



Damper Creek Doings

Newsletter of the Friends of Damper Creek Conservation
Reserve inc.

July 2021



From the President's Desk

It may be midwinter but Damper Creek is waking up to an early spring. The first, and most spectacular of our local wattles is brightening up the bush. This is the Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*). The Silver Wattle is quite a large tree, growing to 20 metres or more and it is hard to miss when in flower as its blooms are a brilliant yellow. At other times of the year the Silver Wattle recedes to form an important component of the middle storey with the silvery-grey, feathery foliage blending into the bush.

Flowers are also emerging on other wattles, smaller shrubs which may go unnoticed at other times of the year. The Myrtle Wattle (*Acacia myrtifolia*) is a small, neat shrub with pale yellow flowers. It is not common but several are scattered throughout the reserve. Another wattle coming into flower is the Spreading Wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*). This is an untidy, spiky plant which, as its name suggests, grows wider rather than high. There are many more species of wattle in Damper Creek Reserve, ranging from straggling shrubs to tall forest trees. What an incredibly diverse genus the Acacias are!

Other plants flowering right now are the Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*), Bushy Needlewood, (*Hakea decurrens*) and the Common Apple-berry (*Billardiera scandens*). This is an exciting time of the year and the reserve merits frequent visits to observe the changes.



Silver Wattle (*Acacia decurrens*), a harbinger of Spring brightening up Damper Creek

Purple Coral-pea
(*Hardenbergia violacea*)
Scrambling over a fallen
log.





Myrtle Wattle
(*Acacia myrtifolia*)
A small wattle, often
unnoticed when not in
flower.

Twining Apple-berry
(*Billardiera scandens*)
A decorative climber
helping to hide a fence



Doggie Stories

Do you have stories about one of our furry friends? The story of the saving of Damper Creek Reserve from development is intertwined with our canine friends who have long enjoyed Damper Creek as a place to walk and run. Our secretary has a compilation of stories of dogs who have enjoyed the reserve as a place of exercise and socialization. If you have a story, please send your recollections and observations to Helen on:

secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com



Working Bees



Disappointment had dogged our working bees since COVID disrupted our routines. We have adapted to the situation and by being flexible have managed to make a considerable contribution to the improvement of the reserve. Our June working bee was to have been a community planting day. Unfortunately we could not hold this event because of limitations on the size of gatherings. As an alternative, the Friends agreed to help the Bushcrew plant the area around the ponds. This area needs to be seen to be believed, the work done by Danny and others is an exciting addition to the reserve and does a wonderful job of enhancing the surroundings of the bushcrew compound. Our volunteers enthusiastically planted many hundreds of plants and we look forward to watching them mature.

The following Thursday, a date normally set aside for the Midweek Weeders, a good crew turned up to plant the first tranche of the plants supplied from the Melbourne Water grant. Once again, several hundred plants found a home along the west side of the creek near the duck ponds. This area had been carefully weeded and we look forward to the plants maturing unimpeded by weeds.



Enthusiastic workers planted over 1000 plants from the Melbourne Water Grant on July 1st. This special planting day was used to get started on the Melbourne Water grant plants and involved the Midweek Weeders team.



July 25th Working bee Special Notice

The July working bee will be held one week early as Council staff are committed to attending a community planting at Scotchmans Creek. Our working bee will be supported by the Lions Club who will be manning the BBQ. Please bring family and friends along as this is a great chance to plant the remainder of our plants from the Melbourne Water grant. Please bring your own cups.

Past inspiration

Did you know? (Held over from April 2021)

Did you know that Damper Creek area is a site of a local Spanish Flu hospital during the 1918-19 epidemic? The Exhibition building in Carlton was a major centre of treatment but many local districts operated their own quarantine and treatment sites.

A hospital was established in the Oakleigh township but it was recognised that a quarantining of infected people was critical. Messrs Lirpa and Loof, who had a returned soldier in the family, decided that Oakleigh was too far away to send their family members so they established their own hospital on what is now the site of Alvie Hall. This was a very primitive building constructed of rough logs with a galvanised iron roof and side panels. Initially intended for their families it was soon used by other locals when they learned that the Lirpa's wife and Loof's daughter were trained nurses and provided extremely good care. Within a few weeks the locals had contributed some hay and wooden panels to insulate the walls and up to 8 people were recuperating in the hospital at one stage.

CTD over

Lirpa and Loof could see that some patients would benefit from more air while breathing and devised a pressurised mask and hoses made of gutta percha. This was connected to a fan operated via a mechanical drive from their windmill. When there was no wind they operated an electric fan which was powered from their hydro electric plant on Damper Creek. (*See Damper Creek Doings April 2010*) After 18 months there was no further use for the hospital and the building was dismantled. Lirpa and Loof remained silent about their belief that their pressurised mask made recovery quicker.



From the *The First April* Files of the Waverley Historical Society.

Dates to remember:

Wed 28th July Alvie Hall from 7.30 - 9pm

Working Bee

Sunday 25th—(Working bee and BBQ), (covid permitting)

Location Park Rd entrance, 200m to duck pond
commencing at 10am - 12.30pm.

Thursday July 29th Mid Week weeders –

10.30 - approx 12 noon at Main Pond

***We ask that you bring your own cups to the working bees
to avoid the use of wasteful disposable cups.***

Report it!

Have you seen something along Damper Creek that you think needs attention? Please contact Monash Council and leave a report. You can contact them the following ways.

- www.monash.vic.gov.au/contact/request-a-service
- (03) 9518 3555
- download the App – Snap, Send, Solve

We would love to hear from you

The content of this newsletter reflects the opinions of the editor and the Friends of Damper Creek Reserve. Content is welcome and should be emailed to dougscott3@bigpond.com or to the secretary at secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

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