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Vibrant, sustainable culture in the West



IRAMOOZ NEWZ

IRAMOO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CENTRE



MOONDANI BALLUK

ISSUE 4

SPRING 2006

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MAKE A DATE TO SEE IRAMOO NOW

If you have not been to Iramoo recently, then make sure you pay a visit soon. Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre is moving forward in leaps and bounds. Our native King Quail and our Zebra Finch have been busy breeding, but be warned their chicks are not babies for long. Our Yabbie, Yibbita, although not very social appears to be quite content in his new home, the boat. Our native fish, Southern Pygmy Perch are enjoying their new home, likewise with the mosquito fish. We have a few tadpoles slowly developing and it is anticipated with excitement that it will not be long before we have our first frog enjoying their new enclosure. With spring comes the awakening of our striped legless lizards, Sylvia and Stella. There has already been some sign of life. I am sure our lizards will enjoy their new company in the Discovery Centre. Rick, Mel and our wonderful regular volunteers Fran, Karin, Bill, James, Stan & Ken have done a fantastic job of cleaning up Iramoo and giving it a fresh look. Thankyou everyone.

By Carolynne Venn

PARTNERS IN WASTE EDUCATION

The signing event on August 1 between Brimbank Council and Victoria University was well attended by people from the Community, Brimbank Council, the University and Iramoo. A formal partnership agreement was signed by Professor Ian Rouse of Victoria University and Brimbank Councillor, Dr Kathryn Eriksson. Brimbank Council and the Iramoo Discovery Centre have agreed to combine their resources, expertise and networks to promote waste education.

Victoria University will provide classroom space at Iramoo, while Council has donated demonstration recycling, green waste and compost bins, in addition to a worm farm. Kathleen Kemp, Council's Environmental Education Officer will assist Iramoo to develop programs to be delivered up to six times a year to school and community groups.



Kathleen Kemp
Brimbank's
Environmental
Education Officer.

"This initiative is just one of the ways that Council has committed to reducing the amount of rubbish that goes to landfill each year," she said. "Encouraging the community to become enthusiastic recyclers helps Council to promote waste minimisation and education to the wider community." Be on the look out for future activities at Iramoo for workshops in waste management. Kathleen Kemp will be working with staff at Iramoo.

By Carolynne Venn



Councillor, Dr Kathryn Eriksson
and Dr Colin Hocking.

Photo courtesy of VU Media

Photo of Councillor Dr Eriksson & Dr Hocking & Assistance with Article—

Courtesy of Brimbank Council and VU Media Dept.

A word from Ranger Mel

NATIONAL TREE DAY

On July 29th around 15 people attended Iramoo's National Plant "Day" where 900 wildflower seedlings were planted including Lemon Beauty-heads, Button Wrinkleworts, Common Ever-lasting Daisies, Showy Podolepis and Murnongs (Yam Daisies). A further 400 wildflowers were planted a few days later—Thanks to everyone who helped plant out the indicator species for the vegetation monitoring program.

MT ROTHWELL

25 people enjoyed a lovely visit to Mt Rothwell, seeing lots of native critters on the spot-light walk including over 25 cute Rufous Bettong (silvery mini-roo), many Red-bellied Pademelons, too many Brush-tailed Possums, a few Southern Brown Bandicoots, a couple of frisky Long-nosed Potoroos, some Eastern Grey Kangaroos, one Red-necked Wallaby, one distant Ring-tailed Possum AND the highlight of the night... a gamboling Eastern Barred Bandicoot running across the closely cropped grassland. Eastern Quolls, Brush tailed Rock Wallabies, Black Wallabies, Echidnas and Sugar Gliders also live in the 170ha of unique old growth grassy woodland, but unfortunately they were not seen on the night. Thanks again to Brett McDonald for being such a great guide and for putting up with my interruptions. It would be possible to organize another visit in the future for those who missed out— it requires a group of at least 10 people costing \$10 each. If interested please let us know.

WATERWATCH

Iramoo was successful in receiving a Melbourne Water Junior Watercare Grant. On the 23rd August, an advanced Waterwatch Training Session was held at Iramoo and at the Jones Creek Wetlands. Rhys Collins, our Regional Waterwatch Coordinator, provided the training for Volunteers and Staff at Iramoo. Initially we anticipate conducting Waterwatch monitoring once a month, with the aim to increase monitoring to weekly when several interested schools, volunteers or community members are able to assist on a regular basis. The \$2000 grant allowed us to purchase two Waterwatch Kits which have already been tried and tested. The good news is that our Wetlands on first testing has proved safe and sensitive bugs were found. This great news has proved to be an optimistic start for Iramoo.

WINDMILL

The windmill has arrived at Iramoo, and now awaits construction—Go Rick go! The next challenge will be to organize a new stand for our new addition. Iramoo was lucky enough to take ownership of a disused windmill that was resting on the roof of an old building in Sunshine. Little did it think that it would be given a new lease of life at Iramoo. Watch out for future news on this wonderful national icon.

BIRD BREEDING – FREE GIVEAWAYS TO GOOD HOMES

The Zebra Finches have been busy breeding, with 9 new birds flying around and more "feed me" chirping heard coming from a nest. The King Quails are also quite happy, with 4 surviving chicks getting bigger by the day. 6 Zebra Finch have been already given to good homes – to the volunteers who help look after all the animals in the Discovery Centre. If any FOI members would like some King Quail or Zebra Finch, let me know. Otherwise, I'll try swapping them for some bird seed at the local pet shop.

SPRING SCHEDULE

The next coming few months are Iramoo's busiest – there are 1000's of seedlings to propagate, 1000's of old seedlings to get planted, 1000's of weeds emerging, 1000's of seeds to collect, and warmer weather to enjoy. The plant database is growing with data, but there are plenty of photos to be taken of the natives and weeds to be developed into id guides to help with plant identification, along with pressing specimens to make a herbarium. Some of these activities will take place for Weed-buster Week, 9 – 11 October.

GRASSLAND TOUR

A spring Grassland tour is also being planned for Tuesday 24 October, where we'll organise buses to take a tour of several local grasslands in flower, with a picnic lunch. It will also help me identify some prime seed collection sites.

A word from Ranger Mel continues..

NATIONAL THREATENED SPECIES DAY

On September 7th and to celebrate Biodiversity month in September, we will commence with roof-tile surveys for Striped Legless Lizard in the Iramoo Wildlife Park. A SLL survey is scheduled for the Saturday volunteer activity on Sept 30, with surveys occurring on a fortnightly basis until December.

VOLUNTEERS

Thankfully, a Community Initiatives Program has recently commenced at Iramoo on Mondays and Tuesdays each week. The project will be going to mid January, so there are extra hands to help get the work done. This is in addition to the great effort of our regular volunteers who come on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the last Saturday of each month. We also have new students that have started their Fieldwork, Honours and PhD studies. It is great to see so many willing helpers around Iramoo, thank you to everyone.



Some of the Volunteers & Staff doing waterwatch activities during their Training Day on the 23rd August.



MOONDANI BALLUK INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC UNIT

BACHELOR OF ARTS (KYINANDOO)

Kyinandoo is a Wurundjeri word meaning "clever". The Bachelor of Arts (Kyinandoo) degree will be delivered at VU from 2007. It offers Indigenous Australian and Global Indigenous units and then gives the space to take a set of subjects specific to your career goals, for example, community development electives. If you know of anyone who is looking for a great course in 2007, let them know about Kyinandoo and they can call KJ on 9919 2891 – or check out our web page at <http://www.vu.edu.au/MoondaniBalluk>

2006 GARMA FESTIVAL – A CELEBRATION OF YOLNGY CULTURE

On 3rd August KJ & Mark Minchinton (the Director of Moondani Balluk) travelled to Arnhem Land to attend the annual Garma Festival. Indigenous Units of Australian universities were invited to participate in the Indigenous Education & Training Forum which formed part of this years Festival. Representatives from secondary and primary schools across the Northern Territory were also present.



But Garma is much more than this; it is presented by the Yothu Yindi Foundation and is a colourful event with a greater deeper purpose. That is, to provide an experience and direct involvement in a spectacular and substantive display of cultural practice and cross-cultural learning for any people. The Women's and Men's Cultural Tourism component of the Festival is an innovative and brilliant program. One that you should all aspire to participate in at some stage over the coming years.

For more information please contact Karen on 9919 2891

Photo and article written by Karen Jackson

Deb's Final Report



Photo 1 - Podolepis sp 1 planted tubestock with it's first generation of babies in disturbed soil.



Photo 2 Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides planted tubestock with it's first generation of babies in disturbed soil.

Hi Guy's,

Guess what - I'm finished !!!!! The study was a great success with the results providing irrefutable evidence that disturbed soil benefits the grassland forbs. The seeds all germinated better in disturbed soil. Even the tubestock plants responded better to the effects of disturbed soil. They grew larger, survived longer, produced more flowers with greater a seed weight and more viable seeds per flower head and their roots had a greater biomass than the tubestock grown in undisturbed soil. We also discovered an amazing result with the seed grown root architecture. The seed grown plants grew a long tapered root with little laterals while the tubestock plants had many tap-roots and lots of lateral roots in a squashed tube like configuration (See photo 3 & 4). Implying that the tubestock plants didn't grow a normal root structure and are not able to survive for a long time. The healthiest forbs are the ones grown from seed as they are responding to environmental cues and growing naturally. Tubestock plants provided many viable seeds for the immediate environment and the second year appears to be very exciting as many more seeds have germinated next to their mother plants (See photos above). We now know that seed grown plants are healthier. This is great as these seedlings should out last their mothers. The flowering in the plot over this spring should be great as there are many more germinated seedlings of all the five species than I originally planted, so enjoy!!!! I'm going away for 3 months to Western Australia to view the wildflower show there for a change. I'll be back early November and will organise a wildflower tour.



Photo 3 – Ptilotus spathulatus plants grown from seed.

See ya soon

Debbie.



Photo 4 – Ptilotus spathulatus plants grown in tubes. The top row in undisturbed soil & bottom row disturbed soil.



Walk or ride a bicycle in your local area.

Not only will this save on your fuel costs but it is a great way to exercise and enjoy some stress free time.

SUSTAINABILITY TIPS



Do you need an excuse to get into your garden?

Think of it as a workout in the 'Green Gym'.

PLANT OF THE SEASON— KANGAROO GRASS



Botanical name: *Themeda triandra*

Description: Large spiky grass flowerhead, triangular shaped. Flowers between Summer and Autumn. New growth is purple-green, turning a pale rusty colour when dry in summer.

What location does it like? Prefers open positions, well drained soil & full sun. It is very common in areas that are not heavily grazed, eg. Cemeteries and roadsides Wide spread, drought resistant, deep-rooted, warm season perennial grass.

Garden use: Great for ground cover & rock gardens. It is most effective when planted in groups.

Additional uses: Wurundjeri: Leaves and Stems were used to make string for fishing nets

Food: Seeds could be ground and baked.

Wildlife: Provides food for Kangaroos, butterfly caterpillars and seed eating birds.

Information was sourced from Plants of the Merri Merri & www.anby.gov.au/.../thameda.trimdra.html 2/9/06

PROFILE OF OUR VIP.

NAME: Fran La Fontaine **AGE:** 45 years

OCCUPATION: Biologist (presently looking for work).

FAVOURITE HOBBIES: Looking at fungi, both large and small (microscopic). I'm involved in a few naturalist groups like Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and Fungimap. I enjoy natural history and gardening, everything that is plant related. I keep fish, guinea pigs, canaries and finches. I also enjoy photography and gem fossicking too.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH IRAMOO? Volunteering Victoria, I was looking for a plant and animal group to use my plant knowledge and expertise. I was interested in the grasslands aspect and conserving the Striped Legless Lizard habitat. It seemed to be an excellent place to be, a perfect match to what I could offer as a Volunteer.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT IRAMOO THAT KEEPS YOU INVOLVED?

The support and encouragement from all the other volunteers and staff of Iramoo. I feel connected with the people here. It is great to receive recognition for my efforts and seeing the results of my work. I enjoy watching people enjoy the fruits of my work and contribution. It's a lot of fun, too!

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR IRAMOO?

I would like to see a stronger public profile for Iramoo. It deserves more recognition for the work that is done here. I would like to see more people from the community to get to know about Iramoo, and hopefully get involved themselves.

Interview with Carolynne Venn 30/8/06



BrimBUG

BRIMBANK'S BICYCLE USERS' GROUP

Started up only six months ago, BrimBUG now has about 60 members and is growing all the time. We hold rides every two weeks and have meetings once a month. At these meetings (7pm at Iramoo, second Tuesday of the month) we discuss and plan how to deal with local cycling issues, such as on-road cycle lanes and recreational trails in and around Brimbank. Already VicRoads and Brimbank City Council are beginning to prick up their ears.

We are a very diverse group and our rides are planned accordingly. We have short family rides, middling ones and longer rides for seasoned cyclists. All our rides are posted on Bicycle Victoria's Find a Ride page (www.bv.com.au/find.php).

There is no charge for membership or rides – come along to one of our dynamic meetings or join us for a great cycle sometime!

Contact Gavin Wright: 9311 6762, brimbuggw@yahoo.com.au

Dates to Remember

Iramoo will be open on the following weekend dates.

Time: 10-00am to 2-30pm (3pm close)

You can come for the morning, or for the day,
it's your choice.

BYO lunch, gloves and smile.

30th September 2006, Sat.- Striped Legless Lizard
survey.

28th October 2006, Sat.—Gardening

25th November 2006, Sat.—Seed Collection

PLEASE NOTE THE SATURDAYS ARE TENTATIVE DATES. PLEASE RING AND BOOK ATTENDANCE DURING THE WEEK PRIOR. IF WE HAVE NO PRIOR BOOKINGS, WE WILL CANCEL THE DAY.

PLEASE PHONE **9919 2815** AND LEAVE YOUR MESSAGE, THANKYOU.

**EVERY TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
ARE VOLUNTEER DAYS AT IRAMOO
TIME: 10-00 AM TO 3-00 PM**

OTHER DATES

You are invited to the

FRIENDS OF IRAMOO AGM

6-30 pm 31st October 2006 (Tues)

to be followed by a

short FROG WATCH SURVEY

Green Lab,

Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre.

3rd October 2006 Victorian Volcanic Plains
Forum (Geelong)

4th October 2006 Launch of Brimbank's
Sustainable Garden Book.

10th October 2006 BrimBUGS Meeting
7 to 8-30pm in the Green Lab at Iramoo.

24th October 2006 Grassland Tour

*For more information on any of the above,
please contact us.*

Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre is home to the Striped Legless Lizard, (Delma impar), Mr Curly Sedge and the Button Wrinkleworts. It is a unique place that offers sanctuary to many endangered species within the heart of St Albans.

Iramoo offers educational programs to show people how they can preserve the habitat for our special animals and plants. By participating in our activities people see that the loss of habitat is the primary reason for the loss of many species and we now have a chance of reversing the damage.

Friends of Iramoo

*meet each month in the
Green Lab*

Time 6-30pm

Membership—\$5 a year

Contact us at Iramoo

or email

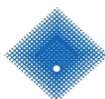
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