Native grasses

With all the summer rain we have been having it has provided a great opportunity for our native perennial grasses to show their ability respond to our variable weather conditions. Below are two native grasses that are taking advantage of the summer rain and can be easily recognised at the moment.

**Microlaena stipoides** (Weeping Grass) grows to a height of approximately 0.7 metres and produces delicate, drooping stalks of spikelets. The naked grains are similar in shape to rice grains but smaller, approximately 5 mm long. The grass grows best in acidic soils and is drought- and frost-tolerant. In Australia it is found in areas of medium to high rainfall (above 600 mm per annum) and the leaves normally remain green all year. *Microlaena stipoides* produces nutritious pasture for grazing livestock with productivity of approximately 2 to 7 tonnes per hectare and digestibility of approximately 60–70%. Its drought-tolerance has led to an increasing interest in its use for turf to replace exotic species, and it is being researched as a perennial grain crop.

**Bothriochloa macra** (red grass or red-leg grass) is a warm-season perennial grass that forms a prostrate tuft of basal leaves with numerous wiry stems. Leaves are usually reddish or purplish in colour. Stems are of low acceptability and digestibility, but the high-quality leaves are readily eaten when green. Production: 3.8 to 10.4 t/ha Forage value: moderate to low Crude protein: 4 to 15% Digestibility: 48 to 59%. Response to fertility: increased growth Response to grazing: increased growth Frost tolerance: low to moderate Drought tolerance: high
**GORSE CONTROL ASSISTANCE**

The Wooragee Landcare Group was successful in securing funding to support the control and management of the noxious weed Gorse. The Victorian Gorse Taskforce Grant was aimed at assisting the Woolshed Area by providing assistance in the identification and management options available. This grant also enables the group to offer rebates to Landcare Group members for expenses incurred in the management of Gorse.

Gorse can be found growing in a wide range of soil types but ideally prefers low fertility, acidic soils. Infestations are generally located along roadsides, creek banks, neglected areas and marginal forests. Gorse competes with young trees and shrubs and hinders the growth of native understorey species. A long-term effect of the plant’s presence is that the soil becomes more acidic and loses nutrients.

Gorse is a major agriculture weed, invading all pasture types and significantly reducing grazing capacity. It has the ability to exclude all other plants and greatly hinders access to stock and waterways. Gorse is highly unpalatable to cattle and sheep and provides significant haven for rabbits, foxes, feral cats and mice.

Another major issue with Gorse is its highly flammable and creates a significant fire hazard. Given the current climatic conditions and fire fuel loads in this area controlling this weed is extremely important.

Through this grant Wooragee Landcare is able to offer support, information, education and facilitation of a control program designed for your property where they can fund up to 50% of necessary control methods.

The Wooragee Landcare is asking for any Landholders who would like assistance with their Gorse control to contact Cathryn Mahon.

If you require any further information or wish to be a part of this program please contact Cathryn Mahon on 0499 004 924 or email at cathryn@southerncrossvermin.com

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**Project funding 2015 and beyond**

With the ever-changing grants programs it can make it difficult to know when and where we might be able to gain funding to undertake things group members would like to do.

One of the ways to help groups is to be prepared for when grants open through pre-planning projects so they are ready to submit when opportunities arise. It is then just a matter of confirming participants through a quick ‘Expression of Interest’ process.

As your Local Landcare Facilitator part of my role is to assist the group to plan projects for the future. Today funding applications require a lot more detail about where projects are going to be run and some require project sites to be mapped and submitted with applications.

If you are thinking about doing revegetation, gully fencing for erosion control/stock exclusion or any other on-grounds work that might require funding, please contact me. I cannot promise we will be able to find funds, but if I don’t know about it, I cannot help! My position is currently funded through to June 2015, and between now and May 2015 I am available to support groups planning future projects.

The Mid-Ovens Landcare Consortium would also like your suggestions on community projects that have wider implications than just on-ground works by landholders. Do you have a great idea that could bring your community together to look at environments/sustainable farming or living practices? This might include information sessions, field days, public land areas and trial sites.

If you have an idea for a project you would like to see run in the area please contact me on 0428 211 008 or email (preferred) alandi.durling@landcarevic.net.au to discuss it further.
As part of this year’s Pumpkin Festival we are holding an exhibition of local creativity. We would like to invite you to show us your creations. The exhibition is open to ALL All local residents. All forms of art and craft.

If you make anything from anything, be it functional or fun, we want you to show it to us. Paintings, sculptures, tapestries, needlework, woodwork, garden art and sculptures, jewellery, leather work, anything. No entry fees, no prizes, just for fun. Items can be listed for sale.

If you would like to contribute, or if you know someone who may like to contribute, please contact.
Ken and Cecily Fletcher.
Ph 57271340 mob, 0431 287283

Giant Pumpkin Competition and Harvest Festival is on again! Saturday April 18th 2015

The 3rd Murmungee Giant Pumpkin Competition and Harvest Festival promises larger giant pumpkins, bigger crowds and masses of entertainment in 2015. Now taking its place among the featured events for the region, the festival is being held on Saturday 18th April. “We expect to beat the winning pumpkin of 109 kilos,” said Lyn Brown, a festival organiser.

In addition to the giant pumpkin and the prettiest pumpkin categories, a Pumpkin Pie competition has been added this year including demonstrations scheduled throughout the day in butchery, bike maintenance, plant propagation and horse preparation for show events.

“The upcoming 2015 festival is going to be huge! It really is an all-round family friendly day featuring fresh food, home grown produce, plants, crafts, activities, a silent auction, a local art display as well as a petting zoo, face painting and games for the kids,” says Maureen Rae excitedly, joint festival organiser. “No alcohol will be served or permitted on the day as it is a family friendly event.”

Held at the Bowmans-Murmungee Hall located at the corner of Bowmans Road (off Great Alpine road) and Murmungee Road (off Buckland Gap Road) all funds raised go to the local community including LinX2Home, a unique, intensive short term respite accommodation aimed at preventing young people from becoming homeless or entering care.

The event kicks off at 10.00am but Giant Pumpkins entering need to be delivered from 9am with the weigh in at 10am and judging done in two age groups, under 13 year olds and adults. Always a fun category receiving some creative designs, the Pretty Pumpkins and can be entered from 10am until 12 noon. Pumpkin Pies can be entered from 10am with judging held at 10.30am as slices will be served with morning tea.

So bring your families and your pumpkins along to the Giant Pumpkin Competition and Harvest Festival on the 18th of April, 2015 in Murmungee. It will be a great family day out with children’s activities, competitions and food galore!

For more information contact: Penny Showers 0408 033 344 or pennyshowers@hotmail.com
Gardening Jobs:

We started our gardening program on the very first day we came back to school. We were all very excited to do a garden walk and write down our observations and jobs that we needed to do. We are really glad Owen is back to teach us everything about plants, soil and bugs. We have made fruit fly traps and so far no fruit flies have got our fruit and tomatoes.

We are covering some of our seedlings to give them some shade while they are little. The hot sun will soon dehydrate them if we don’t! We water them three times a day when they first go in. We have germinated radish, carrots, lettuce, basil, rocket, and parsley. We have propagated Wall flowers, African Daisies, Daphne, Rosemary and Canna lilies for the Easter Market. (Monday April 6th)

What's New?

We now have 14 beehives in the creek paddock to help pollinate our produce. They are always very busy but they don’t bother us.

HUGE Harvest:

It has been a great time to harvest our produce: zucchinis, rhubarb rocket, oak leaf lettuce, silver beet, tomatoes, apples, herbs (basil, sage rosemary, garlic chives) garlic, cucumbers, parsnips, spring onions, cherry tomatoes, plums, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers and cumquats! Julie hasn’t had to buy much for our kitchen program! Our chooks are laying well and we are selling the eggs to help raise funds for another Atauro Island compostable toilet. Anna is our leader.
Kitchen Jobs:

We have made preserves, cucumber relish, zucchini relish, tomato garlic and basil sauce, tomato and chilli jam and rhubarb relish.

We have been recycling and cleaning jars for preserves.

SAKG Menus:

Zucchini slice Wooragee salads Stewed Rhubarb.
Chicken Stir Fry, Fried Rice, Stewed Apples, Stewed Plums.
Silver Beet Rolls, Risotto, Asian Cucumber Salad.
Parsnip Soup, Dressed Chinese Summer Salad, Indian Flat bread.

We are becoming experts on kitchen safety and hygiene.

Taste Tests:

We have been tasting different varieties of apples, plums, cucumbers, tomatoes and lettuces. We did a survey and found our kids think Satsuma plums taste slightly nicer than Mariposa plums.

We all had our first taste of a school nashi. Mmmmmm very nice.
We only grew 2 nashis this year. Owen says there will be a lot more next year.

We love making patterns with fruits and leaning about fractions, doubling recipe ingredients, weighing and measuring.
We all enjoy reading and adapting recipes and working in teams.

VERY EXCITING NEWS!

We loved having Sir Peter and Lady Lynne visit our school.
Charli thinks she is the most famous Prep girl in the world. We do too!
**Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter**

**web site:**  www.neighbourhoodwatch.com.au

**email:** nhw@neighbourhoodwatch.com.au

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**Next Meeting:**- Wednesday 18th March 2015

**Venue:**- Woorgee Centenary Hall

**Time :-**  6.30pm

**Contacts:- Tess Lucas (03)5728-7257 or Pauline Carson (03)5728-7264**

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**Next Gathering**

We have decided to reschedule our BYO BBQ night, usually held in February, for next month on Wednesday 18th March. As usual it will be BYO Meat and drinks with a salad/dessert to share. Hopefully the weather will still be pleasant at that time of year.

**Report from Dederang**

Last night five members of Wooragee NHW attended an evening over at the Dederang Sports Complex. Gillian Metz, the CEO of NHW Victoria, spoke about the new directions that NHW is taking with an emphasis on engaging young people and older people. We obtained a further supply of rural gate signs so if yours has faded and cracked come and get a new one at the BBQ next month or contact Pauline Carson to obtain one. It was a very pleasant evening with a good attendance of members from Dederang, Wangaratta and Wooragee NHW.

**Thieves**

It has recently been reported that diesel was stolen from earthmoving equipment down in the Woolshed Valley, and that others in the area have had intruders in their sheds at night but haven’t managed to identify or catch them so far. For those in the Woolshed Valley, but also as a general rule for everyone, please lock your sheds and vehicles at night or when away from your property.

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**Recipe of the Month**

**Zucchini nuggets**

**Ingredients:**

- 1.5 cups grated zucchini
- 0.5 cup grated potato
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon plain flour
- 0.5 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 0.5 cup breadcrumbs or quinoa flakes

**Method:** Preheat oven to 200 degrees C. Line tray with baking paper. Using hands, squeeze gated zucchini & potato to remove excess liquid. Add egg and flour and mix to combine. Place breadcrumbs (or quinoa flakes) & parmesan on large plate and mix to combine. Shape teaspoons of mixture into small nuggets. Coat in breadcrumbs. Place on tray. Drizzle small amount of olive oil over nuggets. Cook for 25-30 minutes, turning nuggets halfway through until golden and cooked through.
March In The Veggie Patch

What an amazingly different season we have had this year – watering has certainly not been an issue! However, the wet humid weather has encouraged some unwanted pest such as whiteflies on the beans, cucumbers, tomatoes etc.

**Whiteflies:** Whiteflies suck sap from the plant, resulting in a yellow mottling on the surface of the leaf, as well as leaf loss, wilting and stunting.

**Physical and Cultural Controls:** If you had clouds of whiteflies on your tomatoes or beans in the previous year, then acting early in the spring is your best bet to control this pest! Useful strategies include:

- Hang sticky yellow traps above the plants, at the beginning of the season to detect an invasion early. Tapping the plants with a stick will cause the whitefly to fly up and onto the traps.
- Handpick older leaves to remove young whitefly stages.
- Avoid using a lot of nitrogen fertilizer, including manures, as succulent growth will increase whitefly populations. You may need to check your phosphorus and magnesium levels, as deficiencies in these are believed to contribute to whitefly infestations.
- Try a high pressure hosing in the early morning, 3 days in a row.

**Biological Controls**

- Natural enemies of whitefly include small birds, spiders, lacewings, hoverflies, ground beetles, mirid bugs and damsel bugs. The adults and larvae of some ladybirds also feed on whiteflies. Habitat, such as a border of perennial plants, needs to be available all year round as a refuge for these predators.
- Insecticidal soap sprays such as Natrasoap are a good choice of control for the home gardener; spray every 2-3 days for 2 weeks.
- Spray Eco-Oil or try making your own oil spray by mixing 1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid detergent with 1 cup of cooking oil; add 1 to 2.5 teaspoons of this solution to 1 cup of water, spray onto plants every 10 days.

This month’s “To Do” list

- Pumpkins and melons will be ripening now. Test melons for ripeness by sniffing them, (a fruity smell indicates ripeness) and by tapping them to see if they sound hollow. Don't pick pumpkins till the stems turn dry near the base of the pumpkin, then let them 'cure' or harden on a hot roof or dry cement for a week or two. This will help stop them rotting in late winter. Store them on their edge on open shelves. Pumpkins that aren't quite ripe will still be sweet- but they won't store well.
- The time is ripe to plant the winter garden – broad beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, peas and snow peas, turnips, parsnips, leeks, onions and garlic; as well as all the Chinese greens. An extensive planting of carrots now will provide carrots for the entire winter as well as the early spring. Plant coriander and parsley seeds.
- Start to prepare for frost now- work out which plants are vulnerable, like passion fruit & citrus trees and start building shelters for them – frames of poly-pipe covered with shade cloth work well.
- Check plants (esp. citrus) for scale- spray with white oil on a cooler day, if necessary.
- Keep a close eye on cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli and other brassicas plants for grubs – remove and squash them at the first sign to help minimize the damage.
- Continue to trim and tidy your herbs – don't let the leaves get too old.
- Enjoy harvesting all your vegies and make lots of tomato sauce and pickles/chutneys of all kinds.

**Producing your own seed:** One of the characteristics of a truly sustainable garden is that it produces at least some of its own seed. This is most often done when gardeners select, harvest and store seeds until the proper time for planting the following year. But some self-seeding crops produce seeds so readily that as long as you give them time to flower and mature, and set seed, you will always have free plants growing in your garden. You can simply let the seeds fall where they are, or toss pieces of the seed heads into the corners of your garden, or whichever area you want them in — no harvesting, storing or replanting required. With most self-seeding vegetables, herbs and annual flowers, you’ll just need to learn to recognize the seedlings so you don't hoe them down. Should seedlings require relocation, you can simply lift and move them — after all, they are sturdy field-grown seedlings. In addition to getting all the free garden plants you need (and some to share with family and friends), nurturing self-seeders is also a great way to provide a diversity of flowers that supply pollen and nectar for beneficial insects. Self-seeding flowers, herbs and vegetables that show up in early spring include arugula, calendula, chamomile, cilantro, dill. Nasturtiums, amaranth, New Zealand spinach, and even basil or zinnias appear later, after the soil has warmed.

All our lettuce, spring onions and Kale are grown this way.
Wooragee Landcare Group Committee

**President:**
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**Vice President:**
Graham Missen 03 5728 7262

**Secretary:**
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kbowley53@gmail.com

**Treasurer:**
Dirk deZwart 03 5728 7397
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**Committee Members:**
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Cathryn Mahon 0499 004 924
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Mary Prowse 03 5728 7313
Jerry Alexander 0427 352 837
Maureen Cooper 03 5728 1311
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Do you have email available? Please consider getting this newsletter electronically. You will be saving the Landcare Group money and it will be more environmentally friendly. Send your email details to kbowley53@gmail.com
WOORAGEE LANDCARE GROUP
ABN 79 607 176 531
Membership Form
1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016

Annual Membership Fee:
$22 (GST inclusive) per Wooragee/Woolshed household per financial year: July 2015 – June 2015.
All membership fees are due by the 1st July 2015 due to insurance requirements.
Members must be financial before applying for subsidies or hiring group equipment.
Membership helps pay for the monthly newsletter and insurance against injury while carrying out Landcare related activities. In 2015/16, financial members will be eligible to participate in the free native tree and shrub giveaway.

Fill out the details below and Post to:
The Treasurer
Wooragee Landcare Group
PO Box 368
Beechworth, 3747

Payment can be by:
- Cheque made out to Wooragee Landcare Group
- Any branch of WAW Credit Union - Record your name with the deposit made out to Wooragee Landcare Group
- Direct Transfer to:
  BSB: 803 070
  Account Number: 24867
  Account Name: Wooragee Landcare
  Reference: YOUR SURNAME

You can arrange to make this an annual direct transfer so you never have to remember to pay again!
Receipts will be sent out shortly to all members who have paid.

WOORAGEE LANDCARE GROUP ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP 2015
Please remember to update your contact details if your email address has changed

Name: ........................................................................................................................................................................
Address: .....................................................................................................................................................................
Phone/s: .................................................................................................................................................................
E-mail: ....................................................................................................................................................................

Property Name (if applicable): .................................................................................................................................
Property location (locality/catchment): ....................................................................................................................

Amount Payable: $ 22.00

PAYMENT BY: CHEQUE ☐ WAW CREDIT UNION ☐ DIRECT TRANSFER ☐
Do you have an interesting story, web site or advertisement you would like to place in the Wooragee Landcare Newsletter?

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to the rising costs of printing and postage the Wooragee Landcare Community Newsletter will be sent 4 times a year to all Non-Landcare members in Wooragee and Woolshed that currently receive the newsletter via the post.