

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

June 2015



President's Report

It has been a very busy few months since the last meeting of the SCA on 8 March in the Silverleaves reserve. This was also the Annual General Meeting and it was very pleasing to see it attended by many locals. Several new Silverleaves members have joined the Committee and we warmly welcome Gillian Armstrong, Barbara Wilkinson, and Judy Horacek.

2015 Agenda – many challenges

In 2015, we face a number of ongoing challenges. These include weed control and vegetation management, monitoring and opposing inappropriate development, and our campaign to Save the Rhyll Inlet. There, our ultimate goal is to protect the land parcel to the south of Bruce Road and gift it to Philip Island Nature Parks via a Trust for Nature entity structure. The subject blocks are currently on the market at 2 Settlement Road and 1 – 5 Settlement Road. These parcels are zoned farmland but contain vital wetland assets, and are part of the Rhyll Estuary Zone. SCA has also made a submission to the Victorian Coastal Council which is developing an updated Coastal Strategy document for the State. Our submission highlighted the threat to wetlands and the vital need for their protection and rehabilitation. It is our ultimate objective to restore the entire Rhyll Inlet, as far as possible, to its pre-farming status. This is a big goal but not unachievable.

Maintaining unique character

The threat of inappropriate development is always present and our organisation has a sub-committee dedicated to monitoring applications and to oppose those which would have a detrimental effect on vegetation, wildlife and the uniqueness of the area. As a Silverleaves resident said at our most recent meeting held at

the General Store on Saturday 6 June: "Silverleaves is characterised by small scale houses nestling in the trees and bush; many people have made great efforts to maintain indigenous gardens and protect wildlife".

One of our Committee Members, Ros Trayford, recently presented at the Coastcare Leadership Course representing SCA. Ros gave an excellent overview of Silverleaves, capturing its essence and the work SCA has recently been engaged in. Copies of the new SCA brochure were provided to attendees. Ros's presentation was very well received and we are very grateful for his time and effort.

SCA continues to monitor and object to inappropriate development proposals to maintain exactly this neighbourhood amenity and character. We encourage those who can help us to add their voice to these protests. Please email us if you would like to know more.

A dirty nappy for dinner, anyone?

Protecting the foreshore and marine life from waste and rubbish, and dog control are two of our ongoing headaches. Recent media programs have highlighted the global threat of plastic refuse in particular. The problem goes well beyond plastic, as pretty much anything seems to be thrown away by humans so carelessly, often ending up in the sea with disastrous effect. In February, I collected a dirty nappy left on the sandbar on Silverleaves beach. If I hadn't picked it up, it would have been taken out by the tide and potentially ingested by a fish. Think about that a moment.

Similarly, dogs with owners who don't clean up after them also mean serious pollution problems. Dogs cause many other problems including disturbing marine and other wildlife – all preventable if they are on leash and walked in the designated areas. Thank you to all those already doing the right thing! Please keep it up.

SCA going digital

SCA is planning to launch a website to improve our email membership and related communications. We are also seeking to achieve tax deductibility. Both of these will elevate our ability to grow membership and encourage donations. As a not-for-profit group, we rely on member subscriptions, donations and grants to continue our vital work. Together with the SCA Committee, a warm thank you to all who have joined/rejoined SCA and donated funds. I am looking forward to reporting further on delivery of our website, we hope by the end of 2015.

SCA Plant Stall – Sunday 7 June

Jarvis Weston, Don Cox and Myra Holmes set up the SCA Plant Stall at the General Store early on the morning of Queen's Birthday Weekend. The Stall was staffed by volunteers who sold plants set up in groups of varying heights. The coastal banksia – our own 'Silverleaves' – was very popular. By lunchtime, many interested visitors had bought plants and discussed planting and positioning. Thank you to Barb Martin Bushbank, Bass Coast Shire and the Silverleaves Store and to all who bought plants for supporting this important venture.

SCA is encouraging the replacement of weeds like agapanthus with native alternatives. We hope to eventually eliminate 'escapee' weeds growing in Silverleaves verges and on the foreshore. This work greatly enhances the environment – and we appreciate the efforts of many residents who 'go native'. We hope to hold another plant stall later this year. All proceeds are put towards weed control, native plantings and other related activities.

I am personally looking forward to planting four new coastal banksias and 20 lomandras purchased at the plant stall in my garden in the coming weeks. Thank you again to all those who continue to work in - and with - the SCA.

M A Johnston

Birds of Silverleaves

Barb Wilkinson took this great photo of a Red Capped Plover in March as she was sitting on her eggs, and by afternoon the chicks had hatched. Thanks Barb for capturing the moment.



Red capped Plover

And Geoff Sands in Bruce Road sent in the photo of Firetails, with a note to people who leave out water for birds; "add a 'half brick' to the deeper water bowls or the birds will drown, smaller birds like a shallow dish to have a 'wash' in as well as a drink".



Beautiful Firetails, also called Eastern Firetails



Musk Lorikeet

There have been increasing numbers of Musk Lorikeets at Silverleaves over the last few years; you may have noticed noisy groups of them especially in the mornings and late afternoon. They are mostly green in colour, with a yellow patch at the side of their breast, a red forehead and a blue crown, although females are less blue than males.



Eastern Rosella

There has been increasing numbers of Eastern Rosella's, easily confused with the Musk Lorikeets. They are usually seen in pairs and have a red head, neck and breast, with yellowish upper parts and distinctive white cheek patches.

Celebrating 'Silverleaves' Heritage of Local Plants

The Coastal Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) is one of the special trees that belong in Silverleaves and from which its charming name is derived. Provided a garden has room to allow for a tall tree, this is a winner, creating shade and interest especially from the cones that grow first like small candles then develop into large inflorescences that provide nectar for birds. Aboriginal Victorians of the Boonerwung 'tribe' made a sweet drink from fresh Banksia cones.

Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) is notable for its pretty creamy scented flowers, which often attract butterflies. Its timber is easy to work and has been used for tool handles. The tallest examples are found near the coast and may reach to over six metres in height.

A little lower, but bushier, is the Common Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*), which copes well with drought and exposure. These shrubs may be clipped into hedges or allowed to spread. They have small white flowers and thick fleshy leaves.

Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia baccata*), is a hardy scrambling shrub that grows in a coastal environment, and adapts well to home gardens. It produces dark red berries that may be eaten, but taste sour.

One of the most attractive plants is the White Correa (*Correa alba*), which is native to the coast and will grow to almost two metres in a garden. It has bell-shaped flowers that live for long periods among the grey-green foliage, and last well in an indoor arrangement.

A useful ground cover is the Native or New Zealand Spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonoides*), which is distinguished from the Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*) by its creeping habit. Cooking for about three minutes produces an edible, slightly salty product, and some people have used the spinach for pesto.

Many Australian gardeners are using local species, particularly for their interest, and for a sense of belonging.

By Valerie Tarrant Ph.D., OAM

(Dr Tarrant was awarded an Australia Medal in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours for Services to the environment, conservation and community education. She leads 'Friends of the George Street Reserve' in Sandringham and is a regular visitor to Silverleaves.

Weed mapping along the foreshore

On Sunday May 3rd at 10am a few eager SCA committee and members met to map weeds along the foreshore of Silverleaves. This project was started last year, and helps to prioritise and plan weed control activities along the foreshore, in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire Council. About half of the foreshore is now mapped, and future working bees will complete the data base.

The foreshore was generally found to be in good shape; however there were fairly large infestations of Agapanthus, Cotoneaster and Pittosporum found which will be targeted with SCA grant money and funding from Council. The Agapanthus infestation was found bordering residential properties, most likely originating from gardens, highlighting the importance of keeping this plant de-flowered, or better yet, removing it entirely and replacing it with native species such as Lomandra.

If you find any Mirror Bush, Polygala, Sea Spurge, Agapanthus, Ivy or any other weeds growing in the foreshore vegetation please notify the SCA Secretary

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

Nature Strip Planting Guidelines

The Bass Coast Shire have guidelines for planting in Nature Strips which includes what planting is permitted, what you need to be mindful of, and how to apply for a Road Occupation Permit to conduct the works. Residents are then required to maintain these in a neat and tidy condition. These guidelines are incorporated into Schedule 1 of Local Law No. 1 Neighbourhood Amenity 2012.

You can also obtain a copy of the guidelines from any of Council's customer service centres. Any enquiries regarding the guidelines and Road Occupation Permits can be directed to the Asset Protection Officer at Ph: 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or 03 5671 2211 or via email to basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au.

SCA encourages residents when selecting plants to consider indigenous plants which can enhance biodiversity, provide habitat for local insects and birds and maintain the unique neighbourhood character of Silverleaves.

Weed of the Month



Cotoneaster

This species originated in eastern Asia and has found its way into the Silverleaves foreshore. This plant reproduces by seed, which are commonly spread by birds that eat the brightly coloured fruit. Seeds are also dispersed by other animals (e.g. foxes) and in dumped garden waste.

This species forms thickets and dense infestations will shade out the native ground flora and impede the regeneration of overstorey plants. The fruit are poisonous to humans and this species can also act as host for bacterial fireblight, a disease of orchards.

Physical removal of the plant and all fragments is the best organic method. If plants are cut down they will produce suckers from the base (i.e. crown). Spraying maybe necessary but as a last resort; cut the tree down or make downward cuts around the base of the tree and apply weed spray within 10 minutes.

Hooded Plovers Update

The Nature Parks 2014-15 Phillip Island hoodie breeding season snapshot: 28 nests, 70 eggs, 23 chicks of which 12 (probably 13) fledged. The juvenile count 12-13 is because we think a chick at Hutchison Beach fledged (very close at last visit) however we don't have proof and it was not banded. Overall there was equal or better success than the previous 23 years and continues a pleasing trend. Report any nests to PINP 5951 2800

Container Port Development at Hastings option off the agenda

The State Government appears to be in no hurry to develop a second port in Victoria, with the expansion of the Port of Hastings apparently off the agenda. Proposed legislation introduced by Tim Pallas is based on the premise that Melbourne will not require a second port within 50 years. This is great news for Western Port but we must continue to protect its environmental wellbeing into the future.

Source; The Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser June 3 2015

NEXT S.C.A. MEETING

- Sunday 6 September 2015
- 11.00 am
- Silverleaves Store

Please feel welcome to come to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, propose ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. We look forward to seeing you then.

SCA Diary 2015

SCA Committee Meeting 2015

Sunday 6 September 11.00am, Silverleaves Store

Revegetation Working Bee along the foreshore from Ellen Rd to Uringa Court

Sunday 20 September, 10.00am. Meet at the Silverleaves Store.

SCA Membership

It was decided at the last SCA committee meeting to trial making memberships due for the calendar year in December / January to avoid the confusion during the year (starting at the end of this year.) We will send out reminders in the newsletter and encourage you to renew your subscription during this time period. It's only \$10.00 and includes four issues of the SCA newsletter, which is also available by email. Donations are very welcome and help us complete valuable weed clearing and revegetation projects amongst other activities. Complete the membership form with your cheque and send to:

The Secretary Silverleaves Conservation Association Inc
P.O.Box 9037 Cowes, VIC 3922

Or make a direct deposit online:
Bendigo Bank
BSB 633 000 Account 132 984 592.

New Email address for any queries
silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

If you have a story or a photo you would like to share from Silverleaves or would like to make a contribution to the newsletter please contact the SCA Newsletter Editor by email
myra.holmes.000@gmail.com

