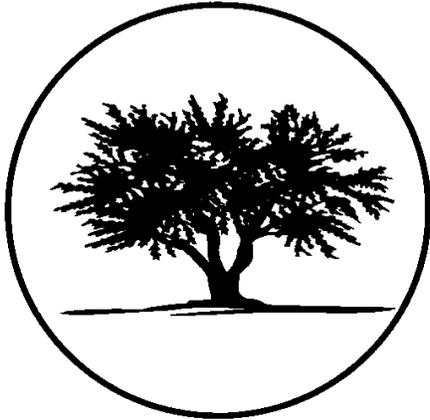


DAMPER CREEK DOINGS



The Newsletter of
FRIENDS OF
DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

Reg No. A0029531G

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

P.O. Box 2063 Mount Waverley

March 2017

Editorial:

City of Monash's proposed New Residential Zones:

The meeting of the Monash Council on February 28th passed the amended C125 proposals with a strong majority. This is a great result for conservation groups such as ours. The Council will implement a five metre setback at the rear of properties in the General Residential Zone and a seven metre setback for properties that abut Damper, Scotchmans and Gardiners Creeks.

The maximum coverage of each block has been reduced from 60% to 50% in General Residential zones and to 40-45% in areas near the creeks.

This is a particular success for friends groups such as ours as it provides multiple benefits of:

- 1: Prevention of obtrusive overlooking of the reserve by new buildings.
- 2: Allowing backyard gardens which extend the range of wildlife and effectively increase the size of the reserve.
- 3: Increase of the area of water permeable surface. This benefits the flow of water by buffering the effects of intermittent rainfall.

The proposals have to be presented to the State Planning Minister for approval but it is my understanding that Monash will implement the changes immediately.

In a move that may undermine Monash's initiative, the State Government has issued a new blueprint

for “Plan Melbourne” with the stated intention of aiming for 70% of new building to be constructed in established areas. At this stage it is uncertain how these plans will interact with Monash’s C125 New Residential Zones.

Clean Up Australia Day



Some of the participants and the rubbish collected between Alvie Road and Stephenson Road. The rubbish included a “camp” discovered in a secluded part of the creek near the corner of High Street Road and Stephenson Road.

Did you know? April 2017 *(Please read on April 1st)*

Did you know that Damper Creek valley was of horticultural significance and the site of a vineyard? In the mid 1860s Nathaniel Billing Esq., owned a 60 acre vineyard, his seven-roomed house "Waverley Park", stood about 100 yards back from High Street Road. adjoining the present St. Stephen's land. Nathaniel Billing was an Architect with offices at 20 Queen Street, Melbourne and by 1864 he had established himself as a leading ecclesiastical architect. By the early 1860s the original owner of Crown allotment 58, Mr O'Sullivan, had sold some of his property to Henry Steel Shaw. Mr Shaw's name will be remembered as the man who gave "*one acre more or less*" for the building of St Stephens. Mr Billing designed the church and his fee was £17/10/- which he immediately donated back to church funds.

But what of the vineyard? This proved to be most successful for a few years but the cattle and goat livestock of neighbours proved to be a menace during the summer months, while pumping water from Damper Creek to irrigate the grape crop was an onerous task. Redmond Barry who, with his partner Louisa Barrow, were located opposite at what is now Riversdale Golf Club, were leaders in horticulture and arranged for the grapes to be pressed and bottled. This fruity red was awarded a medal at the Dandenong Show in early 1870s and was a great money earner for St Stephens church. It is unfortunate that extensive weeding and farming in the 20th century has removed all traces of the vineyard, but it should be noted that a couple of wholesale nurseries operated in the Damper Creek area and the Paramount Nursery in Essex Rd was only closed and subdivided in the late 1970s.

Refs . *They Continued Steadfastly*

The *First April* Files of the Waverley Historical Society

In Praise of Small Things

As environmentalists (at least, if you're reading this, I hope you are) we come up against a number of contradictions when it comes to our own gardens. Should a garden be productive and grow food for the table? Should a garden be a part of the environment, in other words should it include the range of plants that grow in Damper Creek? Or should it be a horticultural showpiece, a collection of plants carefully selected for spectacular flowers or sculptural form?

Let's face it, a purely environmental garden is more than a bit untidy. Trees can grow too large and crowd out other plants. If the smaller plants don't die they get "leggy" and just look ugly. Also your friends might think you have allowed "weeds" to take over your garden, a sign of neglect (and maybe senility).

So, if we are to impress our friends, provide a semblance of suburban conformity as well as provide a haven for wildlife, we must necessarily adopt the "horticultural showpiece" model, albeit modified with a knowledge of the indigenous flora to provide the desired habitat extension for wildlife. Let us assume, for now, that you have a framework of larger trees and shrubs that may have been inherited from a previous owner. Smaller plants must then be chosen to fill the gaps, cover the ground and smother the weeds. There are many indigenous plants that will satisfy this need but they may require a little more management than the well behaved exotic cultivars. Here are a few:

Ground Covers:

Dichondra repens: Otherwise known as Kidney Weed, this plant will infiltrate your garden beds and lawns and impart a great naturalistic feel to your garden. It does better in shade with a bit of moisture and will withstand some foot traffic and mowing. It has been used as a lawn substitute.

Viola hederacea: The flowers are a beautiful combination of purple and white. It has a trailing habit similar to *Dichondra* but it won't do well in a lawn.

Einadia nutans: The Nodding Saltbush is a flat growing plant (not really a bush) that does a great job of crawling between your other plants. It will tolerate very harsh conditions and will propagate itself readily. This plant has the useful property of being able to be rolled up like a carpet so weeds can be removed, then you simply roll it back into place so you have an instant living mulch.

Brachyscome multifida: This little purple daisy is common and will do the job of a classic border plant. It can also be interspersed among your other plants to give a cottage garden effect.

Chrysocephalum apiculatum: The common everlasting is a prostrate plant with furry grey leaves and little pompom flowers. It can be planted en masse or allowed to trail among other plants. Like most plants it will benefit from pruning after flowering.

Lilies:

Many of our natives are classified as lilies. They may not have the spectacular flowers of the exotic lilies but we must remember that the cultivated lilies are the result of hundreds of years of selective breeding. Our native lilies have their own charm and delicacy. With selective breeding they may eventually become rivals to their European cousins.

Dianellas: Several species exist which all share blue flowers with yellow anthers followed by blue berries. Spreading, grassy, they nestle into the landscape.

Arthropodium: These are the chocolate and vanilla lilies. Yes, they do smell like their names suggest. They form an important part of native grassland, dying down after flowering, they are sustained by a tuber which was cultivated as a food source by the aboriginals. In your garden, the tuber won't necessarily survive the summer so if you plant a patch, be prepared to do some infill planting in Autumn or Winter.

Bulbine lily: Growing as a clump with yellow flowers, the bulbine is a staple of revegetation projects. It seeds prolifically and if it appears that the parent plant has died, you may be surprised when new plants appear in unexpected places the following spring.

Lomandra longifolia: Not noted for its flowers, this plant with its long strappy leaves fills in many of the gaps in Damper Creek revegetation. It is tough but it can dry off in summer and it will benefit from the removal of weeds which seem to germinate in the centre of the clump. Once a patch of this plant is established it will be pretty maintenance free. There are other *Lomandras* which are not quite as obtrusive. There are many cultivars available from commercial nurseries.

Did you know that the Australian Grass Tree is also a lily?

Grasses:

There are many native grasses which will serve a useful role in the garden. They can be tall and showy, clumping, or low and mat forming. Of the latter, *Microlaena stipoides* or Weeping Grass is a

useful, fine grass which can be allowed to grow unhindered (it will only grow to about 30cms) or it will make a fine lawn if // mown. Note that the seeds will stick in your clothing and it will readily spread into cultivated garden beds. If you want an unobtrusive grass try *Austrodanthonia geniculata*. The small clumps will spread to cover the most parched areas to a height of no more than 10cms. It can be mown but is hardly worth the trouble.

A Change to Our Monthly Meeting Arrangements

For the remainder of 2017 we will designate the March, May, July, September and November meetings as “Admin” meetings. All members are welcome to attend to raise any issues of concern but we will not have guest speakers or supper at these meetings and the expectation is that general business will be conducted expeditiously and the evening will not be a late one.

Dates to Remember	Event	Notes
Wednesday March 22nd	Admin Meeting, Alvie Hall	7-30pm – 8-30pm
Sunday March 26th	Working bee – hand weeding. Please bring garden tools for robust weeds and mattocks for blackberry outbreaks	10:00 to 12: 30 Alvie Hall Carpark/ Golf Avenue behind Alvie Hall
Wednesday April 26th	Monthly meeting Guest Speaker: TBA	From 7-30 pm
Sunday April 30th	Working Bee	10 am to 12-30

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Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the Yarra Catchment.