



Welcome to our September 2008 Land for Wildlife newsletter! I hope it's been a productive three months for you all. Now that winter has vanished for yet another year, and summer is trying its best to get started, it's time to finish up planting. As the hotter weather commences, make sure you increase the length of watering times for deeper root growth and mulch desired areas to prevent water loss and maintain moisture.

This month's newsletter contains articles on removing Couch Grass *Cynodon dactylon*, a guide to identifying all those unfriendly (but bird attracting) *Sclerolaenas*, the role of wildlife corridors, and a profile on Alice Springs Airport, a very active Land for Wildlife property.

We have an upcoming workshop on the 11th October, entitled 'Habitat Creation: Natural Regeneration, Seed Collection and Propagation'. It will be held at two Land for Wildlife properties that have undertaken thorough and sustained buffel removal and experienced significant regeneration. The workshop starts at LOT 7802 Brumby Rd Ilparpa commencing 10am. Please RSVP by 4th October, as places are limited.

Happy reading!

Danielle O'Hara and Bill Low
Land for Wildlife Coordinators

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Land for Wildlife Update

Alice Springs Show

Somewhere amongst the dust and showbags and displays, the rides and competitions and people, the Australian Plant Society and Olive Pink Botanic Gardens have created a tranquil haven in the midst of the chaos. Situated across from the Parks and Wildlife hut, each year APS creates a demonstration garden and sells merchandise and seedlings propagated at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens.

With so many species in flower, a beautifully landscaped dune display and friendly and hospitable workers, it's no surprise the display and stall won first prize in its category!

For the second year in a row, the APS allowed Land for Wildlife/ Garden for Wildlife to use two of its central display boards to promote the scheme. This openhandedness is much appreciated, as open days, shows and plant sales provide Land for Wildlife with the perfect opportunity to promote the scheme to the public. The synergy of advice on what species are appropriate to particular locations in town and the brilliant array of plants offered by APS allowed people to select appropriate species for their blocks. Land for Wildlife signs on the front gates of your properties have resulted in the logo and name being familiar to many community members. Many people take the opportunity at public events to follow through and enquire about the program. The face-to-face opportunity to talk to Land for Wildlife workers and view our display of available information is instrumental in many peoples decision to become members and contribute to the creation and maintainance of wildlife habitat on their blocks.

Friday was busiest, with the Plant Society selling a significant proportion of their plants, and a number of people signing up for membership or expressing interest in Land for Wildlife. Saturday saw a decrease in numbers but the opportunity to have some less frantic chats.

The show was an enjoyable, and constructive way for Land for Wildlife to promote the scheme and gain members. A huge thanks to Olive Pink and the

Australian Plant Society for allowing Land for Wildlife to share their space.

Rethinking Waste in Schools



On the 20th of August, as part of the Rethinking Waste in Schools 'Big Day Out' Land for Wildlife had a hard days work playing 'Wildlife Corridor Games' to assist classes of primary school students from transition onwards to understand they can help assist wildlife movement in their schools and at home.

The Re-thinking Waste in Schools Challenge is about students and teachers working together to reduce their impact on the environment and is open to all schools in the Northern Territory. The program is an initiative of Keep Australia Beautiful. Their goal is to improve the environmental and social outcomes for all communities in the Northern Territory through educational, interactive activities.

Participating schools choose the projects they wish to tackle from a range of activities such as paper recycling/reuse, aluminium can recycling, organics recycling, energy and water reduction or activities that relate to litter management.

On the 20th of August, involved schools participated in a 'Big Waste Day Out' at the Araluen Arts Centre. The Day was an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they'd learnt about using resources wisely and sustainably in their schools.

Each school did a brief presentation, and set up an interactive lesson to show other students and

participating community groups what they'd learnt. Community groups such as ALEC, CoolMob, Power and Water and Land for Wildlife also held activities to involve schools in being involved in best practice environmental management. ABC Radio covered the day.

Presentations included innovative ways to recycle cans, with stilts, bowling pins and string-phones providing chaotic entertainment. A worm farm was demonstrated, with instructions on use and the opportunity to hold the worms (much squealing transpired!). In a flurry of activity, students learnt about how to grow yummy, nutritious food in a vegetable garden, how to make super-cool wallets out of old cardboard milk cartons, made paper, painted calico bags and witnessed a wearable arts fashion show!

If you're interested in any of these activities for schools, or for your own kids, please contact Land for Wildlife for details.

Articles

Wildlife Corridors

Our landscape was once covered by a mosaic of different vegetation types such as swamps, grasslands, forests and heath. This mosaic supported many species of animal that moved, mated and dispersed throughout their territories and beyond.

Disturbance such as clearing has left fragments of vegetation isolated, and the land is dotted with islands of preserved native forest or scrub. Species unable to move across this changed landscape are vulnerable to local extinction



Wildlife corridors link these areas of remnant native country. Wildlife corridors are corridors of land containing appropriate vegetation, which allow flora and fauna to move across a wider territory. One of the primary goals of the Land for Wildlife program is to

include private landholders in retaining or establishing vegetation connectivity. The existence of corridors allows wildlife to do a number of things

- Respond to environmental variability. This enables animals to move from areas with a scarcity of water/food to more plentiful areas
- Respond to population pressure. This enables animals to move from overpopulated to less-populated areas when necessary
- Maintain genetic diversity. This provides animals with a wider range of breeding partners, preventing inbreeding in a local population.

As Land for Wildlife members in a region where much of our remnant bushland remains intact (although sometimes threatened by weeds, feral animals or building developments), you can play a significant role in ensuring your property is a strong, effective link in a wildlife corridor.

It is extremely advantageous in corridor maintenance/creation to have a number of interconnected properties involved. The wider and larger the wildlife corridor is, the more effectively it provides habitat.

However in more isolated, urban contexts smaller wildlife refuges can be created by choosing local native, bird-attracting species and providing habitat for smaller invertebrates and lizards. Fallen logs and leaf litter are ideal for this, and even old pieces of timber or corrugated iron can be a haven for a small creature.

Land for Wildlife is currently trying to encourage memberships from clusters of properties, therefore expanding the geographical area committed to conservation. This is why talking to your neighbors about Land for Wildlife could direct them towards making a decision to commit to providing wildlife-attractive habitat on their blocks.

<http://www.urbanecology.org.au/topics/wildlifecorridors.html>
©Photo by Eric Nun

Sclerolaena

They may be a nuisance, and you most certainly don't want them anywhere you may be walking barefoot, but *Sclerolaena* (copperburrs, prickly bushes, bindyi, three corner jacks) are a favourite of birds in Central Australia, and a guarantee that you'll have a variety of bird species feasting on them in or on the edges of your block. Belonging to the family Chenopodiaceae, all 80 species of *Sclerolaena* are endemic to Australia. Pictured below are 7 of the species of *Sclerolaena* that are common in the Alice Springs region, so you can identify what the birds in your backyard are eating, or what's embedded in the bottom of your foot....

Grey Copperburr *Sclerolaena diacantha*

diacantha: with two thorns or prickles
Perennial up to 30cm high with densely hairy stems. Linear, succulent leaves 10-15mm long. Occurs on a wide variety of soil



types, but most commonly on sand plains. Often recognised as the most palatable of the *Sclerolaena* species
Fruit has 2 spines



Sclerolaena costata

Perennial up to 60cm high with fleshy, linear leaves 4-10mm long. Occurs on slightly saline habitats including mulga scrub and the base of rocky hills.
Fruit has 4 spines



Johnson's Copper Burr *Sclerolaena johnsonii*

Perennial to 40 cm high; branches glabrous (bare) to slightly hairy.
Succulent leaves up to 10cm long.

Fruit has 5 longish spines

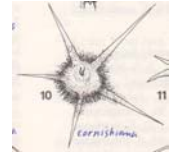


Cartwheel Burr

Sclerolaena cornishiana

cornishiana: named after William Cornish, 19th century SA government surveyor
Small, branched woolly annual or perennial forb, 30-60cm height.

Soft small dense shrub with whitish hairs.
Occurs in small colonies in stony or rocky saline, sandy or clayey soils.
Fruit has 5-6 spines.



Goatshead Burr *Sclerolaena bicornis*

bicornis: 2 horned, referring to the fruit
Branching shrub to 60cm high; covering of white woolly hairs.
Grows in red and black clayey soils, often in disturbed areas. It is an indicator of poor soil condition.
Fruit is white and woolly with 2 spines



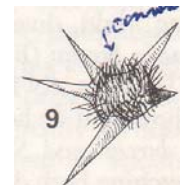
Succulent Copper Burr *Sclerolaena cuneata*

Dense, prickly, short-lived perennial forb up to 30cm high; fleshy leaves.
Grows in red clay, loam, sandy and shallow soils on plains, hills and stony ridges. Recognised as an increaser species and an indicator of overgrazing or overutilisation
Fruit has 3 (sometimes 4) strong spines



Tall Copper Burr *Sclerolaena convexula*

A perennial forb up to 40cm high, with a covering of silky hairs.
Small, pointy leaves 0.5-1cm long. Found in sandy and loamy red soils, and the shallow soils of hillsides
Fruit has 5 short spines



Flora of Central Australia. 1973. Jessop, ed.
Purdie, Materne and Bubb. 2008. *A Field Guide to Plants of the Barkley Region Northern Territory*, Barkley Landcare and Conservation Association
Moore, 2005. *A Field Guide to Plants of Inland Australia*, Reed New Holland

Couch...? One success story



Couch remains a persistent weed in gardens throughout Alice Springs (and beyond!). Spray it, pull it, mulch it, it still manages to poke its little green head above the surface of the soil. I recently visited one Land for Wildlife property who had successfully eradicated what was once a solid back and front yard of couch lawn. Although their success was partly due to fortunate timing, a mix of diligence and experimentation has resulted in a beautiful couch-free garden.

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. Couch is a deep rooted grass up to 30cm tall, forming dense mats and living for many years. The reproductive structures 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).

Unfortunately, as I'm sure you've discovered, 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. 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 with something to block the light, including black plastic, old carpet, etc. for a minimum of 6 months.

If you are considering using chemical control, the time is when the plant is growing rapidly, and is green and healthy, preferably after rain. Given we may be waiting some time for those rainclouds to deliver; another method is to give the grass a solid water to encourage new growth.

If using glyphosate, 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 until there is sufficient above ground leaf material before poisoning. Be aware it may take two to three applications to effectively control it. Alternatively, a week after you first spray it, you can cultivate the area to bring the rhizomes to the surface to dry out.



The Strangeways front yard

The Strangeways' moved into their Ilparpa block late 2001. They tried two different techniques on their front and back lawns, both with varying results but ultimately successful.

On the back lawn the Strangeways' sprayed once with glyphosate after rain. They placed down weed matting next day then covered it with mulch. They continued to spot spray and pull regrowth in the proceeding years. The weed mat was removed after two years when new growth had reduced to a manageable rate.

A different technique was tried on the front lawn. Two sprays were undertaken after rain. The entire area was then covered with a 5cm layer of sand and gravel mix. The sand was purchased from Centre Landscaping Supplies, and the gravel from a concrete supplier in town. Regrowth

was very minimal, and when it did occur, was not connected to a rhizome.



The Strangeways' back yard

The Strangeways' attribute some of their victory to the 2002 rains, which provided sufficient water to encourage fresh, green new growth to enable spraying to be successful. However I myself am inspired by any story where a property owner has triumphed over couch, regardless of the circumstances! Good luck!

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

University of California, Integrated Pest Management.
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7453.html

Land for Wildlife newsletter January 2006 Pg. 4.

Pest problems?

White Oil

White oil is useful for controlling all types of sucking insects. Common sucking insects in Central Australia include scale insects and mealy bugs.

Scale insects suck sap from plants, robbing them of essential nutrients. Scale insects thrive in warm, dry environments. The scale bug is small, oval and flat, with a protective tan to brown shell-like covering (scale). Scale generally targets the undersides of leaves and around leaf joints. They are often accompanied by increased ant activity as they farm honey for their honeydew. Mulga, Witchetty Bush and Dodonaeas are particularly susceptible.

Mealy bugs are small, soft sap-sucking insects covered in white silky hairs that infest new shoots and growing tips of plants. Mealy bugs will commonly leave a white residue on

plant's leaves that resemble cotton. This residue is either the egg sacs of the mealy bugs or the pests themselves. You may also find that the plant has a sticky residue on it. This is secreted by the mealy bugs and can attract ants. They are also fuzzy or powdery looking. Signs of mealy bug activity include deformed leaves or new growth. They affect a wide variety of shrubs and herbs. To remove you can either squash by hand, prune and dispose of affected areas or spray with white oil.

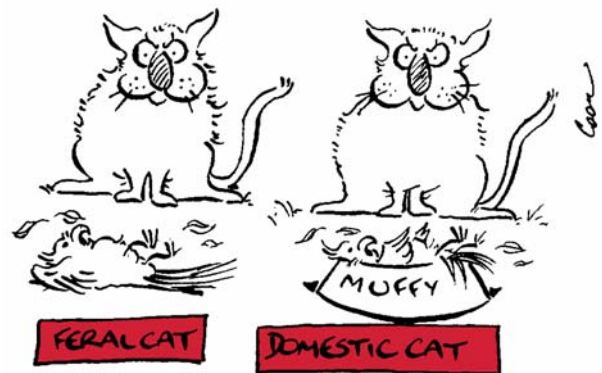
The main reason for using oil is to dissolve waxy secretions that insects use for protection so the insecticide can then do its work. Do not apply in the middle of the day and avoid using on plants with hairy foliage. Simply mix 1 cup of vegetable oil with ½ cup detergent. Dilute, using 1 Tablespoon of solution to every 1 litre of water. Spray every 5-7 days as needed, covering both sides of the foliage.

Greening Australia. 2007. *Native Plants for Central Australian Gardens*. Greening Australia, Alice Springs.

Phipps, Nikki. **Scale Bug: How to Control Plant Scale.**

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/problems/scale-bug-how-to-control-plant-scale.htm>

Bits and Pieces



Fauna Profile

Processionary caterpillars

Procession: the act of moving along or proceeding in orderly succession or in a formal and ceremonious manner, as a line of people, animals, vehicles, etc.

These intriguing but painful caterpillars do indeed proceed in an orderly and seemingly ceremonious manner. Up to 4cm long, they are the larval stage of the bag shelter moth *Ochrogaster lunifer*, and are present in all states of Australia. Acacias and Beefwood *Grevillea striata* are their most preferred restaurants.

As they move around, each processionary caterpillar lays a trail of silk from the spinneret near its mouth. Other caterpillars in the procession follow nose to tail, like a miniature train. These processions form when the caterpillars leave their forage tree to find a new food source or in the autumn when cool weather drives them to temporary silk entwined shelters in the litter at the base of a tree or they seek a suitable pupation site on the ground.

Jean-Henri Fabre, the great French naturalist, after patiently experimenting with a group of these caterpillars, finally enticed them to the rim of a large flowerpot where he succeeded in getting the first one connected up with the last one, thus forming a complete circle which started moving around in a procession which had neither beginning nor end.

The naturalist expected that after a while they would catch on to the joke-get tired of their useless march and start off in some new direction.

But, not so. The living, creeping circle kept moving around the rim of the flowerpot-around and around, keeping the same relentless pace for seven days and seven nights-and would doubtless have continued longer had it not been for sheer exhaustion and ultimate starvation.

To avoid the heat, and protect themselves from predators such as birds, these caterpillars rest together inside a tough silk bag armed with their cast-off hairs, skins and frass, often noticed in the branches or at the base of trees.



Many of us have become unwillingly familiar with these hairs! Processionary caterpillars have hairs that are sharp enough to pierce the skin, but the hairs carry bacteria and other micro-organisms, so these micro-organisms are injected into the skin. Also present on the adult moths, they can cause skin rash in sensitive people. Their rash can last for months after the exposure, and can become easily infected. The general name for skin problems of caused by caterpillars is Urticaria. In Australia approximately 1,000 different species of moths have caterpillars that can cause Urticaria

To treat irritations as a result of urticating caterpillars, remove all affected clothing and apply a piece of adhesive tape to each of the affected areas, then pull the tape off immediately. This will remove some of the hairs and irritants and reduce the full impact of the irritation. The use of analgesics, creams, antihistamines and lotions with steroids will also assist in relieving the symptoms.

The hairs of processionary caterpillars have been implicated in causing abortions in horses. No mechanisms for such a reaction have been recorded. The only reasonable explanation for this occurrence is that the hairs carry pathogenic bacteria.

Adult moths have a wingspan of about 4cm, forewings that are dark grey or brown, hindwings that are shaded white to grey at the base. Some have a pale dot in the centre of each forewing. The moths have a yellow-banded abdomen (hence the genus name *Ochro* = yellow, *gaster* = stomach)

which ends in a white tuft of hair. When disturbed, the moths are inclined to lie still on one side with a curled abdomen, so appearing dead.

Ochrogaster lunifer Herrich-Schäffer



The female adult moths lay several eggs in one mass on a food tree. They cover them with a layer of hairs from their tail. The female moths have no mouthparts so die after a few days.

Herbison-Evans, D. and Crossley, S. 2008 'Processionary Caterpillars' www.usyd.edu.au/museums/larvae/oto/lunifer.html

Herbison-Evans, D. and Crossley, S. 2008. www.staff.it.uts.edu/~don/larvae/faqs/what.html

LfW in other states

Land for Wildlife Tasmania officially launched its Garden for Wildlife program in late August. It had been unofficially in operation since March, and at the time of its 'Official Launch' already had in excess of 70 registrations state-wide. This was achieved purely by word-of-mouth, no publicity!

Their website www.gardensforwildlife.dpiw.tas.gov.au is currently being developed and already contains useful information about attracting wildlife to your garden, albeit with a Tasmanian focus.



Websites worth a look

Seedy stuff

www.florabank.org.au

Florabank is Australia's premier resource for native seed. Florabank recognises and shares the best available knowledge from research and practice in native species seed management. Florabank supports a professional and clever seed industry, encouraging quality and choice for buyers of native Australian seed. The most valuable section for landholders is the 'Seed Knowledge' section, which details guidelines for native seed collection, storage, propagation and revegetation. There is a very extensive resources and references list.

Property Profile

Alice Springs Airport



Land for Wildlife signage beside Anetyeke Interpretive Garden pond.

In November 2007, Alice Springs Airport became one of Land for Wildlife's largest properties. Covering 3550ha, the property is bounded by Colonel Rose Drive to the north, Todd River to the north-east, Undoolya cattle station to the east, south east and south and the old Ghan Railway line to the west – making it Australia's largest airport land holding.

Since the 1950s land management at Alice Springs Airport has been a necessity. Originally a smaller land holding, dust storms up to 10,000 feet created by the 8 year drought in the 1960s and over grazing on the surrounding land created safety issues for aircraft and on several

occasions aircraft had to divert to other airports. Subsequent acquisition of the surrounding land and gazettal of the whole Todd River flood plain as a dust control area meant that the airport was required to focus on all aspect of land management. Since privatisation 10 years ago environmental management at Alice Springs Airport has become part and parcel of everyday operations. It was therefore a natural progression for the airport to partner with Land for Wildlife and to enjoy the commercial, educational and conservation value that its membership offers.

The airport is a habitat for a variety of flora and fauna species. Paltridge & Latz, conducted a survey in 2003 and recorded 181 plant species at Alice Springs Airport. No species of national conservation significance were found, although 3 plant species were noted as having conservation significance within the Northern Territory. - *Einadia nutans* ssp. *Nutans*, *Ixiochlamys nana* & *Maireana lobiflora*. Six vegetation types were assessed including one locally uncommon plant community (Coolibah Ironwood community) which is represented well in the central northern paddock and along the former drainage depression associated with St Marys Creek. Fire sensitivity & disturbance by feral animals contribute to the classification as vulnerable.



Enormous Sturt Desert Rose *Gossypium sturtianum* in flower

Fauna surveys have recorded a total of 118 species on Alice Springs Airport. The list includes 3 amphibians, 23 reptiles, 80 bird species and 12 mammals. During the airports property assessment for Land for Wildlife membership, Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*, Little Corella *Cacatua sanguine (indeterminate)*, Sand Goanna *Varanus gouldii*, and Long-nosed Water Dragon *Lophognathus longirostris* were observed in the Garden. There has been an increase in a number of bird species

since the gardens have been the focus of extensive re-working, including Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius*.

Bats are the most diverse group of mammals known to exist on the Airport with the Lesser Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*) and the Southern Freetail Bat (*Mormopterus planiceps*) being the most prevalent. Other native mammals on the airport include the Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*), the Sandy Inland Mouse (*Pseudomys hermannsburgensis*) and the Dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*).

Two bird species identified on the Airport, the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) and the Square-tailed Kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) are classified as "Lower Risk - Near Threatened" under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act (2000).

The airport aims to incorporate the promotion of biodiversity conservation as part of their everyday functioning of activities through the implementation of an Environment Strategy and this is demonstrated through the following:

- The development of a fire and weed management plan that sees regular monitoring of the airport property to reduce noxious plant growth and reduction of fire risk
- A bird and animal hazard management plan that ensures that the airport is able to preserve the property's native fauna and flora without interfering with the requirement to prevent fauna from becoming a safety hazard for incoming and departing aircraft. This plan also addresses feral animal management of the two feral species (feral cat and red fox) and two pest species (European rabbit and house mouse) that currently exist on airport land.
- Erosion monitoring is undertaken on a regular basis to review the soil stabilisation methods employed at the airport

Alice Springs airport provides a research site for the Centre of Integrative Study of Animal Behaviour – a research group based at Macquarie University (Sydney) to study the behaviour of the Australian Desert Ant *Melopohus bagoti*. *Melopohus* are one of the few ants to feed in daytime temperatures of up to 53 Degrees Celcius. The deserts of Central Australia are rich in plant life, making it easy for *Melopohus bagoti* to find dead insects for food.

Educating the general and travelling public is important to the airport. The airport precinct is often the first experience travellers to Central Australia have – the development of Anetyeke (native) gardens when the current terminal was constructed in 1990 was instrumental in raising awareness about Central Australian ecological communities.

The Anetyeke Garden is an educational garden located north side of the airport passenger terminal. The garden is patterned on local plant communities including Palm Valley riverine community, Mulga depression, Witchetty Bush rise and Sand dunes. Wildlife is attracted to the garden, including Euros, lizards, a wide range of birds, and recently, an elusive rogue cow making night-time missions to the pond.

Educational signage for the garden is currently being designed by Pauline Clack. This signage will provide identification of the major species present, and an explanation of some of the ecological processes that occur in Central Australia.



Eremophila christophori in flower, with Lemon Scented Grass *Cymbopogon ambiguous* visible in background. The gardens contain a variety of healthy native grasses

Recently the airport employed Richard Aitkins who did the original landscape design for the Anetyeke Gardens in the early 1990s when he was employed by the Conservation Commission (pre-cursor to Parks and Wildlife). Richard also designed the centre strip up the Stuart Hwy through Alice. Although retired Richard is commenting on the current garden design against the original design plans. Extension of the car park to the north offers the opportunity to bring the Coolabah-Ironwood community into focus by

featuring it along the drains and clay depressions along the entry road to the car parks.

The entire terminal area is surrounded by well-maintained gardens dominated by locally native species. A diverse range of species are present but feature the dominant species for the communities on display. The airport contracts Craig Dainton, Greenfields Garden Maintenance to maintain the garden. A medley of Craig's enthusiasm, guidance from Geoff Miers, Greening Australia, and a very supportive and active airport management team, has resulted in a vibrant and healthy looking garden, with a large portion of species currently in flower.

Only local natives are planted, and the purpose is to encourage a healthy looking, non-contrived garden containing good, prospectively flowering examples of each species. The areas are intended to be gardens- they are not sites where natural regeneration is actively pursued but serve as an example of a successful, intensively managed garden.

Craig believes correct irrigation is the key to a successful garden. The system was in dire need of some attention and repair when Craig began his work. Immediately the pipes were changed from 13-19mm. They are now checked regularly and maintained. In summer, plants are watered approx. 2 times a week for 4 hours to ensure water soaks more deeply into the soil, encouraging deeper root growth and therefore plant health as well as more stability in the wind. This replicates natural rainfall patterns in Alice Springs, in which rain typically occurs heavily in short spurts.

It is the airports intention for all staff to participate and be aware of the conservation activities occurring, and Land for Wildlife fulfilled the aspiration for them to become part of a conservation network where staff of all tenants on the airport can attend regular workshops to learn more and enhance their management actions.





Qantas staff at the airport participated in a plant a tree promotion encouraging people to plant local native trees.

The previously mentioned Environmental Strategy aims to reduce the impact the airports commercial operations have on the environment. They implement various energy reduction measures. Northern Territory Airports PL aims to minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources wherever practicable and to improve the efficiency of the use of natural resources, particularly energy and water. They are researching the practicalities of renewable energy, in particular solar hot water heating

The Airport participates in a wide plethora of additional activities, and has many plans for the expansion of their efforts to engage in biodiversity conservation. It is commendable that a commercial airport has not only become a Land for Wildlife property, but is also actively committed to best practice environmental management. If you are interested in having a look at well-maintained, locally native gardens in brilliant flower, drop by the Airport gardens and take a few minutes to confirm that the logo for the Anetyeke Gardens is correct when it strives to live up to its Arrernte name as "a good place to sit".

Alice Springs Environmental Strategy December 2004

Letters to the Editor

Danielle,

If you haven't come across them before, "Drought" Pipes are a modification of the system used in the early days of Woomera to water the street trees.

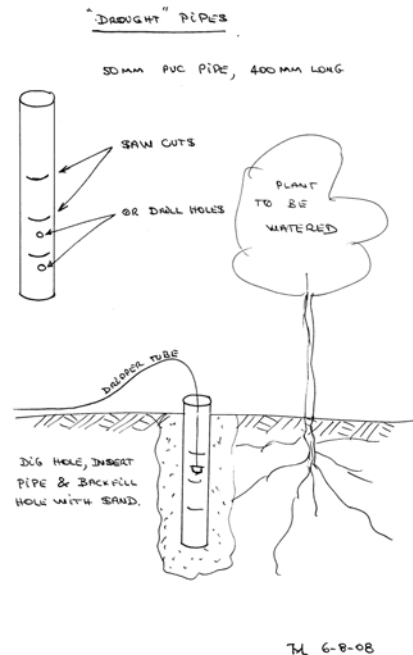
Refer to the attached sketch. The drippers go down inside the pipes and, if all goes well, all the water is absorbed into the soil with no ponding on the surface. If it doesn't go well, most of the water is absorbed and some of

it will overflow the pipe and pond on the surface. We have used this system on all our plantings and we think it is beneficial. It seems to reduce the water lost to evaporation and puts the water closer to the root zone.

The reason I am telling you this is that I have just come across a HUGE stock of PVC pipe pieces - 50mm diameter and 400mm long. There are hundreds of them! They are not slotted or drilled but they are FREE.

Do you think that LFW people (or anyone else trying to water plants) would be interested?

Regards,
Dave Leonard



Big thanks for Dave Leonard for supplying this information and advising Land for Wildlife about access to the PVC pipe pieces. Also a big thanks to CSIRO Alice Springs for recycling these materials as they were no longer required for the research for which they were used. Unfortunately there was a huge demand for them, and they've all been snapped up, however the above diagram demonstrates how to make your own and install them.

Interesting things happening in the Great Outdoors at the moment

-Migration season: Rainbow Bee-Eaters have arrived and huge flocks of crows heading south have passed.

-Nesting season is underway for many birds. Crested pigeons are perching on their skimpy nests, and Banded Lapwings are getting territorial.

-Growth of seedlings in areas lucky enough to have got rain from "the big storm"

-Early spring, the windy change of season time, making bike riding a more challenging task

-Early spring, the time to make sure your plants are getting established and will be able to cope with the summer stresses

What have you seen that has been of interest to you? Let us know so we can alert other members to keep an eye open for the same thing.

If you have taken a favourite photo in the last quarter, send it to us and we'll share it in the next newsletter. There might even be a prize for the best entry or best effort that we can present at the next workshop.

Calendar of Events

Olive Pink Botanic Gardens

until October 26th *Things that go bump, spark, gush, whirr* kinetic sculpture exhibition on display amongst the Garden plantings.

October 1st - 5th *Textures, Tinctures & Twigs*. Philomena Hali working as artist in residence in the Garden creating an installation work using desert fibres, natural dyes and wood. Do come and see the work in progress!

October 10th - November 2nd Irrkerlantye artists exhibition with new works themed around water.

Australian Plant Society

Upcoming meetings

October 1st Topic: 'Update of the *Acacia latzii* project 2002-2008'. Presenter: Jo Smith

November 5th Topic: 'Concepts of Landscape Design Through the Sewage Farm Project'. Presenter: Frances Smith

Alice Springs Field Naturalists

Field Trips

October 11th. Mt Undoolya, Rosalie Schultz to lead.

October 25th and 26th. Old Hamilton Downs, if sufficient interest.

November 8th. Sewage Ponds.

Land For Wildlife

October 11th Habitat Creation: Natural regeneration, Seed Collection and Propagation. LOT 7802 Brumby Rd Ilparpa commencing 10am

November Bird identification workshop at Alice Springs Desert Park. Dates to be advised

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