

YOU ARE INVITED

TO OUR BARBEQUE AND AGM, MONDAY 3RD DECEMBER, AT HICKINBOTHAM'S WINERY, 194 NEPEAN HIGHWAY (NEAR WALLACES RD) DROMANA.

BBQ AT 6.00 PM, BYO FOOD, ALCOHOLIC DRINKS FOR SALE AT BAR.

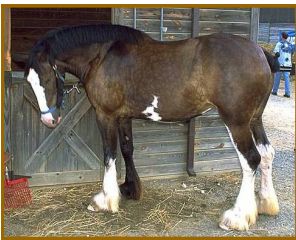
AND DO BRING A CARROT FOR BERT THE CLYDESDALE, AS HE CAN FEEL A BIT LEFT-OUT.

SPEAKER 7.30: LEON COSTERMANS —TOPIC: RELATION OF GEOLOGY TO ECOLOGY.

ALWAYS A LOVELY EVENING WITH A VIEWS OF VINES, FARM AND THE BAY.

Below: Bert (or maybe his cousin) , from

Wikipedia (he's famous!)



Bower spinach—*Tetragonia implexicoma*—Internet



Rhagodia condolleana DPI

SPIFFA NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN PENINSULA INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA ASSOCIATION INC
PO BOX 480 ROSEBUD 3939 AUSTRALIA
REGISTERED NUMBER A0024178

MICROLAENA STIPOIDES—WEEPING GRASS



PIC: WIKIPEDIA

With the hot weather upon us and talk of fire after a bumper season, it seems appropriate to talk about one of our native grasses *Microlaena stipoides*, bearing in mind that native grasses carry much less fuel load, and therefore burn less fiercely in fire events.

Microlaena stipoides, or *Ehrharta stipoides*, related to the African *Ehrharta*, occurs naturally in all states of Australia as well as in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Philippines. Common names include 'weeping rice grass' and 'weeping meadow grass'.

Microlaena stipoides belongs to the family Poaceae, (Poas also making a beautiful show this year on the Mornington Peninsula). It spreads underground as well as producing seed.

This grass grows to a height of approximately 0.7metres and produces delicate drooping stalks carrying spikelets which contain seeds. *Microlaena stipoides* prefers acid soils and is

drought and frost tolerant. In Australia it is found in areas of medium to high rainfall and the leaves normally remain green all year. (Also an advantage in bushfire season).

According to Wikipedia, *Microlaena* is a nutritious pasture grass, with productivity of approximately 2 -7 tones per hectare and digestibility of approximately 60–70%. Its drought-tolerant qualities have led to an increasing interest in its use for turf and other research is being carried out.

Microlaena stipoides is also an elegant garden grass, which can be mowed to make lawn, or left to display its delicate beauty.

With the foregoing advantages, one wonders why it was ever replaced, either as pasture or garden grass.

FIRE RESISTANT INDIGENOUS PLANTS

These include **Rhagodia condolleana**, or Seaberry Salt Bush, with a high salt and water content in its leaves, and which forms a "sprawling shrub of up to four metres high" (DPI). It will also climb or ramble. Helen Snee, of Victorian Flora, describes it as "A tough screening shrub that is able to tolerate a wide range of conditions." These include "wet, saline, coastal, shade....Leaves are semi-succulent, dark green, oblong-elliptic in shape and up to 25mm in length. The leaf undersurface is a paler green and mealy. Leaf margins are often recurved." It

has "Inconspicuous whitish flowers" and the fruit is "Small, shiny dark red berries" produced in the autumn. The fruit and leaves were possibly part of the aboriginal people's diet, and the berries are certainly appreciated by the birds.

Tetragonia implexicoma or Bower Spinach, also has a high salt and water content and a climbing and drooping habit, forming a bower or creeping at ground level to form a thick cover. Wikipedia describes it as — belonging to the Aizoaceae, or ice-plant family and is mainly

found in coastal regions of New Zealand and southern Australia as well as on many nearby island groups. It occupies habitats from sand and shingle beaches through coastal woodland, shrubland and grassland, and as exposed, salt-pruned vegetation on cliffs... It may also be found inland or on calcareous sandstone or limestone outcrops in dense forest. The flowers are yellow and pink-to dark red succulent berries which are eaten by birds and lizards

— Best of all, these species do not needing watering.

MICROWAVE WIRELESS TECHNOLOGIES AND OUR WILDLIFE

"AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE GREATEST POLLUTING ELEMENT IN THE EARTH'S ENVIRONMENT IS THE PROLIFERATION OF ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS. I CONSIDER THAT TO BE FAR GREATER ON A GLOBAL SCALE, THAN WARMING, AND THE INCREASE IN CHEMICAL ELEMENTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT.

Dr. Robert O. Becker continues: "And from what I can tell by reading media reports on the Internet, this phenomenon of the sudden disappearance of life-forms (insects, amphibians, fish, bats, birds, etc) is happening all over the world. Just last year, the fact that there is (and has been) a worldwide die-off of bees was finally taken up by the media. The frogs have been dying for years—(although they were originally "mysteriously" showing up with deformities)...at the beginning of January 2008 a Swedish journalist sent me a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Company about the disappearance of tens of millions of birds across North America: <http://rawstory.com/rawreply/?p=372>

Research into this field by Tamara Hicks has produced the following:

"Wireless technologies that rely on microwave radiation to send emails and voice communication are thousands of times stronger than levels reported to cause some health impacts. Prolonged exposure to radiofrequency and microwave radiation from cell phones, cordless phones, cell towers, WI-FI and other wireless technologies have been linked to physical symptoms including headache, fatigue, sleeplessness, dizziness, changes in brainwave activity, and impairment of concentration and memory." (The BioInitiative Press Release, 2007, p2).

Dr. George Carlo, in an email regarding birds, Jan 1st 2008, says "Canaries in the coalmine is the operating concept...But it is a bit more complicated than the historical example, and therein lies the risk of missing the truth.

What we have found in our work with Autistic children, electrohypersensitives, and other patients with membrane hypersensitivity-related conditions is that the ability of the person—or species—to counter environmental insults becomes severely impaired. EMR (electromagnetic radiation) is most likely a synergen in these cases, including...with disappearing birds. The exposures (to) such as pesticides, chemtrails, harvesting of forests, and urban sprawl are not causes competing with EMR—they are additive and synergistic causes. They are insults to the system that require strong biological compensation to overcome. EMR depletes that ability to com-

pensate, and thus the person—or species—succumbs to the effects of the environmental insult more severely and more rapidly."

"Thus it is clear that this radiation is... having a serious impact on life on this planet...The disappearance of bees has come to be known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)...There is ample evidence to suggest that it is indeed long-term exposure to microwave radiation—especially from 3G GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) digital phone technology—that is killing the birds. "Scientists at the research Institute for Nature and Forests in Brussels, Belgium, have produced the first evidence that mobile phone base stations are affecting the reproductive behavior of wild sparrows...Fewer house sparrow males were seen in locations within relatively high electric field strengths of GSM base stations" ... "In Spain: Alfonso Balmori, as conservation biologist...reported a significantly lower number of white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) fledglings in nests close to mobile phone transmitters compared to nests further away. Balmori also found difference in how the birds behaved close to the phone antennae. Young birds died of unknown causes, and bird couples frequently fought while constructing their nests...some nests were never completed and the storks remained passively in front of the antennae.

...Several million birds of 230 species die each year from collisions with telecommunication masts in the USA during migration...mainly at night, in fog, or bad weather, when birds might be using the earth's magnetic field for navigation, and could be seriously disoriented by the microwave radiation from telecommunication masts...In the UK, where the allowed radiation level is 20 times higher than in Spain, a decline of several species of urban

birds has occurred, coinciding with the increasing installation of mobile phone masts." (ISIS 2007). The article on the website <http://educateyourself.org/cn/microwaveskillinginsects-birds20mar08.shtml>, comments that "Birds (and insects and other small animals) would naturally be the first to ...be affected by this increase in ambient radiation since naturally they have smaller bodies and hence less flesh to be penetrated by exposure to microwaves."

In a paper entitled "Effects of Different Kinds of EMFs on the Offspring of Insects", Panagopoulos & Margaritis found: 1) a dramatic decrease in the reproductive capacity of fruit flies -up to 60%- with exposure to a digital GSM field, and 2) significant changes in reproductive capacity with exposure to other forms of electric and magnetic radiation. They exposed the fruit flies to cell phone radiation for only six minutes a day for only four to five days...there has also recently been reported ...a dramatic die-off of fish and bats in the USA. A Minnesota high school ... student, curious (to see) if there was a link between an increase in frog deformities and electropollution decided to test the streams for electric currents and ... was actually able to find them at dangerously high levels...these currents...could explain the ... increase in infections as well as ... the drastic disappearance of aquatic species we are seeing around the world".

See article from Times of India

STUDY SAYS CELLPHONE TOWERS DAMAGING BIOLOGICAL MAKEUP OF BIRDS, BEES—THE TIMES OF INDIA

“Pune: the rapid growth of the cellphone industry in India has fuelled haphazard building of base stations without prior planning or regulation, which is impacting the birds and bees biologically, an experts’ committee has found. The panel has formulated guidelines to check their installation in the country.

Recent studies indicate the harmful impact of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) from transmission towers on humans and bees, with birds exposed to a greater risk, the report said. Such radiation also resulted in aversive behavior in bats and sparrows, abnormal behavior in tits and kestrel birds and reproductive failure in white storks.

The committee recommended that EMF be recognized as a pollutant and regular auditing be conducted in urban localities, educational, hospital, industrial, residential and recreational premises and around the pro-

tected areas and ecologically sensitive areas. A law, the experts suggested, that protects urban flora and fauna from such radiation is necessary as conservation issues in urban areas are different from forested or wild-life habitats.

There must be strict control over installation of cellphone towers near wildlife protected areas, Important Bird Areas, Ramsar Sites, turtle breeding areas, bee colonies, zoos. Security lighting for on-ground facilities should be minimized and point downwards or be down-shielded to avoid bird hits, the study said.

The government must formulate rules to prevent unscientific proliferation of cellphone towers across the country, Pattazhy said. In India studies conducted by him proved that cellphones with a frequency of 900MHz for 10 minutes kept in the beehives keep worker bees away. “There is a drastic decrease in the egg pro-

duction of the queen bees. It fell to 100 eggs a day compared to 350 eggs per day in the control colonies,” he said.

The report also said that since electro magnetic fields are an invisible form of pollution there must be an independent system for monitoring such pollution which causes population decline in sparrows and bees.”

References:

Times of India c Bennett, Colman & Co, 27.10.2011

<http://articks.timesofindia.com/27.10.2011>

“Are microwaves killing insects, frogs and birds? And are we next?” By Paul Raymond Don, March 20, 2008

<http://educate-yourself.org/cn/>

*Obviously food for thought. Many thanks to Tamara Hicks for this information. Ed

RULE CHANGES ON BURNING OFF

DID YOU MISS IT? Reported in the local papers:

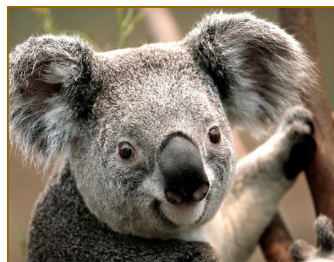
As part of the Open Air Burning Local Law, residents can no longer burn off on land less than 1500sq m without a permit. Times for burning remain at Friday and Saturday between 9am and 4pm. For those whose land size qualifies.

The burn-off must be more than 10 m from other properties

unless a permit is first granted.

If planning a large burn, you should notify Victoria Fire Operations Centre on 1800 668 511 or burnoffs@esta.vic.gov.au to avoid unnecessary callouts by the local fire teams.

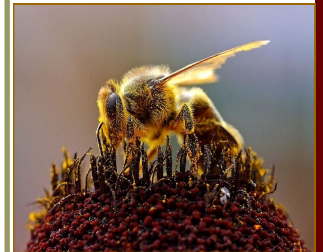
If you should see an injured animal such as our little friend on the above-right, you can call his friends at Animalia...



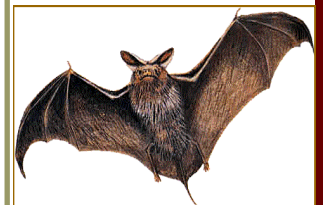
FOR WILDLIFE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION CALL

ANIMALIA ON 0435 822 699
You can also join the team as a volunteer, as a carer after brief training or help with data entry, record keeping, maintenance, laundry, fundraising etc.

Some of the precious creatures which appear to be affected



Honey Bee: Wikipedia



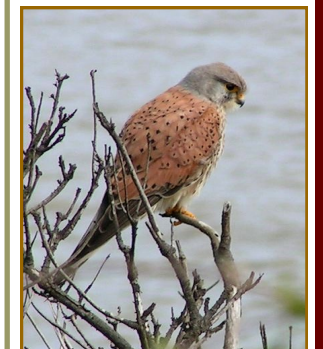
Bat : Wikipedia



White Stork:
Norfolk Birders



Australian Green Tree Frog
Wikipedia



Kestrel: Wikipedia

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT NEWSLETTER WELCOME: DEADLINE 15th JANUARY 2013.

Send to Jan Dwyer, 56 Sunningdale Rd Rosebud, or email: dwyerjan@gmail.com Already have a treat in store with another article by Norman Hellard

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DID YOU MISS IT? REPORT IN THE SUNDAY AGE 21.10.12

Alarminglly, the report states that "Waterfront communities from Southbank to the Mornington Peninsula face a damage bill of more than \$1 billion from severe storms and rising seal levels over the next 90 years...The report, by federal, sate and local governments, warns that parts of Rosebud fore-shore could be completely submerged by 2100 during coastal flooding, while residents around El-wood's canals face massive annual losses if government and local councils fail to act.

Maps...show a large section of Point Nepean Road would be regularly cut off during storms, while local residents and businesses would encounter frequent floods resulting from climate change...

Mordialloc would also experience a sharp increase in flood damage without immediate government action...Due to be released next February, the Port Phillip Coastal Adaption Pathways Program examined four vulnerable coastal areas and another flood-prone area in North Melbourne...The report...establishes a cost-benefit framework that will be used to shape planning decisions and infrastruc-ture investment by governments...Estimates by the Climate Change Department ...revealed that 247,600 coastal homes across Australia...were at risk of inundation from a sea-level rise of 1.1metres over the next century..." chouston@theage.com.au

**A SAFE AND VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND
NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR FRIENDS AND
MEMBERS**

IF UNDELIVERABLE RETURN TO SPIFFA
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