

Bush Telegraph



Bushcare Newsletter

www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Autumn 08

Protecting Aboriginal Landscapes

I recently attended a launch for *Talkin up Urban Landcare* and *Field Guide for Bush Regenerators for Protecting and Conserving Aboriginal Landscapes*, facilitated by the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority. The main topic was working with the Aboriginal community to help improve our natural resources, as well as allowing the wider community and Aboriginal community to become more mutually engaged with each other, especially within natural resource management.

Also outlined were the legal aspects and how to respectfully consult with the Aboriginal community of Sydney.



Woollahra Municipal Council respects and acknowledges all Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal community members within our Local Government Area (LGA).

Within Sydney, including the Woollahra Council LGA, there are many aspects to the natural landscape which have Aboriginal cultural heritage. Traditionally many non-Aboriginal people have viewed these as archeological sites that needed protection, however Aboriginal concerns for their heritage are broader and include cultural obligations to care for country, which still occur today.

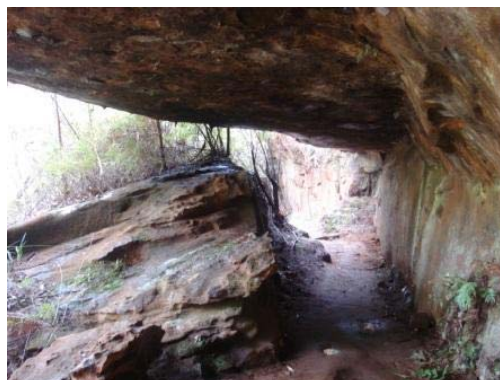
Features that occur in our natural landscape such as flora and fauna, water bodies, rock formations, forest and hills are places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people. They can be associated with lore and legend of dreaming and creation time. Song lines and dreaming tails usually connect these features of landscape.

This knowledge is passed along these pathways as part of their spiritual responsibility.

As mentioned, the Field Guide is aimed at bush regenerators, biodiversity managers, and Bushcare volunteers to protect and conserve Aboriginal landscapes. Information includes:

- The types of objects, local Aboriginal places and values that can be found in bushland sites.
- The legal obligations, requirements, and what to do if Aboriginal sites are found in your bushland site; and
- How to get additional information about Aboriginal objects, values and places.

If you need more information see a Bushcare Officer, as we carry the guide in our site folders.



Bushcare Liaison Officer Message

Hello Bushcarers, I hope everyone is keeping warm, and enjoying the winter sun in the bush.

It was great to see some Bushcare volunteers at Woollahra Council's Volunteer Morning Tea. I thank you all for putting in the time to help restore our Bushland areas.

This issue discusses how and where to go whale watching; how to remove one of the toughest weeds I have ever come across, Mothers of Millions; the Correa with its magnificent flowers features as our native plant of the month; the Kookaburra is featured as fauna of the month; plus we have a massive story on fungi.

The front page story covers very briefly how we can protect and conserve Aboriginal landscapes, especially on Bushcare sites.

Weeds to watch this time of year are Farmers Friends, Sow Thistle, Madeira Vine and I have even seen a few bindiis starting to poke their heads up.

Keep on weeding

See you on site.

Rudi Adlmayer.

Fauna Corner

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*

The laughing Kookaburra is one of the most instantly recognisable birds in both its plumage and voice, and is often heard early in the morning in a rollicking song sung in unison. It is in the family *Halcyonidae* and the order *Coraciiformes* which includes Bee-eaters and Kingfishers.

Kookaburras live in open forests and woodlands. They do not need free water to survive and occur in most parts of eastern Australia where they nest in large trees with hollows. They need open ground to hunt in and feed on snakes, lizards, rodents and small birds, but mainly live on insects and other invertebrates.

Kookaburras hunt by the perch and pounce methods, typical of the Kingfisher family. They settle on a branch or stump rarely no more than 10 metres high and sit staring fixedly at the ground below. Once prey is sighted they drop down onto their prey, seizing it with their bill before flying back to the perch to eat it.

Kookaburras can live for 20 years or more. Their birth rate is generally low to keep pace with low death rates, so therefore population growth is slow. Kookaburras form permanent breeding pairs and take at least a year to rear their young. Offspring usually stay

and help with defending territory and rearing and feeding the young.

Identification

Length: 400–450mm

Adults: Sexes are very similar with the male having blue-white over the lower back and rump and covered in flecks.

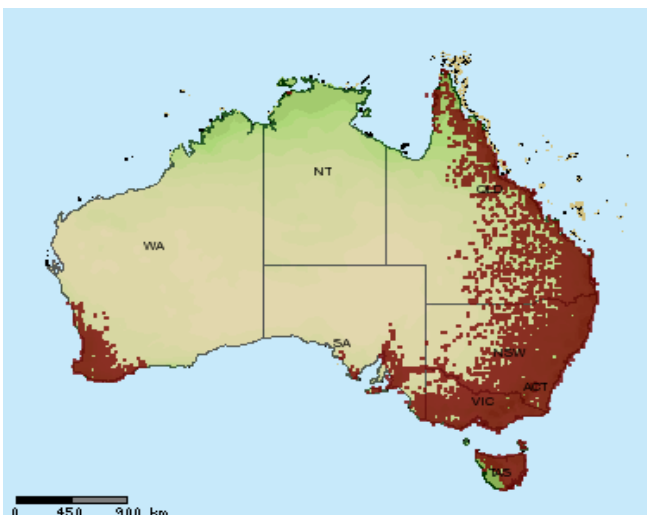
Kookaburras have an off-white head, marked with a dark brown stripe through each eye and over the centre of the crown. Under parts are entirely off-white, faintly barred with dark grey-brown down flanks. The Bill is a creamy bone colour and claws dusky.

Juveniles: As adults, but with shorter beaks.

Voice: Six different short calls from a chuckle to a kooaa to rollicking laughter. This is usually done to denote and advertise territory.

Nesting: Breeds from Sept– to Jan in a large cavity in any object big enough to contain an adult, usually a hole in a tree, branch or termite mound. Lays 1 to 4 eggs; fledge in 5 weeks.

Kookaburras are seen on all our Bushcare sites, especially at Cooper Park where there is an abundance of large trees.



Laughing Kookaburra distribution Source: <http://www.birddata.com.au/maps.vml>

Weed Control Update

Mother of Millions *Bryophyllum delagoense*

Origin

Introduced to Australia as a garden plant, Mother of Millions is indigenous to Africa and Madagascar and is now declared a noxious weed in many parts of New South Wales. Mother of Millions, as the name suggests, reproduces quickly, producing hundreds of tiny plantlets which quickly form new clumps. It is very adapted to dry conditions which can increase the plant's potential to survive and spread.

Mother of Millions is a toxic plant and when ingested by livestock can cause death. It is also poisonous to humans and household pets. The chemical nature of the plant contains the same bufadienolide-type cardiac glycosides as Oleanders, Foxgloves, that can cause death from heart failure. However few cases of human poisoning can be traced to this plant. (Wilson 1997)

Description

It is an erect smooth succulent perennial in the *Crassulaceae* family. Growing in height from 30cm to 1 metre. The stems are usually pinkish-brown to greyish in colour.

Leaves

The leaves are cylindrical-shaped, pale green to pale brown in colour with dark green patches and a shallow groove on the upper surface. There are up to seven projections at the tip of each leaf which when broken off can develop into new plants.

Flowers

The flowers are orange-red in colour and occur in a cluster at the top of a single stem. Flowering can occur from May to October.

Fruit

Mother of Millions also produces numerous seeds which can survive in the soil for a number of years before germinating.

Habit

Mother of Millions is commonly found growing on gravelly and sandy soils. It is a weed of bushland and disturbed sites such as roadsides, along fence lines, around rubbish tips and abandoned rural dwellings. It also occurs frequently along creeks and rivers where it is spread by floodwaters.

Control

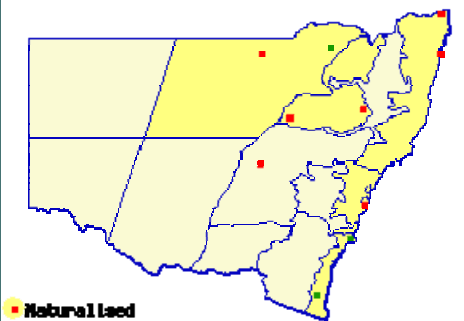
Preventing the spread of Mother of Millions is the best control measure. Regularly check for it in the winter months when the plants are in flower and are easier to see. If found remove immediately using a combination of control methods including hand removal, herbicide application and rehabilitation.

For smaller infestations, Mother of Millions can be removed by pulling up individual plants by hand. Once the plants have been removed they should be stored in black plastic bags until completely decayed or buried. By doing this re-growth from leaf fragments will be prevented.

Care needs to be taken when using this method of control as plantlets may detach from the leaves during removal and establish as new plants. Some re-growth will therefore occur and follow-up treatment will be required.

Source :

- Wilson, S. 1997 *Some Plants are Poisonous Reed, Victoria.*
- *Weeds and Illustrated botanical Guide to the weeds of Australia* BA Auld & RW Medd &
- *Primefact 45 Mothers of Millions* <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/mother-millions/mother-of-millions>



http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/avh/tmp/N_SWsubmap028117310.gif

Whale Watching Season

Yes folks, it's that time of year again. Our Cetacean friends are moving north again to breed in the warmer area of Australia's eastern coastlines. Whales include the humpback and southern right whales. Other whales you may see include: minke, blue, sei, fin, false killer, orca (killer whale), sperm, pygmy right, pygmy sperm, brydes and the white whale migaloo.

Whales appear to have evolved from a group of primitive animals called *mesonychids* that also gave rise to grazing hoofed animals. Fossil records show cetacean ancestors returned to water and evolved into their recognizable forms over 50 million years ago. Approx 38 million years ago, ancestral Cetaceans evolved into two groups, which is differentiated by their feeding methods and structures.

The first group developed teeth and the ability to echolocate and include dolphins, porpoises, sperm and pilot whales, and orcas. The second group adapted to feeding to smaller prey such as plankton and small fish, in place of teeth they have bristle like teeth on the upper jaw called *baleen* which sieve the prey from water. Species include southern right, humpback, and minke whales.

Cetaceans range in size from the blue whale coming in at 33 metres and 120 tones to Hector's dolphin at just 1.5 metres and weighing only 60 kilos.

Whales were hunted in Australian and New Zealand usually following European exploration. They were hunted for their blubber, which was used for oil, soap and food products, baleen, sperma-ceti, teeth, and ambergris.

It is estimated that 2 million whales were killed in the 20th century, the onslaught reduced whale migration to at least 5% of former numbers.

Today there is evidence that humpback and southern right populations are slowly recovering around Australian coasts, however species such as the antarctic blue whales appear to have barely recovered in the last 30 years and may never recover from the impact of whaling.

Where to see whales

During July whales can be seen migrating from the coastal cliff walk around Vacluse near the Macquarie Lighthouse. Look for spouts of water coming from the whales blowhole. Bring binoculars. Boat cruises also take passengers out, giving you a closer look.

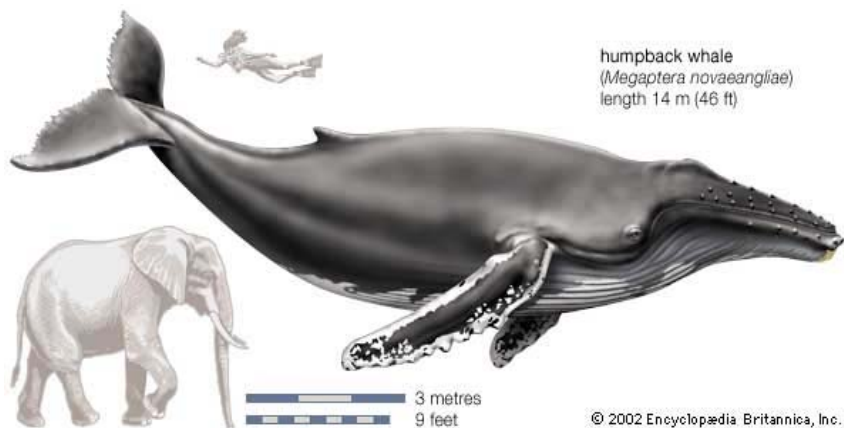
FREE Whale Watching & Coastal Cliff Walk

Come whale watching and enjoy a beautiful coastal cliff walk with Woollahra Council on Sunday 15 June 2008.

Look out for humpback whales heading north with the help of a National Parks Discovery Ranger from 9.00am – 12.00pm at Lighthouse Reserve, Old South Head Road, between Georges Road and Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars.

At 10.30am, just 100 metres south of whale watching, join the 90 minute guided coastal cliff walk from the Obelisk, near Macquarie Lighthouse, to Gap Park. Walk along the breathtaking coastal cliffs and learn about the natural and cultural history of the area.

The coastal cliff walk is an easy grade with a few steps. Please bring wet weather clothing, sunscreen and good walking shoes. Light refreshments will be served at completion of the walk. **Bookings are essential.** Call Justine Twiss on 9391 7057 to reserve your space.



Whale Migration Australia.

Source: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/plantsanimals/WildAboutWhales.htm>

Flora Corner: White Correa *Correa alba*

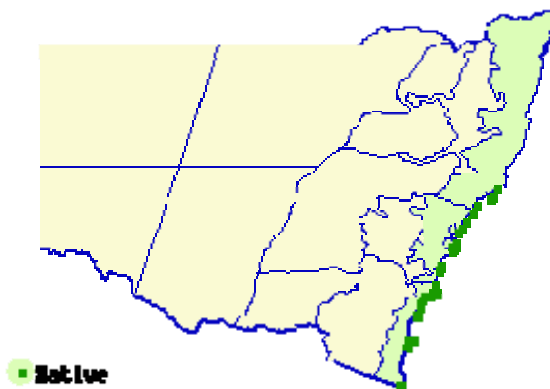
Correa is a lovely perennial Australian native that tolerates sandy soil.

Correa is small shrub to about 1.5 metres in height by a similar width. Leaves are oval shaped and greyish in colour. They are 15–30mm long by 10–30mm wide. The white flowers occur from the leaf axils and are about 11mm in diameter. Unlike other *Correa* species, the flowers are not bell shaped, but are more open.

Flowering occurs mainly in late autumn and winter but occasional flowers will be seen at other times.

This is one of the hardiest of Australian native plants being successful in most reasonably drained soils in full sun or semi shade. It is very resistant to salt spray and is tolerant of at least moderate frosts. Once established it is tolerant of extended dry periods.

White Correa will grow from cuttings from current season's growth. Sold in most good nurseries



Bushcare Member Profile: Winsome McPherson

Winsome stated weeding with us at Cooper Park about two years ago. Here she answers some questions on why she enjoys working as a Bushcare Woollahra volunteer.

What is your favorite weed and native plant?

Lantana is Winsome's favourite weed, as it is easy to remove and you cannot mistake it. Winsome also says that you never know what you will find under it, as she found out when we found an old set of steps, now aptly named 'Winsome Steps'. Her favourite native plant is many of the varieties of Wattles, *Acacia*. Winsome thinks they have a beautiful perfume, and colour.



What inspired you to join a Bushcare group?

Fate brought Winsome to join Bushcare as she had previously inquired why there was no 'Friends' type group in Cooper Park as she walked through the Park. Some time later, when she happened to open the local paper, Council was calling for Bushcare Volunteers, and the rest is history.

Winsome is also a massive AFL Swans fan, and, like Bushcare, she never misses it. The only time she did was when her sister in law turned 100! Now that's dedication.

Welcome new members Gretel, Genevieve, Julianne, and Vivian. We hope you enjoy being a Bushcare Woollahra volunteer.

Fungi

Fungi is a fascinating and mysterious organism, that appears rapidly after rain in arrays of different colours and sizes. They appear after heavy rain in the warmer months of the year and can be seen growing out of decaying trees and branches, mulch and lawns. At this time of year they are plentiful, and are appearing at all our Bushcare sites (*see photos*). Whether they are the classic mushroom or leathery, gelatinous, or slimy fungi they are all beautiful, and play an important role in our ecosystems. Other types of fungi include toadstools, puffballs, truffles, yeast, bread mould and skin infections like tinea.

Biology

Fungi are different from plants because they cannot photosynthesise, that is, convert energy from the sun into energy to survive and grow on. They are different to animals because fungi digest their food externally while animals digest their food internally. To get food, fungi rely on absorption from the substrate they grow in. This is done by the cotton like filaments, the **hyphae**, that colonise the substrate. This mass of tangled hyphae is called the **mycelium** which colonises the substrate, such as a decaying log, and releases enzymes that help the fungi absorb nutrients. Sometimes fungi can form in rings in lawns and forest floors. This is due to the **mycelium** expanding outwards in search of food and after each season fruiting bodies appear often in expanding rings. Fungi produce spore that can be moved by wind, animals and water.

Fungi classification

Fungi are classified in their own kingdom, the other 4 kingdoms being Plant, Animal, Monera (bacteria), and Protista (other single celled organisms). Fungi in Australia is recognised to have 3 divisions in their kingdom; Protoctista, Chromista, and Eumycota. Its classification is a complicated one and further information can be gained from the Victorian Botanical Garden Website at www.rbg.vic.gov.au and the Australian Biological Resource Study at www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs.

Fungi in the ecosystem

Fungi plays an important role in ecosystems, and there are several roles it plays in the associations they form with other organisms. These include mycorrhizal associations, parasitic and saprophytic relationships. Many plants have what is called a **symbiotic** relationship with some fungi; together they form specialised roots commonly known as **mycorrhiza**. The association allows the fungi to take sugars and water from the plants root, while the fungi assists the plant by uptaking nutrients and minerals from the substrate, as well as protecting the plant against pathogenic fungi and soil borne organisms (Fuhrer 2005). In contrast to a mycorrhizal fungi, a **parasitic** fungi can cause the death of horticultural and native plants. A fungi spreads from other infected plants by moving underground via the rhizomorphs (fungi roots), and spores through water, invading neighbouring plants roots and vascular systems. Most trees and forests that are healthy can repel this pathogenic invader, however old and stressed trees can become readily infected.

Saprophytic fungi are the fungi that break down and recycle dead plant and animal matter and other wastes. These types of fungi can be seen on decomposing logs on forest floors, mulched areas, and dead tree trunks. Older trees can have their lignin and cellulose consumed and can lead to brown and white rot in trees. Saprophytic fungi can also destroy wooden structures such as buildings and furniture.

Fungi play a role in the diet of Australian native animals such as wallabies, potoroos, wombats and birds relying on them as a food source.

Identifying Fungi

When collecting Fungi for identification always remember that some species can be poison, so wear gloves and never digest any fungi you find. Fungi can be photographed and as it decays quickly in the fields make notes from which include:

- Location
- Name, if possible
- Cap description such as size, colour range
- Gill description, turn upside down and look at spacing, colour and attachment to stem
- Stem description including length, diameter, texture and colour
- Spore print colour. This can be done by putting the cap of mature fungi on white or dark paper overnight. By morning a spore print should be seen.
- Odour
- Habit of fungus, and habitat description.

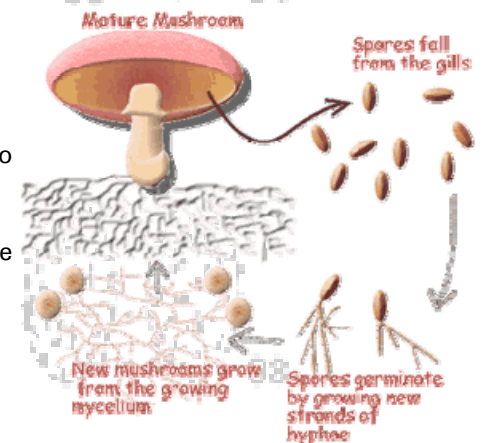


Figure 1: Fungi reproduction



Omphalotus nidiformis



Amanita sp



Mystery species



Pycnoporus coccineus



Hypholoma aurantiaca



Mystery species



Mycena viscidocrudenta



Stereum hirsutum (Possible)

With Thanks to Donald Gover of Sydney Fungal Studies Group Inc. for assistance with identification

What's on and around the place

June	September
<p>Sunday 15 June — Whale Watching and Coastal Cliff Walk 9.00am—12.00pm: Look out for humpback whales as they head north then join a 90 guided coastal cliff walk to Gap Park. Bring wet weather clothing, sunscreen and good walking shoes. Bookings essential, call Justine Twiss on 9391 7057.</p> <p>Saturday 21 June —Trumper Park Walk & Bushcare Training Come and learn about Trumper Park and join a Bushcare group. Free morning tea and training. Meet at 10am at Trumper Park Grandstand. Contact Rudi Adlmayer on 0423 020 648</p>	<p>Sunday 14 September—People & Pets Day 11am—3pm: Join in the fun of this fun free family event at Lyne Park, Rose Bay. Browse the pet-related stalls, enjoy wild life shows, seek advice and enter your pet in the dog races or competitions. For more information, visit www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au.</p>
July	October
<p>Join <i>HarbourKeepers</i> along the Hermitage Foreshore, Vaucluse for a morning of bush regeneration on the third Sunday of every month. Help to remove the weeds that are choking our native Australian plants and animals. No experience is required as training and tools are provided. Free event. Contact Dave for more information and to book: info@harbourkeepers.org.au - 9299 0000.</p> <p>Sunday 27 July—National Tree Day Come and plant one of 1000 native trees at Cooper or Gap Park. Contact Rudi Adlmayer on 0423 020 648</p>	<p>Thursday 9 October—Writers and Readers 6.30pm—7.30pm: Come and listen to Prize winning Australian poet Robert Gray talks about his memoir <i>The Land I Came Through Last</i> at Woollahra Council Chambers, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay. Tickets cost \$10, \$7 for Woollahra Library Friends, and must be paid for an picked up in advance. Contact Woollahra Library and Information Service, 9391 7100.</p>
August	November
<p>Tuesday 8 July, 10.30am—12.00pm Banksia enthusiast Cas Liber, leader of the Australian Plant Society's Banksia Study Group, will share his experiences with banksias and discuss the different species and their particular soil and micro-climate requirements. Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney \$18, Friends \$12, includes morning tea at 10.30am Call 9231 8182.</p>	<p>24 October—2 November The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is the only national prize for sculptures of smaller dimensions. Come along and view the exhibition at Woollahra Council Chambers, 536 New South Head Rd, Double Bay. For more information, contact Jo Jansyn, Cultural Development Coordinator, on 9391 7135</p>

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If undelivered please return to
Bushcare Liaison Officer PO Box 61
Doublebay NSW 1360

If you are interested in becoming a Bushcare volunteer, contact Councils Bushcare Liaison Officer Rudi Adlmayer on 0423 020 648. For more information, log on to www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au, or email bushcare@woollahra.nsw.gov.au.

