



CRISP

Nursery News

Winter 2020

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Focus on Pea Flowers



Indigenous Plant Nursery
 17 Greenwood Ave,
 Ringwood VIC 3134
 Tel. (03) 9879 3911
 email: crisp@melbpc.org.au
www.crispnursery.org.au
 ABN: 83 189 398 124

SALES AREA

Wednesday 9.30am - 12.30pm
 Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm
 Saturday 10.00am - 1pm
 (March - Nov)

CRISP WEBSITE

www.crispnursery.org.au

Check out the full colour version of
 CRISP News on-line

Management Team

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nursery Management | Annette O'Sullivan Stephanie Dean |
| Committee | |
| President | Ann Adams |
| Vice President | Ken McInnes |
| Secretary | Alan Bowes |
| Treasurer | Lloyd Smiley |
| Members | Judith Pinney Fiona Taylor |
| Newsletter Editor/design: | Linda Hibbs |
| Website manager/design: | Ken McInnes |

Volunteers

Most of the work at CRISP is carried out by volunteers. These are people from within the community who give their time to help provide a large range of indigenous plants for the Maroondah region. If you care about your local environment and would like to help out at the nursery, join the friendly team. No experience needed. Learn the difference between our local native plants, learn to propagate and pot up the many seedlings.

Note: Due to COVID-19 we are currently not taking any new volunteers

Cover photo credits

All photos in CRISP News are taken by CRISP members unless otherwise stated.
 Front Cover: *Pultenaea scabra* Rough Bush-pea photo by Annette O'Sullivan

A Note from the Editor

I had hoped that by the time this issue came around that we'd be enjoying getting out and volunteers would be back at the nursery - but not to be. Here we are in our second lockdown. Hopefully this means, however, that you are doing plenty of gardening and planning for spring.

Thank you to all those who have contributed articles or photos to this issue; Ken McInnes, Anthony Bigelow, Susannah Maher, Ann Heskett, Chris Coyle, Kay Sinclair, Christian Hauser, Stephanie Dean, Annette O'Sullivan, Dave Harry, Ruth Jackson and Charlotte Templing. Also a big thank you to Kathy Croft, Michelle Woodman for proofreading and Stephanie Dean and Annette O'Sullivan for checking over the draft.

The focus of this issue is on the pea flowers within the *Fabaceae* family, or pea family group of plants. I recall when I was growing up near Wombolano Park, that as kids we called some of these the 'egg and bacon' plants due to their colouring. They are not anywhere near as common anymore and as you can see from the article by Stephanie and Annette, some of these plants are now either very rare or are considered to no longer exist in Maroondah. As you can see from the middle page spread of the magazine, these plants have beautiful flowers. Some, such as the *Hardenbergia*, will be familiar to most, but others are easily missed in their natural environment.

Enjoy this issue and stay home and stay safe.

Linda Hibbs



Save a Life

Plant a Tree
 Save the wildlife

DISCLAIMER
 CRISP Nursery Inc. does not hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed in CRISP News. They may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the organisation but are merely printed to share information with those who are interested in the conservation of our local flora and related environmental concerns.

Report from the Nursery

Stephanie Dean and Annette O'Sullivan



The first half of 2020 has presented so many challenges but in amongst these have been great opportunities. At CRISP we have continued to supply the community with local species for revegetation projects and home gardens.

We have worked through the difficulties of the restrictions placed on us by COVID-19, despite having to limit our volunteer workforce to just committee members and a few others that were undertaking specialised tasks, and are pleased to say we have remained open and busy.

It was lovely in recent weeks to welcome back more of our volunteers, especially in the potting shed, even if numbers were still restricted. The way things worked at the nursery had to change as a result of the restrictions, but our volunteers were adaptable, resilient, committed and are to be commended on their dedication. Unfortunately due to the new lockdown, we once again have had to suspend our volunteer sessions.

Some previous activities have also remained suspended including our popular Monday Mornings in the Reserves and seed cleaning evenings. We will keep members informed when these will recommence. However, if you are interested in getting involved in community revegetation projects, the Maroondah City Council Bushland Liaison Support Officer will be able to direct you to appropriate activities.

Our plant sales through the public Sales Area have increased greatly this year as people are spending more time at home and taking the time to add more of the local species to their gardens. This has kept us very busy with restocking and sharing information with people new to gardening with indigenous species. Our booklet 'Wildlife Gardens Maroondah' has been an invaluable resource which many local residents have appreciated.

We thank everyone for their patience during these challenging times and hope you stay safe and well.

New restrictions

Due to the State Government announcement on 7th July of the reinstatement of restrictions, we again need to suspend our volunteer sessions. These restrictions are predicted to last for the next six weeks.

At this stage we are planning to keep the Sales Area open but request that you:

- **Do Not** come in to the nursery if you are unwell or have been in contact with anyone who is unwell.
- Practice social distancing – be aware of limiting numbers to two customers in the Sales Area at any time.
- Use the provided hand sanitiser on entry to the nursery
- Only touch items that you wish to purchase
- Wear a mask

We thank you for your patience and cooperation. We will be continually reviewing our processes as the situation evolves, and will keep our members and supporters informed.

Visitors to our Sales Area are reminded to read the information for the new restrictions. Sales are cash only unless by prior arrangement.



If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

How CRISP Adapted, Survived and Thrived...

by Ann Adams (CRISP President)



In late March, Rick rang the time-honoured cowbell to summon volunteers to break for morning tea. By this date, the community was becoming aware of the highly infectious Coronavirus and the need for social distancing. So, on this beautiful sunny day, we enjoyed morning tea together, not realising that this would be the last time for many months we could gather in this way.



Above: Morning tea in March before social distancing

Below: Later Pam, Louise and Judith share morning tea together whilst social distancing



Concerns relating to the risk of Coronavirus infection escalated quickly in the community. The CRISP committee could no longer hold monthly meetings in the familiar comfort of the CRISP kitchen and despite your President's personal apprehension of all things computer, committee members were successfully introduced to Zoom technology as the platform for holding Committee meetings.



Above: Ken McInnes, Stephanie Dean, Ann Adams, Allan Bowes, Kay Cole (& David), Lloyd Smile and Annette O'Sullivan conduct a committee meeting via Zoom

The Committee and Management then had to make a difficult decision. Due to the difficulties of ensuring everyone's personal safety during the pandemic, volunteers would be asked not to attend CRISP for the time being. The huge task of adapting to an uncertain COVID future began. Enter the stalwarts Annette and Stephanie who orchestrated the survival of CRISP. Current plant

stock had to be maintained and nurtured. Earlier plant orders had to be prepared for collection. In one order alone from Maroonah City Council, 3,000 healthy indigenous plants were despatched in one truckload! Since January, many plant orders have been despatched to the Council or Friends groups, helping to green our local environment.

It was also decided that plant sales to the public would proceed as usual. The public has rediscovered the joy of gardening and when compared to 2019, plant sales have increased by nearly 100% so far this year.

A sparse handful of committee members assisted during these challenging interim 'survival' times that seemed eerily quiet with so few volunteers present. Social distancing was maintained, further contributing to the 'new normal' atmosphere of COVID times.

...Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic

Left: Fallen *Eucalyptus globoidea* in Wombolano Park
Below: The seeds from this *Eucalyptus globoidea* being prepared for storage in CRISP's seed bank



D18396
EUCALYPTUS GLOBOIDEA
WHITE STRINGYBARK
MEDIUM TO TALL TREE WITH DENSE CROWN AND STRINGY BARK. ADAPTABLE, FAST GROWING, AND TOLERANT OF DRY POSITIONS. USEFUL FOR SHADE, SHELTER AND TIMBER. MODERATELY FROST TOLERANT. MOST SOILS.
Wombo
6/5/20
Derek

Below: Committee members socially isolate to have a chat over morning tea at CRISP.



For a few weeks, at the end of June and early July, CRISP was able to welcome back some of our volunteers. This was a good reminder of the importance of community involvement in the nursery. There were fewer volunteers stopping work for morning tea, but the conversations were just as lively.

For the next six weeks, it will only be staff, committee and some volunteers doing specialist tasks that will keep the nursery functioning. Hopefully, in the spring, we will be able to welcome our volunteers back again.

Sadly this was not to last and on the 7th of July when a return to lockdown restrictions for six weeks were announced by the Victorian government, we had to again suspend the weekly volunteer sessions.

Management wish to thank everyone for their continuing interest in and support of CRISP during these challenging and changing times.



Recently Kay Cole resigned from the position of CRISP Treasurer. We thank Kay for her former contribution to CRISP and wish her well for the future.

Below: Volunteers Louise and Pam in the potting shed standing on the taped "X" reminding all to socially distance. Ken doing some maintenance work at CRISP.



Save Our Sugar Gliders in Heathmont

by Anthony Bigelow
First Friends of Dandenong Creek



We need your help!

Heathmont's remaining sugar gliders need help, and you can be part of the solution. This project invites residents to become stewards for wildlife. It wasn't that long ago when Sugar Gliders were a common sight in Heathmont, emerging at dusk and flying past you to their supper.

Sugar gliders are a keystone species that will help us map remaining wildlife corridors. This project, spearheaded by First Friends of Dandenong Creek, and supported by Maroondah Council and Abzeco, records glider occupancy in specially designed, strategically placed nesting boxes. The boxes will be installed in reserves, schools and gardens. Trained experts will check their occupancy regularly and document the findings. Findings will form a corridor strategy for the Heathmont area that First Friends of Dandenong Creek and Maroondah Council can use to protect, maintain and enhance our corridors. Wildlife corridors are critical for our native fauna to survive and thrive and are vital for them to travel from one area to another, but with increasing urban development, these are fast disappearing.



Sugar glider
Photo: Nalini Scarfe



Photo: Nalini Scarfe

Photo: Nalini Scarfe



Residents can join a monitoring group or host a 'nest box' tree home for gliders in their garden. There are 100 new nest boxes to be placed. Monitors will connect with like-minded others in a biannual audit (depending upon COVID-19 restrictions) of gliders in boxes. Furthermore, they will know that their findings will help contribute to a dynamic corridor development strategy.

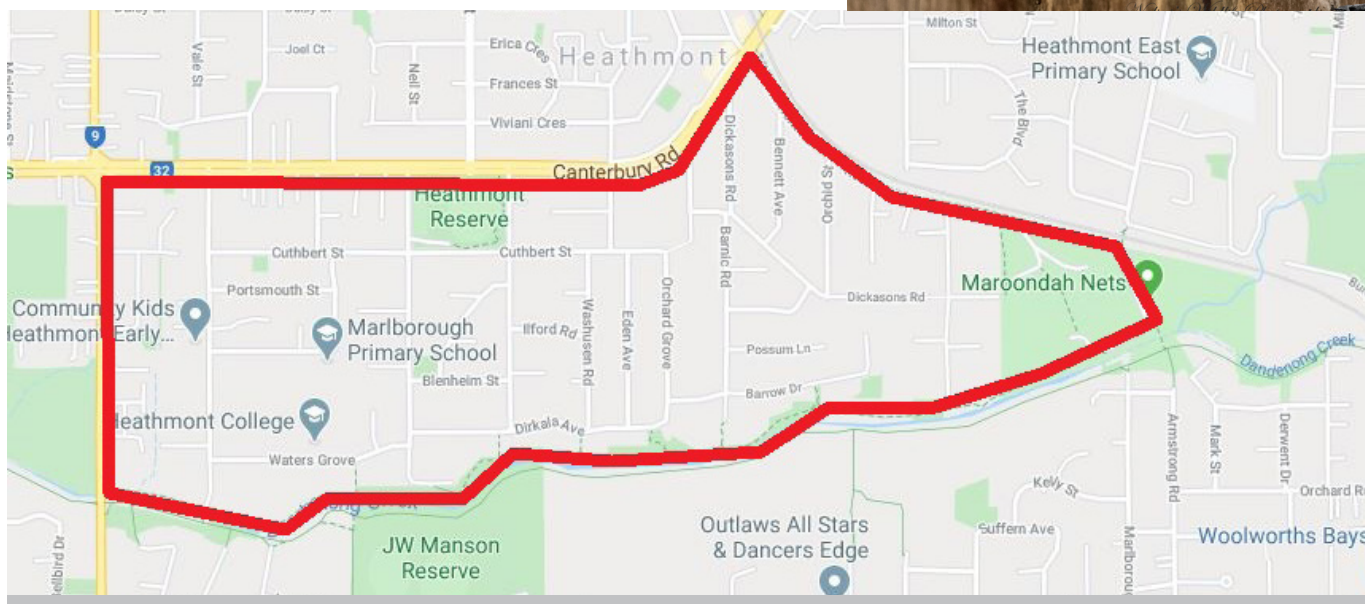
If you are interested in supporting this work and can host a nest box in your garden or school, then please contact us at: ffdc1999@gmail.com

Please note, you must live within the Sugar Glider survey zone, which is the area bordered by Canterbury Road, Heathmont Road, Dandenong Creek and Wantirna Road.



Photo: Nalini Scarfe

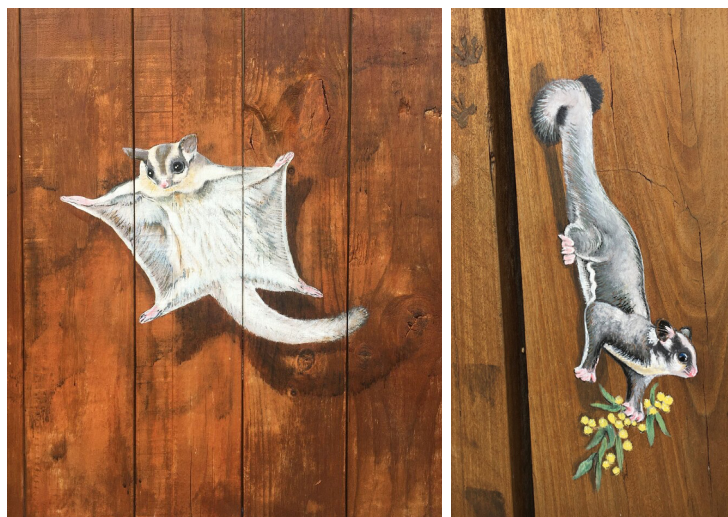
Below. Area for the Sugar Glider survey zone



Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

Of interest to members



MOOROOLBARK STREET ART PROJECT

“This year (2020) I’ve been lucky enough to see my dream of doing some public art come to fruition, with a series of six Sugar Glider paintings in Hookey Park. These launch the Mooroolbark small artworks trail and have been a fun challenge to organise and deliver.

#Mooroolbarkstreetart is funded by #Pickmyproject and supported by the Mooroolbark Traders Association, Yarra Ranges Council and coordinated by Art Rangers Network.”
(Joanne Percy) josdesktop.com

Ed’s Note: Joanne has also recently painted a Powerful Owl in the main street of Mooroolbark as part of the Small Artworks Trail. Keep a look out for these artworks if you are in the area.

THE AGE

'It's never been this bad': White foam covers part of Dandenong Creek

An article in **The Age** by Craig Butt, May 2018

Link to article and video showing the foam floating on the water and in the air:

<https://www.theage.com.au/melbourne-news/it-s-never-been-this-bad-white-foam-covers-part-of-dandenong-creek-20180520-p4zge1.html>

Bizarre scenes are unfolding in Melbourne's east, where thick white foam is flowing down a local creek. A long stretch of Dandenong Creek in Heathmont looked more like a washing machine on Sunday as it was covered with a layer of white bubbles.

The creek's flow seems to have churned up volumes of suds, and large tufts of the white foam have been breaking away and floating about like small clouds. It has been caused by chemical pollution of some kind, but the exact source of the contamination is yet to be determined.

Heathmont resident Julie West said the creek had been polluted before but "it's never been this bad". "It's environmental vandalism," she said. "It's like someone poured too much detergent into the water. The current is stirring up the suds and they're in the trees, in the paddocks, they're everywhere." She said onlookers had been saying that the area even smelled of detergent.

Friends of Dandenong Creek vice president Anthony Bigelow said it was the tenth time this year the waterway had been contaminated. "This weekend alone we have had three pollution events," he said. He said the creek had been foaming since Saturday, but was looking worse on Sunday, as these photos posted to social media show. But Mr Bigelow said the foam was "masking what's happening down below" and a sign of high concentrations of chemicals being present in the water. He said a five-kilometre stretch of the creek, from the Marie Wallace Park in Bayswater to Boronia Road in Vermont, was coated in white suds.

Mr Bigelow said he believed businesses based in the Bayswater industrial estate, where a stormwater drain feeds into the creek, were responsible for the pollution.

"What we fear is going to happen - like most of these events - is that the EPA will come out and say 'source unknown' and then close the case," he said.

Mr Bigelow said animal life in the creek was unlikely to have been affected by the spill. But he said that's



only because the fish and other aquatic life in the creek were killed off by similar pollution in the area last November, and stocks had not since been replenished.

"We're almost at the point of tears about this at the moment," he said.

The Environment Protection Authority's executive director of regional services Damian Wells said the source and composition of the chemical pollution in the creek had not yet been determined. Mr Wells said the authority had collected samples of the affected water for testing, which will help them understand the chemical make-up of the pollution and may help lead them to the culprit. He said the spill appeared to contain detergents, which had become mixed in with the water and were also forming a film on the surface of the creek. He urged people in the Dandenong Creek area to avoid coming into contact with the polluted water or the foam.

Isolating the culprit of the pollution would be difficult, he said, because there were a lot of potential sources and tracking the path of the chemicals back to the origin would be a complex task. He warned any rogue operators found responsible for the spill could face anything from a \$8000 fine to prosecution in the courts, and urged anyone with information on the source of the pollution to contact the environmental authority's hotline on 1300 EPA VIC.

A Melbourne Water spokesman said crews were on-site to assist with the clean-up operation.

Pollution Monitoring An Australian First

by Anthony Bigelow

Real-time monitoring of Dandenong Creek! We are thrilled to announce that, after months of planning, a **First Friends of Dandenong Creek** initiative is about to be launched. This is the first time in Australia that a community group has deployed this type of solution to highlight and help tackle the ongoing pollution issues affecting our community and the wildlife in our creek.

Sensors providing real-time alerts have been strategically placed into Dandenong Creek between Vermont and Bayswater, which are designed to look for characteristics of pollution events; these include temperature, pH and conductivity changes. When an event occurs, the sensors relay the information back to an online portal, which then notifies the team. This has the benefit that critical time sensitive information can be provided to the EPA, and additionally provides us with accurate historical information. Access to the online portal will be publicly available, and this solution is aimed to support the EPA in ultimately finding the source of the pollution.

Dandenong Creek, like many of our creeks around Melbourne, have suffered from pollution over a long period of time. On Melbourne Cup Day 2017, for instance, all of the Short-finned eels and fish along five kilometres of the creek from Bayswater to Vermont were killed. Ten truckloads of dead fish and eels were



Above: (L-R) Dr Dave Sharley, Hon. Alan Tudge MP, Deputy Mayor of Knox Marcia Timmers-Leitch, Steve Marshall, Anthony Bigelow, Jude Dwight

taken away by Melbourne Water following this event. We believe that providing this technology to highlight what is occurring will ultimately increase awareness of the issues we are facing.

To help bring this to fruition, Dr Dave Sharley and Steve Marshall from Bio2labs (based in Melbourne) have worked tirelessly to pull all of the elements together from a technology perspective. Dave and Steve have been working with FFDC for a few years now, and have produced a number of reports detailing the levels of contamination along the creek. They both see this technology as the next logical step in community awareness. We would like to thank everyone involved in working on and supporting our application for the Federal Government's Communities Environment Program.



Dr Dave Sharley with one of the sensors





Faboideae - pea flower family (in Maroondah)

by Stephanie Dean & Annette O'Sullivan

The legume family *Fabaceae* is one of the most diverse in the world with more than 19,000 species, and easily recognised by their pod-shaped fruit. The *Faboideae* are the largest subfamily of the *Fabaceae* usually identified by the pea-shaped flowers. An acceptable alternative name for the subfamily is *Papilionaceae* when this group of plants is treated as a family.

The flowers are often described as being shaped like little butterflies. Each flower has five petals. The back or standard petal is large and erect, there are two wing shaped petals at the sides and two fused petals that make up the keel. The keel encloses the reproductive structures. The flowers are followed by pod-shaped fruit which contain the seeds.

Definitions

papilionate – Butterfly-like, with a flower like that of a pea

standard – the large posterior petal of pea flowers

keel – the structure formed by the fusion of the two anterior petals of a flower in the *Fabaceae*

wing – lateral petal of a flower of *Fabaceae*

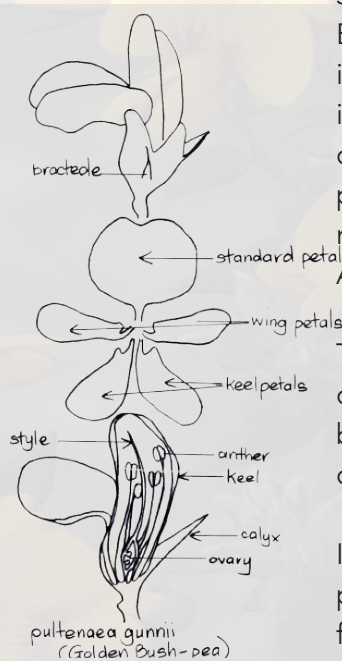


Diagram - A.O'Sullivan

Below:
Seeds and pods of
Kennedia prostrata
(Running Postman)



Photo: A. O'Sullivan

Globally, pea flowers are important food sources as all the peas and beans that we eat come from this family. In Australia, there are more than 1500 pea-flowered species, encompassing a diversity of forms from herbs and shrubs to vines and trees. Peas can be found in virtually every habitat. It should be noted that many of the native peas are toxic.

In Maroondah there are 23 species of Pea flowers that have been recorded historically, with 20 presumed still present, according to Biodiversity in Maroondah – 2020. Of the 20 species still present, nine are considered to be critically endangered and at risk of dying out in Maroondah.

At CRISP, we attempt to grow many of these species with the aim of returning them to the Bushland Reserves to boost numbers and improve the possibility of cross pollination, increasing the genetic diversity and thus the chance of regeneration and securing the populations of these species. We often have a number of these species available in the Sales Area for residents to buy.

The seed of many of these species can be difficult to collect due to the short period of time between ripening and the seed pod opening and dispersing the seed.

In the natural environment the reproductive process is often helped by ants. The ants eat the fleshy attachment on the seed and then bury the seed underground where it waits until the time is right for germination. The seeds may remain viable for many years and often pea flower species quickly recolonise an area after bushfires. In the nursery environment, many of the pea flower species seeds require soaking to break the dormancy and enable germination.

The variety of species available ensure that there are some plants that would be valuable to include in home gardens. The booklet 'Wildlife Gardens Maroondah' is full of information and ideas for including these plants in your garden and revegetation projects.

Local species of the pea family

- Bossiaea prostrata* (Creeping Bossiaea)
- Daviesia latifolia* (Hop Bitter-pea)
- Daviesia leptophylla* (Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea)
- Dillwynia cinerascens* (Grey Parrot-pea)
- Glycine clandestine* (Twining Glycine)
- Hardenbergia violacea* (Purple Coral-pea)
- Hovea heterophylla* (Common Hovea)
- Indigofera australis* (Austral Indigo)
- Platylobium infecundum* (Famine Flat-pea)
- Platylobium obtusangulum* (Common Flat-pea)
- Pultenaea gunnii subsp. gunnii* (Golden Bush-pea)

Critically endangered

- Glycine microphylla* (Small-leaf Glycine)
- Gompholobium huegelii* (Common Wedge-pea)
- Almaleea subumbellata* (Wiry Bush-pea)
- Kennedia prostrata* (Running Postman)
- Pultenaea forsythiana* (Prickly Bush-pea)
- Pultenaea pedunculata* (Matted Bush-pea)
- Pultenaea scabra* (Rough Bush-pea)
- Sphaerolobium minus* (Eastern Globe-pea)
- Viminaria juncea* (Golden Spray)

Assumed to have died out

- Platylobium reflexum* (a flat-pea)
- Pultenaea sericea* (Heathland Bush-pea)
- Goodia lotifolia* (Common Golden-tip)

Reference:
 Biodiversity in Maroondah, Volume 1, Version 1.0, 2 June 2020.
 Prepared for Maroondah City Council by Graeme S. Lorimer, PhD,
 Biosphere Pty Ltd



Indigofera australis
 Botanical illustration by Ruth Jackson

Plant Profile

Indigofera australis (Austral Indigo) of the Fabaceae family is a popular garden plant sold at CRISP Nursery. It is an adaptable shrub suited to positions of full-sun or full-shade, in well-drained soil. The sprays of mauve pea flowers that occur September to November make it an attractive shrub for understory planting. Pruning helps *Indigofera australis* maintain bushiness and vigour.

Indigofera australis provides important habitat for wildlife. The flowers are a source of pollen and nectar for many native insects, including bees and wasps, and the leaves are food for caterpillars. The leaves and stems of the plant have been used as a source of dye, and crushed leaves or roots are reported to have been used to stun or poison fish.



Indigofera australis
 Photo: Ruth Jackson

Pea Flowers in

Note: Flowers and



Platylobium obtusangulum
Common Flat-pea

(Ruth Jackson)



(Ken McInnes)



Indigofera australis
Austral Indigo

Dillwynia cinerascens
Grey Parrot-pea



Pultenaea scabra
Rough Bush-pea

Pultenaea forsythiana
Eastern Prickly Bush



(Christian Hauser)



(Charlotte Templing)

Daviesia leptophylla
Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea



Hovea heterophylla
Common Hovea

(Christian Hauser)



Almaleea subumbellata
Wiry Bush-pea



(Christian Hauser)

Daviesia latifolia
Hop Bitter-pea



(Christian Hauser)

Viminaria juncea
Golden Spray

(Ruth Jackson)



(Ruth Jackson)



Hardenbergia

n Maroondah

plants are not to scale



(Christian Hauser)



(Christian Hauser)

Bossiaea prostrata
Creeping Bossiaea



(Ruth Jackson)

Pultenaea gunnii spp *gunnii*.
Golden Bush-pea

(Charlotte Templing)



(Ruth Jackson)

-pea (Dave Harry)



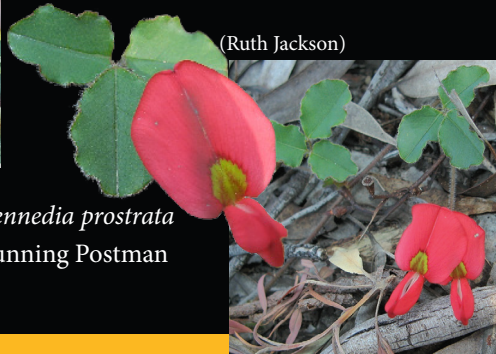
(Ruth Jackson)

Glycine clandestina
Twining Glycine



(Ruth Jackson)

Kennedia prostrata
Running Postman



(Christian Hauser)

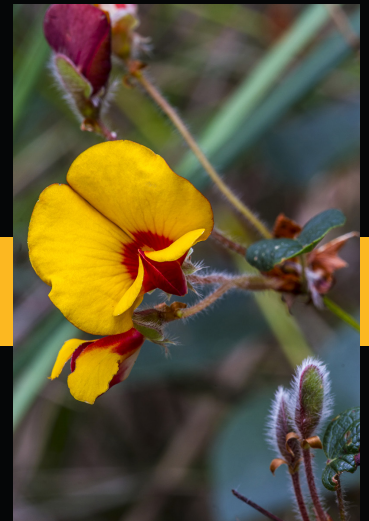
Goodia lotifolia
Common Golden-tip



(Christian Hauser)

Daviesia leptophylla
Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea

Platylobium infecundum
Famine Flat-pea



(Ruth Jackson)

Bergia violacea Purple Coral-pea



(Christian Hauser)

Right:
Sphaerolobium minus
Eastern Globe-pea



(Christian Hauser)



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Our Mini Wetland Project

by Anthony Bigelow
(Friends of Dandenong Creek and CRISP volunteer)

Unsure what to do with an 8m by 2m section of ground at home? Well, if you have some time on your hands, think about converting it into a mini wetland and help our local fauna and flora at the same time too. This is what my son Charlie (nine years old) and I have been doing over the past 18 months. Our little wetland area is now home to 30 or more indigenous species of plants, sourced mainly from CRISP, with some additional non local natives added in. It has been a fun and fascinating project to work on together and rewarding on many levels. During summer, in particular, it was quite common to see the local wildlife accessing the water, including numerous varieties of indigenous bees, insects and dragonflies. At one point Wood Ducks flew in to have a look!

The area, which runs from north to south, has always been a difficult location to grow plants. It is close to the house and boundary fence, and receives only around three hours of direct sunlight per day. Constrained by space and sunlight, we had to be a little bit creative.

The area previously contained a mix of builder's sand, rubble and material left over from a recent renovation. We spent from January to August 2019 digging out the area. The plants went in around the wetland from late September. We shifted almost three square metres of soil to



create our wetland. We then chose to let the wetland fill naturally. To best assist this, we formed a garden bed with a gradual slope on the northern side, with a path leading from the house and winding its way through the plants. Sitting at the lowest spot in our yard, excess rain falling on the garden runs into the pond and fills it.

During summer, the water level did get quite low, but even with just the occasional shower, it still kept the water at a sufficient height, and the plants did not appear to suffer unduly. In the extreme dry periods over summer though, it was interesting to monitor how the plants coped and responded to the changes in water level. The ones in the water appeared to tolerate both local inundation and extended dry periods quite well, without any observed negative consequences to their growth. That said, we are closely monitoring it at present, given it's our first season.

The biggest issue we faced was to determine whether to use a pond liner. Although the soil is predominantly clay and the area was holding water quite well without a liner, given the close proximity to the house, we eventually decided to



choose one. The height of the liner is higher next to the house, so any excess water runs into the garden bed and away from the property.

Originally, we had mosquitoes breeding in the water. We found that this was a result of the water becoming stagnant. We subsequently installed a small solar powered water pump, which aerates the water for around five hours per day. Since that time, they haven't returned.



We have chosen not to use any sprays or fertilisers of any kind on the garden from now on, as we are hopeful that frogs may take up residence at some point (they have been heard in our neighbours yard). We also wish to keep the wetland as close to a 'natural' ecosystem as possible.



Photos showing the building of the 'wetland'.
All photos by Anthony Bigelow

Bubble Blowing Bees

by Susannah Maher (CRISPMember)

It was when I was staring at a flower for the **Wild Pollinator Count**, that I noticed perched on a blade of grass nearby, a bee I had never seen or been aware of before. This was an eye-opener for me, to the fact that native bees are all around us, in my case, enjoying the correas. All it takes to find one, is a warm sunny day and some flowers.

With an identification by Dr Ken Walker through **Bush Blitz**, I discovered that I had not found one bee species, but two: *Hylaeus littleri* and an *Exoneura* species. The *Hylaeus littleri* bees are black and less than a centimetre long. The male bees have a cream mask over their face and a reddish-orange striped abdomen. The females have two white stripes next to the eyes and an abdomen that is one half reddish-orange, and the other half black. The *Hylaeus* bees swallow pollen and store it in their crop (honey stomach) rather than carrying it on their legs or body.

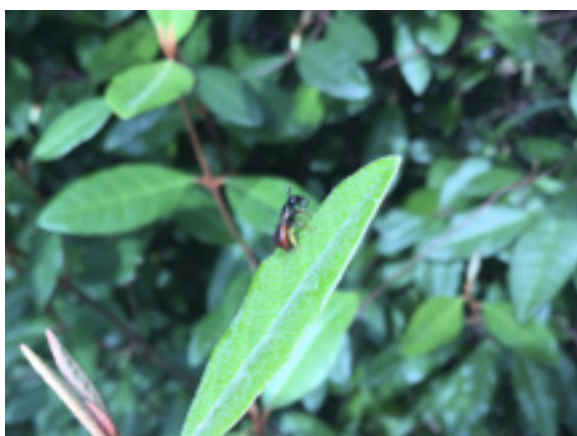


A native bee blowing a bubble
<https://www.flickrriver.com/photos/lordv/48143394312/>

The *Exoneura* bee species are black with a reddish-orange abdomen, and they carry pollen on their legs. They survive the winter by hibernation in small burrows made in the stems of some plants.

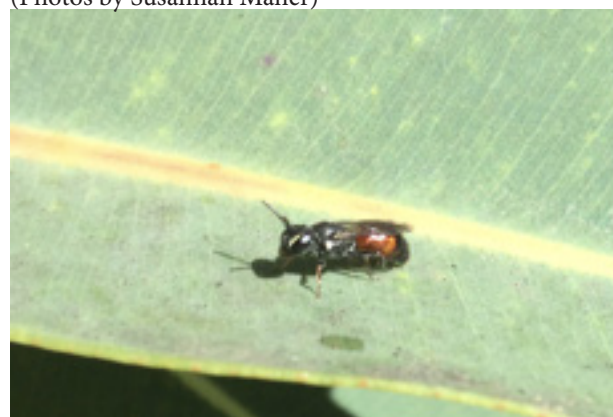
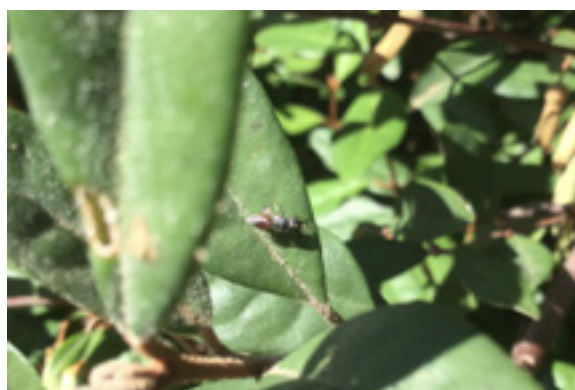
I have been lucky enough to see both bee species blowing bubbles! This behaviour is about concentrating the nectar they collect and evaporating off excess water. They sit still on a leaf and blow, perfect for taking photographs.

With more and more insects becoming extinct every day, it is vital that we provide good habitat for species such as these. Our ecosystem depends on us to restore what we have taken away and protect what we have left.



Left: An *Exoneura* bee, blowing a bubble
 Below left: A female *Hylaeus littleri* bee, blowing a bubble
 Below: A female *Hylaeus littleri* bee

(Photos by Susannah Maher)



Herman Pump Reserve - Heathmont

by Ann Heskett (HPR Facilitator and CRISP volunteer)

COVID-19 brought on some unique challenges when it came to the task of planting 1200 tube stock in the Reserve over the winter months. We weren't able to meet as a group, as we had traditionally done, but were determined to get the plants into the ground, so had to do some creative planning.

Derek, Council Bushland Liason Officer, (Maroondah Council) kindly delivered the 22 boxes in April, and we proceeded to organise the planting via the Friends of Herman Pump Reserve Facebook page (a closed group). People would message me, indicating when they could pick up a box of tube stock and a Hamilton planter tool at my back gate, and would proceed to have their own private community planting session out in the park. Planters were wiped down in between use.

Over a two month period, the group of individuals

managed to get all 22 boxes into the ground! Perhaps not all were planted exactly in the right places but we were grateful to the enthusiasm of the locals and took into account the challenges of the COVID times. The plants even survived the big downpour!

There were other innovative and creative responses to the difficulties we all faced at this time, including a ribbon hunt in the park, laminated Easter egg hunt, a bear hunt, bicycle challenges, a photographic challenge, local

musicians playing at dawn on ANZAC day, and VIC ROCKS has recently been able to hide rocks in the reserve for children (or adults!) to find.*

We're grateful to all our enthusiastic and committed local people who remain committed to making this space one that we can all enjoy, and continue to connect to others in our community.



Photos of fungi sent in for the photographic challenge



The big downpour

Photos by Ann Heskett



The bear hunt!

*Note from Ed. VIC ROCKS is a simple concept of painting and hiding rocks in parks and playgrounds. Their photos appear in the VICROCKS Facebook page so hunters know where to hunt for rocks.



ANZAC day - musicians at dawn

From Edibles to the End of Winter

by Chris Coyle (CRISP volunteer)

There is a time of year in historical agricultural communities, modern food growers and urban farmer's calendars, sometimes known as the "hungry gap". It lies somewhere between mid-winter and mid-spring when not much can be harvested from the patch and growers are entirely reliant on what is stashed, preserved and so forth. Every cropper has gaps but no matter how many varieties you grow there is always a universal gap of about a month that is thin pickings. In stark contrast, the flowers in the ornamental parts of the property, are often the only signs of change in winter.

Up to about 15 years ago, there used to be pokey little nurseries of ramshackled coppins-log (the ones that were treated and removed from playgrounds) cabins, chainlink, and limp, daggy shadecloth all over the place. There are still many in the fringes of Melbourne, but around here, there used to be little ones everywhere, like the one on Mt Dandenong Rd, across from the Maroondah Hospital which is now houses. The hardware stores had put a lot of the little ones out of business but thankfully there are a handful of tenacious ones left.

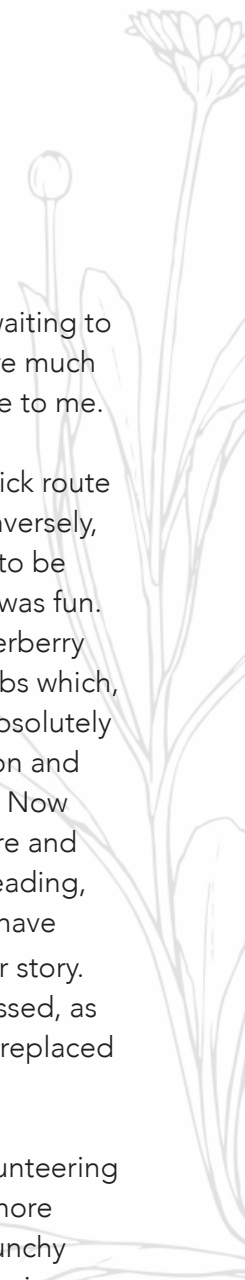
Our nursery, CRISP, was made more visible to me due to the shrinking pool of small, independent nurseries and lack of choice, so I was eventually lured in about a decade ago.

I was into edibles, suitable for permaculture type gardens, the theory being that indigenous natives would require less work than all other edible natives or introduced species. I had come across early editions of Tim Low's bush food books, with the samphire, Kangaroo Apple, Cherry Ballart, Nardoo, Native raspberry and lots more, pressed front and centre into the Eden mapped out in my head. There were childhood memories of the Bush Tucker Man which made

Australia seem like an exotic food bowl waiting to be planted. At the time, ornamentals were much like window dressing or background noise to me.

Books and television always provide a quick route to utopia over a couple of hours, and conversely, following those dreams usually turns out to be the best antidote. The first visit to CRISP was fun. There was the Mountain pepper and Elderberry panax and then the various roots and bulbs which, under my desperate stewardship, went absolutely nowhere due to inexperience with position and too much wishing for quick turn-arounds. Now that I am more familiar with the range here and have done more than the usual cursory reading, there seems to be quite a few more that have come to my attention. But that is another story. However, when that first edible phase passed, as indeed a lot of gardening fads do, it was replaced by a more wholesome pursuit.

After months of sporadic visits, some volunteering between jobs, many months away, then more frequent visits to the usual events, the crunchy sales area grew into a more rounded experience. And if nothing else was going right in my life at the time or I was being rained upon or hung over from heat stroke, then the staff and volunteers made each trip worth it, and uniquely so because it wasn't just a purchase like at a regular nursery, or even a commercial native plant nursery, it was part of a more corporeal timeline. And now I am still captivated by the quirky leaf shapes, more so than flowers, and the form of some plants, more so than their practical uses or their edibility. So, my tastes have gone from a very economically driven, effort-and-reward, foodie approach to one of form, function, problem solving and position. Thankfully now, there are more survivors of my black hand in the garden than there are twigs in the ground.





The *Dillwynia* at the front fence
(Photo: Chris Coyle)

My one all-time favourite is the *Dillwynia*, one of my oldest surviving purchases, which after running out of room in the front yard, was wedged in the scarce centimetres between the front fence and the front footpath, in gluggy, shallow soil. It is definitely not an edible but has provided a more reliable sense of achievement in that it flowers at the coldest time of the year. In the last few years, it has grown to 80cm and flushes a deep yellow every spring, responds well to pruning and training, and is a beacon and reminder to myself and all walkers-by of the breaking of the winter.

The buds are swelling now and are eagerly awaited, more than all the other plants in the nature strip, because by flowering time, no matter how Melbourne fares in our hungry gap of the soul, we are reminded that any winter, no matter how long or miserable, never lasts.

My garden and photographing fungi by Janette McNally

I have been able to devote a lot more time to weeding. I can't garden when it is hot so any day that has been half decent I've spent outdoors. I dug out a 9m length of agapanthus and once I've got all that in the garden rubbish bin, I'll dig out most of the remainder. Weeding is a destructive-productive pastime. Great for anger management, mindfulness, exercise and fresh air. The plants I bought from CRISP have all survived so far. The white epacris and the greenhoods in the neighbouring reserve are up and flowering. Lots of plants are flowering early, I think. It has been a fabulous time for photographing fungi.



Good Morning, Rise and Shine - It's Wintertime Winter Joys for breakfast

I heard a cheery chirpy bird
The wakeup calls I much preferred
Emanating from the door out back
A Butcher bird, little chap
Hopped on a chair and there he sat



Photo: Olyryn Smiley

He was singing such a joyful tune
And seemed to want me out there soon!
I stood transfixed, just watching him –
It was like he wanted to come in
For me to make him breakfast or do something

I had never seen him there before
And his song was not to be ignored
Oh, it made my poor heart skip a beat
And was such a happy morning treat
With my soul so nourished- who needs to eat?

This dear little bird enshrined by the sun
Had warmed my soul so I was at one
With Nature and the world around
Just listening to the lovely sounds
For Nature's joy just knows no bounds

Yes, each new day brings its own special wonders
Of bright golden wattle in budding numbers
And soon the egg and bacon blooms will come
For many birds and insects to feast upon -
Nature's pleasures continue to go on and on

By Kay Sinclair (CRISP member) June 2020

Vulnerable

Poised on the edge
of past and future
a tentative parachute
falling earthbound
brushing against
crumbling ochred soil
soft like a gossamer thread
in time-capsulated protection

Created from
ancient predetermined
carbon imprint
vincibility in the face of adversity
its existence reliant
on day's timekeeper
and precipitation eternal

A seed
before germination
the next generation
vulnerable

by Linda Hibbs (CRISP member)

“Why is your grass long in spring and summer?”

by Ken McInnes (CRISP Vice President)

I am often asked this question by neighbours and visitors. Sometimes I feel that I need to print a sign near our native grassland, to answer this question. Perhaps something like:

“My native grasslands actively grow, flower and set seed during spring and summer, and mowing at this critical time threatens their survival.”

I could also add that the grasslands provide safe habitat for caterpillars, butterflies, spiders, bees, flies and other native insects and skinks, and the waving grass seed heads create a micro climate that keeps the ground cooler, and collects moisture from the night air. Birds, such as magpies and butcherbirds, also strut through the waving ‘grassy forest’ looking for food. Furthermore, weedy grasses like *Panicum Veldt Grass*, *Ehrharta erecta* often grow slower during hot weather, so the native grasses gain an advantage.

Furthermore, in early December 2019, I had onion orchids growing and flowering in my native grassland for the first time. A few years ago I had nurtured some tubes through summer and after they had flowered, I scattered the seed into the grassland. Now they have grown. I had previously tried planting orchids from tube stock into the grassland with no success. So over-sowing the grassland with orchid seed appears to have worked!

I mowed my native grasslands in mid November 2019, and again in early March 2020, without a catcher, so the grass seeds were scattered. The grasslands survived the hot dry summer well and look lush and green and healthy now.

“My native grasslands actively grow, flower and set seed during spring and summer, and mowing at this critical time threatens their survival.”

“Why is the grass long in spring and summer?”

Well, in the Bothwell Cemetery in Tasmania, there is a sign that explains why, with a ‘no mowing’ logo. Part of the cemetery is an “important area of native grassland that contains a number of rare and threatened species.” Then a note that: “The Central Highlands Council, working with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, has established a mowing program that will ensure the long-term survival of the plants.”

So next spring and summer, I might make a sign, or letter box the neighbourhood, telling them why my grass is long in spring and summer. Or even better, if Maroondah had a program that supported habitat and my garden was registered, that would explain it better.



Sign at the Bothwell Cemetery in Tasmania

Photo: Ken McInnes

Photos by Ken McInnes



LOCAL ENVIRONMENT/FRIENDS GROUPS

Many local residents are working to improve the habitat and connectivity of our reserves. If you are interested in getting involved, either join with one of the existing groups (see below) or start your own in your local reserve. If you are interested in starting work in your local reserve, contact the Bushland Team at Maroondah City Council (9294 5677) to discuss how your effort and enthusiasm can be best directed.

The Maroondah City Council website provides further detail about many of the reserves and walks in Maroondah <http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/Explore/Parks-and-playgrounds/>

Andersons Creek Landcare

<https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/Volunteer/group-details-public/?id=b541f9cc-e644-e711-8147-e0071b668681>

Contact: andersonscreeklandcare@hotmail.com

Bungalook Conservation Reserves

Working bees held 2nd Saturday of the month from 9.30 am

Contact: Graeme 0403 229 862 or email: graeme@meg.org.au

Croydon Conservation Society

<http://www.croydonconservation.org.au/>

Contact: Liz 9879 2247

First Friends of Dandenong Creek

<https://www.ffdc.org.au/>

Contact: Charlie 0417 125 677 or email: ffdc1999@gmail.com

Friends of Candlebark Walk

Working bees held every second month

Contact: Marlene 9723 0656 or email: marnrobt@gmail.com

Friends of Cheong Park

Contact: cheongcroydon@gmail.com

Friends of Eastfield Park

Contact: eastfieldpark@gmail.com

Friends of FJC Rogers Reserve

Working day is 1st Wednesday of the month from 12.00 to about 2pm. Bring your lunch and chair.

Contact: Don 97362309

Friends of Herman Pump Reserve

2-3 Working bees a year

Contact: Ann 0402 628 054 or email: annandcraig@hotmail.com

Friends of Wombolano Reserve

Working bees held 3rd Sunday of the month

Contact: Andy 0414 999 491 or
Merrilyn 0410 073 514

Friends of Yanggai Barring

Contact: Pat 9723 0036

Heathmont Bushcare

<https://heathmontbushcare.com/>

Working bees held 1st Sunday of the month

Contact: heathmontbushcare@gmail.com

Maroondah Bushlinks

Contact: Margaret 9876 3094 or email: marbushoz@hotmail.com

Mullum Mullum Bushcare Group

www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Mullum-Mullum-Creek-Bushcare-Group-393340894351096/

Contact: Bill 0418 366 780 or email: tristramlarkins@optusnet.com

Ringwood Field Naturalists Club

<http://www.rfnc.org.au/>

Contact: info@rfnc.org.au

Warranwood Reserve

<http://warranwoodreserve.org/>

Contact: Margaret 9876 3094 or email: warranwoodres@hotmail.com

Warrien Reserve

<http://warrien.org/>

Contact: David 9725 3163 or email: friends@warrien.org

Wieland Reserve

Contact: John: cullfamily@gmail.com

What's on...

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many seminars and outdoor environment activities have been cancelled. In many cases, webinars have taken their place. Below are some sites that either have a webinar coming up, often via Zoom, or have recordings available of previous webinars on their site or YouTube.

1 August 2020 - 10:00am - 11:30am

Create a habitat garden

Brimbank <https://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/events/create-habitat-garden-online-workshop-0>

Back by popular demand! Brimbank City Council is celebrating **National Tree Day 2020** with a repeat session of our habitat gardening workshop. You'll learn how to attract birds, butterflies, reptiles and frogs to your yard. We'll also discuss native trees appropriate for small spaces. Habitat gardens can provide a stepping stone for native birds and animals to move safely across highly urbanised areas. They can also be places of beauty and calm. If you missed our previous workshop - this event is for you. It's the perfect time to start designing and planting in your backyard. Even a small action can make a big difference! Please register via the eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/create-a-habitat-garden-tickets-11174156...>

Parks Victoria seminar series

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/volunteering>

Trust for Nature

<https://www.trustfornature.org.au/events>
The first one was on 17 June, and it is planned that the recorded webinar will be available soon.

Yarra Ranges

Have had a few nature webinars. The most recent one was about the Powerful Owl.

Museum Victoria

<https://museums victoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/whats-on/museum-lectures/>
Lectures have gone online, with previous recorded webinars available.

NOTE: All CRISP memberships are due for renewal at the end of June. (if you joined between March and June 2020, your membership will remain current until July 2021). Many thanks to those who have already renewed, your ongoing support of the nursery is greatly appreciated.

Direct deposit to renew membership

Can't get to the nursery to pay cash?
Don't have a cheque book? We are making it easier for you to renew by direct deposit.

BSB 033 044

Account No: 149422



Ensure you put your name in the details section so we can update your membership

Sending an email to the nursery when you make the deposit will ensure that your membership information is updated correctly.

Application for Membership

(Please Circle) SINGLE -\$10 per annum FAMILY- \$15 per annum GROUP -\$20 per annum

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact: Tel: _____ Email: _____



PLEASE TICK ✓

NEWSLETTER OPTIONS:

I wish to continue receiving the newsletter by snail mail

OR

I wish to read the newsletter on the website

Please forward payment to:

The Treasurer
CRISP Nursery Inc.
PO Box 706
Heathmont, VIC 3135





CRISP Nursery News

Winter 2020

Indigenous
Plant Nursery
17 Greenwood Ave,
Ringwood VIC 3134

Tel. (03) 9879 3911
ABN: 83189398124
crisp@melbpc.org.au
crispnursery.org.au



CRISP Nursery News

Winter 2020

Spotted Pardalote in Wombolano Park
(Photo Viv Osborne - CRISP member)

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