

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Many of you would have watched with horror the graphic footage on the ABC's 7.30 Report a few weeks ago of koalas caught up in the harvesting of blue gum plantations in Victoria's Western District and around Mt Gambier in South Australia.

The plight of the hapless koalas, some sustaining injuries from the trees as they hit the ground, others savagely mauled by the machinery used to fell, strip and stack was very disturbing. The scale of koala deaths and injuries was made public by some of the workers involved who had become increasingly concerned about what they were doing. Wildlife carers faced with horrendously injured koalas, have spoken out as well.

Like the NSW Plantations Act, the Victorian legislation was set up to safeguard and entice investment by more or less guaranteeing harvesting once a timber plantation was accredited. Self-regulation was and is the name of the game. It's a fact of life that thousands of koalas and other species, increasingly deprived of natural habitat, have colonised the vast plantations now maturing for harvest.

Here in the Northern Rivers koalas also face serious threats from the clear-felling of planted vegetation. In our case I'm referring to the windbreaks which are characteristic of so many macadamia orchards in the region. The Lismore local government area alone boasts more than 4,000 hectares of mapped orchards, most of which are under macadamia cultivation. The windbreaks which were planted to protect the young macadamia trees back in the 1970s included Tallowwoods (*Eucalyptus microcorys*), Forest Red Gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) and Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*), some of the species preferred by the region's koalas. Thus many of the windbreaks have become the home-ranges of small permanent koala colonies as well as providing the means for transient animals to traverse large areas of monoculture.

The macadamia trees so close to their food source have also become an important factor in local koala ecology. Their low forks and heavy foliage provide safety and shade in windy conditions and during hot spells; just the place for mother to rest up while her youngster works on its climbing skills.

Only last month we took delivery of a mother and front-young that came down with a macadamia tree during the clearance of an orchard. Fortunately neither was injured and they are now happily ensconced on a nearby property.

Probably unintentionally, many macadamia growers have become koala guardians, enjoying the delights and accepting the responsibilities of guardianship. Regrettably there are some who appear not to give any consideration of the animals now sharing their properties. Recent removal of a several hundred metre-long section of windbreaks on Duncan Road, Dunoon, is a case in point. The property is American-owned which may be the reason why management is so disinterested in considering options other than clear-felling its native vegetation.



Kal and Mum

As many readers will be aware, there is no legal requirement to consider the impact of vegetation removal on koalas or other threatened species where there is exemption to the Native Vegetation Act. Clearing planted windbreaks falls into this category although work must stop if a koala is seen in a tree and resumed only after the koala has moved on. Even so koalas are injured and occasionally killed.

Following the death in 2011 of a koala which appeared to be associated with windbreak removal, Friends of the Koala and other stakeholders worked with the Australian Macadamia Society to produce a fact sheet for growers on Vegetation Clearing and Koalas <http://macadamias.org/pages/ams-fact-sheets> We still work with the industry, reporting these incidences to the state and federal authorities but there is little to be done. Disappointingly windbreaks continue to disappear.

On a more positive note it's great to see the keen interest in more on-ground koala recovery work happening in Nimbin. Thanks to Peter Hardwick, Friends of the Koala is providing free koala food trees to fifteen interested land holders and a field day is being considered. To date, around 300 trees have been requested for planting. More trees will be available later in the year when the tree propagation season warms up and the nursery is better stocked.

Happy koala spotting.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233. For information about koalas, their food trees, how you can assist koala conservation visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone 6621-4664. We can also be followed on Facebook.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat ring the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 13-15-55.



One of the koalas injured by harvesting operations



by Philippe Dupuy, President

NEC shopfront has been very busy keeping visitors informed about the increasing threat to the environment. 'It is always rewarding to talk and discuss issues concerning the state of the environment and the phoney economy, we are learning from each other' said a volunteer. We were also ecstatic that our campaign to retain the bench in front of the NEC Shop was successful.

Casino Environment Centre

About 30 Protectors went to Royal Camp State Forest Tuesday 23/7/13 to take part in an action aimed at stopping the logging of Koala habitat and high feed areas.

The legendary Dailan Pugh from NEFA (North East Forest Alliance commented 'In Compartment 13, which is proposed for logging, we located 18 trees with Koala scats about their bases, of which five qualified as high use trees because they had more than 20 scats about their bases, with another two qualifying because they had different sized scats indicating a mother and baby. All results have been forwarded to the authorities.

This supplemented previous work by NEFA and has contributed to large parts of the forest now being identified as Koala High Use Areas that should be excluded from logging.' There is still plenty of work to be done. Dailian reckons 'only small parts of the logging area have so far been assessed and that indicates the forest is predominately one large Koala High Use Area.' so stay in touch for the next step in the campaign to protect Koalas and their habitat.

Tara and the real costs of CSG

In 2010, the Nimbin Environment Centre made its first trip to Tara to find out for itself what CSG mining was all about. Back then I was shocked at the extent of the destruction. This last trip made me gasp in disbelief! The concatenation of utes, buses and huge trucks taking workers from their kennels at 5.00 am for a heartless job in this

sparsely populated region was comparable to Sydney's peak traffic.

We desperately blockaded the road with our bodies, cars, vans and utes for a few minutes at a time which, made their lines extend for kilometres on end. There was the procession of the believers, men and women sacrificing the joy of sharing and caring for family and country for the lure of money that will turn their hearts 'into dead black coal'

The destruction of the forest was the hardest to grasp. Large sections of over eighty metres in width and extending for kilometres had been mercilessly bulldozed taking with it rare birds' nests and nestlings, like the Red Cap Robins, lizards, gliders and wombats.

Invaluable trees were stacked metres high on each other as far as the eye can see. It was a bit like 'The World At War', Mass graves of logs, priceless resources waiting to be burnt or to rot. This is the value placed by our governments on scarce flora and fauna.

We have become a nation of sheeple shepherded by a private consortium of wolves that fatten us on rich lies. The investment value (for rich people only) of the gas fields was x billions in 2010, today it is y billions and next year may be x&y billions but the following years it will gradually go down until it has the same value as Metgasco's shares; worthless!

In the meantime we pay for road repair and widening, fuel rebate, depreciation, workers compensation and health costs etc... to sustain this mad industry.

The price of the pollution of precious water, soil and air along with the destroyed forest and wildlife will never be costed. The hidden expense will force future generations to live in poverty - on a moonscape with crows and cockroaches. The dollar so fervently worshipped by so many will turn out to be a fickle god that played cruel games of false and empty promises.

To get an idea of the extent of this cancerous growth, watch Brian Monk's 5-min Youtube clip 'Where are the gas wells?'

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Which weed?

by Triny Roe

Say 'weed' and it conjures up a variety of thought depending who is listening. Here in Nimbin, many people immediately think of the Jesus weed, pot.



Lambrechtsen basket

Others are reminded of any one or all of the numerous invasive plants that may require some level of management in rural and urban landscapes.

Some people see food and medicine. A number, but not all of these plants have properties that make them valuable assets.

To another group, weeds play an important role creating biomass, nature's remedy to restore cleared and degraded land. Ironically bitou bush was planted for dune reclamation and now many groups are working hard to control it due to its effectiveness in excluding all other vegetation. Bitou is included in the list of 20 Weeds of National Significance indicating the seriousness of its impact.

Some folk create art. Shelagh Morgan was inspired by the weeds on her property in Eureka to create a delightful exhibition. 'Herbarium Vivum' harks back to an era of genteel Victorian botanists documenting plants, pressing specimens, and painting delicate watercolours. Many of these weed plants came to Australia as ornamentals and still have an intrinsic beauty despite their current bad reputations. Other artists such as Linnie Lambrechtsen weave weed vines into baskets, demonstrating their versatility.

Unfortunately, when these immigrant plants arrived, they often came without the limiting factors or agents which kept them under control in their homelands. Or they just didn't want to stay where they were put. A number of these naturalised species also went berserk. They grew rampantly, forming monocultures, smothering, excluding and displacing native species and impacting adversely on agriculture.

Weeds are a part of our lives. In the burbs, home gardeners spend hours controlling weeds in their lawns and flowerbeds. No farmer can afford to neglect their weeds. If you think weeds don't impact on you because you don't have a garden or are not a farmer, think again. The increased costs for agriculture leads to more expensive food on the plate. The cost to Australian agriculture for both weed control and lost productivity is estimated at four billion dollars per year. This figure doesn't include costs of controlling weeds in conservation areas and native bushland.

Over 25,000 plants have been introduced into Australia since European occupation. Of these 2,739 have been naturalised, ie become weeds. 429 of these are declared noxious and/or are controlled by legislation requiring management by landholders. These plants have been marked for special consideration because of the huge damage they can cause to agriculture and the environment.

Another 5,097 plants have weedy reputations in other parts of the world but have yet to have the opportunity to wreck havoc here. Government weed agencies monitor some of these plants, such as Miconia which has devastated large tracts of Tahiti's rainforests and has the potential to do the same here.

In Central Queensland farmers are anxiously watching their paddocks for signs of Red witchweed, *Striga asiatica*, which was recently discovered near Mackay. Not recorded before in Australia, this root parasite infects corn, rice, sorghum and sugarcane reducing vigour and yield. Worldwide, witchweed costs \$7 billion annually. Its impact is particularly felt in Africa, which has not increased levels of food production since 1960. Authorities are keen to ensure it doesn't spread further.

Weeds are here to stay. But not all weeds are everywhere. Yet. Measures to prevent new weeds from arriving and spreading, including quarantine and early detection of new arrivals, will protect the environment, agricultural activities and our lifestyles. Happy weeding.

BIRDS

The pre-dawn gloaming recedes to reveal a pink and grey sky, chilled with the expectancy of another rainy day. Birdsong emerges with the cacophonous cackling of the kookaburras, the roosters' defiant vocal battle. The maestro composers, the butcher birds, prove yet again that they can warble with the best of them. A myriad of smaller birds, energetically squeeze out their high-pitched chirps and squawks. The melancholy of the low-throated rainforest doves provides a bass note to one of nature's finest symphonies.

This morning I'm listening anew. What's it all about, I ask myself? Sex of course. Morning is the time for it... The family of kookas are probably saying, "If you can hear this, then you are too close to our girls!" The butcher birds might say, "C'mon love, how 'bout it, I'm just over here." The roosters are showing off to their females by saying "I'm the greatest lovmaker...right over here miss Henny" Birds are just out there having fun and chasing birds.



View from the loo by Stuart McConville

attaching themselves emotionally so they can better ensure the survival of their species.

Humanity is more complex. Our fragility has ensured that we use collaboration as our main survival technique for the bulk of our evolutionary timeline. We paired off, often for life, as a means of building a team geared to survive. Most organised religions realised this long ago and wrote it into their dogmas to promote the marriage ideal. These days however, survival is a lot easier and we can choose freely between a monogamous or polygamous lifestyle.

Our base animal instincts tend to lead us towards polygamy, old conditioning and values developed as social constructs by religions pull us the other direction by making polygamy

Birds and in fact most animals are polygamous or at least serially monogamous, looking for and finding new genes to combine with as many times as they can over a lifespan. They commit to each other for the purpose of breeding and rearing young (and maybe a nurturing, healing relationship too) without

sinful. As organised religion becomes weaker in our society, we are less likely to feel intimidated about choosing for ourselves which lifestyle we lead. Ironically, this new found freedom has the power to bring us even closer to God....

"Any attempt to restrict the natural expression of love is a denial of the experience of freedom – and thus a denial of the soul itself. For the soul is freedom personified. God is freedom, by definition – for God is limitless and without restriction of any kind. The soul is God, miniaturized. Therefore, the soul rebels at any imposition of limitation, and dies a new death each time it accepts boundaries from without." – N.D. Walsch (1998)

Conversations with God – An Uncommon Dialogue.

Ancient Tantric philosophers understood this and accepted that people are free to choose either path, and that both have spiritual significance at different stages of our lives. Left (polygamous) and right hand (monogamous) path Tantra are valued equally as two facets of the same coin; to cater to the complexity of human sexuality.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions Composting Toilets and Waste Water consultancy. Check out www.poohsolutions.com for winter specials.

Biodiversity beyond a broken economic system

by Geoff Dawe

In a debate reported in *Habitat* magazine of May 2011, joined by such people as David Suzuki; Professor Ian Lowe, president of the ACF; Clive Hamilton, founder of the Australia Institute, and other participants, both David and Ian felt that excessive economic growth was a major cause of environmental degradation.

The idea could be extended a bit further: the continued over emphasis on economic growth, despite a model of triple bottom line sustainability that shows Western culture needs to reduce emphasis on the economic in favour of the social and environmental, means that Western culture has become visionless. That is, the environment cannot be safeguarded in the culture's current predominately economic view of the world. "Where there is no vision," the ancestors who scribed Proverbs in the Old Testament say, "the people perish."

So we'd best get on with another view of the world. In correspondence with the three legs of triple bottom line sustainability, there are three means of movement into a future that is not socially and environmentally ravaged: movement toward a rural gardening culture

as an economic base; to greater community or communalisation as a social base; and to movement away from technology dependence as an environmental base.

To suggest movement away from technology, is to draw out the elephant in the room to full exposure, for it is the bleeding obvious to say that industrialization is killing the world, and that it is only with movement away from industrialisation, that the destruction ceases. That is, the answer to the problem of an environment crisis has been staring humanity in the face for ages, but we have just not wanted to look, because most of humanity is deeply materialistically attached – perhaps even... addicted! We find it next to impossible to get off the tit of increasing resource dependence. We will do anything to distract attention from this, including pretending we have been made powerless by the coal lobby, the trucking lobby, or a cabal of people withholding sustainable technologies.

Phillip Sutton, convenor of the Greenleap Strategic Institute in the abovementioned debate suggested "...some of the larger environment groups are not willing to risk their credibility by striking out into the unknown to prevent

catastrophe." Moving away from technology dependence as current technocratic people, is striking out into the unknown. That is not good reason for why it is not a direction for humankind.

It is fear of the unknown too, that largely surrounds Western culture's treatment of exotic species. Because exotics are voiceless and unable to intellectually defend themselves, humans have no qualms in ascribing wrongness to them and seeking their extermination. The ecological or more extensive view, has traditionally been given a back seat to a short term, partial view that conveniently blames immigrant species for environmental degradation, rather than focuses on the possibility of misaligned Western settlement patterns.

An example of inappropriate settlement can be seen in the ecological finding in 1923 in Georgia of the reason for inordinate quail reductions

in quail plantations. The key factor in quail decline, wrote Thomas Dunlap in the book *Ecology and Empire*, is that "Modern farming was destroying the fence-rows that sheltered them and the weeds that they ate, while blacktop (bitumen) was covering the grit that they needed for their (anatomical) crops and the dust in which they bathed to keep down parasites."

In the suggested movement toward sustainability through small gardening farms, it might be well to keep in mind that it was also found that, "late 19th century farms and countryside, with their dirt and gravel roads... small fields and mixed farming and woodlots provided ideal conditions for quail."

With small gardening farms, greater community, and reduced industrial dependence, there is the radical change Clive Hamilton hoped for in saying "...no-one ever achieved radical change by being respectable." It is also the risk-taking needed by the environment movement.



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Permaculture – Designing yourself out of the system

My education, until I was ten years old, consisted of an unstructured immersion in nature, teaching myself to swim in creeks and stepping over black snakes. When I finally entered the government school system, it was a kind of culture shock. During my first week, the entire school of fifty students raced to the front fence at lunch time, pumping their fists in the air as the log trucks rattled past. These were one-log trucks. The drivers responded to the students' enthusiastic sign language by blowing their horns loudly, after which the children would cheer and roll about in ecstasy as if they had blown those very horns themselves. I was all at once embarrassed for them, and



Permaculture Principles
with Anastasia Guise

horrified, for at that moment I realised I was not like them, and yet must live among them. I recognised that to tell them the truth about those enormous trees, now cut up and chained onto the trucks, I would both betray their innocence, and turn them against me.

There is a concept in Permaculture called "designing yourself out of the

system." The premise is that a well-designed perennial agricultural system will eventually require little or no input from its (human) designer. Rather than requiring constant hard work, such a system will replenish itself much like a natural system, cycling nutrients such as fallen leaves and controlling pests by supporting a range of predator insects. Groves of trees shade one another, and fallen seeds sprout to live again. Its biodiversity guarantees its resilience, much like the natural vegetative landscapes it attempts to mimic. The means to such an end is a purposeful application of spatial, elemental, temporal and interrelational design considerations. This, in

other words, is design magic. And while the romantic archetype of effortless productivity may remain out of reach for most of us, it is not such a bad place to aim the bow.

Designing ourselves out of the system can also mean something else – and that is an opting out of the destructive and unethical System that is post-industrial globalised Capitalism. Self-sufficiency gives us back power over our food, farms and waterways, our power supply and the destiny of our waste products. For those concerned with global crises, it can be a source of empowerment to shrink our worlds to a local or farm-level. Not to be confused with dropping out of the



System, designing ourselves out of the System creates a kind of autonomy within it, rather than a complete disengagement from it. Like that ten year-old I once was, we can never design ourselves out of the natural system, and we have a responsibility to stand by or change the human-centred systems we have created.

Early next year, Anastasia will co-facilitate a Permaculture Design Certificate course which offers a truly community experience, allowing students to experience twelve days of community life on Billen Cliffs Village. Visit local farms, see a working biochar kiln, and participate in building an Earthship. For more info, phone 6633-7391.

Plant of the month

Corkwood

Duboisia myoporoides

by Richard Burer

Corkwood is a shrub, or more often a small tree, found on rainforest margins, on the edge of coastal heath and dry sclerophyll forest. This small tree, which can grow to around 6m, has corky bark and delicate white flowers from August to November.

This plant contains valuable alkaloids and can be used in eye surgery. Corkwood has a long connection to Aboriginal people with its uses, ranging from its narcotic properties for humans, to the intoxication of eels and fish for hunting purposes.

This plant is attractive, evergreen and very hardy, being able to handle frost, full sun and marginal soils. However it's not really a species for the home garden, as its medicinal properties are dangerous. Humans who



touch and ingest this plant can be heavily affected by its powerful alkaloids.

Aboriginal friends tell me how, with their families, they would wild harvest the leaf to be sent off to pharmaceutical companies, back in the day when this plant supported this type of industry.

Water's miraculous gift

by Zuela Christie

Both your body and the Earth's surface are approximately 70% water, the essential ingredient that facilitates all Life on Earth.

Water has amazing properties: the only element that can exist in all three states – solid, liquid and gas – it forms molecular bonds that produce a surface tension so powerful it can draw nutrients from the ground way up the tallest tree.

Water is the ultimate carrier and almost infinitely adaptable. Water arrives on Earth as molten ice which falls from the sky as rain. The first droplet of dew on a leaf is water in its infancy.

Water spreads itself about in multiple forms to shower love on plants and animals alike, and be loved in return by all of Nature.

A third of all rainwater that falls seeps into the ground where some of it is absorbed by plants which transpire it back into the atmosphere. The water will then rise into the air that drifts among the trees, or it will rise even higher to form clouds. If it's below zero, the mist forms frost on plants and the ground.

Some water will seep slowly deeper into the ground and begin an incredible journey downward through layers of sand and clay and rock. It's slow, as slow as 30cms a year. Droplets flow eventually into underground aquifers, streams and lakes where they may remain for many thousands of years before moving upwards out of darkness and into the light.

From a tiny spring, water emerges and merges with freshly fallen water to form a small stream that makes its way downward, becoming a river which widens and deepens and becomes strong enough to seriously affect its environment, carving away at rocks by use of the gravel and sand caught up in its flow.

Then flooding pushes sediment onto the flat plains, which become the fertile land that gave birth to civilization. As the old river inches towards the sea, all its sediment



is dropped into the estuary to form a delta, creating new coastline and forming some of the richest agricultural regions in the world.

This is the final gift that water has to offer humankind before, at the end of this phase of its life, it gives itself up to the ocean.

Because water has memory, it has gained experience and wisdom and formed a personality depending on its path in Life.

The multitude of individual experience feeds back into the knowledge of the collective whole. In a vast cycle that we would count as eternity, water travels the path through the Earth's ecosystems, sustaining and loving all Life and linking everything together in perfect balance.

Water witnesses all of Life on Earth, becoming itself the flow of consciousness, of Life.

You can consciously connect yourself more lovingly with this whole reality. No religion owns prayer; it simply involves opening your heart and connecting beyond yourself.

Try getting up every morning and facing water in any space or form and saying to it: "Thank you water, I love you." Three times will do it – you'll be moving the 70% of your body that is water into harmony with the whole and forming beautiful crystals within and without.

With thanks to the spiritual pioneer, Masaru Emoto.

Zuela Christie is a local Polarity Energy Balancer.



Warren Williams, Kate Geary, Gail LeBransky, Dave Kapeen, Eugenie Stephans, Nat Meyer, and Graeme Waller attended a workshop/conference held by Transport for NSW in May, to help develop the NSW 2021 Long Term Transport Master Plan. Wallers Bus Company will run a community consultation about its Nimbin services, at noon on Monday 12th August at Birth & Beyond.

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AT THE GREEN BANK

"First, do no harm"

Beekkeeping news

by James Creagh

The stone fruits and wattles have started flowering – spring has arrived for the bees and they are making the most of the occasional sunny day. This winter has been hard for the bees given the wet season we've had, but I've not heard of any losses due to the conditions. Spring is the time to prepare boxes for starting new hives and adding to existing hives, especially as we go into to the swarming season from August onwards.

American Foul Brood

Recently there have been a few local incidences of American Foul Brood, a disease caused by a bacteria that enters the gut of a bee larvae and feeds on it, killing it, then each one produces around 100 million spores. Over time, the spores spread and weaken the hive and then robber bees enter, take

honey then the spores are spread to other colonies. This disease needs to be taken seriously as there is no cure, and it can easily spread and cause losses of hives. If infected, the colony must be destroyed and the boxes and frames burnt or treated with irradiation. As much as I encourage new beekeepers, I do make it clear that there is a responsibility that comes with keeping bees, and understanding and monitoring this disease are the most important ones.

Mobile phone tower

NBN are planning to build a 50m tower for Lillian Rock. In the contracts offered to landholders at Lillian Rock, there is an agreement that the NBN would have the right to add other telecommunications systems to the tower e.g. Telstra and Optus. There

is much speculation about the health risks to bees from the electromagnetic radiation that mobile towers emit. I am worried about the effect it may have on our hives here at Tutti Fruitti Farm, that would possibly be a short distance from the tower. The good news is that I know of seven neighbours who have said no to having the tower on their land. Ideal would be to find a place for the tower a distance away from populated areas and local food production.

List of bee plants

Local beekeepers and gardeners are working on a comprehensive list of native plants and exotic plants that are ideal for both native and European bees in our area. If you would like to contribute to this list contact me. We are hoping to have the list available for the Nimbin Show and at the Blue Knob Farmers Market.



Daniel with a Wareae hive, Grenoble, France

Colony Collapse Disorder

This is a disease where a hive that seems healthy suddenly dies. It's suspected to be related to the use of pesticides, namely neonicotinoids. Parts of the USA and Europe have banned the product, a good move but recent studies have shown that CCD is a bit more complex a problem. The study published in the

journal PLOS ONE detected 35 different pesticides in the sampled pollen, and found high fungicide loads. It has previously been believed that fungicides did not pose a risk to honey bees – it says that they do not bear the same warning labels about spraying them around pollinators as insecticides do – but the Maryland and USDA scientists “found an increased probability of bees being infected by the gut pathogen *Nosema ceranae* when exposed to high levels of fungicides”. The fungal disease can “adversely affect honey bee colony health, and can result in complete colony collapse”.

I had the opportunity to travel to France this winter and met several beekeepers. One conventional beekeeper I met at a market outside Paris had lost one third of his hives this past winter, mostly to the varroa mite and that's with using chemicals to treat

the mites. Outside the town of Grenoble I met a natural beekeeper Daniel who has had bees just for two years and had lost just one hive out of ten. He's using Wareae hives that were developed in France at the beginning of 20th century. The hive looks similar to standard hives, but the main difference is that the brood where the queen lays her eggs is located to the top of the hive, unlike the standard hives. Our local beekeeping group are keen to build one of these hives in the future.

Swarms

If you see a swarm of European honeybees, phone ASAP and someone from the group will pick it up. Contact Bayleigh on 0413-976-342 or 6689-1667.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers is 1st September. Monthly meetings are held first Sunday of the month starting at 10 am. For more info contact James at: jamescreagh@hotmail.com

Blue Knob Farmer's Market

by Jim Arachne

While it's officially still Winter, you can already feel the change of Spring. Wattle trees are blossoming, mulberry trees are all budding and some stone fruit are in full flower. At Blue Knob Farmer's Market, winter broccoli, cabbage and cauliflowers are at their peak and winter greens, such as kales, mustards and various Chinese cabbages are at their best. Zesty daikon radishes, which grow so well over winter, are great right now as well. There's still lots of pumpkin around, while local sweet potatoes are in good numbers.

Available year round are Jason's unique hand-made sourdough breads, Lee and Peter's local grass-fed beef, André and Kaorie's tofu, Jenny's sauerkraut and lots more.

August is definitely time to be thinking about Spring seedlings to plant in the veggie garden, so call into Greg's certified organic seedling stall. There's still time, if you're quick, to plant broccoli and other cabbage family members are OK as well. This is your last chance for peas, though climbers may run into hot weather if we have early heat and stop producing or succumb to mildews. Tomatoes are OK but seeds won't sprout until soil temperatures are at least 15°C. Beans, carrots, onions and beetroot are all fine. Wait till September and increasing warmth to plant pumpkins, cucumbers, watermelons, zucchini and sweet corn.

While you're at the Market, stroll into the Blue Knob Gallery and view the most recent exhibition, then take a break in their Café – my favourite is Heather's chocolate almond cake with cream!

August talks program

Saturday 10th, 10am

Holistic Small Animal Care – Dr Edward Bassingthwaight

There are a large range of effective therapies that can be used to treat both human and animal illness. Unfortunately, medical professionals tend to only use one or two such therapies – mainly pharmaceutical drugs and surgery. Dr Edward has been a vet for 18 years and a small animal vet for fourteen. Seven of those were spent working in veterinary hospitals. He uses herbalism, homeopathy, essential oils, energy healing and bodywork, as well as pharmaceutical drugs, as treatments – mainly with dogs and cats. He has found that in 95% of cases, the animal can be treated and cared for without going to a specialised hospital.

Dr Edward will tell us about simple treatments we can use for our own pets, the importance of good nutrition, his latest ideas about treatment and prevention of tick problems, and introduce us to a quite different approach to animal illness and health.

Saturday 31st, 10.30am

Establishing a Woodlot for Firewood & Timber – Mark Wright

This talk is an introduction to setting up your own woodlot to produce firewood, small poles for fencing and light construction, windbreaks, wildlife habitat and, eventually, timber for building.

The Wright family, trading as Super Forest Plantations, have been developing plantation forestry in the local region for nearly 15 years and



Dr Edward Bassingthwaight will speak on non-pharmaceutical approaches to animal care.



have just won the bi-annual Australian Forest Growers NSW Tree Farmer of the Year award. Mark will tell us about Super Forest Plantation's work, but focus on how we can set up our own timber production. The Wrights have trialled many different timber species and a range of production methods, and are currently managing around 3,500 acres. Revegetation and rainforest regeneration are also important parts of their work, which aims to be sustainable, renewable and environmentally friendly while providing a much needed timber resource for the local community.

Blue Knob Market runs Saturdays, rain, hail or shine, 8.30am to ~12noon, corner of Blue Knob & Lillian Rock Roads, 8km from Nimbin in the grounds of the Blue Knob Gallery.

Blue Knob Farmers Market runs Saturdays, rain, hail or shine, 8:30am to 12 noon, corner of Blue Knob & Lillian Rock Rds., 8km from Nimbin in the grounds of the Blue Knob Gallery.

Tasty show treats on the way



Steffie welcomes visitors at last year's Nimbin Show

Sustainability Alley is coming back to the Nimbin A&I Show this year.

Organisers are looking for Nimbin's most sustainable farm or produce. If you're a producer or a gardener, and proud of what you're doing, then enter the friendly competition.

The event can help to promote your product or practice. Sharing what works is also a great way to encourage others.

There will be a lot of other events to be involved in as well, and the popular

Paddock to Plate Cafe will be in operation.

A new competition this year is Nimbin Food Bytes – short films about food to get the word out about all the amazing things happening in the Nimbin Food Scene.

Keep it under five minutes long. Films can be serious, fun, beginner or professional. Entries close 30th August and entry forms are available at the NNIC (opposite the hardware shop).

Visit www.nmic.org.au or email: food@nmic.org.au for more information.

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Powerful moments



by Diane Wilder

Music-making at Nimbin Preschool has become a different and very inspiring language to use with each other. Initial exploration, using the piano keys as a sound maker, has evolved into purposeful music making. We are now observing multifaceted interrelationships occurring on many levels of understanding between the children, the piano, the sound and the visual representation of music scoring.

Luano plays the piano carefully and purposefully, selecting the sounds he wants. He is effectively composing music. Draven is listening carefully to Luano's composing. He interprets the sounds Luano is making through linear drawing. Draven is scoring Luano's music.

Jada's relationship occurs between herself, the piano and the painting. She plays a note and scores the note on her paper. Jada continues the process of purposefully selecting notes that are then interpreted and scored. She is composing and scoring at the same time.

The interrelationships are clear. The sound laboratory environment is allowing interdependence and interaction through the process of meaning making together. The children are co-constructing their music through this interactive process.

Upcoming events

Nimbin Preschool's annual Clothes Swap is on again! When: 1st September, at the Nimbin Town Hall from 3pm, swapping starts at 4pm. Entry is \$20 plus a bag of clothes to donate to the swap – this gives you a complimentary drink, plus a new wardrobe! Yummy treats, drinks and supper will be available. This is a women only event. All proceeds go to the Nimbin Preschool.

Exciting news: at the annual Nimbin Show in September, Nimbin Preschool will be open on the Saturday and operating a Café. Come in during your visit to the show for a relaxing coffee, tea, homemade lemonade and something sweet. Children can enjoy playing in the sandpit or doing a painting while they're here.

Coffee Camp shines at athletics carnival

by Kirrily Owen, P&C Secretary

The whole school took part in a seven-school Athletics Carnival at Riverside Park, Lismore, during our first week back. It was a fantastic day with the sun shining (mainly), a roaring trade at the parent-run canteen and the kids having a great time taking part in the varied sports while meeting up with friends from other schools.

The children did a great job, doing their best when taking part and cheering while on the sidelines. We were all excited when Coffee Camp won the overall trophy and all the ball game trophies, as well as the handicap trophy. An amazing result but as always, it is the spirit of fun and support shown by the kids that stands out.

Special congratulations to champions: Frewoini (12/13 year girl), and Jaxon (11 year boy), Liam (jnr boy), and to the runners up: Ella-Rose, Tamara, Tah, Arnhem, Charli and Cooper. Good luck to the sixteen children who are competing at the zone athletics competition on 16 August.

Some Year 2 kids said: "I went in my age race and came fifth. I felt very proud," Ada; "A boy tripped me over, but I just got up and kept running. I was brave," Aiden; and "I competed



The day starts with the school 'march by' always a highlight as each school comes up with their own special action to add some fun to the parade.

Photo: Anne Walker

and I came third and.. I had a good day," Violet.

Congratulations goes to the parents as well for producing an amazing canteen for the carnival this year. This once every six years opportunity is a huge amount of work and organisation – Thanks in particular to Carol and Ness for pulling it all together, Andrew for BBQ and to Summerland for their very generous

sausage donation. We received many compliments on the quality and variety of the home baking and on how healthy and delicious it was, particularly with Benny's roasted veggie and pesto wraps and Christine's locally made pies. It was wonderful to see so many parents involved with the event.

Contact Kirrily Owen on 6689-1567 or the school 6689-9259.



It's fete, baby

Tunable school and preschool will hold an annual fete on Saturday 7th September, so mark this

date on your calendar and come along to enjoy the fun.

It's a great opportunity to have a look around our learning areas, classrooms, vegetable garden and grounds, and to meet the wonderful teachers.

The planning committee is organising some great stalls this year.

There will be the usual delights that we are renowned for: healthy vegetarian lunches – including wood-fired pizza – waffles, scrumptious cakes and great espresso coffee made by real baristas.

Stalls planned so far

include a bookstore, clothing stall, bric-a-brac, plants, face-painting, tarot reading and a gift stall with items made by our children.

Depending on the weather in early September, our famous waterslide will be operating. This year there will be a tamer waterslide for preschoolers.

This event is a major fundraiser for the school. Please support this event by coming along, and by donating any unwanted goods: books, bric-a-brac, clothing.

Call 6689-1179 for enquiries or to arrange collection of donated goods.

Cawongla Playhouse: a community of inquiry

by Natasha Livock

Being an early childhood educator presents many challenges, especially those moments that catch us off-guard. Sometimes the learning is as simple as asking 'why?' or 'why not?'

I was sitting with a group of children playing with a range of resources, when one child says, 'You are the good guy and you have to kill the bad guys.' I respond, 'But what makes them the bad guys and these good guys?' He replies, 'They (bad guys) kill people and do bad stuff.' I wonder, 'But if I am a good guy and kill a bad guy then doesn't that mean I become a bad guy?' A different child responds to this with, 'Nah, good guys have to kill

the bad guys and that's OK 'cause they're good.' Interested in the thinking going on, I ask, 'But what if I don't want to kill the bad guys?' To be told, 'Well if you don't want to kill a bad guy then you can't be a good guy.' So I ask, 'Why?'

'This is the biggest thing in the whole world!' states a child pointing at a dinosaur in a book. Another child responds, 'God is the biggest thing in the whole world; He made the whole world so He has to be the biggest; bigger than everything.' First child replies, 'Well... I don't know who God is.' Second child replies, 'God is who made everything, even us.' First child thinks for a moment and says, 'I believe in science.' Second child begins to cry. We inquire, 'What is



the matter?' Upset child replies, 'But if you don't believe in God you can't go to Heaven.' I ask, 'Why not?'

According to Aristotle, 'It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.'

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Tunable tots get their own class

Traditionally, Tuntable Falls Primary School has placed kindergarten children in the multi-age class of the Lower Primary.

However, with the growing number of kindies, it became necessary at the beginning of 2013 to have a separate kindy class.

The advantages of a kindergarten class are numerous, and include factors such as similar ages and abilities, class unity, as the children learn to identify with the larger school group, and a gentle integration into the overall expectations of "big school".

The community philosophy of Tuntable Falls means that active family involvement in the school setting is encouraged.

Family involvement in schools is associated with academic success and when parents are able to share their children's home and community experiences, they come to view the school more positively.

This is highly valued in our school.

The teacher, Deborah, has put in place an effective learning program for the kindies based on an understanding of how children learn.

Having a formal training as well as training in Montessori and Steiner education, Deborah feels that all children are catered for.

Taking elements of the different disciplines, she is able to develop a classroom environment suited to the different needs of each child while also creating an environment of collaboration and harmony.

A broad range of ages and developmental abilities is found in a new kindergarten class and it is important that children are happy and comfortable in their new environment.

Children are closely observed and gently encouraged in their learning. Those aching to read and write will soon discover opportunities to do so. Those children still in the dreamy realm of early childhood will also find the environment rich, stimulating and satisfying.

All children have opportunities for exploration, investigation, self-directed work and learning through play while they are gently guided through the expectations of the curriculum.

Learning through play is an important part of the day, made all the more exciting by the school's beautiful forest setting.

With the younger children in mind, the wonderful Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden was planned around children gardening and playing.

As the garden features prominently in learning programs, teachers and parents felt it important that the children also had play areas for down-time after the rigours of gardening. The sand pit among the vegetables is perfect for creative play.

The kindergarten class and the pre-school littlies love the responsibility of growing the flowers in the garden. For the past term the class has investigated, observed and nurtured 5000



worms for the worm farm.

The worm delivery finally arrived – and the Kindies were able to tell Andrew from Eden Creek Worms a thing or two!

An orientation day for the 2014 Kindergarten Class and a parent information afternoon is planned for later this year.

The school is offering all kindergarten placements for 2014 free of charge. For more information please contact Tuntable Falls Primary school on 6689-1423, or email: tunfalls@australis.net

Feed the soil to feed the plants

by Thomas Rose

Beautiful, sunny days and cool mornings might indicate that Winter as we know it, is almost over and Spring is around the corner. That means by now, all the gardening tools should be fixed, sharpened and cleaned and the garden beds ready for spring planting.

At Tuntable we took a risk and started some of the spring planting early. The children are still enjoying transplanting beetroot seedlings (grown by the children from seeds), different varieties of lettuce, silverbeet and cucumbers, having fertilized and mulched the garden beds over the last month. The children have already learnt that we "feed the soil to feed the plants" and are enthusiastically stirring and applying the homemade seaweed tea and liquid manure.

For this week's cooking, we harvested a few huge and very tasty cauliflowers that the children have been looking after. After harvesting, the children turned the bounty into a very delicious meal of traditional cauliflower/cheese and baked potatoes, with oven-baked whole apples for dessert. A whole day of cooking, which involved preparing the entire meal, setting the tables for all the children of the school, serving and cleaning up. How much fun everyone had!

The children from the Upper Primary class were challenged with a different kind of garden activity. They were asked to assemble a 'state-of-the-art' (and very fancy) compost tumbler by themselves (with very little help from the teacher). It was



wonderful to watch the enthusiasm and task-orientated energy that the children applied to put dozens of parts together.

This was a real and authentic learning task that needed co-operation and problem-solving skills. The key learning areas of literacy, Design and Technology and mathematics were addressed, and eventually incorporated in the final product: a fully functioning, crank driven compost bin. This compost tumbler will support our efforts to recycle and re-use our green 'waste'.

Check out the pix of the procedure 'before', 'during' and 'after' or come along for a visit if you are interested in the garden and the school.

What to plant in August

Broccoli, Cauliflower, Leek, Lettuce, Peas, Parsnip, Silverbeet, Turnip
Flowers: Bulbs, Calendula, Cornflower, Lobelia, Marigold (French), Poppy, Primula, Snapdragon.

Saddle up and ride for SIDS

The Great Australian Ride for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is fast approaching.

This promises to once again be a spectacular event – last year more than 40 motorbikes rolled away from the Byron lighthouse on a gorgeous sunny day, and organisers say it will be even bigger this year.

The Great Australian Ride starts on Sunday 18th August, leaving Australia's most easterly point, the

Cape Byron Lighthouse, then heading west over 8000km and 20 days across the middle of the country to Australia's most westerly point of Steep Point WA.

The aim is to raise awareness of SIDS and Kids, and to raise much-needed funds for the cause. Last year's ride raised more than \$26,000.

The event is a highlight of Australia's adventure motorbiking calendar and has seen significant growth



through the efforts of volunteers.

Last year the website had 101,000 views from

as many as 35 different countries.

This year riders from Australia, New Zealand and Sweden will fund their own way across the country, on their own time, leaving behind their families to help raise money for a worthy cause.

A donation page is set up as an Everyday Hero account, which the public can donate through: www.everydayhero.com.au/event/thegreataustralianride2013

For more details, phone 0418-708-359 or email: c_loghem@hotmail.com

Tick boxes, win worms

You could win one of two worm farms or two compost bins by completing an online survey about illegal dumping.

Over the past seven months, Lismore City Council and North East Waste have run TV, radio and newspaper advertisements to raise awareness and increase reporting of illegal dumping.

They would like to hear whether these ads have reached you. Fill in the quick survey by visiting: www.illegaldumping.com.au and click on the "feedback" tab on the right of the screen. Prizes will be drawn on Friday, 30th August.

The website: www.illegaldumping.com.au was developed as part of the

project, and provides an online forum to report dumping and upload images of dumped materials.

With the support of NSW Government's Environmental Trust, NE Waste has also developed enforcement tape and stickers for council rangers to use on dumped items.

These help to focus attention on dumped materials and collect information on dumpers.

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Nimbin Market

Sunday 25th August

More information or stall bookings phone 0458 506 000

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