

MEPA NEWS



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President's note

January has again brought heavy rains and ex-tropical cyclone Oswald, rather disrupted human affairs on the Mountain. What of nature's affairs? What happens to the local birds, in particular? One resident reported an exhausted Sooty Tern on the PEI Rd - way off track. Other oddities include: colonies of bell birds appearing at Mt Glorious village and Alex Rd; and a decline in bird numbers generally in some areas.

If anyone has any information on these and other effects we, at MEPA, would love to know

(askmepa@yahoo.com.au)

On the up-side, the windfall of firewood will keep us warm in the winter. Dominic Hyde

Gardening in the Mountains

Trees and Wild Weather

After the recent wild weather on the Australia day week-end, many of us will still be removing the damage from our properties and no doubt re-thinking what is growing near our houses.

You may find that the trees that caused the most problems came into one or more of the following categories:

- tall with a single trunk (eg Pencil Cedar)
- standing alone and not part of a group
- already weak and damaged
- those with a dense canopy
- those not suited to the area (eg exotic Cypress spp.)

Action

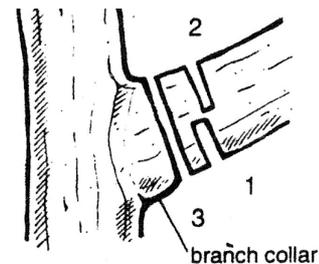
- Check all remaining trees for weakness and decay and remove where necessary.
- Remove or prune back damaged limbs to an adjoining limb or 'sap run' as disease is less likely to enter at this point. If pruning back to the trunk, leave a 'collar'. (See diagram.)
- Create a windbreak.

Pruning

Trees such as Eucalypts actually allow swirling winds to pass through their open canopy so don't be tempted to prune them right back as this will create a mass of dense foliage at the end of each limb giving the wind something to pick up. Unless already

damaged, it is more common for a Eucalypt to drop limbs in very hot weather when the sap heats and swells the limb.

Correct
Branch
Removal
technique



The under (1), upper (2) and final cut (3) method
(SOURCE: DPI FACT SHEET)

Windbreaks

Windbreaks are created by planting *groups* of shrubs or trees, as in this manner (like a forest) they support one another. Stand alone or 'specimen' trees are very open to damage.

Plant a group of shrubs and trees, starting with the lowest on the windward side and then gradually increasing in height. Also, the planting should not be too dense; the idea is to break the force of the wind by allowing it to pass *through* the foliage rather than stopping it completely, which would force the wind up and over creating turbulence on the other side. Choose plants that occur naturally as they will be suited to local conditions.

Wendy Lees

Mt Nebo School Wins Environment Grant

The Mt Nebo State School P&C has been successful in it's application for nearly \$30,000 to restore the forested areas surrounding the school under the QLD Governments "Everyone's Environment Grant" scheme. With assistance from MEPA, the area will be a showcase of Best Practice in Bush Regeneration. The project will commence soon with the pruning and/or removal of many dead or dangerous trees by local arborist Matt Pither, some of which were damaged in the recent storm. This will make the area safe for replanting and for a range of nature based activities and art installations. If you would like to get involved you can contact MEPA or come along to one of the upcoming working bees. Dates will be available soon. Alan Carter

Reminder Become a MEPA member
(\$5 per person, \$10 per family).

Membership form available at:

<http://www.gloriousnebo.org.au/MEPA/membership>

Plastic, plastic everywhere...

I often visit Cabbage Tree Creek, the one that runs through McDowall and Carseldine to the north of Brisbane. There, caught in branches of fallen trees, washed up on the creek banks or stuck in creek-side Lomandras I see hundreds of plastic drink bottles. In some places they are often so thick they make a bridge on which a person can cross the creek. Of course, when there's a flood they all go out to sea.

It's estimated that 3.5 million pieces of plastic enter the world's oceans every day and up to half of these come from drink containers.

Plastics don't biodegrade but break into smaller and smaller pieces over time. These tiny pieces, often too small to see, can be swallowed by sea creatures. The chemicals in the plastic attract such pollutants as mercury, which become concentrated on the surface of the plastic, and later leach into the bloodstream of any fish or bird that happens to eat them.

The term 'biomagnification' means the animal at the top of the food chain is the most affected by plastic contamination - that is often us humans.

This brings us to the Container Deposit Scheme. It has been operating in South Australia for many years and has been recently introduced into the Northern Territory, although that scheme is now facing a legal challenge from the beverage and packaging industry. A 10 cent deposit is charged and repaid to the customer when the bottle is returned.

In South Australia 80% of drink bottles sold are returned, and the waters off the coast are relatively clean compared with other states. In recent figures released by Clean Up Australia, 51% of rubbish collected last year was plastic, much of it was drink containers.

Now let's think about plastic bags - but that will have to wait for another time.

Maggie Scattini

Flowering now – Native

Syzygium crebrinerve (Purple Cherry)

Large rainforest tree common to rainforest areas such as Mt Glorious. Glossy leaves, aromatic when crushed and white flowers Spring to Summer. Fruit is pink to purple, small and edible, but not very palatable. Rough bark at base is rich tan in colour.



Although this tree belongs to the Myrtaceae family, it does not show great susceptibility to Myrtle Rust.

In the forest it can be tall and slender (up to 30m) but when given some space, it will stay much lower as a broad, spreading tree and it is this form which withstood the recent weather event very well because of its low buttressed trunk and widely spreading branches which filtered the wind.

Wendy Lees

Do your block!

Free bush care service

Would you like some assistance managing bushland on your block? Advice on weeds or advice on planting local native plants in your garden?

MEPA has a free service offering advice and information (supported by MBRC)

Contact Maggie - 3289 8175 or

Dominic - 3289 0093 or

Email: askmepa@yahoo.com.au