

BARRABOOL HILLS LANDCARE

Barrabool Hills Landcare Group Newsletter. December 2021.



Above: The organising group: Bret Ryan (Southern Farming Systems), Dr Russ Barrow (Charles Sturt University), Kaye Rodden, Graeme Heath (Charles Sturt University) and Cemlyn Martin (CEO Southern Farming Systems)

Dung Beetle Field Day Report.

6th November, Inverleigh. By Kaye Rodden.

Over 40 members of the community, young and not so young, attended the field day on a warm and muggy Saturday, some travelling from as far as Mortlake and Ararat.

We were lucky that the Dr Russ Barrow and Graeme Heath from Charles Sturt University's Dung Beetle Ecosystem Engineers project were able to cross the border and provide us with an excellent presentation about their research into these amazing insects.

The Dung beetle is fast becoming a national identity, with the National Broadcaster recently featuring them as a key to Australia moving toward zero emissions stating....

“a humble powerhouse working underground to support the big players up top to keep our planet liveable. Dragging poo through the soil, like adding fertiliser, turning humble paddocks into carbon sinks that can soak carbon dioxide out of the air like trees do.”

WHATS ON

DECEMBER 2021

Friday 10th

Barrabool Hills Landcare end of year gathering. See information inside for details.

FEBRUARY 2022

February 17th, 21st & 24th, 2022

Barrabool Hills Rabbit Baiting Program. Details inside. Please order via website.

Date TBC

Barrabool Hills Landcare bus trip to visit past projects.

2022 Dung Beetle Survey.

Joint Geelong Landcare Network, and Upper Barwon Landcare Network project. (See Inside for details)

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-05/climate-change-cop26-untangling-the-mess/100382998>

Those members from our group who attended also heard that the Geelong Landcare Network in partnership with the Upper Barwon Landcare Network and Southern Farming Systems, have been successful in obtaining a grant next year to survey for Dung Beetles across the two network areas. A

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Dung Beetle Field Day Report.

By Kaye Rodden.

steering committee is being set up to start the search for appropriate sites (10 in total) to monitor over the 12 months. There will also be workshops to discuss setting up your own monitoring stations across your property. If you would like to register for any of these activities contact the Geelong Landcare Network Facilitator, Bron Merritt, at geelonglandcarenetwork@gmail.com.

A huge thanks to Christa and Trevor Jones for their help in the setting up and catering.

Thank you to Southern Farming Systems for hosting the event and the support of the Corangamite CMA, funded through a Federal Government's National Landcare Program.



Photo above: Young and old attended the field day. Here some of our younger members intensely watching for dung beetle activity in a monitoring site.

Photo credit Bron Merritt



Photo right: Dr Russ Barrow from Charles Sturt University presenting to the field day. Holding a dry dung pat hollowed out by dung beetles. Dung beetle burrows can be seen in glass demonstration box behind

Photo credit Bron Merritt

Message from the president.

By Jim Seager.

The group has definitely come out of hibernation and has been very busy over the last two months. Whilst Covid restrictions did mean that our regular Executive Meeting was again held on line, and thank you to those members who continue to support our group in their roles on this committee. We do have a couple of vacancies if you would like to be more involved, so please contact our secretary for more information. In normal circumstances we usually "eat and meet" at one of our members home every two months. Great way to catch up and enjoy some terrific food... everyone supplying a plate.

Excellent news though we now have a new newsletter co-editor, Leah Carr, whose family have a long legacy with the group. Leah in fact designed our unique black and white logo many years ago, and her husband, Hamish was the group's first secretary/treasurer in 1995. Thank you Leah for offering to help. And thank you to Kaye Rodden and Christa Jones who put together our last newsletter as an interim measure.

Congratulations to Kaye Rodden who coordinated the successful Dung Beetle Field Day on 6th November. Not only was it very well attended

but also it heralded a major 12 month project to survey for Dung Beetles across the region, funded through a Victorian Landcare Grant. If you are interested in being involved, contact our secretary.

Finally our group has been successful in obtaining funding for a bus trip next year to visit past landcare projects culminating in a BBQ dinner. More information to come in the February Newsletter hopefully.

Looking forward to catching up at our Christmas Function on 10th December, and if not wishing you all the best for the festive season.

Collecting eucalypt seed for revegetation.

By Stephen Murphy. Sustainable Biorich Landscapes.

Knowing what to pick.

Knowing when to harvest eucalyptus fruit-capsules is the key to successful seed collection. This becomes clearer with practice, though the process is similar to knowing when to pick apples. It's the fruit colour and the fruit size that you're looking for. Gum-nuts, like apples vary in size, shape & colour and with experience you learn to recognise the subtle signs of ripeness. Sadly, unlike apples you can't take a bite as a final ripeness test.

A careful look around a tree at the gum nuts/fruit capsules is a helpful guide. You will notice that they form in stages about a year apart. There are the small very green capsules that have recently flowered - they're immature and are months off ripening. You will also see larger capsules that are fully formed with

a ripe blush or a weathered woody appearance - they're the ones you want. They should be a similar size and shape to any old dry woody capsules on the tree or on the ground.

The X guide

The other key indicator is the 'cross (X)' at the end of the capsule. X marks the valves where the capsule opens to release its seeds. If the X is well-defined, the capsules will very likely open when picked. You can also look at the old dry seed capsules to see how the valves look when they're fully open

When in doubt pick some mature looking capsules and place them on a warm windowsill at home - if ready the valves will start



Photo above: River Red Gum seed drying with valves opening.

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... (continued from page 3)

Collecting eucalypt seed for revegetation.

By Stephen Murphy. Sustainable Biorich Landscapes.

to open within a few days and the seed will drop out within two weeks. If it's not ripe the capsules will shrivel like a tiny wrinkly old apple.

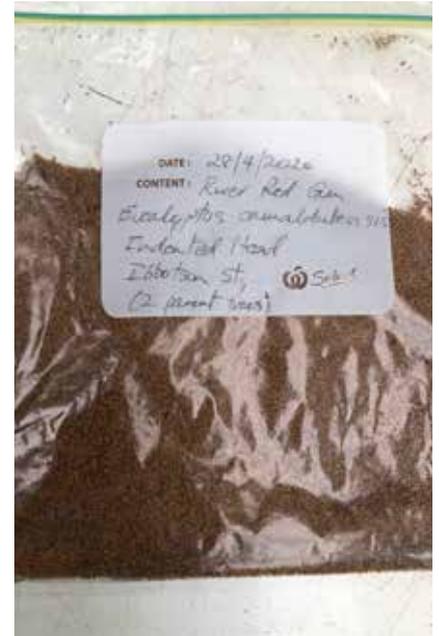
When separating the seeds from the capsules, shake them well in the paper bag, bucket or tub to make sure all the seeds have dropped out. The fertile seeds are often deep down inside the capsule. When you remove the dried capsules the seeds will be at the bottom mixed with immature seed called chaff. Do a final sieving before storing in a sealed labelled jar or ziplock plastic bag. Always record the species name or description and the date of collection.

Sowing

Now you're ready to sow the seed in trays or directly into tubes. November to February is the ideal time when warm temperatures suit the germination of eucalypt seed. Direct seeding is done much earlier in early spring when there is plenty of soil moisture.

To read more interesting articles from Stephen Murphy check out his blog at www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/blog

Photo left:
Dried and cleaned
RRG seed.



What Bird Is that?

By Tim Harte.

Ric Walter identified the bird in the October BHLG newsletter correctly, well done Ric. The bird was a Crested Shrike-tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*). The fantastic black and white facial colouration, brilliant yellow front and black Mohawk plumage makes the Crested Shrike-tit an unusual sight to behold. Crested Shrike-tits feed in the canopy of eucalypt forests and woodlands and are often only noticed due to the sound of them tearing off pieces of bark in search of their invertebrate food.

This mystery bird was noticed when it squawked indignantly at me when I was too close to the Golden wattle it was feeding in. These little birds have been seen in the 'hills' in small groups of their own species and with



groups of Yellow-faced and White-naped honeyeaters.

Do you know what this bird is? A tip to this birds identity can be found in it brown head colour. Email us with

your 'what bird is this?' answer, the first person to answer correctly will have their name published in the next newsletter.



Rabbit Baiting 2022



**EASY PEASY – JUST ORDER VIA OUR WEBSITE instead of filling in this form.
You will be able to pay by direct bank transfer, credit card or PayPal 😊**

www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au/shop

BAITING DATES FOR 2022
17th, 21st and 24th February 2022

Orders are now being taken for the Barrabool Hills Landcare Group's annual rabbit baiting program. This successful program, now in its 17th year, is organized by volunteers for the community. Pindone is a cumulative poison. To be effective, rabbits need to ingest the baited carrots on **three** separate occasions over a one-week period.

ORDERING AND PAYMENT

The minimum quantity that can be ordered is 5kg x 3 costing \$84 (incl GST) in total. You will need to estimate how much bait you will need for each of the three baiting days ie 5 kg, 10 kg or 20 kg as per below. Please call our Hotline if you need help estimating or have issues with the website shop/payments.

Options for ordering and payment methods are:
EITHER
1/ Order & pay securely via our website
<https://www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au/shop/>
Payment options are bank transfer, credit card or PayPal. You do not need to submit this order form but please keep it as a reminder for pick up dates etc.
OR
2/ Pay by cash or cheque at any **Bendigo Bank Branch** (Account No 163791817) using your surname as the Reference. You will however need to scan and email your completed order form to barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com or mail it to: 1133 Hamilton Hwy STONEHAVEN 3218
Note: Unfortunately, we cannot directly accept cash or cheque payments in the current Covid-19 environment.
Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Orders and payments must be received by **8th February 2022**.
⊗ Regrettably we are **unable to process any orders or payments received after this date.**

A Tax Invoice/Receipt will be emailed (where possible) after receipt of your payment. A paper copy will be provided upon request.

COLLECTION DEPOTS

Your entire order will comprise **three** separate allocations. These will be available for collection on the above **three** dates from only one of following two depots.

Depot 1 – Barry & Glenys Harvey - 232 Henty Main Road, Mt Moriac Ph 0407568292

Depot 2 – Brien & Judy Cohn - 25 Kingsbury Lane, Waurm Ponds Ph 0414835833

Please specify on the order form from which depot you will be collecting your baited carrot and it is essential you include a contact phone number below for the person collecting the bait. Orders need to be collected from the depot between **4pm** and **6pm** on the specified dates

HOTLINE

For more information, contact
Jim – President (0409 935 700) or Heike – Treasurer (0417 020 012)

It is the legal obligation of landholders to control rabbits on their property. One pair of rabbits can produce 180 offspring in 18 months and 12 rabbits eat as much as one sheep! Baiting, warren destruction and removal of areas where rabbits can hide are recognized as being essential components of an integrated rabbit control program

NAME

POSTAL ADDRESS

EMAIL PHONE NO. OF PERSON COLLECTING BAIT

ORDER – ENTER NUMBER OF BAGS on **each** of the three baiting days

5kg bag for each of 3 baiting days = \$84 x = \$

10kg bag for each of 3 baiting days = \$129 x = \$

20kg bag for each of 3 baiting days = \$228 x = \$

TOTAL PAYMENT MADE \$

Direct Credit Reference (ie SURNAME)

Collection Depot:

Waurm Ponds Mt Moriac





INVITATION

END OF YEAR BREAK UP & CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

PLACE: Julie Oatway's at 125 McCormack's Rd

Date: Friday Dec 10th 6.30 Start

We may have missed out on our traditional catchup at the AGM, but let's make up for it on 10th December in Julie's beautiful garden.

Invite your family and neighbors and join us for a wonderful celebration of the year to come, with lots of new Landcare initiatives planned in 2022.

BYO Meat and Drinks

SALAD or DESSERT to share

BHLG will provide nibbles, cheese, and wine for Pre- Dinner

Our event will be COVID COMPLIANT and ALL ATTENDEES 16+ will need to be DOUBLE VACCINATED

QR CODE REQUIREMENT UPON ENTRY

RSVP CHRISTA JONES barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com Mob: 0408 342 403 by MONDAY 6TH DEC



Weed Alert!

By Jim Seager.

Serrated Tussock(ST) and Chilean Needle Grass(CNG) are a couple of very invasive weeds that have become a serious problem in our region.

Landholders have a legal responsibility to control these invasive weeds.

Identification is often easier at this time of year when they are in flower.

Check for correct identification as some native grasses look similar.

Stopping seeding is the key to preventing their spread but due to the good season many of these weeds seem to be seeding unchecked this year.

It is important that you check your property now and treat these weeds, including other noxious weeds you find, immediately as allowing them to seed now will result in many years of weed control in the future.

Options for controlling seeding include;

- Slashing prior to seed set (be sure to avoid spreading seeds by cleaning down machine before moving to new areas)
- Spraying with both knockdown and residual chemicals to stop seed set and prevent re-establishment in following years.
- Some areas can be sprayed completely with a non selective herbicide before seed set, with the intention to resow to new perennial pastures the following year.
- Manage livestock grazing to reduce seeding and prevent spreading as CNG can be spread easily by sheep, especially while seeding.
- Be aware that vehicles can also spread weed seeds. Clean vehicles regularly if travelling between properties.

Check hay paddocks before cutting and be sure not to sell or buy contaminated hay.

- Establish a property map identifying the location of weeds for followup control next year.
- If neighbours are seen to be not controlling their weeds, give them a call to discuss as these weeds will soon be yours if they are not controlled.
- Establishing native wind breaks can help reduce the spread of ST across the landscape

Contact your local Landcare group to discuss control options.

For further information contact Jim on 0409 935 700.



BECOME A MEMBER.

Join our vibrant Barrabool Hills Landcare community and help support our projects and events? Only \$15 annually per family.

Go to our website for all the details on how to join www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au or email us at barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR NEWSLETTER.

Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome. Let your fellow community and members know what is happening in the Barrabool Hills.

Send articles and photos to barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com, deadline for next issue is 15/01/22.

Members are able to advertise their Barrabool Hills business in the newsletter @ \$30 per issue (space allowing). Ads. are approximately 50 mm x 70 mm, and will be printed provided there is space.

CONTACT US

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Instagram: [barraboolhillslandcaregroup](https://www.instagram.com/barraboolhillslandcaregroup)

Website:

Special thanks goes to the Leigh family for distributing the newsletter.

Barrabool Hills Landcare Group wishes to thank the Surf Coast Shire for printing the newsletter.



Attendees at the Dung Beetle checking out the newly established field micocosms to check beetle numbers.