

# THE GECKO



Edition 32  
July 2021

Welcome to the July 2021 edition of The Gecko.

We started and ended this quarter with COVID-19 disrupting our activities. But in between lockdowns we were able to make some headway.

As usual, the City of Canning has been of great support. Their willingness to accommodate our needs and flexibility to work around COVID restrictions has shone through in each of the activities we have held this quarter.

## April to June 2021

### **27 & 29 April 2021**

Our originally scheduled date for the plant salvage had to be cancelled due to a COVID-19 related lockdown. However, we more than made up for it with two weekday events, ably supported by the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team.

Over the two days, we saw 11 individual volunteers contribute pots and 74 hours of their time to help dig up and pot on native plants that were to be destroyed to make way for the State Football Centre.



Some of the salvaged plants receiving their first dose of TLC after being potted up.

The City provided some pots, soil mix and three able bodies, plus they arranged for two consultants from Natural Area Consulting Management Services (NACMS) to advise and assist with the plant salvage. NACMS, in turn, provided some soil additives to give

the salvaged plants a boost. Emerge Associates, the environmental consultants for the State Football Centre project, also provided some pots and kept us informed as to when the site would be taken over by the builders.

With everyone playing their part we were able to fill around 200 pots with approximately 400 plants (many of the larger pots were able to hold more than one plant each). The plants are now being cared for by volunteers. We hope that our efforts will be rewarded with the plants recovering from the shock of being dug up and able to be put back in the bushland.



Some of the salvaged plants. Photo: Ian

### 16 May 2021

This month's activity was held earlier than usual to coincide with the City of Canning's green waste collection.

Earlier in the week, the City's Natural Area Team cut down some Japanese Pepper branches and left them where they were cut. On the activity day, six of us dragged the cut branches nearly 100m to the verge, cut them into 1.5m lengths and stacked them neatly ready for collection.



Moving the cut branches to the verge.

Not only did the City allow us to put the green waste on the verge of the vacant land, they also allowed us to leave double the usually permitted amount of green waste.

Originally from Brazil, the Brazilian or Japanese Pepper, *Schinus terebinthifolia*, is one of those trees that when given an inch it will take a mile. It has red berries that are spread by birds, readily suckers from its roots and regrows vigorously when cut down. Its dense growth habit can smother other plants and it can take some effort to kill it. We are grateful to have the City's assistance in getting rid of this scourge of the bushland.

### 13 June 2021

Planting season has started so we helped Greening Australia, City of Canning and the community start revegetating Groundlark Park in East Cannington.

This park was mainly turf grass that doubles as a compensating basin in times of heavy rain. The revegetated area will maintain its water-holding function but some of the grassed area will be turned into wildlife habitat.

Our ten volunteers, a similar number of local residents, plus Greening Australia and City of

Canning staff and a couple of councillors managed to plant around 1,500 seedlings in about three hours. We were planting so quickly that there were times when we caught up to the auger team who were digging the planting holes for us.



The community planting day at Groundlark Park.

If you missed this activity, further planting will be done at Groundlark Park on 18 July.

A special mention must go to the City of Canning for putting on morning tea for us all.

### 29 June 2021

We had a planting day planned but a COVID-19 lockdown beat us by one day. Fortunately the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team was able to keep working and planted the plants for us.

Hopefully the lockdown will be lifted in time for our July activities.



A big THANK YOU goes to Barbara, Frank, Graham, Ian, Jackie, Jelena, Jo, Kade, Lee, Lily, Mark, Mia, River, Ronnie, Rosemary, Shirley, Sian, Stephanie, and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

## Upcoming events

6 July – Planting (location to be confirmed)  
13 July – Planting (location to be confirmed)  
16 July – Guided walk through the bushland  
18 July – Planting at Groundlark Park  
22 August – Bird watching with BirdLife Australia  
September – To be confirmed

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

## Also this quarter

As well as the plant salvage detailed above, the City of Canning arranged for Grasstrees Australia to dig up and care for 30 grasstrees. These grasstrees were growing in the area to be cleared to make way for the State Football Centre. Grasstrees Australia will look after the plants until the winter of 2022, at which time they will be replanted in the bushland surrounding the Football Centre.

In two hours, the three Grasstrees Australia staff members had trimmed, dug up and loaded 30 grasstrees onto their truck.



Larger grasstrees are trimmed of their leaves before being dug up; smaller plants are trimmed afterwards.

A pointed spoon-like attachment to the bucket of their skid-steer made digging the grasstrees easy. The plants were then driven to the truck for a trim before being hoisted aboard.



A trimmed grasstree is hoisted onto the truck while other plants await their turn.

Days after the grasstree salvage, the fence went up to demarcate the State Football Centre work site. The fence will not only protect people from inadvertently wandering onto a construction site, but will also alert the workers that they are coming close to a protected area.



The fence separating the State Football Centre site from the bushland.