

SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

Nest boxes restore burned habitat



The road to recovery for local residents affected by the Wooroloo Fire has begun and the Shire will continue to work with many other organisations to support those who have lost property, pets, livestock and possessions.

After a bushfire there are also a range of environmental impacts. Over time the landscape will recover, but some elements may need monitoring or human help.

Local biologist and environmental educator Simon Cherriman was moved to action by the loss of large habitat trees, with a fundraising effort to provide nest boxes to properties affected by the Wooroloo Fire. Nest boxes can help provide replacement homes for a range of native animals that need hollows for shelter or to breed. Simon has been out visiting residents with burned properties to assess areas suitable for installing nest boxes to replace old-growth trees lost in the fire.

Collected donations have helped buy materials and support Men's Sheds, schools and community groups to build boxes. Simon also ran two nest box building demonstrations as part of the Blue Sky Festival in March, with support from the Shire of Mundaring.

Simon said; "People love being part of nest box projects, either through hands-on workshops or installing them in their backyard, because they feel a strong sense of achievement helping wildlife with direct, practical action." If you would like to make your own nest box, or check what size would suit a particular animal, see Simon's guide to building nest boxes at www.re-cyc-ology.com.au.



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Left: Wooroloo Primary School students made nest boxes. Above: Completed nest boxes. Photos: Simon Cherriman.



Djeran - April to May

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. Djeran (ant season) brings cooler nights and dew in the early mornings. Banksia flowers start to blossom, providing nectar for mammals, birds and insects.

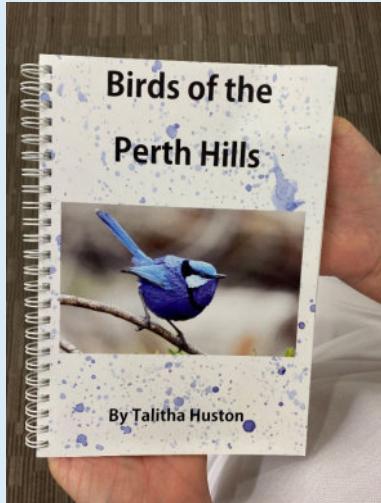
Look! It's a new bird book

The recent Blue Sky Festival featured an inspiring book launch by young author Talitha Huston.

She has researched and written a book called Birds of the Perth Hills, featuring her own photography. Part of the proceeds of book sales will be donated to Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

Talitha will give a talk to the Darling Range Branch of the WA Naturalists Club on 11 June. Find this and other events on their website at:

www.wanaturalists.org.au



Switching to solar

An additional 70kW of solar panels has just been installed on the Shire's Administration Centre, on a west facing section of roof. This adds to the growing rooftop solar capacity in the Mundaring town centre. There are already solar panels on the roof of the Mundaring Arts Centre, two medical centres, Aldi, Hills Fresh, the car wash - and over 1000 panels on the roof of the Coles shopping centre alone!

The price of solar panels has fallen over the past decade while the cost of electricity has continued to rise. We encourage more local businesses and residents to look at rooftop solar, and see if they can reduce their environmental footprint as well as their power bills.

If you are not always home in the middle of the day, then installing west facing panels for more solar power in the afternoon and early evening might work better for your household. The Good Solar Guide is a free online resource to learn more about solar options.

Shire of Mundaring is a **Switch Your Thinking** member council, which means local businesses and residents are eligible for discounts from participating retailers. This includes up to 20% off solar panels and battery systems as well as a range of other sustainable products and services. Search 'Switch Your Thinking Business' to find out more.

Counting the costs of food waste

Did you know that food waste is a major problem in Australia, costing our economy around \$20 billion each year and accounting for more than 5% of Australia's greenhouse gases? In WA, over two thirds of waste collected in household bins is organic material, currently lost to landfill. The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) estimates that of the 130,000 tonnes of general waste that the region produces annually, approximately 40% (55 tonnes) is food and organic waste.

Shire residents can access **Switch Your Thinking** workshops, and discounts on sustainability products including worm farms. To find out more about reducing household food waste, visit www.switchyourthinking.com.



Prickly in pink

Within months of the Wooroloo Fire, grasstrees (balga) re-sprouted and many burned trees are showing green shoots. While the ground may still look black and bare in places, there will usually be enough seed left in the soil to regenerate after rain. Some of this seed is from introduced weeds and some is from native plants.

A new plant appearing in some burnt areas is prickly, pink and not so pretty to handle! Its common name is 'Thorny Solanum', also known as Afghan Thistle (pictured right). Its scientific name is *Solanum hoplopetalum* and it is native to areas east of the wheatbelt. It is considered an agricultural weed outside its natural range, and dense infestations can affect livestock grazing.

If you think you have spotted a new weed in your area, download a copy of the Plants out of Place book, or pick up a copy from the Shire. There is also a MyPestGuide service from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).



Caring for country

The Mundaring Environmental Art Project is a long running partnership between the Shire and the Mundaring Arts Centre. Each year local primary school students are invited to investigate a theme and draw their ideas on A4 paper. The winning entries are turned into banners for the Mundaring town centre.

This year's theme is Caring for Country, investigating traditional ecological knowledge of the land and seasons. Learning about Noongar culture provides opportunities for children to consider and connect to the natural environment through a different perspective.

For more information, or to download entry forms and suggested resources, visit the Projects section of the Mundaring Arts Centre website at www.mundaringartscentre.com.au

Did you know we have a Fire and Burning Information Line?

April marks the return to the Restricted Burning Period for Shire of Mundaring residents, who can burn one small dry garden pile at a time between 6pm and 11pm (with conditions). Other burning may be allowed with a permit from the Shire or the local fire brigade.

Remember, no fires should be started on days when the fire danger rating is 'Very High' or above. Do your best to notify neighbours beforehand to avoid causing unnecessary stress, and phone the DFES Communications centre on 9395 9209 prior to ignition.

Once we have had enough rain, free workshops on how to safely conduct a cool burn will be held. To register your interest in a workshop, or to ask about managing fuel loads or firebreaks on your property, phone the Shire's Fire and Burning Information Line on **9290 6644**.



Example of a dry burn



Example of a green burn

Perth Hills Climate Change Interest Group

Perth Hills Climate Change Interest Group came together in 2019 from their shared belief that urgent action is needed to address the climate emergency. The group aims to support activities for a more sustainable, low pollution future and share information about the impacts of climate change. For the Perth Hills, some of the most worrying will be more frequent and intense bushfires and loss of native species and biodiversity.

In 2020 the group hosted a screening of the documentary '2040' at the Kookaburra Outdoor Cinema with support from the Shire of Mundaring (pictured below). Members gathered suggestions from more than 150 hills residents, including children, and produced a report 'Envisioning the Hills beyond 2030'.

For more information or for a copy of the report, contact the group by email phccig@gmail.com or via their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PerthHillsClimateChangeInterestGroup



Landcare Calendar - Tips for Djeran



- Start to prepare your property for revegetation by undertaking weed control where you are planning to establish native plants. You may need to do this more than once if weeds re-appear after the first rains.
- For great tips on preparing the soil for planting, watch our 'Planting for Success' video, presented by landscape architect and radio personality Sue McDougall at www.mundaring.gov.au.

Six Seasons has been prepared by the Environment and Sustainability team at Shire of Mundaring. For feedback, questions or to subscribe, email environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au

What's On



Creekline Restoration Workshop, Boya

Sat 22 May, 10am to 12pm

This workshop will provide explanations and practical demonstrations of how to prevent erosion along creek lines, control weeds and select the right native plants to restore habitat.

Register for this FREE workshop at www.eventbrite.com.au by searching for 'Creekline Restoration Workshop'.

Seedlings for Landcare pick up

Sat 12 & 13th June, 9am to 3pm

Shire Operations Depot, Halifax Place, Mundaring

Residents who successfully applied for seedlings can collect their seedlings in June.

An email will be sent to successful applicants in mid May with details of allocated seedlings and pick up day. For enquiries contact the Coordinator at: seedlings@mundaring.wa.gov.au.

Tree planting morning at Lake Leschenaultia

Sat 24 Jul, 10am to 12pm

Bring the family and help plant native trees and shrubs at the Lake! Morning tea and a sausage sizzle provided. Registration is essential as numbers are limited.

Note that the planting area is quite steep so it will not be suitable for very young children. Enquiries and registration via email to: seedlings@mundaring.wa.gov.au.