

Editorial

The juggernaut of residential development continues, seemingly unabated, in Mount Waverley. The “sold” notices are rapidly followed by the appearance of a temporary chain wire fence as the developers move in on a house which, a mere forty or fifty years ago was the pinnacle of someone's suburban dream. Has the world changed so rapidly that a dream home of the sixties is now deserving of nothing more than to be consigned to history books? Will future home buyers seek the remaining examples and treasure them as we do the Victorian cottages of inner Melbourne? Regardless of architectural merit, older homes contain “embedded energy”, being the energy used to produce the materials used in their construction. This is largely destroyed when a building is demolished and the replacement building then incorporates its' own “new” quota of embedded energy. Even though new buildings require construction to much higher levels of energy efficiency, the environment loses out due to the huge size of many of these buildings (more embedded energy) and a greater interior volume to be heated or cooled. Will these, too, fall out of favour in the next forty or fifty years?

Then there is the issue of gardens. Back in the sixties, the garden was not usually a priority once the house was built. Plants were accumulated over a period of years, choosing specimens which appealed or using gifts of friends. Gardens evolved, a fruit tree here, a rose there, a few natives and many (many) plants that later came to be classified as weeds. Fast forward to 2011, the new house will, in most instances, come with landscaping

included. Forget about the careful accumulation of plants over decades, the home builder in 2011 wants an instant result with instant lawn and mature plants inserted into heavily modified soil. How will these gardens fare over the next fifty years or so? In all likelihood, they probably will fare quite well, with professionally chosen plants which compliment the house architecture, chosen for a quick result without growing too large for the block and avoidance of weed species, with appropriate care these gardens should last well. However, they will be boring and their owners will increasingly be disconnected from their maintenance and choice of plants.

All of which brings me to the latest garden bed at my home. I have recently “liberated” a narrow strip about 30cms by 25 metres which was buried under concrete between the fence and the footpath. The strip has been populated with over a hundred small plants, mainly grasses, which have been sourced from local indigenous plant nurseries. I don't expect it to be low maintenance, I will be kept busy removing exotic weeds, I expect many people won't like it, but I will learn a lot and I will have a chance to explain my strange choice of plants to passers-by. That has to be more valuable than a “neat” garden.

If you have a non conventional gardening story to share (especially one involving indigenous plants) send me an email and help banish boring gardens.

Beverley Counsel 1931,- 2011

Beverley Counsel passed away on October 23. Beverley was a founding member of the ***Damper Creek Conservation and***

Development Group which was later to become the ***Friends of Damper Creek Reserve***. The inaugural meeting was held at her house in Oak Court.

Beverley was a frequent visitor to the reserve, often seen walking one of her dogs. They were Tacker, Vamp and, lastly, Cinders, a retired greyhound. Beverley was always good for a chat and encounters with Beverley and Cinders will be an enduring memory for many of the “*Friends*”.

Beverley is survived by her children, Adele, Julian, Philip, Caroline and Marita as well as many grandchildren.

LATE SPRING AT DAMPER CREEK (2011)

Damper Creek in October/November? This wet year there is abundant vegetation – and, of course, bird life. There is not so much variation in type, as in numbers. The wooded branch area where the track goes up to Sunhill Drive, a favourite spot for a flock of small wattle birds, rings with their calls. (While the raucous calls of the larger red wattled variety that do not flock, can often be heard from the steep banks of the creek near the bridge.) On the high bank across from the Stephenson's Rd. car park, I came face to face with an unexpected visitor as well: a fierce looking grey goshawk with hooked yellow beak. I'd seen his pathetic leavings the day before: a little flesh and a few feathers along the winding path. I met his eye – and haven't seen him since!

Along the Wetlands track and on the lake we've had abundant ducks of several varieties. A first in my experience is a batch of chestnut teal ducklings. They are a little dusky and slimmer than our common black duck babies: no early sign of the glorious chestnut, white

and teal colours of their parent! The lovely silver spotted wood ducks with their precious one only baby have flown and now also, after a heavy rainstorm, I've seen one only, chestnut teal duckling. What a fuss his parents make of him! [I recall a year with ducks and ducklings of a rich brown and dark brown colour. There was a little mud island near the top of the lake then and instinct or their parents had made them curl up in a spiral, bill tip to tail, on their side. From the path above they looked a marquisette brooch!] Well, nothing very extraordinary at Damper Creek this pre-Christmas season. You may have noticed there are fewer mature kookaburras lately, for the parents left this year's hatchlings in the care of last year's offspring. Now, with the warm sun, little insectivores can be seen flitting through the fern gully. With the summer heat we'll soon be hearing the gathering of the currawong at Middle Bridge and the far ends of the Reserve, to sing their evening reveille.

Don't Miss Our Annual BBQ

Where:

In the Reserve, enter from Sunhill Road. Note that due to works in the reserve, the location may be a little different from previous years.

When: November 27th · Commences 12-00 pm till 3-00pm Come earlier if you want to help with the setup.

What to Bring: Meat and salads provided, vegetarians catered for, soft drinks and cordial available. BYO wine, beer, seats. If you are enviro-friendly bring your own plates, cutlery, cups and glasses, otherwise disposables will be provided.

Friends of Damper Creek Important dates to remember:

	November	Notes
Meeting:	Wed 23rd - 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
BBQ	Sun Nov 27th 10-00am to 12-30pm	Sunhill Rd
	February next year	
Meeting:	Wed 22nd- 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun February 26th 10-00am to 12-30 pm	To be advised
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Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the Yarra Catchment.

Please address all mail to:
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The Newsletter of

FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

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DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

November 2011

