

AUTUMN ISSUE · MARCH 2026

GREENLINK NEWS

Your local indigenous plant nursery



End of Year Celebrations

The weather was perfect for our annual Greenlink Christmas lunch, held on December 17th - a special occasion to show our gratitude to our amazing team of volunteers for their hard work throughout a particularly busy year.

The homemade feast was sensational, giving everyone the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy good conversation, a refreshing bevvy, and a delicious meal. We extend our sincere thanks to those who contributed by bringing food.

Our Christmas raffles were held and winners celebrated, everyone had the opportunity to guess the number of lollies in the jars, and each guest received a gift pack comprising a 2026 calendar featuring photos taken by our volunteers, a writing pen, and an organic cotton tea towel and reusable shopping bag, both displaying our Greenlink logo.

We are always very appreciative of the ongoing support from Whitehorse Council, with Elgar Ward Councillor Blair Barker and Parks and Natural Environment Volunteer Support Officer Cassie Lukies joining us for lunch.

Images: Greenlink Box Hill Inc



Greenlink acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of the land that the nursery conducts business on, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This issue:

Welcome to 2026, and our first newsletter of the year! This edition is bursting at the seams with news, articles, and items of interest.

There's been plenty happening at Greenlink lately, including our nursery expansion (yes, literally...) as well as a contraction of sorts, in the form of a rogue fallen tree branch!!

Our workshop series is still going strong, and we feature a recent session on cultivating bonsai with native plants.

From butterflies to bandicoots, our talented volunteers have you covered with fantastic habitat garden articles!

Eucalypt of the Year is back, and we've provided a link for you to cast your vote.

Plus, we invite you to look at tree bark in a whole new light...

Happy reading!





Nursery Expansion

In early February, we facilitated a significant transformation in the nursery's layout. With support from Whitehorse Council, we have extended our eastern boundary by 3.5 metres, complete with new fencing and preparations for additional benches.

This improvement will allow us to expand our capacity and better serve the increasing demand for indigenous plants from both our customers and numerous wholesale clients.

Additionally, this new space will enable us to increase our seed production area as we tackle the challenges posed by a changing climate, through cultivating stock boxes of plant species that are becoming harder to source from our traditional collection areas.

We are really excited about this development and the positive impact it will have on the nursery.



Images: Janet Russell & Gabrielle Bradley

Wurundjeri Seasons

Iuk Eel Season (March)

- Hot winds cease and temperatures cool.
- Iuk (eels) are fat and ready to harvest.
- Binap (Manna Gum) is flowering.
- Days and nights are of equal length.
- Lo-An Tuka, the Hunter, is the star Canopus, seen almost due south at sunset.

Source: museums victoria.com.au

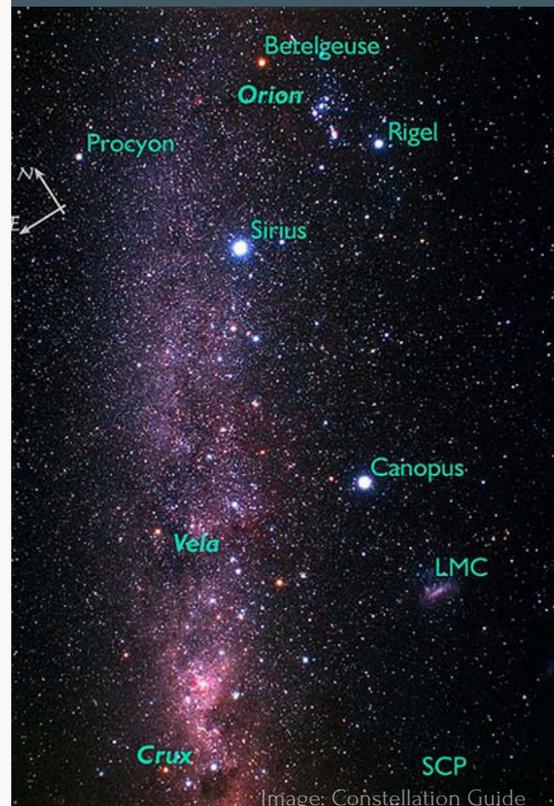


Image: Constellation Guide



Image: Canva.com

Greenlink Talk: Australian Native Bonsai

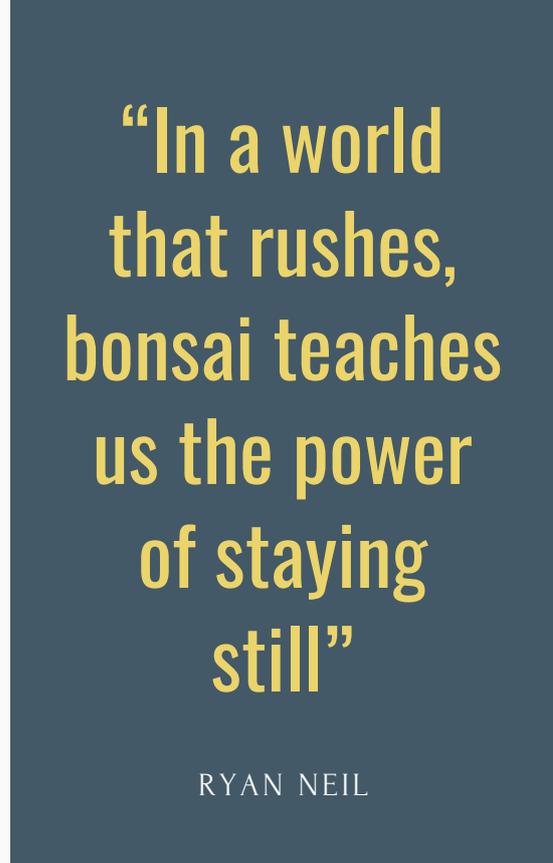
In early December, Greenlink welcomed Marcela Ferreira from Native Inspiration Bonsai to the nursery for a talk and demonstration on using native plants for bonsai.

Around 40 people were in attendance, and we learned about various aspects of growing bonsai, including how to repot tubestock, the importance of developing a good strong root system and how it impacts bonsai, how using native species has meant adapting traditional techniques, and which species can be a bit more challenging than others. Marcela brought along a couple of advanced bonsai examples to show us and explained how she got them to that stage.

Marcela's bonsai journey began many years ago, using what would be considered traditional exotic species used for bonsai. Her desire to explore something new sparked the purchase of her first Australian native plant, along with a thirst for knowledge which evolved into the creation of Native Inspiration Bonsai in 2024.

We all came away with a new appreciation of the time, skill and patience that goes into growing native bonsai, and thank Marcela for her attendance, and for answering the many questions from the audience of existing and novice bonsai growers.

Many species that Marcela discussed as being suitable for bonsai are available for purchase at Greenlink. So if you are interested in starting your own native bonsai journey....come and visit us!!





President's Report

BY ROBERT JONES

After what has been a long, hot and very dry summer, finally the heavens have started to open up and provide a little rain as we head into Autumn. Hopefully this is just the start as we very much need plenty of follow-up rain to get a good level of moisture into the soil.

With extra watering going on at the nursery this summer, we have not lost any plants due to the dry conditions, and our stocks are all looking extremely healthy and ready to go out the gate into people's gardens, parks and bushland reserves.

As mentioned previously in our last newsletter, the large Eucalyptus tree in the nursery decided to lighten its canopy and dropped a large branch (around 3 tonnes in weight) onto the polyhouse, destroying it in the process - somewhat of a disaster for us.

However, some good has come out of this as we have the opportunity now to rebuild a larger polyhouse in its place, and are currently in the final stages of accepting a quote for the new work. We will be able to enlarge the width of the polyhouse by around 1.5 mts giving us additional holding capacity for an extra 1,200 plants, and anticipate the work should be started within the next couple of weeks.

At the same time council have allowed us to enlarge the size of the nursery and have moved the eastern fence line 3.5 mts, creating more space for us. The lower portion will be kept as a shrubby area allowing us space to start seed farming some species that are becoming rarer in the bush, with the upper portion being used for stock plants and additional bench space which is desperately needed to cover the growing demand for our plants. We calculate this should enable us to increase our holding capacity by around 8,000 plants, mainly to cover orders.

We trust that all this work can be finished within the next 3 months, giving us a very much enhanced Greenlink, and puts us in a very positive position for the years ahead. A busy but very rewarding few months ahead for us.

Please call into the nursery and have a look at the changes and join us for morning tea (10.30am).

Fire Country

FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE SERIES

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has released a 6-part [documentary series](#) in collaboration with First Nations leaders and experts, inviting us to listen, learn, and take direction from Country and the generations of First Nations people who have cared for this land for over 65,000 years.

The second episode focuses on [Fire Country](#), featuring the use of traditional knowledge systems and practices in relation to cultural burning, to improve Country and community health and wellbeing.

"Fire knowledge is applied to a diverse range of ecosystems to enhance and support things like foods, medicines, germination and activation of seeds and grasses, resources, habitat, water quality, breeding cycles, and maintenance of ecological diversity that delivers benefits across all of these areas." Leeton Lee commonground.org.au



Image: Firesticks



President's Report cont....

The year ended with a great break up party to celebrate not only the festive season, but also the enormous contribution all the volunteers have made to a successful 2025. They are the lifeblood of Greenlink.

Our benches are full of stock ready for our first open Saturday for the year on 21st March - watch out for a few bargain prices on the day. Orders are being put aside ready for collection in the coming months, with additional orders now starting to come in for National Tree Day. All of this will keep us busy in the months ahead.

Seed collection is almost over for the year and with the dry conditions it has only been an average year for collection, with some plants producing almost no seed this season. Other nurseries have also reported they faced a similar situation. The parkland around the nursery appears to have survived well over summer thanks to the watering we have undertaken, and we are now preparing renovation plantings along the new eastern boundary fence line to improve the appearance and enhance that side of the nursery.

Overall we continue to operate on a strong basis, continue to stay in a healthy financial situation, and despite the very dry conditions we have had a steady stream of customers coming into the nursery every day we are open.

Treasurer's Report

BY TREVOR EDDY

At this stage, we are well on track to meet our budgeted end of year outcomes. Sales are ahead of plan and with forward orders still to be processed and invoiced, our income stream looks pretty good.

We are still to complete the repairs to our polyhouse and as we do so, will take the opportunity to increase it in size which will mean a number of other infrastructure changes may need to be made which will incur some additional capital expenditure.

With a strong balance sheet and cash position, we will be able to meet these additional expenses despite the usual February low sales volumes and additional expenses as we renew some of our ageing equipment.

Teaching our Children

It's never too early to teach our children about our indigenous plants and particularly what is safe to sample and what is not.

We were thrilled to see our three-year-old Greenlink fan, Banksia, granddaughter of Emi and Trevor, introduced to *Coprosma quadrifida*, (Prickly Currant-Bush).

Coprosma has edible, sweet currant-like fruits which ripen in summer. Banksia really enjoyed picking and eating them and even took some home for her sister Luna and also for her Mum and Dad to put in a salad. She also now knows what to pick and what not to when it comes to indigenous plants and berries.



Image: Trevor Eddy



Seed Collecting Season

After a very dry winter and spring, our seed collecting team have had quite the task collecting enough fresh seed for the nursery.

As well as visiting our traditional collection sites to harvest seed for propagation, we also collect from the many different plants we grow in the parkland adjacent to the nursery, as well as from our recently established Seed Production Area (SPA) within the nursery.

Overall, the quantities collected from bushland areas this year were lower than previous seasons, with collection from some species sufficient for our needs, but others either produced very low amounts of seed or failed to flower entirely. Other indigenous nurseries have reported similar stories, which is of a concern if it becomes a recurring issue, and highlights the importance of creating SPA's to supplement usual seed sources and reduce pressure on our precious remnant areas.





Beauty & the Beasts: Attracting Butterflies and their Larvae

BY ASHTON HAWKINS

Butterflies are one of the most recognisable and attractive group of insects. Their striking and colourful markings, graceful flight patterns, and essential role in pollinating various plants, makes them thoroughly sought after by gardeners and conservationists alike. Unfortunately for many gardeners, these beautiful critters share a much less desirable juvenile counterpart, the caterpillar.

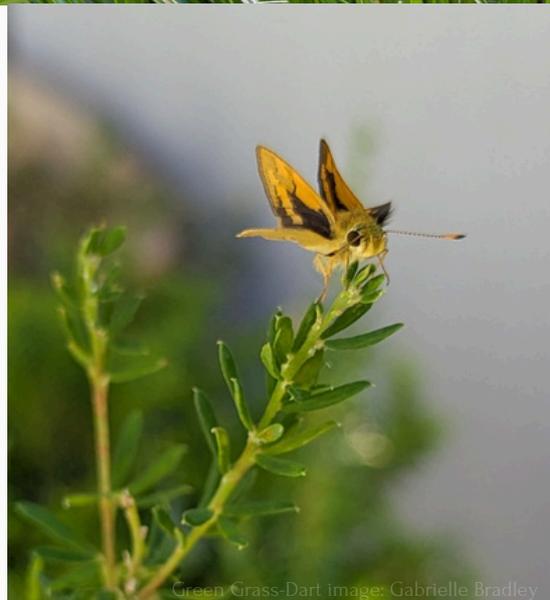
Given their various life stages, suitable butterfly habitat must accommodate the unique needs of butterflies across their lifespans. As they progress through four separate stages in their life cycle (egg, larva, pupa and adult), butterflies develop different requirements. So, what can be done to meet those needs?

LARVAE

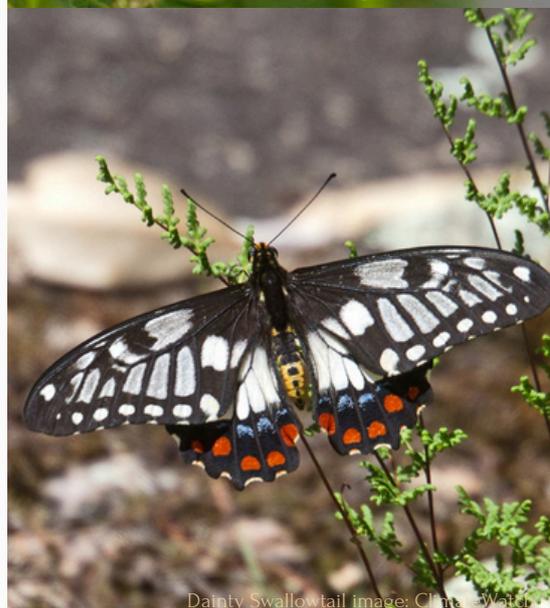
Butterfly mothers are often quite particular when selecting a plant to lay their eggs. They must find a plant which meets all the needs of their larva, which often have limited mobility and a restricted diet (sometimes to one plant species exclusively). Fortunately, there is much overlap amongst preferred host plants, which aids habitat gardeners in accommodating as diverse a population as possible.

Native graminoids (grass-like plants, including sedges, rushes and grasses) are the dominant larval host plants in more temperate climates, like Melbourne. Entire groups of butterfly such as Browns, Skippers and Darts are dependent on either specific native grasses or particular grassy habitats. *Lomandra longifolia* and *L. filiformis* are essential hosts for the various Ochre species, while Skippers also make use of many *Poa*, *Gahnia* and *Patersonia* species. Darts and Browns are far less particular, with both seeking out of a wide range of native grasses, particularly *Imperata cylindrica*, *Microlaena stipoides*, *Poa* spp., *Rytidosperma* spp., and *Themeda triandra*.

Jezebels and Swallowtails are two groups with less of a dependence on graminoids. Various mistletoes are host to Jezebel larvae, which can be established on many suburban trees and shrubs, including exotic species. Swallowtails seek out citrus plants to lay their eggs, and have a much extended range due to citrus orcharding throughout southern Australia.



Green Grass-Dart image: Gabrielle Bradley



Dainty Swallowtail image: Climate Watch



Imperial Jezebel image: Connecting Country



Image: Canva.com

Beauty & the Beasts cont.....

Blues and Coppers are a unique group of butterflies, often sharing a symbiotic relationship with native ant species. The larvae of these butterflies are frequently cultivated by native ants, which harvest a nectar released from glands on their rear, in return for protection and transport from the safety of an ant nest to suitable feeding locations.

A prominent local example of this is the Eltham copper butterfly, which relies exclusively on the *Bursaria spinosa* shrub and the *Notoncus* genus of ants. This group of butterflies is more difficult to accommodate in suburban gardens and bushland as a result of this symbiosis, further complicated by the wide range of specific host plants to each species including various mistletoes, *Pomaderris* spp., *Bursaria* spp. and *Acacia* spp. amongst many others. This diversity in host plants is a common trait with some other groups of butterfly, such as Nymphs, Glasswings, Crows and Tigers.

ADULTS

Attracting adult butterflies into the garden is often simpler than their associated larvae, as their nectar consumption is far less specific. Heavy nectar producing and long flowering plants, such as *Xerochrysum viscosum*, *Kunzea leptospermoides*, and *Goodenia ovata*, are invaluable in attracting adult stage butterflies.

Water is another essential requirement for adult butterflies, and can be met by ensuring the provision of shallow accessible water at varying height levels throughout the garden. Bird baths with rocks and sticks emerging from the water allow butterflies to access the water safely, with rocks and bricks helping to wick water upwards and away from the precarious waters edge.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

General garden practices can also be tailored to improving butterfly habitat. This can be quite simple, such as leaving caterpillars on garden plants, a reduced mowing frequency, leaving some areas a little 'messy' with organic litter, and perhaps most important is eliminating the use of chemical insecticides.

More complex interventions are always available to the avid gardener, like native lawn substitutes, mosaic mowing and the establishment of mistletoe plants.

The Wrap Up

Adult butterflies are the beautiful culmination of a far less glamorous, but equally important larval period.

While native grasses are an excellent place to start in accommodating the young of many butterflies, when combined with water and substantial nectar resources for their adult stages, any suburban garden can become a perfect habitat for so many local species of butterfly.



Varied Dusky - The image: Gabrielle Bracey



Eltham Copper Butterfly image: nccma.vic.gov.au



Greenlink Hosts MP

We were delighted to welcome our Federal Member for Menzies, Gabriel Ng MP to Greenlink.

Following a tour of our nursery and an explanation of how we worked, Gabriel enjoyed a relaxing and well-earned coffee with our volunteers and spoke about his keen interest in indigenous plants.

He also outlined grant and volunteer recognition opportunities which he has made available for our community.

Gabriel was accompanied by Emily Abrahams from his Parliamentary Office who kept things on track.



Images: Greenlink Box Hill

Tree Bark Microbes

Well if we didn't love our Australian tree species enough already, now a new study has given us another reason to be in awe of them!

Recent research by Southern Cross and Monash universities has shown tree bark plays an important role in combating greenhouse gas levels.

Each tree is host to trillions of microbial cells in its bark, which effectively "eat" harmful gases such as methane, hydrogen and carbon monoxide.

Different tree species are host to different microbes, so decisions can be made on the best trees to plant to eliminate specific toxins in those particular areas.

Read the full article [here](#)



Invoke your Inner Bandicoot!

BY JAN AKEROYD

Indigenous plants have a reputation for being tough customers, able to survive drought, bushfire and floods and tolerate poor quality soils. While often true, it doesn't mean these conditions are what native plants require. The carefully managed pre-colonial landscape of this area had adequate water, a soil rich in organic matter and shade from the hot summer sun - a landscape in which the plants, animals and humans thrived and in which all played a role in supporting the whole.

Bandicoots (image 1) were an important animal species back then, turning over leaf litter and digging hundreds of small conical holes every night using their long pointy snouts and tough clawed feet as they foraged for insects and fungi. A bandicoot can move 3.9 tonnes of soil in a year! This disturbance helped organic matter to break down and release nutrients, helped keep the soil aerated and supported the infiltration of rainwater into the soil.

We don't have bandicoots in our area of Melbourne these days (the photo was taken at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens), so it's up to us to be the bandicoot in our garden. If we are starting from scratch we can give our plants a headstart by setting up our gardens to be resilient ecosystems, or we can "retrofit" an existing garden to change the prevailing conditions or transition to plants more suited to conditions which cannot be changed.

- Soil Aeration: human noses are short and not particularly suited for digging holes, so we can channel our inner bandicoot and aerate compacted soil ergonomically by using a garden fork or broadfork to break up soil compaction. Drive the fork into the ground, ideally 20cm deep, then rock it back and forth to crack the soil open and create deep fissures to bring oxygen into the soil, help rainwater to soak in. Leaf litter and topsoil will fill the cracks keeping these new channels open. This is a great way to prepare a new planting area and avoids the "bucket effect" caused when you dig a planting hole in clay and fill it full of lovely rich soil; if water can't drain away, the hole may fill with water and rot the roots of your new plant.

For large spaces in my garden, I also like to incorporate heavily mulched pathways so I can work from these paths when planting and caring for my new garden area. A large paver or temporary piece of plywood placed in the middle of a garden bed will also provide a spot I can work from, while avoiding re-compaction.

- Nutrient cycling: the digging activity of bandicoots breaks up twigs and leaves and old dry grass so that it breaks down in the soil more quickly. The human shortcuts for this bandicoot activity are the addition of garden waste compost to depleted soils and using a layer of chipped arborist mulch to cover any open ground.



Image 1



Image 2

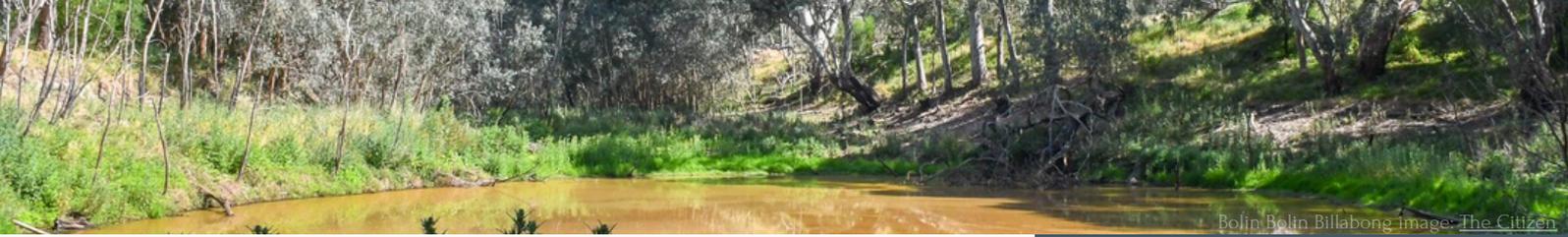


Image 3



Image 4

Photo credits: Images 1 & 3 Jeff Zehr Images 2 & 4 Jan Akeroyd



Bolin Bolin Billabong image: The Citizen

Invoke your Inner Bandicoot! cont.....

In the long term, establishing a dense cover of plants will create a living mulch and drop leaf litter to create the perfect conditions for birds, small insects and soil organisms to turn soil over and recycle nutrients - it's amazing to look under the ruby saltbush in the park around Greenlink, it is alive with critters and dark crumbly humus.

● Water infiltration: the rolling hills of Whitehorse were once open grassy woodland with a network of seasonal and permanent creeks, wetlands and billabongs in the valleys. The clayey soils were managed by the local Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to grow various tubers and grasses; and the activity of our bandicoot friends would have been appreciated for its contribution to the health of this productive landscape. The holes bandicoots created would have trapped rainwater runoff allowing it to hydrate topsoil. Wide flat creek valleys would flood regularly allowing water to soak in and replenish the groundwater and wetlands. Billabongs and ponded water along creeks would provide accessible water even in the height of summer when many creeks would dry up.

Along with providing important habitat, these waterways also cooled the landscape and supported large trees which would pump some of the groundwater back into the atmosphere so it could fall again as rain.

In modern Whitehorse, the bandicoots are long gone, there is little room for flooding, wetlands have been drained and most of the creeks are now barrel drains which shunt rain runoff from roofs, paving and roadways straight into Port Philip Bay. An environmentally valuable action we can take in our gardens is to capture rainwater for later use and to modify our gardens to support the infiltration of rainwater into the soil.

On page 12 of the [Gardening with Indigenous Plants](#) book, it recommends creating a saucer-shaped depression around a plant to catch rain and prevent run-off, or on a slope this could be a half-circle on the lower side of the plant. If I am hand-watering through the summer, I create holes or small ditches above new plants and add water so it soaks in and moves down through the topsoil surrounding the plants roots. On a larger scale you can create terraces and ditches (aka [swales](#) on farm-scale projects) across the contour to slow the movement of runoff and allow it to soak in.

There are many examples of this strategy in the park around Greenlink. Terracing of this bare embankment (image 2) with rocks and branches is helping water soak in, keeping mulch in place and has helped these plants to establish.

...and finally

While bandicoots don't use rainwater tanks, if you have the space, you can store rainwater for later use, even on a small scale. I have a 100 litre tank and a 250 litre tank which catch water from the garage roof - if we get a few thunderstorms through the summer this significantly reduces the amount of tap water I use in the garden, and I also use this unchlorinated water for topping up our small pond.

Depending on the layout of your garden, you may also be able to create a [rain garden](#) where water from a nearby building is held on the property and slowly soaks in, or fills a pond; with any overflow being directed into the stormwater system. Cool, shaded creek gullies would once have provided permanently moist conditions for indigenous plants which rely on those conditions, so another strategy to consider is adding drip irrigation to a shady area of your garden specifically for these plants.

Even though we can't bring bandicoots back to urban gardens, by creating a diverse indigenous garden, many other species will find refuge and add their own special gardening talents to our efforts. Thornbills (image 3) have made a home in our neighbourhood and are spending a lot more time in our garden helping with pest control since we added our little pond. Others, like the thirsty parrot in image 4, which drank from the puddle made by the hose on a very hot dry day, will stop to refresh and refuel on their journey.

There is a workshop in Ringwood on April 18th that may be of interest: [Australian Native Rain Gardens](#)

VOTE

Image: Canva.com

Eucalypt of the Year

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!

March 23 is National Eucalypt Day, and 2026 will be the 9th Eucalypt of the Year with a very special theme of “Our Eucalypt Home”, celebrating the important habitat and biodiversity roles eucalypts play in the Australian environment.

You can nominate your favourite Eucalypt species from the ten contenders [here](#) with voting closing on Monday 16 March.

The most popular Eucalypt of the Year will be announced on Saturday 23 March.



5 Facts about Eucalyptus Trees

Eucalypts have been in Australia for at least 60 million years.

Eucalypts evolved from being rainforest species and adapted to a hotter and drier climate.

We all love eucalypts for their form, aromatic foliage and stunning flowers, but they are incredibly important as food and habitat for so many birds, insects and mammals.

Sadly, we are losing many of our mature eucalypts, meaning less hollows and nesting sites for hundreds of species.

Eucalypt forests make up over 80% of Australia's forests, but are threatened through land clearing, with some species now qualifying as threatened.

Source and image below: [Birdlife Australia](#)



Polyhouse Update

Late last year, our nursery experienced significant damage to the main polyhouse due to a large tree branch that fell from the nearby Candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*).

Fortunately, this incident occurred in the early morning hours and didn't affect the safety of our volunteers, and luckily we did not suffer any loss of plants as the polyhouse frame absorbed much of the impact, along with a small unobtrusive metal table next to the potting mix bin, as shown in the top right image.

The council arborists cut up the branches, and we will make use of the logs in and around the nursery for habitat and as planter stands.

We are currently collaborating with the business that upgraded our seed house last year to install a larger frame to accommodate the growing demand for our plants.

Stay tuned for updates and photos of the new polyhouse in our next newsletter issue!





Hey Kids!!

ARE YOU UP FOR A SCAVENGER HUNT?

Your challenge is to tick off all 18 nature items, and learn some traditional Kulin Nation names as well!

NANGANA... YANNATHAN ... THARRACK To See... To Walk...To Hunt

DANCE OF THE PLANTS © 2022 Sonia Marie & Libby Henstock

Gardening For Small Native Birds

We all know how wonderful it is to share our gardens with native birds, but the reality is that many of our smaller bird species are disappearing, due to urbanisation and changes in the type of plants we grow.

But you can create a safe haven for wildlife in your own backyard.

This [video](#) by Birds in Backyards shows you which plants to use in your garden that will provide food, shelter and nesting material specifically for small Australian birds, with many of the plants recommended in this video available for purchase here at Greenlink Nursery.



Source: [Dance of the Plants](#)



Greenlink Box Hill Inc. is now on [LinkedIn](#)

For those members on LinkedIn, you can now join and follow us using this link [Greenlink Box Hill Inc](#)

Or follow us on Instagram: [@greenlink_nursery](#)

At Greenlink Box Hill we value:

- Every customer who deals with us.
- A happy, safe, and enthusiastic workplace that embraces all volunteers and makes them feel welcome, respected, and honoured.
- The high quality of our plants.
- The contribution that everyone makes to our success.
- Honesty and ethics in all of our dealings with customers and each other.



Greenlink Box Hill Inc. Reg No. A0018547D

President: Robert Jones

Vice-President: Emi Luppino

Secretary: Chris Almond

Treasurer: Trevor Eddy

Committee Members: Andrew Hardie, Heather Eadon, Janet Russell, Gabrielle Bradley, Ashton Hawkins, Matthew Jennings, Andrew Halliday

Newsletter Editor: Gabrielle Bradley

BE A CONTRIBUTOR

If you have any stories, news, photos, or an upcoming event that you would like to share with Greenlink for publication in our next newsletter, please write to the editor at greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com

GOOD TO KNOW

Regular open days:
Tuesdays & Wednesdays
9.00 am - 12.00 pm

Saturday sales days:
21 March 2026
18 April 2026
23 May 2026

Contact:

greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com

0479 121 653

(Answered 9am - 12pm Tues & Wed only)

Visit:

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www.greenlinkboxhill.org

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