

THE GECKO



Edition 33
October 2021

Welcome to the October 2021 edition of The Gecko.

Planting was the main activity this quarter. But, we also managed to squeeze in a bit of variety along the way.

A couple of community activities organised by the City of Canning and bird watching with BirdLife WA saw more people find out about our patch.

July to September 2021

8 July 2021

This day saw seven volunteers brave a couple of showers to help the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team plant 2,000 seedlings. Though few in numbers, we were full of enthusiasm.



A small but enthusiastic group of planters.

As well as the sense of satisfaction that comes with giving a plant a forever home, planting gives you the opportunity to find out what lives in and under the ground. We took time out to observe a blind snake and the native millipedes that were disturbed by our activity.



An Australian Wood Duck looks at the work being done.

Later in the day a pair of Australian Wood Duck came searching for a nesting hollow in the trees above our heads. They seemed to be interested in what we were doing – or were they just checking out the neighbours?

15 July 2021

Six volunteers, including two City of Canning councillors, helped Canning's Natural Areas Team plant another 1,800 seedlings.



Planting with the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team.

16 July 2021

Five community members, including two children, joined us for a guided walk through one of our patches on this day. While it was overcast, it didn't rain during the walk.

We shared interesting snippets about the bushland and learnt more of its history from one attendee who has lived in the area for more than 50 years.

We also watched a Galah take a sprig of *Eucalyptus* leaves into a hollow. Eucalyptus leaves act as an insecticide and are used by birds to help keep the nest free of parasites.



Community members enjoy a guided walk.

18 July 2021

Our planned activity of planting at Groundlark Park was postponed due to the area being under water. Groundlark Park, as well as being a park in the usual sense, does double duty as a compensating basin. With all of the rain we had during July its services were well and truly needed.

Fortunately, there were other activities in the area that people could attend, including a sand sculpture exhibition, an obstacle course, jumping castle and sausage sizzle. Some advanced trees and about 300 seedlings were planted in Mary Mackillop Park and Russell Park.

Even though it was cold and wet, everyone had a great time. There were some kids who were soaked through, and so cold their lips had turned blue, but still wanted to stay and enjoy the activities.



The finished sand sculpture and some of the trees that were planted at Mary Mackillop Park.

22 July 2021

Today was the first fine day we have had for a few weeks so planting conditions, although cold, were much more pleasant than we have been used to.

As well as our five volunteers and City of Canning's Natural Areas Team, two of the City's desk-based conservation staff joined us to help plant the last 1,200 seedlings to go in at this site.

Although we planned to be on site all day, with fewer plants, more helpers and better weather we had all of the plants in the ground and headed home soon after 11.00am.



More planting.

22 August 2021

Although overcast, the morning stayed dry for the 17 people who came for a spot of birdwatching. As usual, the Brown Honeyeaters provided the background soundtrack for the entire walk with other birds adding their voices as we moved about the area.

Everyone agreed that the birds that made a lasting impression were the Red-Capped Parrots as they stayed still and out in the open long enough for everyone to get a good look.



Birdwatchers look for waterbirds on the lake.

While the birds were the main focus, the wildflowers and the construction of the State Football Centre were also topics of discussion. Five species of orchid were found to be in flower and there were many other plants blooming near the edge of the path. The State Football Centre site looks uninviting at the moment, but revegetation of previously bare areas will give us new habitat to explore in the future.

We finished the walk with morning tea and compiled a list of all of the bird species seen or heard – an impressive 45 species.

12 September 2021

With a few weeks of drier weather, Groundlark Park was no longer doing double duty as a compensation basin and the water had drained away. Lots of volunteers joined Greening Australia and the City of Canning to get another three thousand plants in the ground in three hours.

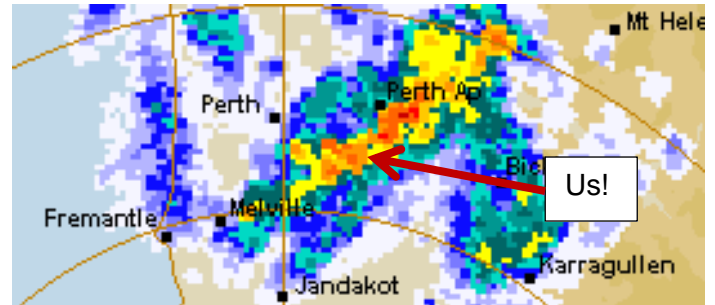


Planting at Groundlark Park.

26 September 2021

All we can say is that we gave it a go. It started raining at 6am, then there was hail at 7am and thunder by half past. But at 8.30am the rain stopped and it looked like we might have good weather for the activity.

At 9am there were three stalwarts at the weeding site. We were just about to get started when the rain came down quite heavily, and the thunder and lightning started. Deciding to live and weed another day we went home only for the weather to clear at 9.30am.



The weather radar at 9am (red is heavy rain).

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

Upcoming events

31 October – Weeding
 November – To be confirmed
 December – To be confirmed

Also this quarter

Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation (SKHKAC) has started filming a project called Caring for Country - Our Way. It will include the cultural restoration goals for their Place of Healing bush block in Queens Park and work through the six seasons of the Noongar calendar. Our bushland is being used as a reference site to help guide with the reintroduction of appropriate plant species.

Karen, from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and Sian, FQPB, will be shown in the film talking about some of the species that could be reintroduced to the Place of Healing block.



Filming Caring for Country - Our Way for Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation.