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Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group

Greening the Grainbelt – www.abgn.gov.au/greening-grainbelt

An innovative approach to native plant revegetation in one of Australia's top cropping districts is set to reverse the region's trend of declining native vegetation.

The new database will help farmers find out what local native plants once grew in their area, and how to re-establish them.

With just 2.8 percent of the native vegetation cover remaining in the Harden Shire, landholders wanting to replant local native species have had to guess what originally grew on their land.

"Planting native species has always been a challenge as there is so little information on the original species that grew around Harden," says Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Coordinator Ms Louise Hufton. "There's been even less data on how and where to re-establish them."

Information for the database came from the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra, part of the CPBR. The Australian National Herbarium is the largest herbarium in Australia. It is much like a museum for plants which have been collected from the bush, dried and stored, and information about them recorded.

"We knew that within the records of the Australian National Herbarium there would be information about plants that have been collected from the Harden region since European settlement," says Dr Judy West, Director of the CPBR.

Plant specimens collected over 200 years ago by colonial botanists such as Sir Joseph Banks are kept in the Herbarium and new plant specimens are continually added.

"By searching our records and identifying all the plants collected from the Harden region we have come up with a list of plants that we think represents what grew in the region prior to clearing," says Dr West.

Local landholders and experts also provided their knowledge of local plants to add to the database.

"Aside from the descriptions of the species themselves the database includes other useful information that will help with revegetation," says Dr West.

The final database describes where in the landscape the species was found such as on rocky hilltops or moist sheltered valleys. It also describes the species' habitat, other plants it grew with, the type of soil it grew on and whether it was an understorey plant or a tree.

"The database also includes practical information on how to propagate the species and where to plant them in the paddock," says Dr West.

"The database and an accompanying report by the CPBR is available in paper copy, on CD Rom and on the Internet at www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt.

"This project is the first of its kind in Australia and we hope that it will serve as a model for other Landcare Groups throughout Australia," says Dr West. (*This article has appeared in numerous publications)*

I have the data on disk if you would like a copy please call.

Officer Bearers for 2001

- Chairman – David Cusack
- Vice Chairman- John McGrath & John Roles
- Treasurer/Public Officer Mark O'Conner
- Secretary Don Constable

Fencing & tree funding available

A small amount of money is available for fencing and trees

- ♣ The treeline must be a min of 20m wide with five rows of trees & shrubs
- ♣ BE prepared to sign a Bushcare agreement that declares you will manage for conservation purposes
- ♣ Site will be audited to ensure that works are carried out to application
- ♣ Application forms available from me
- ♣ Applications close on 12 July,2001

Guest Speaker September Meeting of HMLG is David Dent, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Research Team Leader – Topic– results of radiometric flyovers last year
Next meeting of HMLG Thursday 21 June, Carrington Hotel Harden 8pm
Binalong Meeting, Monday 18 June, Binalong Hall 8pm all welcome.

DrumMuster – 2 July (Harden) 3 July (Galong) 9 July (Jugiong)

DrumMuster will take place at the three collection points across the Shire. It is essential that you book to avoid unnecessary delays with Harden Shire Council (63862305)- inspection takes approximately 1 hour for 300 drums.

Included with this newsletter is a brochure outlining how to effectively rinse the drums. Lids seem to be the difficulty so store them separately and possibly deliver in a plastic bag to avoid the drum being rejected due to residual in the lid. Drums not triple rinsed will be rejected.

Your drum levies are funding this program, so please take this opportunity to recycle as many as possible.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to ask council staff when making your booking.

All collection points are at the local Waste Transfer Depots

Don Constable & HMLG have nominated Galong Public School's Superb Parrot habitat project for the National Landcare Education Award. Landholders surrounding Galong School are currently assisting the students understand how their plantings can be linked with others.

GMO seminar

A number of members have requested that a information session be held to inform members about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's). A subcommittee has been formed to put this seminar together. If you have any suggested speakers or ideas please call David Cusack.

Sites needed for tree research

NSW Ag is looking for sites on the western slopes that will play a key role in new research to track the performance of trees.
The research involves locating trees planted more than six years ago in areas that receive an average rainfall of between 450 and 800 mm.
Trees that have survived the full range of climatic conditions will no doubt be the species that farmers will want to plant, rather than those that won't survive the next drought or severe frosts.

"Tree performance varies over time, and early growth may not necessarily reflect survival or performance over longer time, hence the need to target trees planted more than six years ago."

When located, the trees will be measured and data collated to form a valuable resource for people living in the area. The research will be completed by the end of the year.
These include forestry, avenue and amenity plantings, windbreaks, shade and shelter trees.
Priority will be given to native species with farm forestry potential, but exotic forestry species will also be included. Data from natural regrowth will also be considered where relevant, and examples of where previously healthy established trees have died in later years will be useful.
"This will allow farm forestry to become a viable alternative that will provide environmental, economic and social benefits for rural communities.
Anyone with trees that could be measured for the research should get in touch with Anthony Signor at the Tamworth Centre for Crop Improvement on 02 6763 1238

Last week I inspected all the Crown Weevil release sites for Pattersons Curse control with Mathew Smyth CSIRO. Eight of the nine sites have established successfully. A new weevil was released that will attack the tap root at one site

Greening the Grainbelt – those receiving funding this financial year your fences should be built.

Binalong Landcare Group

Congratulations to David Sykes recently elected chairman of Binalong Landcare AGM and thanks to Ian Giles the outgoing Chairman

Binalong have been successful in obtaining funding from the Environmental Trust to plant 15ha of Mount Bobbara. They plan to plant 1600 trees & shrubs on 47 sites that have already been sprayed. Binalong school have propagated some of the trees and plan to plant in August.

Anyone who would like to assist with this project particularly on planting day please

Testing is currently being undertaken in several paddocks as a follow up to last years Acid Soil Action project. The aim is to validate the quality of site data on a whole paddock basis, assist understand the lime rate required to cover the variability within a paddock, understand the variability of surface and subsurface acidity in any one paddock. Attempts will also be made to correlate the data to the satellite/ radiometric data previously obtained.