

# Sunshine Bushland Reserve

July 2011 Newsletter No.129

[www.sunshinereserve.com.au](http://www.sunshinereserve.com.au)

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## RAINGARDENS = HEALTHIER WATERWAYS

Swelling populations and the resulting urban growth are placing an increasing burden on our stormwater systems, which carries through to our natural waterways and the ecosystems they support. Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is part of the solution to this growing problem. WSUD is a strategy being adopted increasingly by many councils and developers and comes in various forms. Raingardens come under the heading of WSUD and can be implemented on virtually any scale so are a wonderful way that we can all do something to contribute to healthier waterways from our own homes.

The concerns that come with stormwater are in both the quality and the quantity and the vectors for the pollutants that enter our stormwater systems are all the hard surfaces that do not allow for water infiltration into the natural scheme.

Litter, bacteria and excess nutrients are the main factors affecting the quality of stormwater.

Litter is self-explanatory and the issue of bacteria is largely due to the amount of dog faeces that enters the system due to the behaviour of irresponsible dog owners.

Excess nutrients in waterways can result in algal blooms which can be extremely damaging as the algae remove the oxygen from the water and also prevent the penetration of sunlight. These nutrients generally present as nitrates and phosphates and originate in a number of ways including airborne nitrates which settle on surfaces and phosphates from bird faeces. Rotting vegetation and possum faeces in gutters can also add to the nutrient load as can runoff of fertilisers from farms and domestic gardens.

Other pollutants include poisons such as herbicides and pesticides and both accidental and deliberate spillages from industries and roads etc.

The quantity of stormwater entering a waterway can also be a serious issue during heavy or prolonged rain events. During these periods the volume and velocity of the water exiting the stormwater drains into waterways can cause enormous erosion and result in the uprooting and undermining of vegetation and the de-stabilising of stream banks.

A raingarden is essentially a water filtration system which removes nutrients and particles from the stormwater coming off your roof, driveway, footpath or other hard surface. It also serves to slow the input of water to the stormwater drains. It looks no different to a regular garden but the layers of a raingarden are what makes it different.

The top layer is the mulch layer or retention layer followed underneath by the filter layer which is also the planting medium and is made up of a high proportion of sand mixed with some topsoil. It is in the filter layer that plant roots take up the nutrients from the water and particles are retained. This sandy mix is to allow for fairly speedy drainage through to the transition layer, composed of white washed sand and then to a layer of gravel. The gravel forms the drainage layer and surrounds a slotted pipe which directs the

filtered water back into the stormwater system or elsewhere in your garden.

The plants most suitable for raingardens are natives which are tolerant to long periods without water but can also withstand short episodes of inundation. Initially a raingarden may require some watering and feeding to become established but once established all its needs will be provided from your roof.

The design of a raingarden is limited only by the imagination and can be a beautiful low maintenance addition to your garden whilst contributing to healthier waterways.

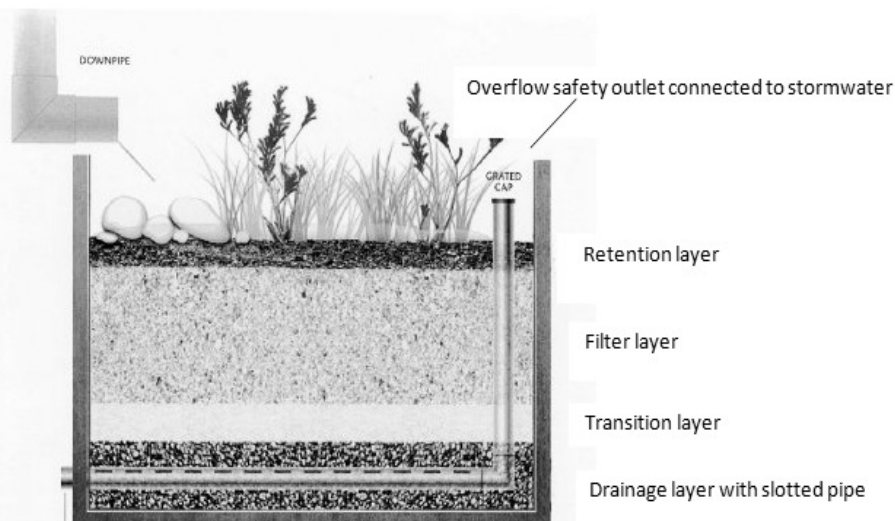


Image source: Melbourne Water

<http://www.mayflyraingardens.com.au>

**Sunshine Reserve Conservation and Fireguard Group Inc.**

**2009/2010 Membership Subscription** (please tick one)  
01/07/2009 – 31/06/2010

Individual ..... \$5.00

- or -

Family (No. of members  ) ..... \$10.00

Donation (optional) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to: S.R.C.F.G.

Please return this form with your payment to **Secretary, SRCFG, PO Box 689 Mt Martha VIC 3934** or deliver to one of the Committee members

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick for e-Newsletter**

**Next Sunday is :-**

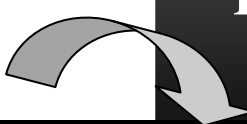
# Planet Ark Day

**Please come and help us plant for the future!**



**Sunday 31st July.**

**Waterview Rise & Scenic View Drive site, Mount Martha. 9.30-3.30pm. All welcomed.**



**Bring your children and grand children! Bring the whole family, fly them in from interstate or abroad. Just get them here !!! Aliens Welcomed.**

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE BRIARS MOUNT MARTHA**

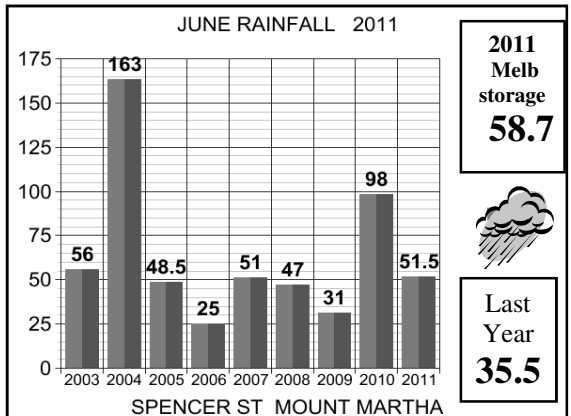


The resident pair of Black Swans recently built a new nest in front of the Chechingurk bird hide in the wetlands. Six cygnets have hatched since Friday. Flame Robins can still be seen as you enter the property. They like to sit on the tree guards. The males have a brilliant scarlet red chest, small birds only 13-14cm in length. The wetlands are once again alive with birds. A delight to see after several years of drought and declining bird

numbers. There are 20 Eastern Grey Kangaroos and 20 Swamp Wallabies living in the wildlife reserve. Two wallabies have joeys, one of these lives in the wetland area is seen regularly by staff and visitors. Attached photo taken on the 30th May just inside the wildlife reserve gate.

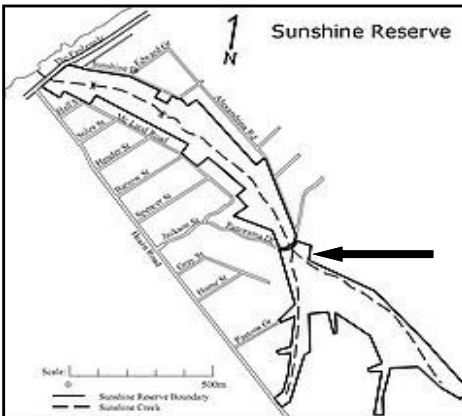
**What's happening in Sunshine Reserve! Microlena Stipoides**

This year thanks to Caring for Our Country grants we have been moving around the already planted out areas of Lower Sunshine planting thousands of Microlena stipoides (also known as weeping grass). In some places it has been one or two and in others large patches. This grass is from local seed and these areas are now ready for its reintroduction as we have removed most of the agricultural grass which wiped it out in the first place. The aim of this planting is that Microlena spreads fairly quickly over a large patch, by shedding its seed and by tuber growth underground. A pretty grass, very suitable for growing on lawns as a grass in areas where it cannot be watered. It does need some weeding until it has become established. It sets seed two or three times a year can tolerate being mown, stays green and forms a lovely carpet. We now have some extra seed and if you would like to remove some of your kikuyu or similar grass which dies off over summer, and would like to make us a small donation, we can get you started and show you how to manage it. We have a permit to collect the seed. Call Gill 5974 1288



**Next committee meeting**  
Sunday 21st August 2011  
7pm .  
9 McLeod Rd Mount Martha.  
All welcome.

**Next Working Bee**  
Sun 7th August 9-30am  
We will be delivering residence kits in the Waterview Ridge Estate.



We are very grateful to our sponsors and funding bodies:

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