

SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

Sustainable House Day 2021

Thinking of building or renovating and want to know how to make your home more sustainable? If so, the free Sustainable House Day program could be just what you are looking for!

The program is run by Renew, a national, not-for-profit organisation that inspires, enables and advocates for people to live sustainably in their homes and communities.

The program provides the opportunity to explore some of Australia's most unique and inspiring homes, and learn from the people who designed them, built them, and live in them.

This year there are lots of ways to interact with participating homeowners and gain insight on sustainability topics.

As well as the opportunity to explore homes all across Australia, Sustainable House Day includes an exciting calendar of events featuring homeowners, designers and experts.

The main free event on 17 October is preceded by a month of online webinars with experts and homeowners providing in-depth information on subjects like finding a sustainable architect and builder, building with natural materials, insulation and energy efficiency and much more.

You can also attend in-person events organised by community partners around the country.

To find out more visit www.sustainablehouseday.com



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Kambarang - October to November

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. During Kambarang, rains are ending and days are warming. Bobtail lizards and snakes emerge to find sunny spots. Wildflowers like Blue Leschenaultias bloom in colourful displays.



Nature Play WA is an incorporated not-for-profit association and a registered charity, dedicated to improving the physical and mental health of Western Australian children by supporting a return to play outdoors and in nature.

Unstructured outdoor play is great for the children and adults alike!

The Nature Play WA website makes it easier to find outdoor events, do-it-yourself activities shared through apps and social media channels, or school-based campaigns.

The program has recently partnered with local governments and community organisations to promote nature trails that provide a unique and fun way to explore

For more information or to download the Play Trail App and Animal Detective Game, visit www.natureplaywa.org.au



Tips for a waterwise lawn

With hotter days approaching, maintaining a healthy lawn can be challenging. There are things you can do to help your lawn stay resilient all year round.

The best time to water your lawn is early in the morning before 9am. Watering early on your allocated watering days allows the moisture to soak through the roots, keeping your lawn hydrated throughout the day.

When rain is forecast, switch irrigation off and let mother nature take care of the watering. It's also a good idea to check your irrigation system regularly so that you're watering efficiently.

This will help avoid any unnecessary water run off and ensure your sprinklers aren't watering the driveway by mistake.

Like plants, your lawn needs a nutrient top up every so often to remain healthy and resilient.

Depending on your soil type, applying a good soil wetting agent and a soil moisture retainer system at least 3-4 times a year can help by improving water penetration and eliminating dry patches.

Once a year, you can apply a feed of organic fertiliser like pelletised chicken manure to your lawn prior to your regular sprinkler day. A slow release fertiliser should also be applied at the beginning of spring and every 2 months after that during the warmer months.

You might spread about one ice cream container full (2kg) per 100m² each time you fertilise. Whatever your lawn doesn't use will end up in our waterways, so please avoid over-fertilising. Always refer to the manufacturer's recommendation rate for the maximum to apply.

Mowing your lawn too short will put your lawn under extreme stress, leaving it open to disease and weed invasion. As a general rule during summer, mow your lawn every 7 to 21 days to a height of 10 to 20mm. Check your turf type to find the ideal mowing height and mowing frequency for different seasons.

Remember to always keep the mower blades sharp, as blunt blades can damage the grass and increase moisture loss.

Information courtesy of Water Corporation.

Caring for native trees in a drying climate

Rainfall has decreased in southwest Western Australia over the last 40 years as a result of climate change. Combined with a rise in average temperatures and increased evaporation, this has resulted in reduced water availability for trees.

Prolonged periods of low rainfall or 'drought' can cause even old, established trees to decline or die due to lack of water. The full effects of drought on tree health may not be obvious until years after the drought event. A reduction in growth, leaf discolouration, leaf drop and excessive epicormic growth are typical symptoms. Drought stressed trees then also become more vulnerable to diseases and insect attack.

To support drought affected trees on your property, deep watering during dry periods and other measures such as fertilising and mulching to reduce moisture evaporation from the soil can help. A qualified arboriculturist can be consulted to determine if deep watering is likely to be beneficial and if so, recommend the most appropriate watering regime and other measures to slow tree decline.

More information on caring for native trees can be found in the Shire's *Dieback and Tree Decline* information sheet at www.mundaring.gov.au.



Living with possums

Hills residents know all about these cute furry critters who can be rather noisy if they take up residence in your roof! The common brushtail and western ringtail possums live in the Jarrah forest, but have also become used to living in urban areas where there is enough shelter and food.

Western ringtail possums are critically endangered. All WA native possums are protected under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. It is an offence to intentionally kill, harm or injure them.

If you have possums living in your roof, you can encourage them to find alternative accommodation by blocking access points to the roof (but make sure the possums do not get trapped inside when you block holes). Consider installing a nest box in a tree (at least 4m high) where possums can safely nest inside.



Trapping and releasing possums may require a permit. It is usually not encouraged as studies have found that moving them more than 50m from their home range results in many dying from predation, or injury from other possums.

For more information on possums visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Budding bird photographers

To kick off the Shire's school holiday 'Wildlife Wednesdays', local environmental educator and professional wildlife photographer Simon Cherriman, and environmental educator Danielle Crichton, led a walk around Lake Leschenaultia to show kids and teens the basics of ethical bird photography at the unique Lake Leschenaultia Conservation Reserve.

Special guest Talitha Huston was also there to share her passion for bird photography and insights into the creation of her book 'Birds of the Perth Hills Region'.

Participants learned to identify and photograph bush and water birds using simple techniques. The afternoon culminated in a photo competition and a copy of Talitha's book awarded as first prize.



Landcare Calendar - Tips for Kambarang

- Plant sedges and rushes as water levels in flooded or waterlogged areas start to recede.
- Rain and sunny days bring weeds. Many weeds can be effectively controlled manually by slashing or mowing before flowering to reduce seed set.
- Get your property ready for summer (see the Shire's Firebreak and Fuel Load Notice).
- Consider alternatives to burning off to reduce fuel loads on your property. Smoke from burning off can trigger a range of health issues such as asthma.
- If you do burn off, let your neighbours know first and avoid burning green or wet plant material as this creates more smoke.



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

Earth Carers Course (FREE)
Starts Wednesday 13 October
Five sessions over five weeks

Learn how to reduce waste, save money and connect with your community. There are hands-on workshops on composting, worm farming and making beeswax wraps. Join a growing network of "Earth Carers". Register via 9424 2222 or wasteeducation@emrc.org.au.

Frogs in Your Garden (FREE)
Saturday 16 Oct (9 to 11am)
Shire of Mundaring Civic Area

Join frog enthusiast Jason Pitman from Perth Natural Resource Management to learn about common frog species found in the local area and how to simply and easily improve frog habitat around your home. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au and search for 'Frogs in Your Garden'.

Aussie Backyard Bird Count (FREE)
Monday 18 October to Sunday 24 October

Taking part in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count is easy! Just spend 20 minutes in your favourite outdoor space and tell Birdlife Australia about the birds you see during that period.
See www.aussiebirdcount.org.au.

Green Card Training (FREE)
Saturday 13 November (9am to 4pm)
Shire of Mundaring Civic Area

If you are a registered member of a Shire of Mundaring Friends Group, this workshop provides essential knowledge and skills in preventing spread of dieback in bushland reserves. Upon completion you will receive certification accredited by the Dieback Working Group. Due to limited places, one member per group may attend. More information/registration via TraceyBell@mundaring.wa.gov.au