

THE GECKO



Edition 16
July 2017

Welcome to the July 2017 edition of The Gecko.

In contrast to last newsletter, where we commented on the amount of rain, here we lament the lack of rain. With the warmest start to winter on record, and

only four wet days in June, things are looking bleak. Nevertheless, we have been planting and plan on doing more. And, if the plants require hand watering during winter, that's exactly what we'll do.

April to June 2017

30 April 2017

The weather was fine but cool for our weeding session. Fortunately, cool weather was just what we needed.

We spent some time crawling under bushes removing weeds. However, we also unearthed several ant nests. Being trapped by branches, we appreciated the headstart the cooler conditions gave us when trying to outrun the ants.



Weeding under bushes

Also found was some *Pisolithus* sp. fungus. This has the common name of dog poo fungus but individual specimens may resemble other things at times.



Dog poo fungus

21 May 2017

It rained steadily for our first knowledge sharing visit with the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (CRREPA), but we went ahead regardless.



Participants brave the rain. Photo courtesy of CRREPA - Colma

CRREPA look after the Rossmoyne/Shelley foreshores, Yagan Wetland Reserve, and the Bullcreek inlet within the City of Canning and have done so since 1994. Most of their patch is right on the edge of the river, no more than a few metres wide in many areas, and they have worked tirelessly to stop erosion.

We saw and discussed some of the techniques they have used to stabilise the bank while their seedlings get established and the trouble they have with getting certain plants to grow.



The group looks at before and after photos of an area. Photo courtesy of CRREPA – Grecian

There are many stormwater drains emptying straight into the river, which bring whatever pollutants wash into them. CRREPA has worked collaboratively with the City of Canning to have some of these pipes cut short to create living drains. They have constructed vegetated pools at the end of the pipes to filter out pollutants.



Newly constructed living drain. Photo courtesy of CRREPA - Colma



The same living drain 10 months after construction. Photo courtesy of CRREPA - Colma

In these areas there is no need to water the seedlings because nearby residents' sprinklers spray water onto the road, which runs through the drains, and ends up watering the vegetated pools.

Where the stormwater drains discharge into the river, fresh water is brought into a saline environment. Outfalls can be identified easily as this is where waterbirds congregate to wash and drink the fresh water.



Swans drinking the fresh water from the stormwater drains. Photo courtesy of CRREPA - Colma

CRREPA has overcome many challenges in revegetating and stabilising the foreshore and continues the good work to ensure erosion doesn't take hold.

25 June 2017

A sunny morning saw 13 volunteers and two members of the City of Canning's Natural Area Team plant 500 seedlings.

Our youngest ever volunteer, at just 3 weeks old, appeared a little underwhelmed and slept through the whole activity. Fortunately, the other attendees managed a little more enthusiasm and we were soon devouring morning tea.

Thanks must go to Jelena, Cheryl and Kade for providing the cookies, rocky road and brownies respectively (all home-made). We also thank the City of Canning for providing the seedlings and the Natural Area Team for their support on the day.



Many hands make light work.

A big THANK YOU goes to Addy, Ash, Barbara M, Bev, CRREPA, Eileen, Jelena, Joe, Kade, Katrina, Koda, Madeline, Michael, Ronnie, Rosemary, Sara, Shirley, Sian, and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Upcoming events

9 July – Planting
19 August – Nature walk
27 August – Bird watching
September – To be advised

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

Also this quarter

A **scorpion hunt** was arranged by the watering group after they found burrows near their seedlings. Once we knew what to look for, scorpion burrows were seen everywhere. However, the scorpions were not so obliging.

Nevertheless, we did see two scorpions. These two were very different in size so we're not sure if they're the same species, but different ages (young and older), or different species altogether.

We also had the light trap out to attract moths and found a few new species (new for us, not new to science).

Thanks go to Kade for the brownies.



Looking for moths attracted to the light.



This scorpion was about 3cm long.



This scorpion was about 7cm long.

To recognise our efforts during Volunteer Week, we received a card from group member Cheryl and her family thanking us for the work we do to protect the bushland. The card features a photograph of our bushland on home-made recycled paper.

Cheryl also gave us some home-made rocky road which was greatly appreciated at our planting day.

Cat trapping was conducted in our bushland in June and we caught one cat. The *Cat Act 2011* requires all cats in WA to be registered with the local government authority, microchipped and sterilised. It also allows for cats to be impounded if they are away from their owner's property. This includes neighbours' gardens as well as the bushland.

To keep your cat out of kitty jail, keep it at home.



Tuesday group

You are welcome to join the Tuesday group on a casual basis or as a regular commitment. This group is currently meeting at 9am every Tuesday. This quarter the Tuesday group has been busy weeding.

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

Bears and tigers

Despite the dry conditions, caterpillars have been seen everywhere. These have mostly been the caterpillars of the Black and White Tiger Moth, *Ardices glatignyi*.

The caterpillars are often referred to as woolly bears, however they are not bears (woolly or otherwise).

Caterpillars pupate when they have put on enough weight and emerge as little as four weeks later as moths. Emergence can be delayed until the following autumn if the animal senses that conditions will not be favourable for the next generation of caterpillars.

The adult tiger moth's wings are usually white with black or brown markings. However, their body is orange with black bands and it is these markings that give it its common name. The markings are a warning to predators that the moth tastes bad and should be left alone.

The Black and White Tiger Moth is found across southern Australia. While we have seen the caterpillars of this species, we are yet to see the moths in the bushland.

