

# FRIENDS OF HODDLES CREEK NEWSLETTER

## Who are the Friends of Hoddles Creek?

A message from the President

The Friends of Hoddles Creek (FOHC) group was formed in 1999 and incorporated in 2000. We are a mix of retirees, farmers and business people – residents of Hoddles Creek and adjacent areas – who want to ensure that the special balance of Hoddles Creek is maintained for future generations. The FOHC is a member of the Upper Yarra District Environment Council (UYDEC).

We are not radical 'greenies' – just people like you, who enjoy the natural beauty of the Yarra Valley and choose to live and work here. We believe we all have a responsibility to look after not only our own properties, but the area in which we live.

As President, I am delighted that we are able to distribute this Newsletter to all families within the Hoddles Creek area. Thanks to Jill the Postie for distribution and thanks to all the contributors for their time and effort.

We want to keep you informed of new projects, invite you to join our working bees or other activities, welcome your comments and, of course, invite you to become an active member of the FOHC.

*Peter Mauger*

Over 200 environmental weeds have been identified in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. These not only threaten our gardens, but also the native bushland. The Shire of Yarra Ranges has two helpful, free brochures on weed identification and what you can plant as replacements. You can contact them on 1300 368 333. Helpful website: [Weeds Australia Search www.weeds.org.au/index](http://Weeds Australia Search www.weeds.org.au/index).

## FOHC WAGES WAR ON WEEDS

Our first weed eradication project involved an extensive area along the Blackleather and Hoddles Creeks that was infested with holly and blackberry. Several working bees “drilling and filling” mature holly trees and “snipping and dabbing” smaller holly bushes and seedlings has seen most of the holly disappear.

Blackberries might be lovely to eat, but they're a devil to get rid of and they thrive in areas that have been cleared and over-grazed. In January, we took them on! Thanks to land holders who gave us permission to drive a tractor over their land, we were able to attack half a kilometer of blackberries. The results are already very visible and we are hoping that we have broken the back of this infestation.

For this large project, we used a commercial herbicide, however several members had suggestions for natural means of removing blackberries.

Planting more trees native to the area will thicken the canopy and help to eradicate the blackberries, while providing a habitat for native plants and animals. Repeat chopping, mowing, sheet mulching and grazing of early shoots are all natural enemies of the blackberry. Or you could try peppering – a biodynamic method that involves spreading blackberry ash over the area. Sowing pumpkin seed in a clump of blackberries can choke the blackberries and give you a crop of pumpkins too.

Once the foliage dies off, the plants can be burnt and then the area heavily planted in order to choke out new shoots. If possible, burning is desirable in order to prevent the blackberry re-sowing itself ready for the next season! (no burning during the Fire Restriction period of course).

If any readers have success stories with blackberries, we'd love to hear them!



## Clearing requires a permit

One of the special things about Hoddles Creek is the mix of the bush and agricultural development. The large areas of native forest, together with the belts of trees and understorey plants that form interconnecting 'wildlife corridors', are both critical to the survival of our native birds and animals. Removal of **any** area of native vegetation is bound to make some creature homeless or compromise its survival.

Striking a balance between bush and business is essential if the beauty of Hoddles Creek is to be maintained. Clearing of native vegetation cannot be undertaken without a permit from the Shire and there are significant penalties for unlawful clearing. Native vegetation includes not only trees, but also understorey plants, as these are an essential part of the wildlife habitat.

Hoddles Creek already has large tracts of cleared land suitable for a wide range of farming pursuits. There is no need for further clearing, a sentiment shared by the Shire's Vision 2020/Strategic Plan, which emphasise the importance of the forest as a part of what makes the Shire of Yarra Ranges unique. Let's make sure we appreciate the beauty of the forests and their inhabitants before it's too late.

## Community snapshot

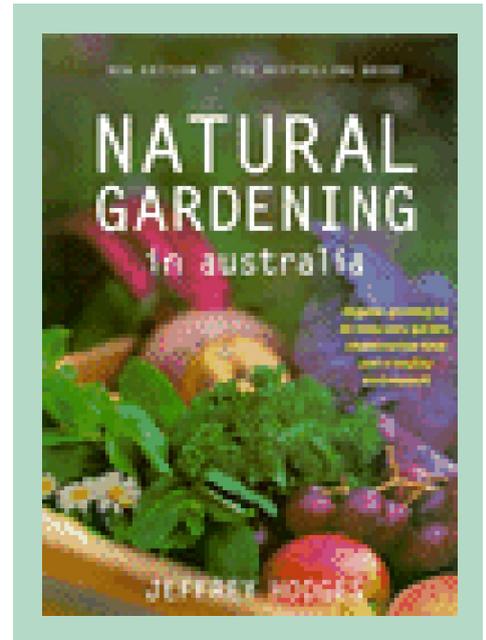
### What do the Hoddles Creek Red Cross do?

*Fundraise!* The HCRC raise funds for use around the world in Red Cross community aid projects. The next fund-raiser is a trash and treasure stall at Yarra Junction on April 21. If you're moving house, or clearing cupboards, why not donate surplus items to the HCRC? *Meet monthly!* Monthly meetings might be a simple meeting, or a combined outing or lunch meeting. *Call Alicia Templer* on 5967 4489 or *Ted Clark* on 5964 7438 to arrange a drop-off of trash and treasure or to find out more.

# COMPETITION CORNER

Win a copy of Natural Gardening in Australia. Jeffrey Hodges' time-saving, minimal-energy techniques have made Natural Gardening in Australia a winner. With his tried and true methods, even the busiest, least motivated gardeners can achieve a bountiful garden that works in harmony with Nature, not against it.

This handsome Viking paperback (RRP \$38) is the prize in our competition. All you have to do is search for the words listed below and then, with the unused letters, find the names of three animals and one plant that can be found in Hoddles Creek. Send you answers to Friends of Hoddles Creek Inc. PO Box 298 Yarra Junction Vic 3797. The winning entry will be drawn from all correct entries received by Friday April 5. The winner will be notified and the winners name published in the Winter Newsletter.



CREEK, EMU, EUCALYPTUS, GULLY, HODDLES, IVY, NATIVE, ORGANIC, PARROT, RAGWORT, RANGES, SOIL, STREAM, WATTLE, VALLEY, YARRA

Unused letters (there are 29)

T P O R G A N I C M  
 O S S A S Y A R R A  
 R G U L L Y T K E S  
 R A T I K R I S E E  
 A B P O T S V E K G  
 P S Y V I A E L A N  
 Y E L L A V N D G A  
 N M A E R T S D U R  
 U O C R A G W O R T  
 E M U S O I L H O L  
 P Y E L T T A W P A

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Answers to competition

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Name:.....  
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 Address: .....  
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 Phone: .....  
 Email: .....

I'd like to join Friends of Hoddles Creek.  
 I'd like more information. Please ring me.

## How to join FOHC or get more information

It's easy. Just complete your details and post to the address shown on the front of the newsletter.

Meetings are held monthly and there is no joining fee. We maintain a watching brief over development projects and run regular working bees, but we also have fun (great luncheons, night animal walks and lots more). All ages are welcome and we'd love to meet you.

Thanks to Melbourne Water for the grant for this newsletter.