



# GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

1st GfW member Ada Markby

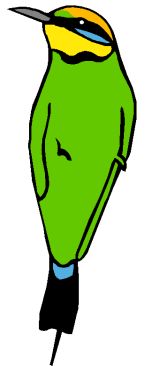


Garden for Wildlife (GfW) was launched on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at Olive Pink Botanic Garden (OPBG). There were 70 people at the presentation by Patron Geoff Miers and possibly 130 passing through over the morning period.

The plant sales by OPBG, Greening Australia and Tangentyere Nursery were very successful.

GfW has successfully registered over 30 properties and has also received a Development Grant from Alice Springs Town Council (\$5000) to continue the development and implementation of the scheme.

The 1<sup>st</sup> GfW member, Ada Markby, originally wanted to join Land For Wildlife (LFW) but her property didn't meet the LFW requirements. In response to this Ada suggested that a "Garden for Wildlife" program would be great for Alice Springs residents. Thank you to Ada for her passion for wildlife conservation and to the organisational efforts of the former GfW coordinator Cassie Wright. GfW is now on its way to becoming an important program for linking vegetation communities together, protecting wildlife and promoting nature conservation within the Alice Springs suburbs.



GfW has coordinated and produced the Vegetation Community Maps to coincide with the Vegetation Species Lists for the area that you live in. Many thanks to Dave Albrecht for allowing us access to the vegetation lists and Ruddy Lennartz for allowing us to develop the suburban land and vegetation types for Alice Springs from the Land Resources of Alice Springs Area Map. Thanks to the dedicated volunteers Sarah Wilson, Tim Collins and Sunil Dhanji for developing the vegetation maps and list to suit the Alice Springs suburban area. Adrian James spent a few late nights on the computer designing and uploading the webpage [www.LowEcol.com.au/lfw/gfw.htm](http://www.LowEcol.com.au/lfw/gfw.htm) which we are grateful for.

**A big welcome and thankyou to all our new members!** The GfW scheme has certainly proved to be a valuable community program for wildlife conservation and this has been confirmed by the large number of member registrations over a short 2 month period. Tell all your friends and neighbours, as we would soon like to register streets as GfW members, maybe even entire blocks, which will link corridors of native vegetation for residence and provide a safe passage for wildlife.





## SPONSORSHIP NEWS

Illparpa Nursery has jumped on board the GfW sponsorship list along with Bloomin Deserts and Alice Springs Nursery by offering members a 10% discount. Don't forget to use your membership card when purchasing plants for your garden. The nurseries are keen to help you prepare your soils for planting and are more than happy to answer any questions concerning the development of your 'Garden for Wildlife'.

Red Kangaroo Books have also joined as a GfW sponsor providing a 10% discount to members on all books. Remember to show your member discount card and also refer to your book list in your GfW member package to see what wildlife field guides you might like to purchase. Red Kangaroo staff are more than happy to order in any new books that you may require.

## WEED PROFILE – COUCH GRASS

Do you have a problem with Couch Grass? Couch, *Cynodon dactylon*, a native of Africa, is a popular lawn species, and is also considered one of the worst weeds in central Australia. It has completely smothered and replaced native plants in many of the natural drainage systems in our region, with devastating effects on species diversity and food availability for animals.

### How does it spread?

It is capable of invading well watered loamy areas after little or no disturbance, and expands both above the ground and below, through the growth of underground stems (rhizomes). Seed is also dispersed by water, or by vehicles and machinery, or is commonly imported with horse manure (keep a close watch on grass seedlings germinating in soil fertilised with horse manure). Most seed germination occurs after rains during the warmer months.



### Description

Couch is a deep rooted grass to 30cm tall, forming dense mats and living for many years. The reproductive flower heads are arranged in spikes (4-7), which radiate from the top of the stems. It closely resembles the native species *Brachyachne convergens*, which has fewer spikes (2-4).

### How do I control it?

Unfortunately, Couch is not an easy weed to control, as even a small piece of stem left behind can develop into a new plant. If you don't want to use chemicals, you can control small infestations by digging it out, with care and diligence. It is important to remove the underground stems by following them and gently digging them up, or they will regrow.

Larger infestations can be controlled by smothering the area for a minimum of 6 months with something to block the light, including black plastic, old carpet, newspaper etc.

If you are considering using chemical control, the best time is when the plant is growing rapidly, and is green and healthy. If using roundup, there needs to be enough leaf material above the ground to carry the poison through the plant to kill the roots, so don't mow or cut it before applying the poison. If you do mow to encourage new growth, wait till there is sufficient above ground leaf material before poisoning.





Be aware it may take two to three applications to effectively control it. Don't use stronger strength glyphosate than the instructions state as this only kills the tops and doesn't get down to the roots. You could also cultivate the area a week after you first spray, which will bring the rhizomes to the surface to dry out.

**Couch References:**

Albrecht, D. et al (1999) *Weeds of the Tanami*.

University of California, Integrated Pest Management.

[www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7453.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7453.html)

Urban Food Garden website:

[http://users.ncable.net.au/~urbanfoodgarden/Web/Vegetables/VEGETABLE%20PATCH%20%20MANAGEMENT/VEGETABLE\\_PATCH\\_MANAGEMENT\\_9.htm](http://users.ncable.net.au/~urbanfoodgarden/Web/Vegetables/VEGETABLE%20PATCH%20%20MANAGEMENT/VEGETABLE_PATCH_MANAGEMENT_9.htm)

**SPOTTED TURTLE DOVES**

75% of the GfW members have recorded Spotted Turtle Doves in their gardens. Action needs to be taken to stop the population increase of this introduced bird.

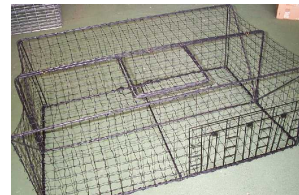
Feral Spotted Turtle Doves have been around Alice Springs only since the early 1990's, when they were released/escaped from aviaries. Feral doves compete with native birds, and in some areas have all but replaced them. We can all help to prevent this from happening by watching out for and trapping Spotted Turtle Doves. If you do have a turtle dove problem, you might be interested in the trapping program being run by the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. If so, you can apply to have a dove trap placed in your yard for a period of time, unfortunately there is a 2-3 month waiting list. Please contact Jon at Parks and Wildlife on 8951 8283 or [jonathan.delaine@nt.gov.au](mailto:jonathan.delaine@nt.gov.au) If you are a 'handyman' and would like to volunteer your time to make a dove trap or 2 for GfW member use, please contact Heidi on 89 555 222, [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au) or P.O. Box 3130.

Trapped birds will be euthanised by experienced Parks and Wildlife staff, or you can take them to the holding aviary at the Alice Springs Desert Park, located down the service road. Below is a list of web addresses with useful dove trap designs. The photographs have been downloaded from the dove trap web links.

[www.globeaustralia.com.au/prodpcbirt.htm](http://www.globeaustralia.com.au/prodpcbirt.htm)

[www.traps.com.au/wireworks.htm](http://www.traps.com.au/wireworks.htm)

[www.wapoultryequipment.com/CTCVT/Bird%20Traps%20cage%20type%20small%20domestic%20use.htm](http://www.wapoultryequipment.com/CTCVT/Bird%20Traps%20cage%20type%20small%20domestic%20use.htm)



*GfW has already proved to be a successful voluntary conservation scheme that aims to increase wildlife corridors and natural resource awareness in Alice Springs. GfW assists property owners in creating wildlife habitats in their own backyards that will be sustainable in this nationally recognised biodiverse region.*





If you have any questions or suggestions, property news or wildlife observations please contact Heidi on the details below. If you have friends who would be interested in joining GfW or LFW please pass on the web site and contact details below.

If you are interested in volunteering your time toward developing an important conservation scheme, GfW can always use your help. If you would like to help with open days/market days, workshops, membership registration, website development or administration, please contact Heidi. Your 'in kind' contribution toward GfW will be gratefully appreciated.

Good Luck with your Garden for Wildlife!

Cheers,

Heidi.

### Contact Details

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### Many thanks to our funding bodies

