policy divides the type and level of community consultation that a Bushcare or Parkcare Plan will receive into minor, partial and full consultation. The level of consultation that a Bushcare/Parkcare Action Plan receives will effectively be judged by the plans contents. The following is a breakdown as per the different levels of consultation.

6.1. Minor Consultation – Consultation only required with Council Staff and also the Department of Lands (for Crown land). If the plans actions include the following:

- No tree or shrub (over 1m at maturity) being planted.
- No installation of infrastructure.
- No other change to current usage or status.

6.2. Partial Consultation – Consultation required with Council Staff, Councillors, CCBs (Community Consultative Bodies) and residents within 200m of the reserve and also the Department of Lands (for Crown land). If the plans actions include the following:

- Planting of trees.
- Installation of minor infrastructure such as BBQ's, picnic shelters and paths.
- Planting of shrubs with a mature height greater than 1m.
- View lines interrupted.

6.3. Full Consultation – Consultation required with Council Staff, Councillors and CCB's (Community Consultative Bodies), plus residents, schools, church groups and Chambers of Commerce, Residents within 500m of the reserve and also the Department of Lands (for Crown land). To be implemented if the plan includes the following actions.

- Reclamation of open areas greater than 0.25 hectare.
- Clearing of natural vegetation greater than 0.25 hectare.
- Installation of major infrastructure such as lighting, playgrounds, BMX tracks, skate parks and car parks

Farewell to Ruth

Ruth Cave who has been coordinator of the Shoalhaven Heads Bushcare Group for the past six years she is stepping down from her role to move into the next phase of her life. It is with great sadness that we say farewell to Ruth who has been dedicated to organising and supporting an equally dedicated bunch of volunteers.

The group, under Ruth's guidance, has undertaken primary weed control and regeneration of the Shoalhaven Heads dunes, river mouth and estuary, including a secret little wetland that was covered with Lantana until Ruth and the group discovered it 4 years ago. Thank you Ruth for your dedication and commitment. Ruth said her greatest regret was not receiving funding to by a quad bike to help carry her Bushcare tools – once a rev head always a rev head.

Bushcare support workers –we want your feedback!

For those Bushcare Groups that have been utilising the services of Bushcare Support Workers, Council is currently in the process of re-tendering the service out to the open market as Real Options International's three year contract draws to an end.

Over the past three years 29 Bushcare Groups have used the services of a qualified bush regenerator to assist them. Now council are looking at getting some feedback as to the value of this service to your group. Shortly a short survey questionnaire will be posted on the Bushcare website so that we can get feedback from you on how well this resource has been used. If you are one the groups who have used this service please take the time to fill out this questionnaire so that we can make sure the service is used wisely. Your Bushcare Group coordinator will be advised via letter and/or email as to when the questionnaire will be available on the Bushcare website.

SRCMA Funding Grants Now Available for Coastal Project

The Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority Caring for Our Coasts grants are now available for community Landcare/Dunecare and Bushcare groups for coastal based projects. Grants of \$5,000 to \$50,000 are available to community based organisations for on-ground works, community capacity building and/or awareness raising activities.

All potential projects will need to meet the Australian Government Caring for Our Country targets and be located on one of the Southern Rivers CMA 51 priority sites. In the Shoalhaven the priority sites are Shoalhaven River (including Shoalhaven Heads), Crookhaven River, Lake Wollumboola, Currarong, Callala Wetland, Cunjurong Point, Narrawallee Inlet, Mollymook and Bawley Point. Closing date for applications is 10pm 4th February 2010. Any Bushcare Groups in these locations who would be interested in applying please contact Alasdair Stratton to discuss your ideas or for more information on the grant guidelines visit the SRCMA website at the following address

http://www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au/news_publications-media_releases.php.

ATTENTION!!!!!!

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL AND WISH TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE ADVISE ALASDAIR STRATTON on Ph: 4429 3592 or bushcare@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

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