



MOUNT LOFTY RANGES GRASSY WOODLAND NETWORK



m l r g w n **NEWSLETTER 2**

AUGUST 2005 n c s s a

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Workshop Program

The program of workshops is now finalized – I hope that there is something here & sufficient variety of locations & weekend/week days for everyone.

Date	Location
Saturday 3 rd September	Mt Pleasant NRC
Thursday 15 th September	Happy Valley Res
Wednesday 5 th October	Monarto
Friday 21 st October	Happy Valley Res
Late Oct/early Nov	Mt Pleasant NRC

Workshop places are strictly limited to 20 people, so send in your expressions of interest as soon as possible. However please only express interest if you are confident that you can attend – otherwise you may take a spot that someone else could have.

For Workshops 1 and 5 contact **Faye Mc Goldrick** (Coordinator, Mt Pleasant Natural Resource Centre, 132 Melrose St, Mt Pleasant SA 5235; Ph: 08 8568 1907

Fax: 08 8568 2699; email: mpnrc@bigpond.com)

For Workshops 2, 3 & 4, contact **Penny**.

I will provide notes for attendees at workshops which you will receive beforehand so that you can be prepared and hopefully take in more on the day.

The **first two workshop** will be very similar – there will be an indoors presentation about the theoretical aspects of grassy woodland (GW) conservation and management followed by a field trip to sites that exemplify these concepts. Aspects covered include: **historic extent of MLR GW, current state, threats, how to recognize a healthy GW, restoration, monitoring our progress**

and relationships between plants and animals in **grassy ecosystems**. The 3/9/05 workshop at Mt Pleasant will include information on butterflies & grasslands.

The **Monarto workshop** is on research into **declining woodland birds**, looking at the ecology of individual species and their requirements. We will also train people in a quick and easy method of scoring flowering of eucalypts – a tool for monitoring sites as well as landscapes. A field trip to a remnant grassland will be included for those wanting to brush up on grass identification.

Workshop 4 at Happy Valley Reservoir will be a **techniques and plant/bird identification** day – we will visit sites with a range of weed threats and talk about technical aspects of weed removal and the effects of weed removal on fauna, as well as observing/identifying a range of native and weed species (there are over 140 native plant spp and 45 weeds recorded here) and birds (over 100 species recorded). The NCS Bushland Condition Monitoring Manual will also be discussed.

We return to Mt Pleasant NRC for a **native grass identification workshop (No. 5)** – an indoor session followed by a field trip to various locations to see the native grasses *in situ*. This will allow attendees to identify grasses to genus but also delve into the intricacies of the species of wallaby and spear grasses that many of us struggle with.

The Mt Pleasant Natural Resource Centre is also hosting two other workshops on grassy themes – contact details above if you are interested:

Thursday 8th September, 10-1, Grass seeding demonstration at Transport SA site (Mt Pleasant - Birdwood) with NGRG & Bob Myers.

November - Grass Management (including how to spot & control *Monadenia* & *Pentstemon*) with Bob Myers, Date TBC.

Penny Paton Nature Conservation Society of South Australia Temperate Woodlands Campaigner
Ph: 8344 8891; 47 Gilbert St, Gilberton 5081
paton@chariot.net.au

Handy Weeding Hints - Olives

John Garnaut has been experimenting with the herbicide concentration in the drill and fill method of olive control and has some preliminary results that he would like to share with others. John estimated that there were 4,000-5,000 olives on an 8.5 hectare block near Maitland in 2003 and there are now 500 to go. Most were controlled by drill and fill (using 1:2 glyphosate to water solution) but, of the 200 that were cut/frilled and swabbed, some have not died and will be drilled and filled. A few of the drilled and filled olives will need follow-up, but that is probably because it was not done properly in the first place.

John speculated that using a strong solution of glyphosate not only put more chemical into the environment, but was also more expensive and possibly less effective than a weaker thinner solution. So in October 2004 he set up an experiment with three adjacent groups of 15 olive trees; Group 1 were drilled and filled with 1:2 solution, Group 2 with 1:5 solution and Group 3 with 1:10 solution. Larger trees received a few more holes and John erred on the side of caution in that holes were drilled deeper rather than shallower, but he felt that he had been even handed in his approach to the trees in all groups. Observation in March 2005 showed that all trees were defoliated and the bark on the lignotubers was cracking. He hopes to revisit the trees in the winter of 2005 to confirm that the olives are really dead.

Assuming that the trial's results hold up on later inspection, bushcarers will be able to use weaker solutions of glyphosate (1:10) for drilling and filling of olives and thus save money. John is firmly of the opinion that being careful about getting enough holes deep enough in the lignotuber and dealing with the lignotuber (not the branches) are as important as the herbicide solution.

John Garnaut with help from Penny Paton

May Day walk & talk in Ferguson CP—our very first event

The walk in Ferguson was attended by about 25 people, ranging from BFL volunteers and staff to weed control methods, bird use of habitats and what people wanted to get out of the Network. Thanks to Sara Boulton of NCSSA for helping to organise the day. interested Nature Conservation Society of SA members. We had a glorious afternoon for our informal ramble through a beautiful SA blue gum/ drooping she-oak/southern cypress pine woodland. There were lots of questions about native plant and weed identification and discussions concerning



Penny & networkers at Ferguson CP (Photo: Giulio Carbone)

Michael Hyde Memorial Native Grass Forum, 25 August 2005

The Native Grass Resources Group is organizing this forum at the Waite on 25th August 9am -1pm, with the theme: Management of Native Grasses in the Urban Landscape. The cost is \$75 plus GST and registration forms are available by contacting Silver Moon on silver.moon@chariot.net.au; fax 08 8536 0136 or c/- RSD 461 Braeside Rd, Finnis SA 5255.

Rust Fungus – Bad News for Bridal Creeper

Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) is one of the worst environmental weeds in southern Australia. Its creeping foliage smothers native understorey plants and its aggressive tuberous root system forms dense impenetrable mats, inhibiting the establishment of native trees and shrubs. Bridal Creeper is a familiar sight throughout southern South Australia and is most often found within patches of trees and native vegetation and along roadsides. Control methods for Bridal Creeper include herbicide spraying, manual removal (including the root system), stock grazing and biological control agents.

Three biological control agents have been introduced into Australia in the hope of limiting its spread. The most successful agent to date has been the Rust Fungus (*Puccinia myrsiphylli*), which destroys Bridal Creeper leaf tissue reducing the photosynthetic surface of the plant, and ultimately depletes the plants energy reserves. The plant sheds infected leaves prematurely limiting its capacity to grow, flower and set seed. The Rust Fungus has proven a highly effective form of control for Bridal Creeper in many areas across South Australia.

The Asparagus Weeds Working Group (AWWG) is holding free community Bridal Creeper Rust Fungus workshops and Rust collection days for landowners and community groups within the Southern Hills Region (Fleurieu Peninsula) and Mt Lofty Ranges region. If you have a Bridal Creeper problem on your property or conservation area then come along to one of these workshops to learn about how to effectively spread Rust Fungus onto Bridal Creeper populations.

Workshops will be held at Inman Valley on August 16th, Strathalbyn on August 17th and at Willunga on August 24th. As limited places are available for these sessions, interested people are asked to contact Susan Lawrie, Project Officer for the AWWG, to book their place and for any more information.

Phone: 8552 9366
Mobile: 0438 885 165

Email: asparagus@internode.on.net

Susan Lawrie



Close up of Rust pustules on Bridal Creeper (Photo: John Virtue)

Editor's Note: With the very dry start to the season, bridal creeper rust is not as active as it was last year at this time – don't give up hope, but keep watching for it at known locations.

Weed/Native Lookalikes

In the last issue of GWN (May 2005), I wrote about Weed/Native Lookalikes & listed the articles that I could find in Trees For Life 'Releaf' dealing with these species. Since then TFL have kindly sent me all of their articles from 2000 on this topic so that I could copy them for interested Networkers – thanks to Glen Chittleborough for this great suggestion. There are 15 of these, including some not mentioned in the last article – salvation jane, broad leaf cotton bush, pussy-tail, boneseed, olive, soursob and veldt-grasses.

If you would like a colour copy of these 15 Weed/Native Lookalike sheets, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Penny at 47 Gilbert St, Gilberton SA 5081. I cannot email this as it is a large document and would exceed my email capacity (and probably yours!).

4th National Native Grasses Conference, 11-13 October 2005, Burra

The 4th National Native Grasses Conference is being hosted by the Stipa Native Grasses Association, the Mid North Grasslands Working Group and the Native Grass Resources Group at Burra in South Australia.

The conference title is **Grassland Conservation and Production – Both Sides of the Fence**. Conference brochure and registration forms available from Christine McRae, phone 02 6373 7628, email:cmcrae@hwy.com.au or Kylie Nicholls, phone 08 8842 3275, email:fullbottlemedia@rbe.net.au. Penny has PDF files of the brochure and registration form that she can email to you as well.

Root rot fungus - *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

Now that it has finally rained, the issue of *Phytophthora* rears its ugly head again. I have received an updated map of Pc and Mundulla Yellow sites from Renate Velzeboer of DEH which I can email or post to interested people.

Also I wondered if there was a need to talk about steps that bushcarers and others can take to minimize the risk of spreading Pc through our positive activities for bush regeneration. I have made myself a very cheap and effective Pc hygiene kit that I have in my car in the winter & I use it whenever I go in the field as a precautionary measure. It consists of a plastic bottle of methylated spirits, a stout scrubbing brush and a spray bottle. I have found that some spray bottles have the same sized screw-on lid as methylated spirit bottles, so that as long as the bottle is half full or more, I simply screw the spray bottle top onto the bottle & use it that way. This negates the need to transfer metho to the spray bottle. Spray tread of boots with metho, brush tread to remove soil and other debris and spray brush for good measure.

Questionnaire Feedback

Many thanks to those who posted or emailed questionnaires back to me – it has been a great help in planning workshops and future newsletters. Specifically Enid Robertson wanted to document more locations for the panic veldt grass *Ehrharta erecta* (p. 3) – Sturt Gorge RP, Belair roadside, Coromandel Railway Station, Wittunga Botanic Gardens, Coromandel Valley/Aberfoyle Park roadside and many more places. It appears to be spreading and should be very green and active now - see photo below (regrettably in my garden, as we use the seed heads for our parrots who love it!).



Panic veldt-grass (Photo: Penny Paton)

Enid's other comment was about the collection of plant material for identification, which I mentioned in 'How well do you know your site?' She rightly points out that there are protocols for this – at the least one should get a piece of the plant that has flowers and/or fruits and press it before taking it to the Herbarium. The State Herbarium has a brochure on how to go about collecting specimens and I will try to extract the relevant information from this for the next newsletter. Otherwise send me a stamped self-addressed envelope and I will post you a copy. One respondent asked whether I had considered setting up an email chatroom where networkers could ask questions or discuss issues. I am unable to provide that service as my time is limited but I am happy to have a column in the newsletter to facilitate this discussion – so send in your questions or issues for discussion.