



FRIENDS OF SCOTCHMANS CREEK AND VALLEY RESERVE INC.

Newsletter – July 2020

President's Report

We wish everyone good health during these unusual and challenging times. Given the ongoing COVID19 developments and restrictions, it's not yet possible to commence our usual weeding parties, Water Watch or our larger July planting sessions (supported by Melbourne Water grants). However, we are extremely grateful that the plants will still find their way into the ground with the help of the Monash bush crew.

It's been a mild autumn with plenty of rain which has meant that last year's plantings have taken extremely well as shown in the photos below. The conditions have also led to a delightful show of fungi in Valley Reserve and the Scotchmans Creek area. I am amazed by the variety of shapes, colours and forms that can be found.

With the lack of our usual events, we are finding other activities to focus on. In particular we hope to put together an information pack for neighbours about our reserves. There have also been a number of very informative webinars such as that by the Yarra River Keeper's on the issue of polystyrene pollution in waterways. Some links to these are provided below for those who are interested.

That's all for me.

Please take care and feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or thoughts to share.

Kallista Sears

President, Friends of Scotchmans
Creek and Valley Reserve

16/7/2019 –Planting



16/6/2020 – ~1 year later



Planting along Scotchmans Creek next to Regent St

Planting Program for 2020

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions our planting program has been changed. We have agreed with Council that their staff will plant all the plants that we have purchased with Melbourne Water Grant funds. Hence there will be no National Tree Day in Monash this year. To date it seems that all the planting at Crosby Drive has taken place. The newly planted area is looking great.

We are anticipating that we will be able to plant in Valley Reserve in a controlled fashion. The planting will not be advertised but regular attendees at plantings will be advised of opportunities to take part in small groups with social distancing.

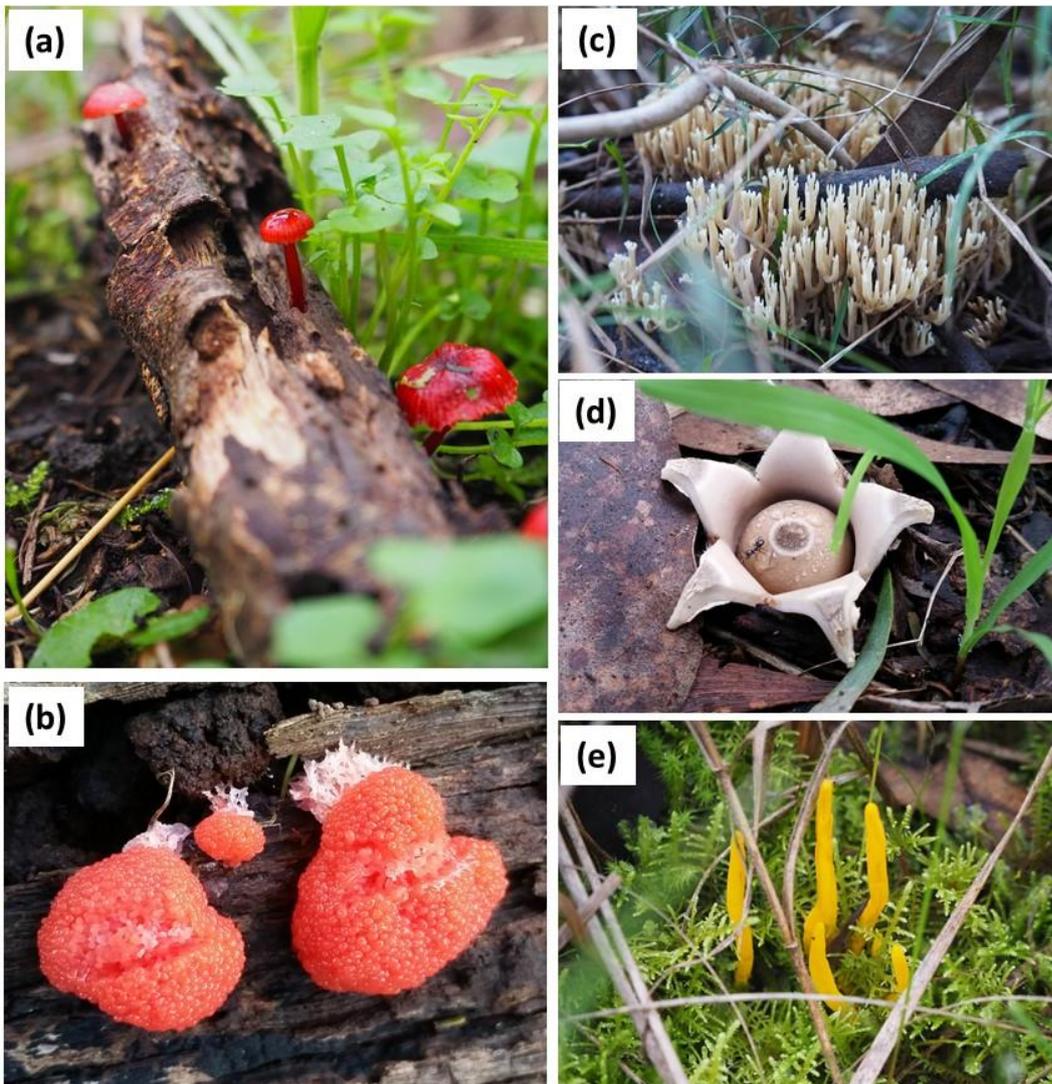
Fungi in Valley Reserve

The mild and wet weather has encouraged an amazing variety of fungi in Valley Reserve and Scotchmans Creek, with some even growing out of a Scotchmans Creek trail sign! The different sizes, forms and colours on display are fascinating and include bracket, jelly, coral and earth star fungi as well as slime moulds.

Fungi play a number of extremely important ecosystem roles from recycling organic matter, ensuring healthy and resilient soils and plants, and providing food and habitat for fauna. Below the fruiting body, is an extensive underground network of thin fibres known as mycelia. These have a huge surface to volume ratio enabling them to efficiently take up nutrients and water.



Many form symbiotic relationships with plants where they provide nutrients, especially phosphorus, to the plants in exchange for photosynthetic products such as sugars.



Fungi in Valley Reserve (a) *Mycena viscidocruenta* (b) Red raspberry slime mold (*Tubifera ferruginosa*) (c) Some type of coral fungi (d) Earth star fungi (*Geastrum triplex*) (e) Club fungi (*Clavaria amoena*)

Polystyrene pollution in creeks

Sadly we often see large amounts of polystyrene (also known as expanded polystyrene – EPS) in Scotchmans Creek and the litter trap above Blackburn road.

Polystyrene is a real problem because it is lightweight and easily blown away, eventually reaching our waterways. It does not degrade but breaks up into small bits that can be mistaken as food by aquatic animals and birds, causing issues such as retarded growth, blocked digestive systems and damaged organs. The polystyrene can also attract persistent organic pollutants such as pesticides and flame retardants.

The Yarra RiverKeeper Association recently completed a project to better understand and quantify potential sources of polystyrene. They found that polystyrene is



the most prevalent item of rubbish in the Yarra River likely originating from a wide range of industries and handlers. Australia consumes 71 000 tons annually the equivalent of 1060 olympic swimming pools!

Monash residents you can help by taking any waste polystyrene for recycling at the Monash Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Centre 380 Ferntree Gully Road, Notting Hill T: 95183767

This service is for residents only - small quantities.

If you would like more information, the Yarra RiverKeeper Association study results are summarised nicely in their report (<http://yarrariver.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Polystyrene-Pollution-in-the-Yarra-River-single-lowres.pdf>) and in a webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcnGq-A6szU>.

Other webinar recordings:

If you love Victoria's tall mountain ash wet forests and rainforests you may be interested in this webinar recording by Prof Lindenmayer from the ANU, hosted by the Murrindindi Library Service. He discusses the impact of fire, logging and salvage logging on these precious areas, based on the groups' 37 years of research.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/648048709108238/permalink/665150697398039/>

Winter in Valley Reserve

The weather may be cool or cold but Valley Reserve is still a great place to walk around in winter. Some of the hakeas are just starting to flower and the early wattles are showing their yellow flowers.

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