

THE GECKO



Edition 12
July 2016

Welcome to the July 2016 edition of The Gecko.

We have started this year well with early rains. Early rains mean early planting – and we have already had two group days plus several Tuesday sessions with the trowels. Keep your fingers crossed for a wet winter and that the rain is still here through spring.

We need your input. Have you taken a photo or seen something in the bush that you'd like to share with the group? Perhaps you have a question to ask. Send it in to fqpbushland@gmail.com and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

April to June 2016

24 April 2016

The day was cloudy, but fine, which suited the 10 volunteers who came to weed African lovegrass, *Eragrostis curvula*. In one hour we had filled 17 bags with weeds and liberated quite a few native plants.

Interestingly, for such a weedy place, there were a number of native invertebrates taking shelter in the grass. The camera was being called from one clump of grass to the next faster than photos could be taken.

Three different species of cockroach and a wolf spider were seen, plus a moth (*Hippotion celerio*, vine hawk moth) and a silverfish, both of which had not previously been photographed in our patch.



New species of moth and silverfish found while weeding.

The weeding was followed by a very chatty morning tea where everyone agreed that doing the same task next month would not be unwelcome.

Special thanks go to Ash and his ute for getting the filled bags to the gate for easy collection.

29 May 2016

A sunny morning was a change after a week of wet weather. Fourteen volunteers planted 135 seedlings in an area we started planting last year.

Because of the good rains this year, the soil was damp and planting could start a month earlier than in recent years.

Everyone was encouraged by the growth put on by last year's plants and was able to imagine what the area will look like in the future.



Infill planting between last year's seedlings.

25 June 2016

Our second group planting day was in stark contrast to the first. It was wet. Very wet. Fortunately we are made of stern stuff and 10 volunteers plus two members of the City of Canning's Natural Area Team planted 500 seedlings.

We had it a little easier than last month as the Natural Area Team had drilled some planting holes during the week which made it so quick to plant. But then we got to the sedges that needed to be planted densely, close to the water's edge. Here we had to dig a lot of our own holes and this made things much slower. Plus, we were doing it in the pouring rain.

There was a collective sigh of relief when the last plant went in the ground and everything was packed away. So as not to miss out on the obligatory morning tea after the activity we retired to Sue's house to shelter under her patio. Thanks Sue.



Planting in the rain.

A big THANK YOU goes to Ash, Barbara M, Bev, Claire, Colette, Collette, Eileen, Ikhlalas, Janelle, Jelena, Jessica, Joseph, Kade, KT, Lee, Michael, Omar, Ronnie, Robert, Rosemary, Sara, Shirley, Sian, Sue, Ubayday and Zaid for helping out with these activities.

Upcoming events

2 July 2016 – Planting

July – To be decided

21 August 2016 – Bird watching walk

September – To be decided

Details of some activities are yet to be finalised but will be distributed by email and advertised on our website.

Also this quarter

Fox trapping happened in the beginning of April. One fox and one feral cat were caught.

Cat trapping followed in mid-April. Unfortunately our bobtails see a cat trap as a safe and secure bed with an all-you-can-eat buffet. Once the bobtails are in the trap and the door has shut no cats can be caught. As this scenario repeated itself night after night we had little chance of catching any cats.



Bobtail in a cat trap.

A rooster was found in a cardboard box on the verge of Luyer Avenue. A call was made to the City of Canning and a ranger attended.

The rooster now has now found a permanent home he shares with several hens.



Rooster found in a cardboard box.

In general, you are not allowed to keep roosters in a residential area in the City of Canning. It is possible that the rooster had been dumped because of noisy crowing.

Storm water being discharged by the new housing development in Whitlock Road made it into the bushland for the first time during a downpour on 18 April.

Early last year the housing development's storm water drainage system was connected to a restored wetland at the back of the development. This was done to put much needed rainwater into the ground, instead of it being piped off to the river. However, we've had to wait until now to see if it worked as the housing was not complete and had no gutters or downpipes.

While the water had all drained away by the time day broke, the evidence it left behind was unequivocal. Where the water comes from the pipework to the ground surface, the bubble-up pit, the surrounding sand had been scoured away by the rushing water. This sand had been deposited along the channel connecting the bubble-up pit to the wetland basins. The basins themselves had been left coated with debris (mostly leaves) which showed the depth of the water by leaving tide marks around the rim.

This was exactly what was meant to happen (apart from the scouring) and all those who were involved in the project were very pleased.

We didn't have to wait long before we could see the water in action. Rain on 25 April fell during daylight hours and the way the water flowed down the channel and into the basin was a joy to witness.

The scouring issue will be fixed and we look forward to more water rejuvenating this area, which was once a very damp place.

Thanks must go to the staff at the City of Canning for ensuring this dream was realised.



Water flows from the houses behind to the bubble-up pit in the bushland.



Water fills a basin that then recharges the ground water.

Tuesday group

You are welcome to join the Tuesday group on a casual basis or as a regular commitment. This quarter the Tuesday group has been busy planting and weeding.

Contact Sian at fqpbushland@gmail.com to find out where and when to meet.

Fantastic fruiting fungi

The early and consistent rains have led to the best fungi fruiting season in a long time. The part that we see poking above ground (think of a mushroom) or sticking out of a log is just the fruiting part of the fungi. The body, and main part, of the fungi is below ground or infiltrating throughout that rotting log. The body of the fungi consists mainly of thin white strands called mycelium. You can sometimes see them if you break open a rotting log or disturb some leaf litter.

Fungi are generally beneficial in the natural environment. They help break down dead plant matter, like fallen logs, so that the next generation of plants can access the nutrients stored in the log. Some fungi have a much closer relationship with plants and are termed mycorrhizal fungi. These develop a symbiotic relationship with a plant and increase the plant's ability to access water and nutrients.

The following photographs are just a sample of the fungi that can be found in the bushland.



Calocera guepinioides
Scotsman's Beard



Laetiporus portentosus
White Punk



Ramaria gracilis
Slender Coral Fungus



Leratiomyces ceres
Red Woodchips Fungus



Pleurotus australis,
Southern Oyster Mushroom



Schizophyllum commune
Split-Gill Fungus



Tremella mesenterica
Yellow Brain Fungus