



December 2020



## Your local indigenous nursery

## 100% run by volunteers

### **Regular Open Days Saturday Sales Days**

Tuesdays and Wednesdays  
9.00 am to 12:00 pm  
Saturdays 9:00am-1:00pm  
17 April, 22 May,  
28 August, 2 October  
and 6 November 2021

### **Contact or Visit Us**

greenlinkboxhill@gmail.com  
41 Wimmera St  
Box Hill North 3129  
0479 121 653  
(Answered 9:00am -12:00pm  
Tues & Wed only)

### **Stay in Touch and Resources**

[www.greenlinkboxhill.org](http://www.greenlinkboxhill.org)  
[www.facebook.com/  
greenlinknursery](https://www.facebook.com/greenlinknursery)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/  
greenlinkboxhill](https://www.flickr.com/photos/greenlinkboxhill)

On October 14 thirty one people attended Greenlink's AGM - held via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. It was disappointing that we were unable to host our usual AGM with supper but it was great to see people we had not seen for months - if only on the screen! We were pleased to have a good number of members and visitors present including Whitehorse Councillor Tina Liu, Whitehorse Tree Education officer Belinda Moody and guest speaker Dr Luis Mata.

The Executive members of the Greenlink Committee were reappointed at the meeting. Karin Godfrey and Gabrielle Bradley have subsequently been appointed as General members of the Committee.

The AGM was an opportunity for our President to summarise Greenlink's achievements and to thank all for their contributions towards Greenlink's success this year.

## Indigenous plants for Indigenous insects

Dr. Luis Mata, ecologist and Research Fellow at RMIT University gave a fascinating talk after the AGM entitled 'Indigenous plants for indigenous insects'. Luis is researching the social and ecological benefits of wildlife gardening for Gardens for Wildlife Victoria. He is examining the relationships between insects and indigenous plants in 4 indigenous plant nurseries in Melbourne including Greenlink.

Luis came to Australia from Spain 7 years ago and is excited by the number of insect species which have not yet been identified here. There are so many new findings to make in Australia compared with Spain where many more studies have been undertaken.

Having determined that the blue banded bee was the favourite insect of the majority of people in the audience Luis started by talking about it. These indigenous bees are attracted to indigenous flowers such as dianella, hop goodenia and pimelea. The bees can usually be seen in October and November when most plants are in flower. Luis told us about a project conducted in Sheils Reserve for the City of Moreland. The Council took over some abandoned green space and asked for advice in bringing back indigenous insects including blue banded bees. They planted indigenous plants and one year later found that the bees had returned! This one example clearly shows the strong connection between indigenous plants and indigenous insects.

Luis shared some of his beautiful photos with us during his talk. The photos allow close up views of the insects and flower parts and allow you to see exactly what the insect is doing – whether it is feeding and pollinating or whether it is just 'having a free lunch'!



### **Amegilla sp. on Pelargonium austral**

Westgate Park, City of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Hymenoptera: Apidae [Blue-banded bee]

Geraniales: Geraniaceae [Austral storksbill]



### **Nematoceran fly on *Xerochyrsum viscosum***

Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery, Port Melbourne, City of Port Phillip, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Luis said that the crane fly above waited for the sticky everlasting flower to open and then moved to feed on it. You can see that the delicate positioning of the legs allows the insect to feed without performing any pollinating service – hence the free lunch.



### **Carrot wasps on *Olearia ramulosa***

Greenlink Box Hill Indigenous Nursery, Box Hill North, City of Whitehorse, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Luis was very pleased to capture the photo of the carrot wasp while at Greenlink. He said that it was quite a rare interaction. The wasp is adapted to holding the flower and is definitely feeding but is probably not pollinating. Another free loader!

Luis spoke about the vital importance of remnant vegetation and reserves for preserving biodiversity. He showed his appreciation of the work done by indigenous plant nurseries including our own. His research has been somewhat interrupted by COVID restrictions but he will now be getting back into the field again. His dream is ultimately to be able to specify a whole list of pollinators and insects attracted to particular indigenous plants (potentially with photos). This information can then be shared with wildlife gardeners and can help garden designers select plants which attract more insect diversity.

Luis spoke about what a powerful tool the digital camera is. It allows you to practise taking photos and a macro lens allows you to get closer to the insects and flowers. There is a limit however to how close you can get before you disturb the insect. A good shot requires patience. I would add that it also requires knowledge of the subject, expertise with the camera and artistry!

You can view more of Luis's photos at [www.flickr.com/photos/dingilingi/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/dingilingi/albums)

An article co-authored by Luis about his research for the City of Melbourne can be viewed at: [Indigenous plants promote insect biodiversity in urban greenspaces | bioRxiv](#).

An extract from the conclusions:

'Our study further highlights that multi-layered, structurally complex indigenous vegetation plays a core role in sustaining high insect biodiversity in urban areas, with the indigenous midstorey and canopy key to maintaining a rich and functionally diverse indigenous insect community within this system. '

Luis answered many interested questions from our audience. He concluded by thanking his colleague Dr. Laura Mumaw who is collaborating with him on this research project, Belinda Moody, the indigenous plant nurseries and others connected with Gardens for Wildlife Victoria.

We are very pleased that Luis is currently researching insect biodiversity around Greenlink and are most grateful to him for sharing his knowledge and passion for discovery.

# City Nature Challenge 2021

## What is the City Nature Challenge?

The City Nature Challenge is an international effort for people to find and document plants and wildlife in cities across the globe. The event will be held from the 30 April- 3 May 2021.

## Why participate in the City Nature Challenge?

There is nature all around us, even in our cities! Knowing what species are in our city and where they are helps us study and protect them, but the ONLY way to do that is by all of us – scientists, land managers and the community – working together to find and document the nature in our area. By participating in the City Nature Challenge, not only do you learn more about your local nature, but you can also make your city a better place – for you and other species!

The above information is an extract from the City Nature Challenge 2021 website <https://citynaturechallenge.org/participate/>

We encourage all Greenlink volunteers to participate. Start by downloading the iNaturalist app and then sharing your observations with scientists, experts and other naturalists (Follow instructions on the website above).



The City of Whitehorse is encouraging community groups across the municipality to get involved. There are various opportunities for Greenlink to contribute to the event. For instance, we could host or guide a nature walk. It can be focused towards finding and documenting a specific species or just general observations. We can also be involved with species identification sessions through the iNaturalist platform.

Greenlink will be coordinating with Whitehorse Council in order to participate in this event. We have not yet decided on exactly how Greenlink will be involved. This is a great opportunity for us to encourage more people to appreciate and learn about our indigenous plants. We are open to suggestions. If you have an idea about what we could offer let us know!

Contact Cassie Lukies, ParksWide Volunteer Support Officer for more information.

Email: [Cassie.Lukies@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:Cassie.Lukies@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

## Bushy Creek Wetland 1 – Conversation starter, December 2nd



### Comments made on Box Hill North Community & Surrounds Facebook page -:

*“First time ever heard frogs at Bushy Creek trail. Testament to the wonderful volunteers and the work they do behind the nursery with this mini wetland.”*

*“I often hear the frogs when I walk along there, especially after rain. Thanks Greenlink and volunteers for the work you do! 🙏”*

*“My young son and I walked by this today, and he was very enchanted by the echo of the frogs. 🐸 thanks Greenlink!!”*

*“It is pretty cool. I love hearing the frogs when I walk past 🐸🐸🐸”*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. Greenlink tries to look after the frogs. I will pass your comments on to our Volunteers. Regards Emi

# Seed Team update

With the lockdown lifting in the last few weeks, the Seed Team have finally been able to get out and about again and resume our flora mapping program, whilst also beginning to collect seed for various indigenous plant species that we propagate at Greenlink.



**Lagenophora stipitate**  
**(Blue bottle daisy)**

We have visited some areas that were previously used as seed collection provenances many years ago, and will resume collecting from there again, so that Greenlink can expand the genetic diversity of our seed bank, and give us many more options for collecting.



**Burchardia Umbellate**  
**(Milkmaids)**

In recent weeks we have visited and GPS mapped plant species at 100 Acres, Tindals Reserve, and the remnant bushland area at Yarra Valley Grammar School, with more trips planned over the next few weeks to collect seed that we noted in our last visit was nearly ready to go. The team is loving getting out into these remnant areas, and there have been many "ooohs" and "ahhhs" as we marvel at the beauty and diversity of our Spring wildflowers in their natural habitat - it has been a wonderful season for our indigenous flora, which we are really hoping will translate into a bountiful seed harvest!!



**Arthropodium strictum and Bulbine bulbosa**  
**(Chocolate and bulbine lilies)**

Thanks to Gabrielle for this update on the work of the Seed Team. The photos of wildflowers and of the eucalypts on the front cover were taken by her during her recent visit to 100 Acres



Just over another 12 months has passed since I gave my last report on Greenlink's performance and who would have thought that so much of this time would have been spent in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. What a year this has turned out to be and we are certainly living in challenging and uncertain times.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with many challenges: cancelling some of our Saturday sales days; reducing the number of volunteers that can be at the nursery; no longer handling cash and yes moving into the world of credit card/electronic payments; having customers pick their own plants and pack their own boxes and now closing the Nursery to public sales other than click and collect operations. All of this has been able to be managed along with COVID safe work plans and all the requirements so that we can keep functioning in the current environment.



Despite these times Greenlink has had an extraordinarily good year, the best year ever in our history. We have had a record number of orders both large and small and a dramatic increase in customers coming into the nursery. None of this would have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our hard-working volunteers who have kept the nursery operating at levels never experienced before, particularly those who have managed to keep coming in during the lockdowns. Our volunteers have put in just on 4,800 hours of work and pricked out just on 47,000 plants a truly wonderful result given what we are dealing with and more than comparable to previous years.

Our Treasurer Trevor will provide more details in his report which is next but in summary our total revenue for the year was just on \$85,000 which is an increase of 73% on last year's results with the total value of plant sales being just on \$69,000 a 58% increase over the previous 12 months. These are the results of larger than expected orders from the City of Boroondara and Melbourne Water and an unexpected order from the City of Darebin which we shared with Bungalook nursery and a more than 25% increase in public gate sales. We were also fortunate to be awarded a grant from the Bank of Bendigo for \$3,000 for new benches for both polyhouse and row signs and a grant from the Commonwealth Government environment department for \$8,500 to assist us with GPS mapping of all our seed collection sites, new refrigeration equipment for seed storage and computer/tablet upgrades.

Although these results have been outstanding in themselves they have tested our resources to the limit particularly with having sufficient plants to sell and available numbers of volunteers to do everything needed at the nursery and the parkland surrounding the nursery that we are committed to maintain as a display area and seed collection site. Going forward we expect sales to drop back to previous levels of around \$40,000 to \$45,000 which is more sustainable for us to manage on an ongoing basis.

Some of the highlights of the year have been:

- New kitchen facilities in the shed
- All the metal benches in the polyhouses have been replaced with new ones
- New weather proof row signage
- Increased the number of working hours in the parkland around the Nursery

- Making a submission to oppose the dramatic level of expansion of the Eastern Freeway and massive loss of open space and vegetation this will cause.
- New refrigerator for seed storage
- An additional tool shed
- New PC and 2 tablets
- New printer
- A donation of \$7,000 to Blackburn Tree Preservation Society to support their educational work with the preservation of our native plants and trees.
- Another great Christmas party (despite the 40 deg plus temp) for more than 40 of our volunteers
- Given away \$3,130 worth of plants through the voucher in the Council Calendar (buy 5 get 5 free) the Gardens for Wildlife program and the Green Money initiative.
- Transitioned away from being dependant on Council to provide us with potting/seed raising mix to an independent supply source from Spotswood Holdings in Yarra Glen
- Held 4 successful Saturday sales days.



Unfortunately 1 of our Autumn sale days had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.

Also due to COVID19 we were not able to proceed with our planned public seminar for around 100 people on creating a frog pond/bog in your garden. Hopefully this will be possible for us to schedule in 2021.

We see the challenges for the coming year as: being able to maintain the stability of the nursery at sustainable levels given the current situation; attracting, training and supporting new volunteers; and the committee spending more time to ensure that with growing administrative and legal obligations that we have in place the appropriate and up to date governance management and statutory requirements and the support structure to ensure the long-term viability of Greenlink.

Finally, in closing I would like to express our thanks to the City of Whitehorse's Parkside team for their ongoing assistance, our local ward councillors for their support and to the team at Bungalook nursery for their ongoing relationship and partnership with Greenlink.

To my fellow committee members, I thank each of you for your support and efforts and for the many hours of work all of you have contributed to the running and success of Greenlink.

Lastly but by no means least to all of our volunteers my deepest thanks and appreciation to each and every one of you for your efforts and contribution as without you Greenlink would cease to exist and not be what we are today and the difference we make is supporting and developing an appreciation in the community of the value of indigenous flora. My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your amazing work and freely giving so much of your time and support. It truly has been a privilege to be President of Greenlink. Thank you all.





Greenlink has achieved a very good financial result this year, putting us in a very strong position. Greenlink is in a position to be able to meet its everyday expenses and be viable into the future.

<b>Overall result – A surplus of \$46,121.77</b>	
<p><b><u>INCOME</u> - up by 73% to \$85,329.66</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Revenue was up by <b>73%</b></li> <li>Sales up by <b>58%</b> - Total sales of \$ <b>69,009.</b></li> <li>Membership Fees - \$ <b>1,100</b> (75 members)</li> <li>Grants and other income - \$ <b>15,220</b></li> </ul>	<p><b><u>EXPENSES</u> – up by 149% to \$ 39,207.89</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Expenditure \$<b>15,220</b></li> <li>Donations \$ <b>7,510</b></li> <li>Technology \$ <b>3,100</b></li> </ul>
<b><u>EQUITY</u> - \$295,772.64 an increase of \$ 44,969.53</b>	

## Greenlink Sales Day – Melbourne Cup Day, November 3.

The Cup was cancelled but we had a record number of customers at Greenlink and a record number of sales for one day.



Customers were overjoyed to get their hands on the plants and we were overjoyed to see them after so many months of lockdown and click and collect sales.

This photo appeared on the **City of Monash Green shoots Facebook page** together with the following comment: *"Greenlink Nursery opened again yesterday. Beautiful staff, great plants, just wonderful"*

Thank you to all volunteers who assisted on that somewhat frantic but wonderful day!

# Plants of the season



## ***Coronidium scorpioides***

Button Everlasting Height: 30cm  
Width: 30cm Aspect: Full sun to  
part shade. Soil: Prefers moist to  
well-drained soils Comment:  
Matting plant for cottage gardens,  
rockeries & borders.



## ***Austrostipa elegantissima***

Feather  
Spear Grass Height: 80cm Width:  
50cm Aspect: Full sun to part shade.  
Soil: Prefers open soils. Comment:  
Tussock grass with cane-like stems  
and very elegant flower heads.



## ***Callistemon sieberi***

River Bottlebrush Height: 3 - 10m  
Width: 2 - 6m Aspect: Full sun to  
part shade. Soil: Prefers moist soils.  
Will tolerate dryness when  
established. Comment: Attractive  
screening plant.

The *Eucalyptus globoidea* or White Stringybark (in the foreground of the photo right) was planted just 2 years ago to mark Greenlink's 30th anniversary. This healthy sapling continues its strong growth in the parkland east of the Nursery.

The indigenous grasses encircling the tree are in flower now - *poa labillardiera* and *austrostipa elegantissima*. In the background are *ritidosperma* species.

## **Celebrating our volunteers – International Volunteer Day 2020**

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December was International Volunteer Day.

This day celebrates the power and potential of volunteerism.

In the past Year more than 186,000 Victorian environmental volunteers from over 2,100 groups have put in more than 2.4 million hours of work worth an estimated \$100 million to benefit our environment.

[https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/volunteering#toc\\_id\\_0\\_international](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/volunteering#toc_id_0_international)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the breadth of environmental volunteers, especially our Greenlink volunteers who made a very valuable contribution.



# Birdboxes for Wildlife: a Year in review



Since my first few nest boxes in March, the operation has grown faster than I could ever have expected. To date, just over 40 boxes have been built and installed in trees around the greater Melbourne area, with some as far off as Gippsland. A full range of parrot, bat and possum boxes have been deployed and their performance will hopefully inform improvements in box design over the coming year.



While a majority of boxes were not installed in time to be used by Melbourne's parrots this year, plenty of boxes received visits from possums. In some areas around Box Hill and the Blackburn drain there have even been signs of use by Gliders and hopefully with more installations will come more evidence of the elusive creatures.



Since starting this little operation, each part of the process has become quicker, easier, and safer – especially installing boxes. Entering the canopy of large trees, particularly eucalypts, is definitely the most enjoyable part of the job.

Rainbow Lorikeets often arrive to loudly inspect me and my work, while Magpies sit across from me as if I'm not there. Possums leave their nests to watch from a safe distance and Tawny Frogmouths keep one eye open to make sure I'm staying professional. It's always interesting to work alongside the wildlife I'm trying to help.



Over the next year I'm aiming to develop a better network between people with these nest boxes to keep them clean and in good shape, and I'm also aiming to develop some better ways to monitor the nest boxes and keep long-term records. No matter what happens, the next year will certainly bring more nest boxes and happier wildlife.....*Robert Ham*

***Robert makes a range of well crafted, good quality nestboxes for birds and microbats. Go to our website <https://greenlinkboxhill.org/nesting-boxes/> for details***



## Important Dates:

Greenlink will be closing over the Christmas period. The last day of operations will be Wednesday 23 December.

We will reopen on Tuesday, 12 January 2021.

Unfortunately, we are unable to hold our traditional Christmas lunch – perhaps next year.

We would like to thank all volunteers for their contribution to Greenlink's success this year and also thank all our members and customers for their support.



## At Greenlink Box Hill, we value:

- every customer who deals with us and provide exceptional service
- a happy, safe and enthusiastic workplace
- 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:** Janet Hodgson

**Treasurer:** Trevor Eddy,

**Committee Members:** Karin Godfrey, Gabrielle Bradley

**Newsletter editor:** Janet Hodgson

