BARRABOOL HILLS LANDCARE GROUPS
Contact us: barraboolhillslandcare@hotmail.com

Barrabool Hills Landcare Newsletter

December 2013

The little things are just as beautiful as the hills and trees. A friend in the vegetable garden. (Geoff Anson) (send us your favourite photo for future editions.)

Farm planning check list December 2013

In each newsletter Jim Seager will provide advice on what Landcare and small-farm jobs could be coming up over the coming couple of months. Here is Jim's first note.

If you have a small hobby/lifestyle farm or run a larger farming operation there are many issues to consider at this time of year.

Planning for the months ahead can help prevent some problems while ensuring those important jobs aren't left to the last minute or forgotten.

Livestock;

- 1st summer worm drench for sheep
- 6 in 1 Vaccine for spring lambs
- Prevention and monitoring for flystrike in sheep
- Vaccinate spring calves and monitoring for bloat in cattle
- New ram/bull purchases
- Consider any feed purchases required for next year
- Service windmills and other pumps etc. for the stock water system.
- Selling off prime or excess sheep or cattle to reduce numbers over summer

Pastures;

- Last chance for spray topping annual grasses to stop seed set
- Preparations of paddocks for re-sowing to new pastures in 2014
- Soil testing and Fertilizer requirements for 2014
- Noxious weed control, spraying hard to identify weeds and mapping of weed infestations so you can implement control programs next autumn.

General;

- Check rabbit numbers and submit baiting orders for February 2014.
- Organise any fencing and tree planting projects, contact contractors, order trees etc
- Cleaning up excess grass around buildings etc for fire prevention.

Jim Seager Agricultural Consultant

President
Kaye Rodden 52651241
nidgee@reachnet.com.au
Vice President
Jim Seager 0409 935 700
ejimseager@bigpond.com
Secretary:
Judy Trotter 03 5265 6181
jtrotter02@gmail.com
Treasurer:
Gayle Cameron 0417524802
annettegayle@hotmail.com
Newsletter
Geoff Anson 0418324632
geoffanson@mac.com
Equipment
Neville Trotter's 0428811009
web-address:
http://corangamite.landcarevic.net.au/barrabool-hills

Trees for 2014

Over the last few years members of the group have used the excellent community facility provided by Barwon Water Nursery to propagate trees and shrubs from seed collected locally.

Although there has been a change in management at the nursery, the service is still available and we are gearing up for the program again.

Jillian and Gordon Rough have been busy collecting seed from local species and we will soon be calling for volunteers to sow the seed in at the nursery. It is not an enormous time commitment, a couple of hours, one of two nights after work is all that is required.

Those members who volunteer to help sow the seed and prick out the seedlings will be given first preference to select trees and shrubs for their own use.

If you are planning to plant local provenance vegetation on your property in 2014, this is a great opportunity to get some free tubestock, so register your interest now with Jim Seager.

A Quiz

Why did the Swiss immigrants leave Switzerland and choose Geelong for their home?

What link does this Punch cartoon have with Geelong viticulture?

In 2012 the whole Geelong region had approximately 153 vineyards totaling 780 hectares. How does that compare with the Barrabool Hills in the 1860?

Who reestablished commercial grape growing in Geelong in 1966?

Find out the answers to these and many other questions that you didn't even realise you wanted to know.

Come to the Barrabool Hills Landcare Group's Christmas BBQ at Geoff and Joan Anson's (see next article).

Christmas BBQ

All active and not so active members, and potential members, are welcome to our 2013 Christmas BBQ.

Wednesday 18th December

50 McMullans Road, Barrabool (through white gate off Merrewarp Road)

6.30 brief report on the last executive meeting

7.00 talk by Geoff on the history of winemaking in the Barrabool Hills.

Wander around the vineyard, winetasting of current Barrabool Hills wines and BBQ.

Bring: meat, a salad or desert to share, drink, good cheer.

Provided: BBQ, chairs, glasses, cutlery, crockery, bread roles, P&S sauce, other friends.

RSVP: geoffanson@mac.com or 0418324632.

Tawny Frogmouth mother and chick

Kaye and Brent Rodden

Gorse Eradication Project 2012-2013

In Autumn 2012 work on a Gorse eradication project in the Barrabool Hills began.

The Barrabool Hills Landcare Group received funding from the Victorian Gorse Taskforce for project coordination and on ground works.

Subsequently the group was successful in applying for funding from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority for gorse control along waterways in the Barrabool Hills region, to be coordinated as a single project. A total of $34,000

The aim of the project was to engage landholders in the Waurn Ponds and Mid Barwon Catchments in the Barrabool Hills region.

The gorse project provided an awareness and education program through field days newsletters and one on one property visits, combined with financial incentives to landholders within the target area.

There was an initial 'expressions of interest' sent to landholders.

Landholders were engaged to discuss a wide range of issues including other priority weeds such as serrated tussock and encouraged to participate in other group programs such as rabbit baiting, sowing perennial pastures and revegetation works.

Property visits were conducted to establish the type and extent of the infestations to be controlled. Spray contractors were then engaged to quote on works using a best practice approach. Other land managers such as the Surf Coast Shire and Geelong City Council were engaged to control gorse adjoining private land where necessary. Councils were also very helpful providing detailed property maps for the project.

Once the work was quoted, landholders who wish to participate were asked to sign a 5 year voluntary management agreement, detailing the funding to be provided and the process of reimbursement.

All the gorse in the project was sprayed with Grazon Extra, a selective broadleaf woody weed herbicide with the addition of pulse wetting agent and spray dye.

This selective herbicide doesn't affect grasses, allowing strong competition to reduce the re-establishment of gorse seedlings in subsequent seasons.

The project generated significant interest and resulted in over 70 property visits.

Approx. 54 landholders participated in the spraying program with several engaging the spray contractor to spray other weeds not funded.

9 landholders choose to complete their own works without funding assistance.

5 properties visited didn't have gorse but were keen to discuss weed control option for other weeds and issues identified.

To date there are three properties where works are still to be completed, waiting for suitable weather to complete spraying. Once completed approx. 35 hectares of gorse would have been controlled.

This will complete the expenditure of the on ground funding.

It is intended to follow up participants in this project to remind landholders of the need to continue controlling gorse seedlings and any re-growth and to provide assistance where possible.

This project has been a great success and with other landcare projects being run by the group will have a significant benefit to the landscape and the capacity of landholders to manage similar issues across the Barrabool Hills.

Chilean Needle Grass

Chilean Needle Grass *(Stipa neesiana*) is becoming a serious pasture and environmental weed in the Barrabool Hills region. It closely resembles many of the native stipa in its growth habit and in its vegetative phase is extremely difficult to recognise in native grass stands. It has sharp seeds which embed in the coats of native, feral and domestic animals, and any nook and cranny on a motor vehicle, and has the potential to spread widely and overrun existing vegetation. Chilean Needle Grass is an extremely vigorous species, drought tolerant with low palatability and the contamination of wool and hides alone is seriously impacting the sheep industry.

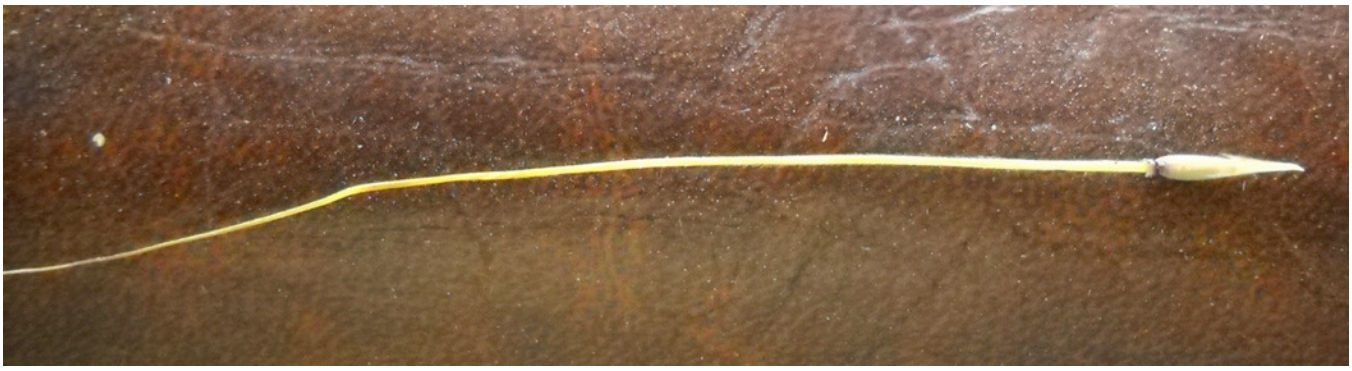
Although the management of Chilean needle grass has been researched, there appears to be little information about selective control in grazed pastures and the use of

spray/seed methodology to determine the ideal conditions to replace the needle grass with other pastures species.

The group has had enquiries from a number of landholders expressing an interest in being part of trials to evaluate control techniques for Chilean needle grass in perennial pastures. We have put a project proposal into the Corangamite Catchment Authority, to support the establishment and monitoring of these trials on at least 3 different sites in the Barrabool Hills area . We then plan to hold a couple of field days for local landholders to discuss the outcomes. If any one is interested in being involved in the trials please contact Kaye Rodden.

Chilean needle grass – seed heads.

(Jim Seager)



Chilean needle grass – note the distinctive "dark ring" between the seed and the awn.

(Kaye and Brent Rodden)

Serrated tussock in a paddock – another major weed in the Barrabool Hills. If it is to large an area to pull out now map their location for spraying before next season.

(Jim Seager (R), and www.northcoastweeds.org.au (L))

Events and group news.

Geelong Landcare Network Meeting Report

Over 50 people attended the Geelong Landcare Network's annual public meeting at the Bannockburn Golf club on the 13th November. Over the last 12 months close to $500,000 has been invested by landholders, in partnership with the federal and state governments. Programs managed by the network have resulted in the creation of new wildlife corridors, fencing and planting out of escarpments and gullies, and control of pest plants and animals.

This is an extraordinary achievement for the network, and the public meeting was in part a celebration of this, with the project coordinator for the Biodiversity grant, Mandy Coulson, providing an excellent overview of the work that is being achieved in that project.

The key note speakers on the night were Christine and Peter Forster who talked about their landcare journey on a family farm south of Ararat, including the challenges they have faced in becoming the first and only Victorians to become Carbon accredited farmers.

Peter was also "crowned" the individual Victorian landcarer this year at Government House. His descriptions of how he and Chris transformed a treeless sheep grazing property and adjoining degraded rabbit ridden hills into a farm that generates income from not only livestock and crops, but also the protection of biodiversity and storage of carbon was very inspirational.

The new Network coordinator, Elissa Ashton–Smith, mused that there was so much conversation afterwards that people forgot to eat!!!!

Get your newsletter faster and save resources.

Most of us now have email access and so we encourage members to change from paper newsletters to email copies. **Colour copies will be emailed to all those who have provided an email address.** Black and white copies will continue to be provided by direct delivery.

Provide your address to Brent Rodden at

nidgee@reachnet.com.au.

Order your rabbit bait now!

Earlier in November all residents in the Barrabool Hills should have received the distinctive "yellow" Barrabool Hills Landcare rabbit baiting flyers, marking the onset of the 2014 baiting season. The Barrabool Hills program is run by a group of volunteers, so if you are considering ordering bait please do so early, it makes the job so much easier for us!

The terrific spring conditions have seen rabbit numbers once again expand - remember each mating pair of rabbits can produce 180 offspring in 12 to 18 months! So enlist your neighbours in the program so that the rabbits can't just duck under a fence next door to hide!

If you need additional order forms they are on the web at

http://corangamite.landcarevic.net.au/barrabool--- hills

Baiting dates for this season are **17th, 20th and 24th February 2014**

Barrabool Hills Landcare Group 20th Anniversary

2014 is the 20th anniversary of the group and the executive has started planning a number of activities to celebrate. The major event for the year will be a "Field Day/Carnival" to be held on 3rd May at the property of Ross and Lyn George. This event will be held jointly with the Otway Agroforestry Network and will feature demonstrations of tree pruning, and milling, selection of trees species for biodiversity and production, propagation and planting, including direct seeding, weed identification, water quality monitoring etc.

Hopefully we will have representatives from other landcare partners present too. There will be food, perhaps music, and we plan to invite as many past Barrabool Hills landcare members that we can contact.

We hope that everyone will put this date in their diaries and come along to learn something new, meet up with old and new friends and celebrate being part of this special place that is the Barrabool Hills!

Landcare equipment available

The Group has a range of equipment available for use by members.

- New 400 L Trailer-mounted Sprayer with 50m hand spray line and 4m boom.
- 2 Kidney Tree Buckets
- 2 Potti Puki Tree Planters plus 2 Georges Tree Planters
- 60 L Spray Tank and Pump designed to fit most quad bikes
- Rabbit burrow Smoker/Fumigator

For further info ring Neville Trotter 0428 811 009.

A probably doomed experiment in the vineyard – copper wire around vines to deter white snails.

(Geoff Anson)

2013/2014 Subscription Reminder

For those families who have not paid this year's BHLG sub (due 1 July) we need you to hop to it and support your local Landcare Group.

We are one of the most active Groups in the Geelong region, run by a highly motivated, very competent and dedicated executive. Managing the rabbit baiting campaign, negotiating Government grants on behalf members, maintaining our sprayer and other equipment, communicating with members all costs money. We depend on your support.

All members of BHLG are entitled to:

- a BHLG gate sign
- a brochure outlining the Group's achievements
- mentoring / assistance with weed control and revegetation
- Newsletters and Emails
- Access to Government funding for landcare
- Involvement in Group activities and projects eg. gorse spraying, carbon pastures and biodiversity and tree seedlings.
- Access to Group tree planting and spraying equipment

Annual membership costs just $15 per family. Pay by cheque or direct credit for 1, 2 or 3 years. Support us so that we can keep offering the best for the Barrabool Hills community.

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

By Cheque:

Please make cheques payable to: **Barrabool Hills Landcare Group**, and post with this form to:

BHLG Treasurer, 33 Ballanclea Road , Barrabool Vic. 3221

By Direct Deposit:

Bank Account details: Barrabool Hills Landcare Group,

National Australia Bank

BSB: 083 537

Account Number: 650 230 924

Please include your surname and initials as a reference & email your application to:

gayle@nmcmillanassoc.com.au

The Barwon at Murgheboluc

(Kaye and Brent Rodden)

Burning gorse after last years spraying program

(Geoff Anson)

Let your fellow members know what is happening in the Barrabool Hills. Contributions to the newsletter are welcomed. Send articles and photos to *geoffanson@mac.com.*

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

The newsletter is printed through the generosity of Andrew Katos, State Member for South Barwon and is distributed through the efforts of the Leigh family