

WESROC News

August 2020

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NORFOLK ISLAND PINE DECLINE

Along the coast of WA, most notably from Bunbury to Geraldton, large numbers of the iconic Norfolk Island Pine trees have been declining in health. The trees most affected are growing closer to the coast and their health decline starts at the top of the canopy, moving downwards.

While there is much speculation into the causes for their decline, conclusive evidence is required. Therefore, WESROC has launched an investigation to discover the cause of the health decline and identify the best methods of boosting tree health and preserving the pines. While Norfolk Island Pine Disease (*Neofusicoccum parvum* – a fungal infection that impacts the health of the pines) and impacts from climate change are suspected, testing is required to confirm the cause and allow for the development of management strategies.

This is an issue that WESROC is moving swiftly on and updates will be provided as conclusive information becomes available.



Templetonia retusa



Thysanotus multiflorus

Photo by John Tann GFDL

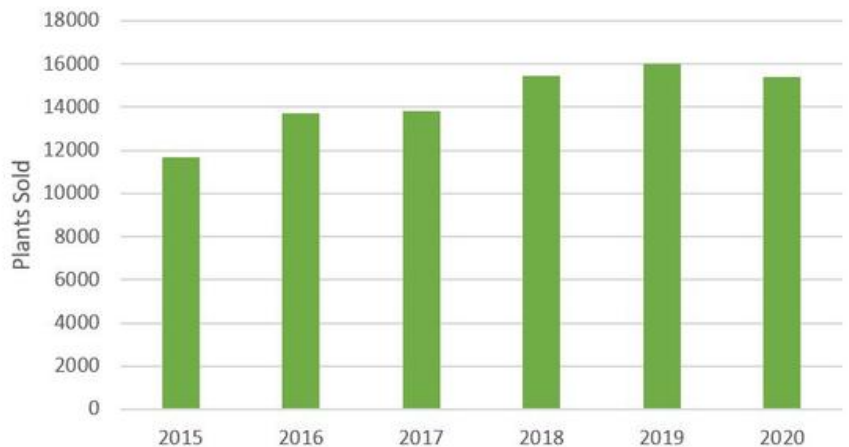
NATIVE PLANT SUBSIDY SCHEME

Despite COVID-19 interruptions and changes to how the Native Plant Subsidy Scheme (“NPSS”) was delivered, the WESROC community showed great enthusiasm again this year for greening their homes with local natives. The NPSS implemented a ‘click & collect’ system where packs of 20 mixed species plants could be ordered and scheduled for pick up from APACE Nursery.

The NPSS ran through April with an extension period into May where plants were available at the subsidised cost of \$1.75 each (half price). This year, 15,400 plants were sold. This is an outstanding result considering the impacts and restrictions relating to COVID-19, and the fact that residents were unable to select their own plant species.

The NPSS supports green corridor initiatives for conserving endemic biodiversity in the western suburbs, increasing canopy cover, reducing urban heat and saving water for within homes and the community.

Native Plant Subsidy Scheme



Wonderful Wildflowers

The WESROC region will soon enter the wildflower season (the Noongar season of Kambarang, which spans October and November) and our local reserves will be carpeted with a rainbow of colour. One small but utterly unique flower to look out for is the Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus* sp.), which is commonly found as the multiple flowering and twining varieties.

These small purple flowers have spectacular fringed petals and are utterly unique. They are also a bushtucker with edible stems, flowers, and tubers that are either steamed or roasted. But if you get the urge to try eating them, please grow your own as taking them from reserves is an offence and affects the natural viability of native plant colonies.

VEGETATION & HEAT SPOT MAPPING

The mapping of vegetation cover and heat spots has been completed in the WESROC region by ArborCarbon. This information will guide future greening efforts through the identification of streets and public open spaces that could be further vegetated or have increased canopy cover, to decrease the effects of urban heating. The mapping will show where green corridors can be planted, to create linkages between reserves and create paths for wildlife to travel and find food.

This project compliments the updated Western Suburbs Greening Plan 2020-2025 and provides necessary maps to assist in restoration efforts, future development planning, and greening strategies. Staff from the WESROC members will undergo training by ArborCarbon to assist them with navigation and interpretation of the mapping.

Whadjuk Trails Website

The Whadjuk Trails website has two new stories! The City of Subiaco implemented new interpretive signage around Lake Jualbup where Noongar Elder Neville Collard shared the history of the lake and its links to significant Noongar sites. These stories will one day compliment the planned Waarlitj Bidi (Eagle Trail) that will wind its way from Shenton Bushland, past Underwood Bushland, and loop up and around to Lake Jualbup.

Visit whadjukwalkingtrails.org.au/noongar-information to listen to the new stories and the next time you walk the Whadjuk Trails download the app to enjoy a more immersive experience.

WESTERN SUBURBS GREENING PLAN

The Western Suburbs Greening Plan is undergoing a final review and will soon be available! This document aims to identify areas of remnant vegetation linkages to form a network of greenways, acts as a guide for developing policies and strategies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and identifies opportunities for the local community to participate in environmental conservation.

It is well documented that balance between the built and natural environment is essential for higher quality and enjoyment of life. Natural spaces play a vital role in providing urban habitat for wildlife, mitigating climate change impacts, improving mental and physical health for residents, and fostering positive cognitive, social, and emotional development in children.

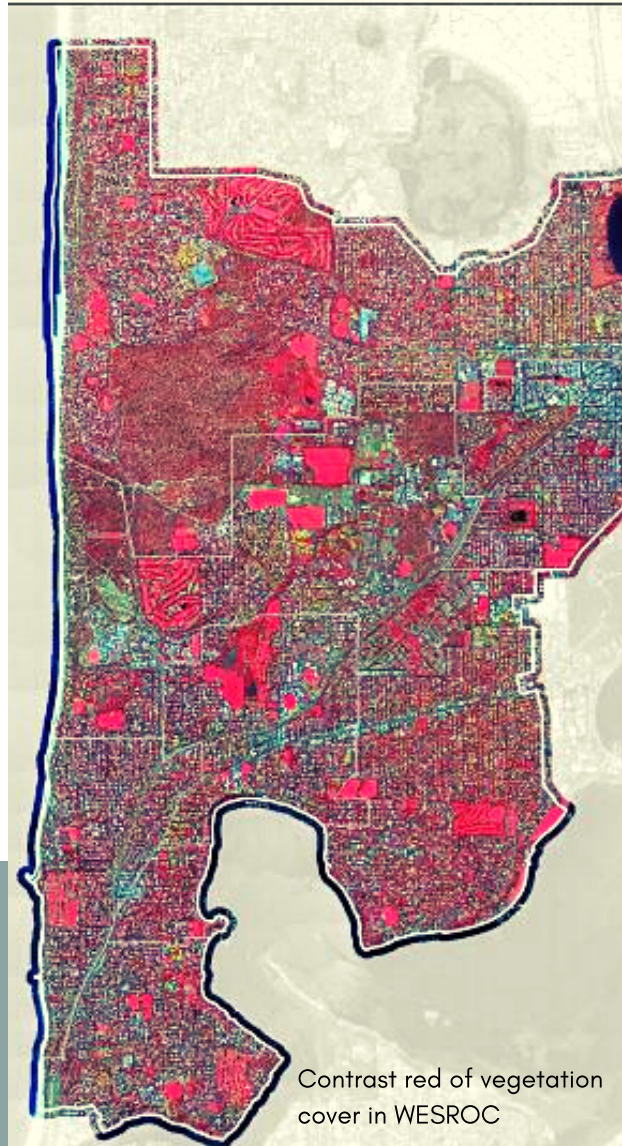


Photo by Bowerbirdaus (GFDL)



Male Black Cockatoo

WESROC CLAG

WESROC is pleased to announce that it has formed a Contiguous Local Government Authority Group ("CLAG") to undertake health-driven mosquito management across the borders of the Cities of Nedlands and Subiaco. The Towns of Claremont, Cottesloe, and Mosman Park will form Subsidiary members of the CLAG.

Approval for the WESROC CLAG has been granted by the Department of Health Mosquito Control Advisory Committee. This will allow the participating local governments to apply for funding from the Department of Health for chemical, physical, and cultural control strategies, mosquito management equipment, and training and development opportunities.

Mosquitoes are of ongoing concern to the WESROC community due to their potential to carry debilitating diseases, such as Ross River virus (RRV) or Barmah Forest virus. They also have negative impact on the amenity of residents and enjoyment of outdoor spaces and activities.

WESROC is Moving!

WESROC has been hosted by the City of Nedlands for the past seven years but the time has come for a change in location! The Town of Claremont will be the new home for the WESROC program and the move will occur during early September. The program remains the same and new contact details will be made available once everything has been finalised.

CANOPIES FOR THE FUTURE

A recent study undertaken by the University of Western Australia, RMIT University, and CSIRO investigated tree canopy cover in the metro environment and have developed a predictive model for future canopy cover on residential lots (excluding street trees and public open space).

The City of Nedlands was used as a case study and is shown to be a leading green council with canopy cover predicted to increase further by 3.1% by 2050. The study was published in *Landscape and urban Planning* 199 (2020). For more information, see the article [Leaf my neighbourhood alone!](#)

Studies like this show the importance of WESROC greening initiatives, such as the Native Plant Subsidy Scheme, and studies like Urban Vegetation and Heat Spot Mapping.



Mosquito monitoring trap



A shady picnic spot at Mason Gardens

AUSTRALIAN RAVENS MAKING MISCHIEF

Recently, there has been an increasing number of complaints about ravens to the WESROC member local governments. Some community members have requested a control program to reduce the population, however, WESROC is aiming to increase understanding of these endemic birds and provide information on what can be done in homes and around the community to decrease the disturbance and damage caused by ravens.

The first thing to note is that ravens are important to the Whadjuk Noongar people. Ravens are both a Totem animal and represent one of the two Noongar skin groups, they are a bird of spiritual significance and the messages called by ravens are listened to and respected.

Raven populations thrive in urban areas especially in older established leafy suburbs found in the WESROC region. This is because they are a woodland species and prefer environments where they can nest 20m or higher above the ground. As more land is cleared for development and tall trees are felled the ravens will move to new areas where tall, mature trees are still present. This inevitably leads to competition over territory and resources.

Ravens are important to a healthy and biodiverse habitat. They help to keep insect populations under control and as a scavenger species they clean away carrion. However, they are a very intelligent and opportunistic species, so here are some simple steps that can be taken to discourage ravens from residential properties and community areas:

- Do not feed the birds, at home or the park. Ravens have a varied diet and will eat seeds, fruit, insects, invertebrates, and meat.
- Dispose of any leftover food from picnics and BBQs. Cover BBQs with a lid where possible.
- Do not leave pet food outside and clean up any food mess made by pets when eating.
- Fruit trees and shrubs may attract Ravens. Harvest fruit promptly and do not leave dropped fruit on the ground.
- Ensure all bin lids are properly closed and do not overfill bins (private or public) so that the lid rests ajar and can be flipped open.
- Do not leave small shiny objects outside that may attract the Ravens attention. If a Raven is causing property damage, consider what might be attracting the Raven to that property and if it can be covered or altered to deter interaction. For example: using a car cover or parking in a closed garage during nesting season to stop the Ravens from removing the rubber from windscreen wipers.

Western Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils



In partnership with

