



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 4th June

7.30 pm at the Balliang Hall

MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS WELCOME

DIVERSIFIED PLANTATIONS ON FARMS

Matt Lamanna – Grow West

Diversified plantings are a real alternative to single species plantations, but there can be major problems with choice of plants for our area, particularly understorey plants.

Matt has access to a very extensive list of plants, and we will discuss successes and failures.

Supper will follow the presentation – Denise is on holiday but her secret recipe for sausage rolls has been revealed.

Grow West Farm Forestry Project – notes from the April meeting

Guest speaker - Gerad Nesredin – Grow West
(email Nesredin.Gerad@dpi.vic.gov.au, or
telephone: (03) 5366 0015)

Gerad described the Farm Forestry component of the Grow West organization. The Farm Forestry project focuses on the use of Sugar Gums in farm Forestry for firewood and saw logs. It involves demonstration sites (60 ha this year), trials of sugar gums of various provenances, extension activities to support landholders considering establishment of plantations (eg on farm advice and field days) and evaluation and review.

Landholders are offered 50% subsidy on the costs of establishment of plantations, and some funding is currently available for small plantations. Generally the funding formula means that the labour costs are born by the land holder and other establishment costs covered by the Farm Forestry Project. The extent of continuing maintenance depends on the purposes of the plantation: virtually nil for firewood after the first couple of years, more for saw logs.

Field days are an important part of the project. (The most recent field day at a Lismore property where Sugar Gum plantations are long established was very successful, with several BRLG members attending). After the first part of Gerad's talk, the benefits of plantations vs more diversified plantings were discussed. Several members reported difficulties with selection of understorey plant species, and problems of survival.

The second part of Gerad's talk was an engaging comparison with his work as a forester in Australia and his home country of Ethiopia. Gerad said the main differences in Ethiopia were in the following areas:

- climate (1200mm pa rainfall in Ethiopia),
- the topography (very mountainous),
- speed of growth: 8 years to maturity of the eucalypts used

- extensive use of manual labour, 300 full time and 400 seasonal workers employed
- very low use of machinery
- the "self reliance" where the Ethiopian project team did everything from collection and germination of seed as opposed to the extensive use of contractors in Australia
- the large size of the Ethiopian project (25,000ha)

The project which started in 1980 is funded by the World Bank. The initial harvest (after 8 years) was for construction timber (poles rather than milled timber). No form pruning of the trees was undertaken. Regrowth after coppicing was used to make charcoal, a major source of domestic fuel.

There was a great deal of interest and discussion. The low carbon footprint of the project was commented upon, although enthusiasm was slightly modified when Gerad explained that, in a day's work, a labourer would dig approximately 30 holes, 30cm by 50 cm, into which seedlings, about 30cm high, would be planted. At this point ripping started to look very attractive despite the costs of fuel and carbon! Given the developmental stage of Ethiopia, and the location of the plantation close to a large city with high levels of unemployment, the project had many benefits in addition to the direct output of timber.

Meet our Members – Chris Winfield

Christopher Winfield is a well known identity in the Balliang community. He laughs often and beneath that exterior lies a person who has many and varied interests.



Chris was born in a little village called Astley in Warwickshire in the UK. He lived on a farm and was the middle of three sons. He was educated in England and went to the University of Nottingham (I am told the University was very close to Sherwood Forest the home of Robin Hood) where he completed a Bachelor of Agricultural degree. From there he went on to the University of Wales where he completed a Masters degree in Agricultural Science.

During holidays Chris used to go to his older brother's farm to work. And as a young teenager this proved to be a very good thing as Mary lived across the road. They have known each other for a very long time and eventually married in 1965.

They arrived at Melbourne's Station Pier on New Years Day 1968 . Not £10 Poms but £12/10/- Poms! That's inflation for you. The plan was to stay 5 years - that plan went out the window didn't it?

Chris had been offered work with the Department of Agriculture in Werribee which was their first home in Australia and where their two children, Ailsa and Jeremy, were born. He stayed in Werribee till 1992 before moving to their Head Office until retirement in 1998.

In the meantime the Winfields bought the land in Balliang and built their own home. They have lived here since 1977. Chris commuted each day to the city to work.

Chris has many and varied hobbies. He has a small Limousin herd and gets a lot of pleasure whenever a calf comes along. He also has bee hives and grows Proteas and sells them to florists. It is worth a visit to see them when they are in full bloom. Chris loves any outdoor activity.

Chris and Mary enjoy travelling back to the UK to visit family and friends. But Chris should not visit cemeteries and start taking photographs. He broke his Achilles tendon doing this on his last trip!!

Chris has an interest in computers and has very good computer skills. He enjoys reading and is a vital member of the Balliang Browsers Book Club. He was the only male member for some years. (He does have support now from three other men)

Chris's main interest is his "first wife" Mary. They enjoy each others company and both enjoy eating out.

Chris was a foundation member of the Brisbane Ranges Landcare group. He has been the Treasurer ever since the group started in 1997 and has seen four Presidents!

The Church of England is an important part of the life of the Winfields. Chris is the Treasurer of St Georges Church Balliang and also of the Bacchus Marsh Parish. Chris says he loves handling other people's money!! It takes up a lot of his time and is quite demanding work, but as he is retired he says that he has plenty of that. Although you wonder about how much spare time Chris has as he seems to have so many and varied interests.

Chris Winfield is a man of integrity. Any thing you ask of him Chris does willingly and with such good grace. Nothing seems to worry him. He is certainly an asset to Balliang .

Denise Anderson

Grow West moves

Grow West have made a number of program delivery changes recently; they are now based with PPWCMA at Sunbury offices, co-located with Melbourne Water staff (space still retained at Bacchus Marsh); A new Major Projects Officer had been appointed – Ms Judith Horvill. She will have a corporate support emphasis to her work; they have

Grants Received

This year we have received generous support from:

PPWCMA - \$500 for the publication of this BRLG Newsletter and \$300 for administrative support;

recently advertised for new Works Facilitator position – ongoing full time, also a casual Projects Officer.

Further information contact Matt Mooney on 5366 0058.

City of Greater Geelong - \$500 administrative support grant

Moorabool Shire Council - \$200 administration support grant.

Interesting items from Moorabool Landcare Advisory Committee meetings – May 2008

The recent publication of the Green Paper on Land & Biodiversity by the State Government has prompted a number of regional community workshops to help interested parties to respond to the proposals. If you would like more information contact Chris Winfield.

The Victorian Government has announced the Future Farming package of \$205m with funds (\$20m) to control roadside weeds. Landcare Groups should note that there are opportunities for

coordinated revegetation project funding in the package.

The MLAC is concerned that locally important weeds (eg galenia, patersons curse) on high conservation value roadsides do not get overlooked in the state funded program to control serious roadside weeds.

THE HALF WIT

A man owned a small farm in Hawkes Bay. The Labour Department claimed he was not paying proper wages to his help and sent an agent out to interview him.

"I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them." demanded the agent.

"Well." replied the farmer, "there's my farm hand who's been with me for 3 years. I pay him \$550 a week plus free room and board.

The cook has been here for 18 months, and I pay her \$500 per week plus free room and board.

Then there's the half-wit who works about 18 hours every day and does about 90% of all the work around here. He makes about \$100 per week, pays his own room and board, and I buy him a bottle of bourbon every Saturday night. He also sleeps with my wife occasionally."

"That's the guy I want to talk to --- the half-wit." says the agent.

"That would be me," replied the farmer.