

SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

Wild Mundaring Goes Totally Wild!



Amphibian category winner Janet Rundle's Motorbike Frog. The Motorbike Frog is named for its mating call that sounds like a motorbike changing gear.

Thank you to all the wildlife photography enthusiasts who took part in the 'Wild Mundaring' Photography Competition. With over 600 submissions, the competition has been an overwhelming success. Eighteen local photography enthusiasts have been named winners across six categories.

Winning photos will be included in a new Wildlife of the Perth Hills booklet, along with additional photos that were submitted in the competition. The booklet will become a free resource for the community to increase awareness of local wildlife and the habitats they require. We are aiming to publish it on our website later this year, and make it available as a free printed booklet in 2024.

The competition was judged by respected author, teacher and naturalist Eric McCrum, with Parks and Wildlife Fauna Officer Karen Jackson, along with the assistance of team members from the Shire's Environment team. Winning entries can be viewed at mundaring.wa.gov.au/environment-waste/wild-mundaring-photography-competition.aspx

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***Join us for a Bat Night Stalk
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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 such as Blue Leschenaultias bloom in colourful displays.



Save Water with Wicking Beds



Tired of endless watering over summer and lacklustre yields? If so, you need to know about wicking beds - the game-changer for vegetable gardening!

Wicking beds, with their ingenious design, ensure your vegetables thrive with minimal effort. These self-contained wonders are revolutionising how we grow veggies.

Here's why they're a must-try:

Water Efficiency: Wicking beds store water in a reservoir beneath the soil, allowing plants to draw moisture up through capillary action. Say goodbye to daily watering – wicking beds keep your veggies consistently hydrated.

Root Health: Controlled water supply prevents overwatering and root rot. Your plant roots will flourish, resulting in robust and bountiful crops.

Low Maintenance: Forget about frequent weeding and monitoring soil moisture. Wicking beds require minimal upkeep, giving you more time to enjoy the rest of your garden.

Year-Round Growing: Extend your growing season with wicking beds. They regulate soil temperature, providing a cozy environment for veggies in all seasons.

Eco-Friendly: Wicking beds reduce water wastage and conserve resources, making them an eco-conscious choice.

Want to learn more? Come along to our FREE Organic Veggie Gardens and Wicking Beds Workshop on Saturday 7 October! See the What's On page for more information.

Waterwise Stars!



The Shire tracks annual water use across all facilities as part of the Waterwise Council program.

Among all the Shire's facilities, the Midvale Early Childhood & Parenting Centre has stolen the spotlight with the most significant reduction in water consumption in the last year.

So, what's the secret behind their impressive water-saving journey, halving their annual water bills?

First off, the childcare centre bid farewell to running hoses during water play. They switched to containers, so children still have opportunities for water play in the warmer months.

The centre also underwent a green transformation, establishing two waterwise gardens with efficient drip irrigation systems alongside new playgrounds.

They are now harnessing rainwater from the roof with a nifty new tank. This collected rainwater waters plants and provides for some of the fun-filled water play, further reducing scheme water use.

In a nutshell, Family and Children's Services have embraced a sustainable water-saving mission, implementing a series of thoughtful changes that not only halved their water bills but also set a shining example for responsible water use.

Other Shire facilities that also showed big savings in water consumption included Chidlow Reserve (22 percent reduction), Glen Forrest Hall and Oval (21 percent reduction) and Harry Riseborough Oval (20 percent reduction).

Going Batty for Microbats!

Bats constitute approximately 20 percent of the world's mammal species, yet in Western Australia, they remain shrouded in scientific mystery.

Bats are more common in Perth than many people realise. Nine species of bats can be found in the metropolitan area of southern Western Australia, and all are little microbats!

These insect-eating mammals can be of great benefit to us all and considering they can be found in most suburban areas you have probably seen them but just not even realised.

The most common species that you are likely to see in the Perth foothills are the Gould's Wattled Bat and the White-striped Freetail Bat. Bats play pivotal roles in the ecosystem by contributing to vital ecological processes such as pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control.

Consider this: a single microbat can devour over 1000 insects in a single night, including pesky mosquitoes! Bats, in essence, function as nature's efficient pest controllers.

In normal circumstances bats prefer to make their home in hollowed out trees but due to urban development reducing their natural habitat they can now often be found in roof cavities, under bridges, in old mineshafts, tunnels and any out of the way hiding places in the suburban garden.

Want to learn more? Join the Shire of Mundaring and the Conservation Council of Western Australia for a special event: Microbat Night Stalk! We're on a mission to uncover the secrets of their night time world. For more information see the 'What's On' page.



Gould's Wattled Bats roost in hollows in old trees, occasionally in ceilings or basements of buildings. They roost together in colonies of around 30 bats. Image: H.B. Hines, DES 2009



Get into the Great Aussie Bird Count

Run by Australia's national bird conservation charity, BirdLife Australia, the annual Aussie Bird Count is Australia's largest citizen science event, held during Bird Week from 16 to 22 October 2023.

The Aussie Bird Count invites everyday Aussies across the country to count the birds they see within a 20-minute period in their backyard, park or any other local spot, and record this data using the Aussie Bird Count app or website.

This provides a population snapshot of Australian birds at the same time each year, allowing us to see any emerging trends in our bird communities over time.

To complete the Aussie Bird Count, spend 20 minutes standing or sitting in one spot and noting down the birds that you see. You will need to count the number of each species you spot within the 20 minute period.

Anyone can participate! If you aren't confident identifying lots of local birds, you can download the Aussie Bird Count app which has a great field guide function for identifying birds based on their size, colour and key features.

To register for the count, visit the Birdlife Australia's website www.birdlife.org.au

Bird and Wildlife Havens Talk



More than 40 passionate garden enthusiasts gathered for a captivating talk on 'Bird and Wildlife Havens for Small Spaces' last Saturday, September 30. The event, hosted by the Shire, featured the remarkable Rachel Green, a native garden guru and wildlife champion.

In a mere two years, Rachel and her husband Mike have magically transformed a barren garden on a small urban plot into a bustling habitat teeming with over 35 species of native birds, not to mention a delightful assortment of insects, lizards, and frogs! Rachel generously shared her top tips for creating vibrant habitat gardens in compact backyards, which included:

1. Make use of every inch of space, even pots on paving slabs can become habitat havens!
2. Ensure a steady supply of clean water - the more bird and bee baths (or bowls) you provide, the better.
3. Opt for native plants - they co-evolved with our wildlife, offering the finest variety of food and shelter.
4. Don't overlook butterflies - plant natives that attract these delicate creatures and be kind to caterpillars (they're future butterflies!).
5. Give insects a helping hand - consider crafting or purchasing a bee hotel to welcome native bees, nature's unsung pollinators!

Landcare Calendar - Tips for Kambarang

- **Late planting opportunities:** as water levels drop in waterlogged zones consider planting sedges and rushes. These don't just beautify watercourse, but also create wildlife habitat while fighting erosion.
- **Fight fire with readiness:** get ready for the upcoming fire season, guided by the Shire's Firebreak and Fuel Load Notice. The 'asset protection zone' area around your house is critical for fire safety. Reduce fuel loads, but you don't need to aim for bare soil - a little leaf litter can benefit plants, insects and fungi.
- **Battling the weed invasion:** Tackle drying weeds and seeds now to thwart their return next year. It's all about getting ahead and safeguarding your property's beauty and vitality.



Six Seasons has been prepared by the Shire of Mundaring's Environment and Sustainability team.
To subscribe email shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au

Engage with nature at our **FREE** events!

Organic Veggies & Wicking Beds

Date: Sat, 7 Oct

Time: 9 am to 11:30 am

Venue: Civic Room, Shire of Mundaring

Discover the magic of growing organic veggies while mastering water-saving secrets with wicking beds. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au, search 'Organic Veggie Gardens and Wicking Beds Workshop.'

Happy Cats and Wildlife

Date: Sat, 28 Oct

Time: 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Venue: Civic Room, Shire of Mundaring

Learn about the impact of cats on wildlife and how to keep feline friends content and thriving indoors with 'catios'. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au, search 'Happy Cats and Wildlife.'

Microbat Night Stalk

Date: Wed, 1 Nov

Time: 6 pm to 7:30 pm

Venue: Broz Park, Helena Valley

Explore the world of microbats, join a bat survey, and discover nighttime wildlife on a guided walk. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au, search 'Microbat Night Stalk.'

Hoo Wants to Be Owl Friendly?

Date: Sat, 2 Dec

Time: 9:30 am - 11:30 am

Venue: Civic Room, Shire of Mundaring

Find out how to make your property owl-friendly and explore wildlife-friendly pest control options. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au, search 'Hoo Wants to Be Owl Friendly?'

Fauna Foray at Karakamia

Date: Fri, 8 Dec

Time: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Venue: Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary

Join ecologists for a fascinating talk and nocturnal wildlife spotlight tour. Register at www.eventbrite.com.au, search 'Fauna Foray at Karakamia.'