

Editorial:

Grasses, worth a second look.

To many gardeners grasses are synonymous with weeds, except for those grasses that are mown for lawns. If you have participated in the planting days at Damper Creek you will realise that much of the planting involves grasses. At the stage they are planted it is difficult to identify these grasses so I recommend that you visit areas which have been planted during Autumn and Winter, you may be surprised.

The importance of grasses cannot be overestimated. Grasses provide shelter to a myriad of invertebrates which feed the higher creatures, the birds and animals we love to protect, many of which would not exist without the complex ecosystem dominated by grasses. Grasses shade the soil, prevent erosion and provide a fine mulch which protects and nurtures the soil. A good coverage of grasses will prevent weed infestation, the nemesis of revegetation projects like Damper Creek.

It is easy to generate enthusiasm for trees and shrubs. The majesty of a River Redgum, Mountain Ash or Lemon Scented Gum is obvious, Banksias, Wattles and other intermediate trees are much appreciated and they are well represented in nursery offerings for home gardens, but look for grasses and you might be struggling. Yet grasses have their own beauty and are perfectly happy in the home garden, possessing sculptural qualities and even flowers which make them desirable subjects.

Take, for instance, the bizarrely geometric flower of the Kangaroo grass, or the wonderfully fuzzy seed heads of Wallaby grasses. The Poas have many interesting species. The soft blue foliage of *Poa morrisii* invites you to run your fingers through it, the robust *Poa ensiformis*, known as the "Purple sheathed tussock grass", makes a dramatic addition to damper areas such as ferneries and pond surrounds.



The colourful flower of
Austrodanthonia Setacea

Damper Creek has some fine stands of *Microlaena stipoides* or "Weeping Grass". Individual plants of this species may go unnoticed but en masse, it clothes the creek banks with a dense blanket of green, it grows well in shady areas and makes a great lawn which seldom needs mowing and is drought resistant.



Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) has spectacular flowers and seeds

So try native grasses in your garden and you will gain a new appreciation of the environment. Most will propagate freely and you can cultivate or remove them at your discretion, a more pleasant task than removing weeds.

November Guest Speaker: Geoff Lay - "Fungi and Flora" - Wednesday 27 November at Alvie Hall Mt Waverley, - from 7.30pm - 8.30pm followed by supper.

Naturalist and photographer, Geoff Lay has been bushwalking around Australia for over 40 years. To improve his knowledge of the plants and fungus, he joined the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Fungus Group and the Australian Plant Society over 20 years ago. Since retirement, he has worked voluntarily at Herbarium in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne with the Senior Mycologists and Botanists. His main project is curating fungus, but he also collects seed for the Millennium Seed Bank and supplies photos for various publications. He has given

talks on Fungus and Flora to many of the Field Naturalists and Australian Plant Societies in Victoria and interstate, as well as other organisations such as Greening Australia and garden clubs. All welcome.

Friends of Damper Creek Christmas BBQ - 20th Anniversary celebration - All welcome.

When: Sunday 1 December 2013 from 12 noon onwards.

Where: Meet in Damper Creek Reserve at the end of Richard Road Mt Waverley. Parking is available in Alice Street

The BBQ is funded by Monash City Council as a thank you to volunteers, and it is supported by Melbourne Water community project grants. New members warmly welcomed.

BYO: Special drinks, chairs, mats, sunscreen, sunhats.

For catering purposes and enquiries RSVP to Kevin 98074933, or email secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

Thank you – Christmas and the New Year is approaching fast and the Friends take this opportunity to sincerely thank our past and present committee members, all members and volunteers and also the Monash City Council Bushcrew for the wonderful support given throughout the year to care for our precious Damper Creek bushland. We wish everyone a happy Christmas, and a safe and happy New Year 2014.

Don't forget to check us out on Facebook. Your photo submissions, both recent and archival, will be welcomed.

Important dates to remember:

	November	Notes
Meeting & Speaker:	Wed 27th - 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
BBQ	Sun 1 st December 12 noon onwards	Meet at end of Richard Rd - Park in Alice St
	February	
Meeting:	Wed 26th- from 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun 2 March 2014 10-00am to 12-30 pm	Middle Bridge

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Damper Creek Reserve Inc is a member of 'Landcare' and 'Land for Wildlife' Volunteer Nature Conservation.
Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the Yarra Catchment.

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The Newsletter of

FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

Reg No. A0029531G

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DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

November 2013

