



# swift chatter



Summer 2016

## swift tips

### Vinca major, a Major Problem

By Denise Hoggan, Rosny Montague Bay Landcare and Coastcare

Gardeners refer to *Vinca major*, also known as Blue Periwinkle or Perennial Vinca as 'an effective way to brighten up your garden.' It can do this, as shown in the accompanying photograph.

The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment describe it as an invasive species and an environmental weed.

We at Rosny Montagu Bay Landcare and Coastcare could describe it in a number of ways: expensive to spray, requiring repeated slashing and extremely difficult to dig out. It bounces back with vigorous growth from the smallest root fragments.

In an effort to deal with an infestation of this garden escapee in the Rosny Foreshore Reserve, we decided to try a different approach: long term smothering to try to weaken the root network followed by revegetation.

Work is ongoing at both sites. The area around the mulched matting will be planted out with plants such as *Tetragonia implexicoma* in the coming months.

Photography: Denise Hoggan



*Firstly, the infestation was sprayed with herbicide and leaves allowed to die off.*



*Using funds from an NRM South Bite Sized Grant, rolls of jute matting were purchased and laid over the slashed, 'dead' Vinca. Hammering in hooks on our hands and knees gave some of us with creaky knees a good workout.*



*Some of these jute rolls had planting slots. The Vinca soon took advantage of this.*

*Follow up cut & paste was necessary, before the area was mulched with low nutrient pine bark.*



*We decided to repeat the process at Rosny Hill Quarry, where there was another Vinca infestation. At least this site was partly shaded.*



*This time the ground was flat, but the heat was harsh. It was great to have Justin Burgess from Clarence City Council turn up to assist us.*

## Woody World of Hollows

Chris Johns

Big old tree older than me  
A holey apartment be it alive or dead  
What history it could tell  
Consider before I fell.

Hundreds of lives living in the tree city  
Safely at home, snug in a woody world  
of hollows.  
Not a nasty slimy wet hole, but dry  
and cosy  
Like the Hobbit said.

Old possum and parrot next to a bat  
Then there is owl and a duck, fancy  
that!  
Brown tree frog croaked, quiet quoll  
You'll wake the spiders and bug folk.  
Small birds; robins, swallows and pretty  
pardalote  
I'm so glad to see.  
Thank you tree.

Hollows are few and far between  
screeched the noisy miners  
There's no room for out of towners.  
Rainbow lorikeets, sugar gliders and  
galah  
Are the worst by far.  
I hear a cacophony of sound, look out!  
Cat is around.

A busy time with the flowers in  
summer and spring  
The tree is so full of life you can hear  
it sing.  
A web of life all around  
We live with nature, even in town.

Big old tree older than me  
Living near bushland is a responsibility.  
There are homes and mouths to feed  
other than mine  
Tree hollows form over a very long time  
Save the old, plant some new  
Because at the moment there are so  
few.



## Wildcare Deslacs Feral Cat Action

Feral and stray cats are having a devastating impact on our native wildlife Australia wide. The problem of predation by feral cats is a complex one that requires a range of approaches to manage their impacts on wildlife, livestock and human health. Wildcare Deslacs has commenced a project to protect the Cape Deslacs Short-tailed shearwater rookery from the impact of cat predation. This has also shed some light on how feral cats move around in a local area in response to changing food sources. Understanding these movements is a key part of future management strategies for the group.

Feral cats are a constant threat to our local wildlife all year round. They are top end predators, prolific breeders, and will eat almost anything that moves, including nesting birds in trees and burrows.

Wildcare Deslacs received a number of reports of feral cat activity down at Clifton Beach. There seemed to be a lot of activity particularly close to the large Short-tailed shearwater rookery in this area. With the support of Tasmania Park and Wildlife Service, we started running a feral cat trapping program, experimenting with traps in different locations and at different times of the year, to see if we could help protect our local native wildlife. We have contributed over 150 Volunteer hours to this project so far.

The table below shows that our peak season for feral cat trapping seems to be in Autumn. This is the time when the shearwater chicks have all left the burrows and the feral cats are looking for other food sources.

From	To	Location	Trap Nights	Not Chipped: Feral	Chipped: Domestic	Total	Trap Rate
06/04/2014	13/04/2014	Cape, woodland	30	2	0	2	6.67%
01/05/2014	07/05/2014	Cape, woodland	35	1	0	1	2.86%
16/10/2014	23/10/2014	Cape, woodland, dunes	35	0	0	0	0.00%
20/04/2015	15/06/2015	Cape, woodland, dunes	87	6	3	9	6.90%
24/09/2015	04/10/2015	Salt marsh	40	2	8	2	5.00%
				227		11	4.88%

The weight of feral cats trapped has ranged between 4-7kg. They are formidable predators. What this table suggests is that the feral cats move down from the Cape Deslacs Reserve, into the woodland and the dunes of Clifton Beach Reserve, down to the salt marsh along Pipe Clay Lagoon Reserve.

We know that this is a long-term project and we are looking for more people to help out. Please email [info@wildcaredeslacs.org](mailto:info@wildcaredeslacs.org) for more information.

By Elizabeth Shannon

# council news

## Clarence City Council Land & Coastcare Grants 2016



All hands on deck. Members of the Geilston Bay Boat Club planting over 400 plants courtesy of a CCC Land and Coastcare grant in 2015. Photography: Keith Bolton

Councils Land and Coastcare grants are once again very popular with Natural Area Volunteer Groups with this year's grants being fully subscribed. Negotiation with the groups and Councils NRM Committee has meant that all the applicants are able to meet the needs of their proposed projects.

### *Congratulations to:*

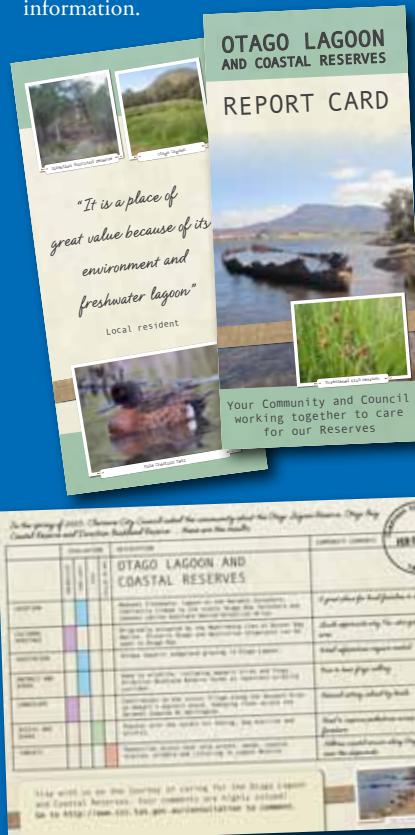
Bellerive Bluff Land and Coastcare. Multiple works along Bellerive Bluff and Victoria Esplanade.	\$3444
Geilston Bay Landcare, South Bank. Revegetation and weeding in line with the new Reserve Activity Plan.	\$4003
Glebe Hill Bushland Reserve Landcare. Works at the Wendy Andrew entrance to enhance visitor experience.	\$848
Lauderdale Land and Coastcare. Revegetation and weed removal in the Lauderdale dunes and around Roscommon.	\$2240
Limekiln Point Landcare. Revegetation, weeding and installation of seating.	\$3410
Mount Rumney Landcare. Building a community shared responsibility for habitat management and weed control in high conservation vegetation communities on Mount Rumney.	\$3950
Rose Bay Coastcare. Revegetation and contractor assistance with ongoing maintenance of the Rose Bay foreshore.	\$1179
Rosny Montagu Bay Land and Coastcare. Weed removal, revegetation and contractor assistance for reserve maintenance.	\$4598
Rosny Springboards (Rosny College) She Oak Point Land and Coastcare. Installation of rainwater tank for use with revegetation and installation of table and seating as a base for weekly activities.	\$935
Seven Mile Beach Coastcare. Beach access maintenance, weed removal and revegetation.	\$3390
Wildcare Deslacs. Engage consultant to develop a Local Management Plan including on ground actions for the saltmarsh adjacent to Bicheno Street and local education of saltmarsh values.	\$2000

Grants to groups totals \$30,000 with a projected in kind contribution of Volunteer time and labour of \$96,000.

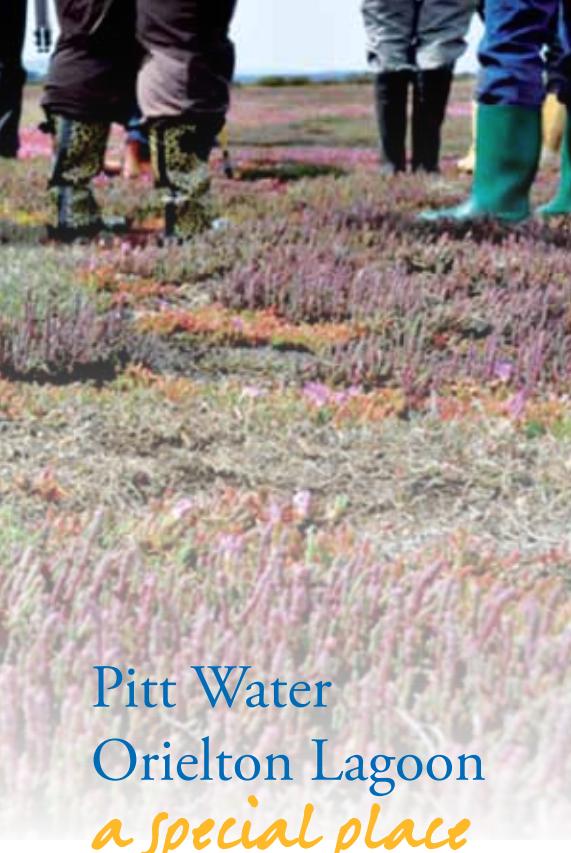
## rapwrap

Clarence City Council is anticipating 2 more RAPs for consultation in March - Kuynah, Tooritta and Carella Bushland Reserve Activity Plan and Clarence Plains Rivulet RAP.

Please contact Phil Watson for more information.



As part of Clarence City Council's consultation process for developing Reserve Activity Plans a report card is compiled from feedback given to Council. These give a snapshot of the values a reserve from a community perspective and a guide to the priority actions contained in the Reserve Activity Plan. The Report Card is a bit like a school report card and over time as each RAP is reviewed any changes for good or bad can be easily seen and actions taken where necessary.



## Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon *a special place*

The Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon is recognised as being a very special area providing saltmarsh habitat for migratory birds that have flown there from far place such as Siberia, a distance of up to 12,000 km. In addition there are rare plants, insects and aquatic species that, together with a general healthy population, provide a rich and complex eco-system.

The Wildcare group called Friends of Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon aims to help in the protection and revegetation of this area. We work on weeding, establishing locally provenanced plants, monitoring water quality and seeking grants for contractors to deal with the weed infestations on the islands and causeway. We can organise bird and plant excursions onto the saltmarsh.

We work with the local councils, NRM South, the Parks and Wildlife Service, Conservation Volunteers Australia, University of Tasmania and BirdLife Australia – but we would really need more local volunteers joining our group to have ‘feet on the ground’, ‘hands on’ for planting and weeding and administrative help.

If you are interested in joining, please join Wildcare Tasmania, [www.wildcaretas.org.au](http://www.wildcaretas.org.au) and then choose Friends of Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon as (one of) your branch(es). We will email you notices of working bees and events.

**Sue Drake**

Secretary

Friends of Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon



## About 'Gardens for Wildlife'

‘Gardens for Wildlife’ aims to encourage and recognise wildlife-friendly gardens and environment-friendly practices in urban gardens.

By creating or providing a garden in a wildlife-friendly and environment-friendly way you will:

- Help to conserve local plants and animals
- Have time to enjoy your garden more by reducing maintenance time and costs
- Reduce excess water through wise water use, such as mulching and use of local native plant species which are better able to tolerate drought conditions
- Benefit from having native birds and insects in your garden through natural pest control (no need for chemicals), increased pollination and fruit/flower set leading to better production

Environment-friendly practices are very important as what you do in your garden can affect other places far beyond your garden boundaries. For instance, watering the garden uses precious water resources. After watering or rainfall, any chemicals used, such as pesticides or excess fertiliser, will run into stormwater drains and eventually end up in the local river or estuary.

Your ‘Garden for Wildlife’ can contribute to bringing nature home by welcoming wildlife to share your garden and by providing a healthy environment for them to do so. Providing habitat in the garden is not only valuable in itself, it can also link to habitat nearby, providing safe corridors or ‘stepping stones’ along which animals can move from place to place.

By becoming a ‘Gardens for Wildlife’ member and through display of your sign you clearly demonstrate your support and commitment to protecting wildlife species and habitat - this is highly commendable and great to see. Find out more about Gardens for Wildlife membership.

[www.gardensforwildlife.dpiw.tas.gov.au](http://www.gardensforwildlife.dpiw.tas.gov.au)

The ‘Gardens for Wildlife’ program is administered by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. The Program has a regular newsletter, ‘The Running Postman’ which includes a regular article for the Gardens for Wildlife program. The program is run in partnership with the Understorey Network , Sustainable Living Tasmania , Royal Tasmanian Botanical Garden , BirdLife Tasmania , Landcare Tasmania Inc. , Wildcare Tas Inc. , Birds in Backyards Program and the Australia Plant Society Tasmanian Branch.

For more information about the program: Gardens for Wildlife Coordinator Community Engagement (Biodiversity)  
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment  
Phone 6165 4409  
Email: <mailto:GardensforWildlife.Enquiries@dpiw.tas.gov.au>



## network chatter

## bird baths in the garden

From: 'The Running Postman Dec 2015 Issue 20 p10'

An overwhelming message from many 'Gardens for Wildlife' members is that, since they have begun growing native plant species in their gardens, a greater number and variety of native birds have been attracted. Many people gain a great deal of enjoyment from seeing and watching birds in their gardens, particularly native birds.

Sally's article on Woodland Birds [pages 6–7, December edition, Running Postman] discusses the types of birds you may see in your garden depending on where you live.

Findings to date from the 'Bathing Birds' surveys (undertaken by the National Parks Association of NSW in collaboration with Birdlife Australia, Birds in Backyards and the University of Sydney) have shown that, at a landscape scale, the presence of remnant native bush, parks or reserves near where you live can influence the likelihood of and types of native birds that may visit your garden.

Isolated gardens planted out to provide excellent habitat for birds, particularly small bird species, will not be able to attract birds if the distance to the nearest native remnant bush is too great. However, collectively,

wildlife friendly gardens may provide for safe movement of small birds by providing stepping stones that create linkages across the urban landscape.

Unfortunately, a growing trend in many new subdivisions is to have smaller blocks with larger houses that occupy much of the area leaving very little garden space.

Additionally, green spaces that retain remnant vegetation or recreational park areas are often not considered in subdivision planning. This seems to reflect a growing disconnect with nature within domestic urban environments, and a lack of interest or desire to retain or create space or habitats for wildlife.

The bird-friendly aspect of your garden will also influence the types of birds that visit. As well as the size and location of your garden, more open urban landscapes often attract larger or more aggressive bird species such as honeyeaters, rosellas, Noisy Miners and ravens, regardless of whether the garden has been well designed and planted with features to attract and provide for small bird species. Just as in natural bush with intact trees and understorey, structural complexity with native plant species within gardens provides for more diverse native bird species.

For the home garden this would include cluster plantings of native plants; use of prickly shrubs to provide protection; and use of various natives to provide food such as nectar, insects, berries or seeds.

One of the best ways to attract and cater for native birds in your garden is to provide water for drinking and bathing. Varied containers can be used, from bowls on the ground to pedestal birdbaths or ponds. A key feature is to have fresh, clean water and a container that birds can safely get in to or out of without the risk of drowning. A stick or rock(s) in the container may help with this. It is also good to have habitat nearby, such as shrubs where birds can fly for safety if they are disturbed or feel threatened.

Having water in containers elevated (or suspended) and on the ground provides water for different birds and other wildlife like bandicoots, wallabies, echidnas, lizards and insects. The 'Birds In Backyards' website has some excellent tips on how to create a safe haven for birds in your garden. Look up [www.birdsinbackyards.net/](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/).

**Iona Mitchell**

Noisy Minors and Butcher birds having a splash.

Photography: Sally Johns

# council news

## INCREASING SKILLS OF *natural area volunteers*

A series of free practical workshops, courtesy of Clarence City Council, that increase the knowledge and capacity of Natural Area Volunteers in Clarence has been held over the past few months with training delivered by Oliver Strutt of the Understory Network.

The first of three workshops was plant identification and weed management held at Glebe Hill Bushland Reserve where the participants had the opportunity to get an infield, hands on guide to plant and weed

identification. It was a great opportunity for the volunteers to ask some of the 'curly' questions about native and introduced plant management techniques.

The second workshop was all about native plant propagation with 10 volunteers having a 2 hour session covering propagation by seed or cuttings for use in revegetation projects or native gardens. Topics included how to propagate using different methods, discussion of growing media, small scale home nurseries and the tools, materials and equipment needed for successful plant propagation. It was a good chance for volunteers to network as there was a range of participants from Clarence and the wider Hobart area.

A third workshop covering Native Plant seed collection and storage will be held early in the New Year hopefully at Waverly Flora

Park, keep an eye out for the invitation and date.

During November Phil Watson and about 40 interested members of the public from Southern Tasmania enjoyed two Wildflower Walks at Glebe Hill Bushland Reserve and Waverly Flora Park. Although we are in the grip of a serious drought there was still a few floral gems hidden in the bush for people to enjoy. Because for the dry conditions the walks also gave an opportunity to include other 'eco' aspects of these reserves including Phil's very funny description of the case of 'exploding pants' in the First World War! A case of friction in the saddle whilst riding horses with an unstable chemical to control a weed that was deadly to the horses.

*By Chris Johns*

Photography: Sally Johns



# Sustainable Parrot

## HABITAT MANAGEMENT & BUSH FIRE RISK

### A great Mt Rumney Landcare group Project in 2014/2015

Following successful grant applications by the Mt Rumney Landcare group (MRLCG), funds were received from Natural Resource Management South and Clarence City Council to undertake a project to provide best practice advice and on ground support to peri-urban land owners in the Mt Rumney/Mt Canopus area about the best ways to balance the construction/maintenance of bushfire hazard management zones with the conservation of threatened species habitat.

The project involved one-on one consultation with landholders in the Mt Rumney/Mt Canopus area whose property contained habitat for the swift parrot, masked owl and eastern barred bandicoot. A workshop was also run to provide bushfire abatement advice in the context of retention of important natural values.

The site visits assessed the bushfire threat to assets on each property and provided verbal advice on how to minimise the bushfire risk

whilst retaining important habitat such as large blue gums, trees with hollows and understorey vegetation including native grassland.

This project built on previous on-ground conservation and awareness raising projects undertaken by the MRLCG over the past 25 years. In particular the project aimed to alter landowners' attitudes toward vegetation clearance and the creation of park land zones around their residences.

Community attitudes in relation to stray/feral cats was also assessed during the project and an assessment of tree hollows in the area was also undertaken.

The project found that there is a high level of concern in regard to bushfire in the area, which in some instances leads to over clearing of vegetation. Whilst there was a relatively high level of awareness of conservation issues affecting the area this did not always translate to the retention of high value habitat. The level of awareness of surveyed landholders of conservation issues and the willingness to alter practices appears to be improving. This indicates that the previous and current one-on-awareness raising approach is having a positive effect.

The issues of stray and feral cats was well understood by many landholders with all supporting measures to manage cats within the landscape. It was recommended that a broader survey of the community be undertaken to further understand community attitudes and inform a future Cat Management Plan for the area.

The area was found to contain a significant number of trees with hollows that provide an important habitat resource. Surveying the remaining vegetation in the area to further the resource was recommended as is raising the awareness of the importance of hollows for fauna species.



Photography: Sally Johns

Recommendations from the final report of the project proposed:

- Investigation of emergency exit route from Mt Rumney and Canopus Hill. Including consultation with landholders along potential routes.
- Targeted one-on-one site visits to landholders with habitat on their properties that were not contacted during the current project.
- Undertaking additional surveying in the area around the issue of stray/feral cats.
- Developing a feral cat management program.
- Investigating sugar glider predation and raising awareness of this issue.
- Seeking funding for native animal monitoring program in area.
- An old growth tree awareness campaign; and
- An extended survey of hollows into white gum and white peppermint forest in Mt Rumney region.



Mount Rumney Land Care group in partnership with Tasmania Fire Service, Clarence City Council, Parks and Wildlife Service and local volunteer brigades held a Bushfire Ready Neighbourhood field day on Mount Rumney in January. About 100 local residents had the opportunity to discuss being Bushfire Ready and to see various pieces of firefighting equipment in action. Hot topics were reduction burns and what to do on "bad fire" days. Young Spencer shows the way with a firefighting hose.

## early bird notices



**City of Clarence**

**2016 VOLUNTEER RECEPTION**

**Clarence City Council's volunteer reception is changing**

A volunteer reception is being held to recognise the work of volunteers in our City.

Community groups can nominate up to two volunteers to represent their group at the reception as space is limited.

**NOMINATIONS**

Nomination forms are available from:  
**Website** [www.ccc.tas.gov.au](http://www.ccc.tas.gov.au) OR  
**Council Offices** 38 Bligh Street, Rosny Park

Forms need to be submitted by 24 March 2016.

Volunteers will need to be available on the afternoon of Wednesday 11 May 2016.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
Petah Long on 6217 9500

 **National Volunteer Week** 9-15 May 2016



Phil Watson - NRM Planning Officer  
6217 9713 - [pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au](mailto:pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au)

Justin Burgess - Natural Assets Officer  
6217 9714 - [jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au](mailto:jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au)

Chris Johns - Natural Areas Volunteer Coordinator  
6217 9715 - [cjohns@ccc.tas.gov.au](mailto:cjohns@ccc.tas.gov.au)

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**Natural Resource Management Committee**

Alderman Kay McFarlane	<a href="mailto:ald.kmcfarlane@gmail.com">ald.kmcfarlane@gmail.com</a>
Lance LeSage	<a href="mailto:aboriginaltiger@gmail.com">aboriginaltiger@gmail.com</a>
Peter Wall	<a href="mailto:pwall008@gmail.com">pwall008@gmail.com</a>
Phil Watson	<a href="mailto:pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au">pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au</a>
Justin Burgess	<a href="mailto:jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au">jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au</a>
Ruth Eriksen	<a href="mailto:reriksen@aquaticsience.com.au">reriksen@aquaticsience.com.au</a>
Lyndel Wilson	<a href="mailto:lwilson@nrmsouth.org.au">lwilson@nrmsouth.org.au</a>
Catherine Nicholson	<a href="mailto:c.nicholson@ozemail.com.au">c.nicholson@ozemail.com.au</a>