



Mornington Environment

NEWS

caring for our local environment

**We acknowledge the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation, past, present and emerging.
The Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we gather.**



A new Friends Group is advancing the preservation, further native development of Pine Avenue Reserve.

Report on page 4

Welcome to Environmentalist Janet Limb

Janet will compile articles for each addition of
MEA NEWS.

You can submit all your
articles to Janet and she will
compile them ready for
inclusion in the next edition.

Janet is an active member
and a regular contributor to
MEA. NEWS.

Thank you Janet,
your help is much appreciated.



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We cordially invite you to

Mornington Environment Association's

Native Bush Tucker Presentation & Annual General Meeting 2022

7:00pm, 10th November

Currawong Community Centre, Mornington



AGM Business

Positions of Office for 2023 Committee

Guest Speaker: Ian Hagley*

"Native Bush Tucker"



Followed by light refreshments

Bring a friend and a plate of supper to share

**Ian Hagley is a recent graduate of Burnley Horticultural College and has recently completed a course on Indigenous plant foods. He is also a committed environmentalist.*

**Members, remember to submit signed nominations to
Election Officer - Jan Oliver, by 27th October**

September was Biodiversity Month

Spring is a good time to do something about maintaining a balanced biosphere

Biodiversity is the natural world around us, in all of the organisms - the plants, animals, insects and ecosystems which live on our planet. This enables us to live, breath, drink and eat within the 'Biosphere.'

Can we do something about preserving a balanced biodiversity?

Whenever we mow the grass or chop down a tree or burn firewood or squash a snail or tread on a small shell on the beach, we are actually destroying the biosphere. So, anything we do to preserve natural life, the better!

1. Grow herbs and native small plants in pots.
2. Buy compost or use your vegetable food scraps to make a compost .
3. You can grow native plants even mixed in with roses and geraniums. The Shire will provide you with a list appropriate for the area you live in.
4. Swap excess vegetables or flowers with neighbours – share your fruit harvest with friends.
5. Plant native plants or vegetables instead of lawn or footpath grass – so what if someone steals a bit of your parsley or native rosemary.
6. Pay for a green bin, or compost these (but note that the compost bin needs to reach a temperature of about 30 degrees to break down – and you need to add a mix of butcher & newspaper torn into shreds, plus dead leaves to balance household potato peels).
7. Preserve native birds by not feeding magpies and kookaburras regularly – they are the predator birds and if there are lots around, they will eat the small birds (wrens, etc) or disturb nests. It's OK to sometimes throw your old crusts for the crested or speckled doves but not all the time. And don't feed the seagulls either! Big flocks put off all other sea birds and they chase away the migratory birds who have just started to arrive here, having flown thousands of kilometres from Siberia and Japan to spend summer on our foreshores. By Jan Oliver

Refine Your Recycling For Best Results

To assist in this process:

1. Officeworks on the Nepean Highway now has a bank of clearly labelled recycle boxes at the entrance. As well as **Ink & Toner cartridges**, you can drop off **Pens & Markers, Mobile phones & accessories, Batteries and Computers**.
2. The Mornington Library has a similar facility conveniently located in Vancouver St behind the Shire Offices. *(See the set-up in the photo on the right.)*
3. The Mornington Recovery Centre at 134 Watt Rd is operated by the Shire. Here recyclable products are received free of charge. **These include white goods (not fridges), computer equipment, batteries of all sorts, aluminium, car oil and paint.** For details check their website.

Let's make the most of these opportunities to keep reusable materials out of landfill! By Janet Limb



Bush Blues by Janet Limb

Spring brings a blue aura to our peninsula. Royal blue, navy blue, sky blue, cornflower blue, midnight blue - how many blues are there? If you are a blue-lover, a walk in the bush will offer you all these and more!



Blue Stars (*Chamaescilla corymbosa*), little china blue saucers trimmed with white stamens, start to flower in early October. About the same time Love Creeper (*Comesperma volubile*) first appears. Masses of tiny flowers on twining leafless stems create a soft blue haze through low-growing shrubs. Love Creeper will do no harm to the host as it seeks only support, having its own root system. If you look at the pea-like flowers through a magnifying glass you will find it differs from the pea in that it does not have the standard petal standing up at the back. Equally delicate is the Tall Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia stricta*) which produces a single flower atop a thin wiry stem. This plant is a member of the Campanulaceae family and is not related to the English bluebell.

The Black-anthered Flax Lily (*Dianella revoluta*) is a larger plant which grows to a height of around 70cms. The flower-bearing stem emerges from a clump of strappy leaves. It has many branchlets supporting up to a hundred flowers that hang down gracefully like fuchsias. They are a bright navy with black and yellow anthers. Later they develop into berries of a rich, glossy purple.



The handsome Spotted Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra ixioides*) splashes its colour through the bush on sunny days. These plants can be frustrating because if conditions are not right the flowers simply stay closed. The flower stem is green and stout with a single leaf and grows to about 60 cms. It will support up to 20 flowers which vary from pale to medium blue and are generally freckled with a darker blue. Happily this beautiful orchid is still widespread in Victoria,

In November the silvery buds of Blue Pincushions (*Brunonia australis*) open to display

their tufted heads of cornflower blue. They will continue to flower well into summer. This widespread plant was named for Robert Brown, the botanist who came to Port Phillip with Matthew Flinders on the Investigator.

The last of the blues is the Tall Lobelia (*Lobelia gibbosa*) a reticent plant which is only prepared to show its elegant midnight blue tubular flowers every two or three years. Of course there are plenty of pinks, reds, oranges and purples in the spring palette but sometimes it is good to focus on blue.



The Mornington Peninsula has extensive National and State Parks and excellent walking tracks. Try the walk from Seawinds to Waterfall Gully. Or from Baldry's Crossing through Green's Bush to Bushranger's Bay. You will see some of the plants I have described and lots of others. For more information visit the contact the Mornington Peninsula Information Centre at:-

359B Point Nepean Rd, Dromana. Tel 5950 1579

Friends Group Reports

Friends of Pine Avenue Reserve - MEA welcomes a new Mornington Friends Group

Yes! We had our second working bee on Friday 16th September and welcomed three new people - in all, 9 - together with **Sheridan from Naturelinks**. We weeded and planted 50 Poas - spraying had not taken place because of the weather - Jamie from Advance surprised us with eight of his students - they donated another 40 Poas - so in all 90 were planted. We plan to meet the third Friday (9am to 11am) each month. Next month hopefully spraying will be done and mulch delivered and we intend to cut and dab Mountain Ash in some areas. We are a very enthusiastic group, looking forward to a grander plan with the Shire in the future. *From Group Coordinator, (see last page to see Contacts address).*



Beleura Cliff Path Working Bee held on the first day of Spring 2022



All along the path, wildflowers are into bloom. The tiny "Egg and Bacon" (*Eutaxia*) pictured above, is flowering early this year. All plants have been growing like crazy.

We don't touch these plants at this time of year, unless they really are a hazard. In the next couple of months the *Eutaxia microphylla* will drop its seed. Each seed has a tiny piece of "chocolate" on it. The ants collect the seed, take it down their holes, eat the "chocolate", and throw away the seed, which can then germinate. We will prune these plants in January 2023. (If you look carefully in January you can sometimes see a trail of ants across the path carrying seeds).



We were weeding and trimming overhanging plants. We want to keep the path safe and clear for walkers and get rid of weeds that compete with the indigenous plants. This means getting down on hands and knees and pulling out weeds by hand, or in some cases cutting off at ground level. Particular targets are the polygala and boneseed.

Photo, right: Hands and knees of volunteers are in action here to get the job done.

★ Latest Note ★

After all the Friends Group did to secure the cliffside and pathway, unfortunately, the state of the Beleura Cliff was declared unsafe. **Mornington Shire has closed the public path until further notice, to protect the users of the pathway.**

The Coast Beard-heath, (*Leucopogon parviflorus*) (pictured right with Kate Phillip), is a hardy small coastal tree with nice flowers and deep roots. Its white berries are edible for humans and irresistible to birds, which devour them and poop out the seed nearby. Passing through the stomach of a bird stimulates the seed to germinate. We do not touch the Heath this time of year unless they are a hazard. We want the birds to spread the seed. We will prune them in January 2023. The Coast Beard-Heath (*Leucopogons*) have been decreasing in numbers on the Beleura Cliff.

Below left - Margrit Abbey, Sally Madsen and Chris Ansell.

Below right - Not praying, working- Jenelle Curtin



Mornington Rotary Club and Tanti Creek Friends Teaming up at Hunter's Crossing .

Mornington Rotary Club has led a project to help rehabilitate the indigenous vegetation at Hunters Crossing, a pedestrian bridge over Tanti Creek on the eastern side of the Nepean Highway. The project was funded by a South East

Water Community Grant, and enabled by Tanti Creek Friends Group, and local residents who all pitched in for the mulch spreading and planting of 300 native plants.

Environmental Sustainability has become a key area of focus internationally for Rotary and this project was part of the club's commitment to it. Special thanks to Tanti Creek Friends Group Coordinator, Marty Lenard, who lent his expertise to plant selection and planting techniques, the Council Nursery at the Briars for the plants and the local residents who got involved.

The project also involved prior spraying by

Council contractors of the invasive kikuyu grass that had taken over from the native vegetation and the spreading of two truck-loads of mulch to suppress its regrowth. The project was delivered over two weekends, one just before the winter and one immediately after it. Report from Mornington Rotary Club.



Friends of Mills Beach

Despite the weather over the last few months not being conducive to working outside, we have managed to get a few things done over the winter. Last month we planted some spinifex on the edge of what is left of Shire Hall Beach, hopefully these will take root and help hold things together a bit. We also cleared a lot of polygala off Red Bluff, a job which is never ending.

In our September working bee we intended to clean up the

Bath Street path and Area A, but ended up spending most of the time pulling out lots of Cape Ivy in the foreshore behind Area A and at the bottom of the path. As a result not much of the path itself was cleaned up. This might be a focus for our October working bee, although other suggestions are always welcome.

Brian Burrows

Bryozoan Reefs of Westernport Bay.

Travis Dutka , lecturer at Latrobe University, May 5 2022 at Coolart Homestead.

Introduced by Amy from Mornington Peninsula Landcare.

These reefs were thought to be coral until 2016 when it was discovered that they were an entirely different species. This project commenced in 2018.

Unlike corals they do not thrive in clear water and are not photosynthetic. They grow in turbid water, mostly at depths between 5 and 8 metres. Reefs are up to 1.5 metres high and extend for 1.74 km. The bryozoa exude a calcium carbonate skeleton which is extremely brittle.

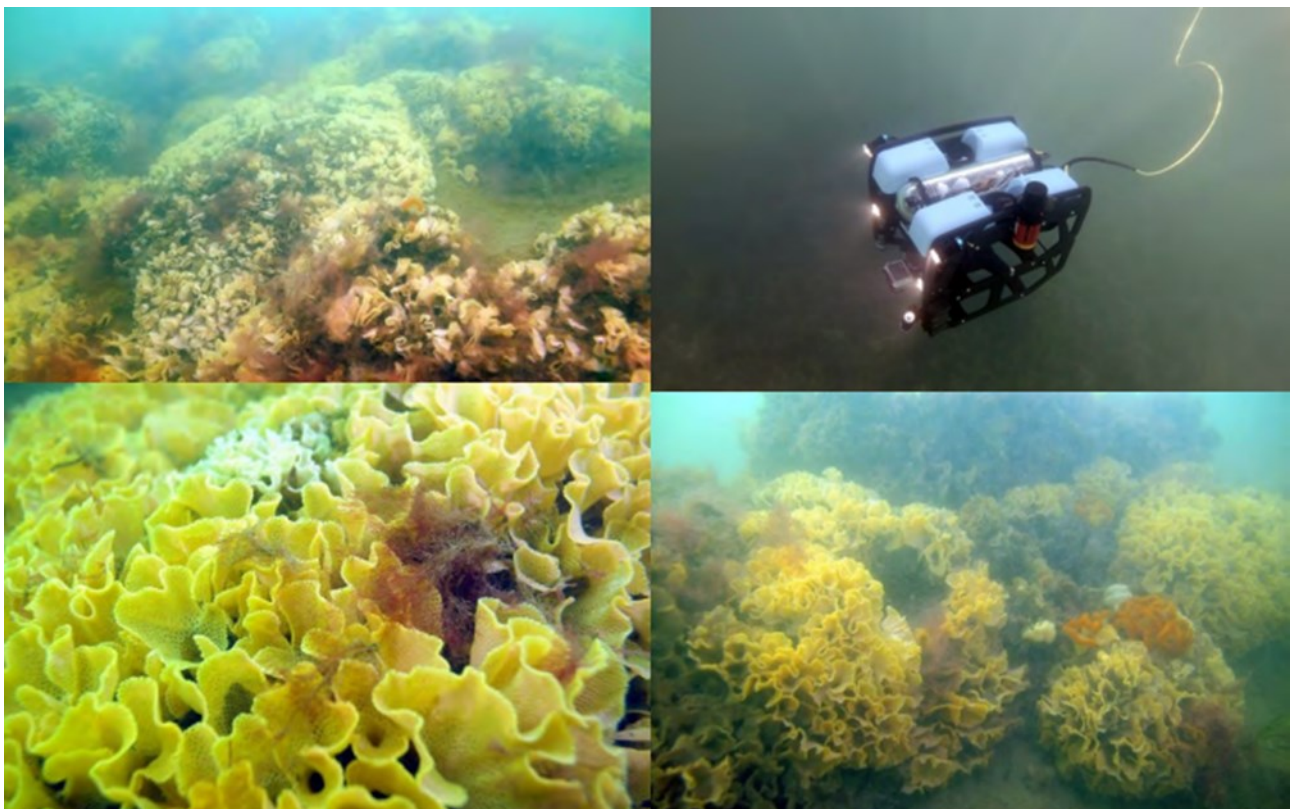
Fish, crabs, worms, octopuses and molluscs live within the colonies making them biodiversity hotspots. In spring large snapper weighing up to 8 kilos can be found in these reef areas of Westernport but not in other areas.

The Westernport colonies are the largest known and are thought to be unique in the world. Other colonies, in Port Phillip for example, are only small cabbage sized clusters.

Reproduction is by the release of larvae which need a hard surface to attach to, for example sand. Thus reefs are formed in lines correlating with the ripples of sand on the floor of the bay.

Colonies are located using echo sounders. They can then be examined using remote operated vehicles and drop/drift cameras. Water visibility is very poor so diving is not an option.

From Ann Robb





🇺🇦 I acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay my respects to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

TRUST FOR NATURE ON THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

The Mornington Peninsula has many wonderful parks and reserves which the public can enjoy. However there are also extensive areas of bushland which are privately owned. In this era, when so many of our treasured species are in decline, it is crucial that this valuable habitat be preserved.

Trust for Nature is a not-for profit conservation organisation which has the legal power to enter into agreements (known as conservation covenants) with landowners. These covenants, which are entered into voluntarily, set aside areas of native bush to be protected. When the land is sold, the covenant remains on the title and is enforceable in perpetuity with oversight from the Trust.

In 2020 Mornington Peninsula Shire and Trust for Nature joined forces to establish a conservation covenant to protect Warringine Park which stretches from Hastings to Bittern. A covenant was also placed on Shire property at 92 Elizabeth Avenue, Capel Sound which forms an important part of the Tootgarook Wetland, much of which is already protected.

Another initiative of *Trust for Nature*, working with Holmesglen TAFE and in partnership with covenantors, has been to establish a Conservation and [Ecosystem](#) Management Program to train Traditional Owners of the Bunurong, [Waddawurrung](#) and Wurundjeri in land restoration and revegetation. Graduates work on important habitat helping to conserve threatened species such as the Leafy Greenhood and the Powerful Owl. They also focus on large weeds such as *Pittosporum*, Blackberry and Boneseed.

Ben Cullen is the Regional Manager for the Port Phillip & [Westernport](#) Catchment Area

He is proud of what has been achieved in this area. He says, “[There are so many conservation outcomes to achieve in this space. The Mornington Peninsula is home to many threatened species and communities that can be protected. By working with Traditional Owners and passionate landholders we can ensure that this area is always significant for generations to come](#)”.



Help us secure native habitat forever

You can help protect Victoria's native flora and fauna by making a donation to **Trust for Nature**.

Lewin's Rail - Ground Dwelling Birds of French Island by Dr. Liz Znidarsic.



These ground dwelling birds are difficult to monitor as they are shy and secretive and often mainly active at night. Therefore acoustic monitoring is very useful. Advances in data storage and analysis now allow huge amounts of data to be analysed and represented as coloured graphs which can identify each species and their activity over a 24 hour period. Data to date proves feral cat elimination programmes are working and a variety of ground dwelling birds are reproducing successfully.

Videos have confirmed clutches of new hatchlings. Species identified include Lewin's rail, bitterns, crakes. 60,000 hectares of French Island are Ramsar listed and animals identified there include the long nosed potteroo and the Eastern bandicoot.

Friends of Coolart Homestead in collaboration with Parks Victoria presented this talk in a series relating to the biodiversity of Westernport Bay.

Make Bookings to attend "Coolart Conversations" no charge! From Ann Robb.

Contact Us:

- www.morningtonenviro.org.au
- morningtonea@gmail.com
- **PO Box 580 Mornington 3931**
- **Monthly MEA Meetings**
7:00PM 2nd Thursday Feb. – Dec.

President:

Margaret Howden 0414 641 999

Secretary:

Ann Robb morningtonea@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Martin Lenard 0427 888 712

Friends Groups

Tanti Creek Friends:

Martin Lenard 0427 888 712
tanticreekfriends@gmail.com

Mills Beach Friends:

Brian Burrows
millsbeachfriends@gmail.com

Fisherman's Beach Friends:

Peter Deerson 0401 584 792
pdeerson@netscape.net

Friends of Beleura Cliff Path:

Peter Nicholson 0400 326 306
beleuracliffpath@gmail.com

Friends of Mornington Railway Reserve:

Charlie Clarke cfc3812@gmail.com

Friends of Pine Reserve

friendsofpine@gmail.com

MEA appreciates help and support

Volunteers meet to work and care for the following areas:

Where and When?

Tanti Creek 9:30—11:30 Last Tuesday of the month contact Martin

Mills Beach 9:30—11:30 3rd Sun or Mon of the month contact Brian

Beleura Cliff Path 9:30—11:30 varied sessions contact Peter Nicholson

Fishermen's Beach 9:00-11:00 last Thurs of month contact Peter Deerson

Pine Ave Reserve 9:00 –11:00 3rd Friday of the month, contact by email

(see left side of this page for contact details)



You too can be involved

If you would like to join us, You can join on line :

- www.morningtonenviro.org.au

Fees are: Family \$15; Single \$10

Email— morningtonea@gmail.com
Please include your contact number.