



# Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

## Newsletter



Chair: James Bufton  
5284-1344

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5369-4214

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Visit our website for latest news: <http://brlg.org.au>

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### Raptors at our next meeting: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November, 7:30pm

Our presenter, Martin Scuffins, is keen to share his life-long passion for birds of prey and conservation with us.

Bring the family and see living raptors in the hall (no, not the committee members). Ask Martin the questions you've always wanted to ask about these awe inspiring birds regularly seen in our district.



Martin was originally mentored in raptor rehabilitation, handling and training techniques under the guidance of local experts in the late 1980's whilst operating a wildlife shelter. He has also travelled and studied widely, spending time at raptor centres and with handlers in the UK, Ireland and Dubai. He is widely known for his work and has conducted training for numerous wildlife care groups.

© David Whelan / Wildpix 2015.

#### Inside this edition of the newsletter...

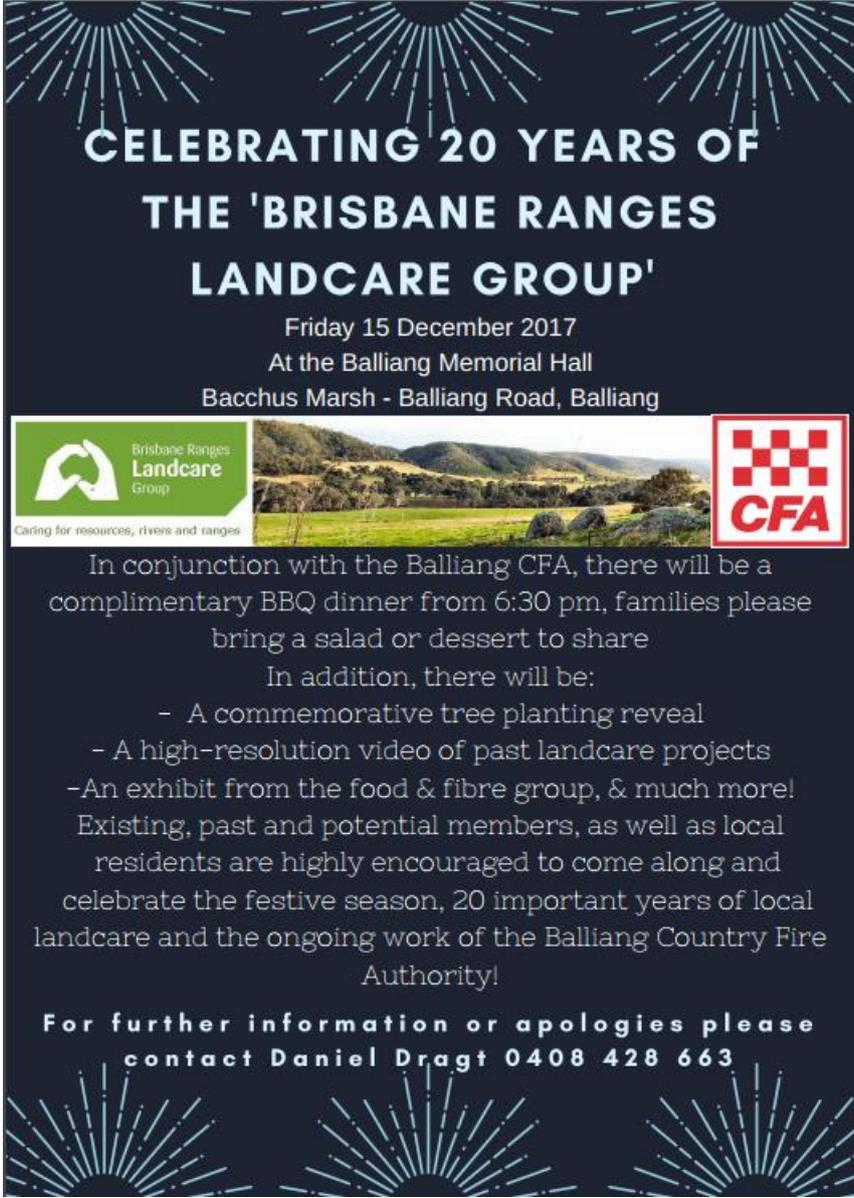
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## ***BRLG 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations***

**Our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is coming up on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December!**

From our first newsletter:

“Our foundation President, Peter Bufton, did much of the work to bring together landholders from Balliang, Staughton Vale and Anakie who were interested in forming a group and tackling such landcare issues as pest plants and animals, salinity and degradation of natural vegetation. About 20 of us met in the Anakie-Staughton Vale Hall in mid-1997 and chose a name which was distinctive and reflected the most prominent geographic feature of the whole district.”



**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF  
THE 'BRISBANE RANGES  
LANDCARE GROUP'**

Friday 15 December 2017  
At the Balliang Memorial Hall  
Bacchus Marsh - Balliang Road, Balliang

In conjunction with the Balliang CFA, there will be a complimentary BBQ dinner from 6:30 pm, families please bring a salad or dessert to share

In addition, there will be:

- A commemorative tree planting reveal
- A high-resolution video of past landcare projects
- An exhibit from the food & fibre group, & much more!

Existing, past and potential members, as well as local residents are highly encouraged to come along and celebrate the festive season, 20 important years of local landcare and the ongoing work of the Balliang Country Fire Authority!

**For further information or apologies please  
contact Daniel Dragt 0408 428 663**

Bring your memories and photos to the celebratory 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be held at the Balliang Hall on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 6:30pm.

## Weed of the Month

Not a prize to celebrate, the weed of the month goes to *Nassella neesiana* or Chilean needle grass. A Weed of National Significance in Australia, Chilean needle grass has been increasingly observed in the last few years along roadsides in our district. This weed has a devastating impact on agriculture, significantly reducing pasture productivity, contaminating crops and hay, and the needle like seed can injure stock or pets. It is a particular problem for sheep, with the seed burrowing into their fleece and skin and cannot be easily removed.



Chilean needle grass produces seed in three areas of the plant: the main seed head (up to 22,000 seeds per plant), in the leaf sheaths (5-6,000 seeds per plant) and at the base of the plant. The main seed head develops during spring but good summer rain can result in a second seeding period in autumn. The reproductive tenacity of Chilean needle grass means early intervention is very important!

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

Chilean needle grass can often only be identified easily when in full flower. To find this weed you will need to become familiar with a few key identification features described below.

**Flower/seed:** The sharp panicle (aerial) seed is approximately 10mm in length. Covering each seed are 2 purple bracts (wings) which give it a characteristic purple colour in flower.

A corona (raised ring) can be located between seed and tail (see Photo 1). This ring can be many different colours including beige, bluish or purple to dark brown. It is a myth that the ring is always purple. Note: Native spear grasses do not have a raised ring.

Cleistogene (hidden) seeds can often be found in the nodes (elbows) of flowering stems, including those at the base of the plant. To find these seeds, carefully peel the leaf sheaf back from the stem to reveal approximately 5 small sesame seed-like seeds in a row (see Photo 2).

The awn (tail) winds the seed like a corkscrew to bury or firmly fix the seed in place. The needle-sharp seed can easily pierce the skin of animals (see Photos 3 & 4).

**Leaves:** Narrow, coarse leaves with distinct ribs running from base to tip. Approximately 20-30cm in length with slightly serrated margins (edges). Colouration varies from lime to mid-green, often with yellowish blotches. Plants can look as though they are suffering nutrient deficiencies.

**Form:** Tussock-forming, grassy plant with a dense fibrous root system. Grows to a height of around 50cm depending on its location and management. Heavily grazed or slashed plants will develop a bare centre with age and flowering stems will tend to grow along the ground, rather than upright. (Photos 5 to 7 demonstrate form).



## HOW TO MANAGE AN INFESTATION

The key to successful management of Chilean needle grass is to:

- Learn to accurately identify it,
- Take immediate action on new infestations
- Prevent further spread – avoid working in, or having stock in, areas where it is in seed.
- Always continue to monitor an area after treatment.

## CONTROL OPTIONS

Type of infestation	Chemical	Grazing management	Physical	Rotational cropping
Small infestation in pasture	Spot spray with registered herbicide.	Maintain good pasture cover by carefully managing pasture and not overgrazing.	Remove by hand weeding or chipping; whole plant needs to be removed.	Not suitable.
Well-established and large infestations in pasture	Not suitable.	Use short duration, high intensity grazing followed by long rest periods.	Mowing will reduce seed set but will not remove stem seeds.	Not suitable.
Arable land, moderate to heavy infestation	Not suitable.	Not suitable.	Not suitable.	Plant crops, and use chemical control or cultivation to ensure that seedlings do not flower



Slashing may reduce seed set in the flower heads but it can actively disperse stem seeds if machinery is not kept clean.

Sources: [Publication 1](#) and [Publication 2](#)

## HAVE YOU SEEN CHILEAN NEEDLE GRASS ON ROADSIDES IN OUR DISTRICT?

Please email the [newsletter editor](#) with the roadside locations of where you have observed Chilean needle grass in our district this season. A map will be published in the next edition!

## Wine of the Month



Wine of the Month is awarded to Stonyfell Shiraz Cabernet.

Easy drinking. \$15 at your discount local store.

Whilst not scientifically proven, a body of evidence is amassing that indicates that this drop provides a great antidote to the unexpected discovery of the Weed of the Month on your land.

For feedback, comments and letters to the editor: [newsletter.brlg@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.brlg@gmail.com)

## Landcare Resources

I want to know about...	Here is a good place to start...
Aboriginal cultural heritage location mapping	<a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-tools.html">https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-tools.html</a> then select "online map tool"
Biodiversity mapping and recording	<a href="http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit">http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit</a> <a href="http://natureshare.org.au/">http://natureshare.org.au/</a> <a href="http://avh.chah.org.au/">http://avh.chah.org.au/</a>
Boxthorn	<a href="http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/africanboxthorn/docs/African_boxthorn-national_best_practice_manual.pdf">http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/africanboxthorn/docs/African_boxthorn-national_best_practice_manual.pdf</a>
Chilean needle grass	<a href="https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-neesiana.pdf">https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-neesiana.pdf</a>
Feral goat control	<a href="https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/feral-goat/">https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/feral-goat/</a>
Fox control	<a href="https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-fox/">https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-fox/</a>
Gorse	<a href="https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/u-europaeus.pdf">https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/u-europaeus.pdf</a>
Landcare networks	<a href="#">Moorabool Landcare Network</a> <a href="#">Geelong Landcare Network</a>
Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Grants	<a href="https://www.melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/apply-funding/stream-frontage-management-program">https://www.melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/apply-funding/stream-frontage-management-program</a>
Rabbit management	<a href="http://www.mln.org.au/images/PDFS/rabbitactionguide.pdf">http://www.mln.org.au/images/PDFS/rabbitactionguide.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-rabbit/">https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-rabbit/</a>
Serrated tussock	<a href="https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-trichotoma.pdf">https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-trichotoma.pdf</a>
Weeds - identification and control	<a href="http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds">http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds</a>
Weed status in Victoria	<a href="http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plant-classifications">http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plant-classifications</a> <a href="http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria-from-pest-animals-and-weeds/legislation-policy-and-permits/declared-noxious-weeds-and-pest-animals-in-victoria">http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria-from-pest-animals-and-weeds/legislation-policy-and-permits/declared-noxious-weeds-and-pest-animals-in-victoria</a>

## BRLG Group News

Following our recent AGM, the BRLG Executive Committee comprises James Bufton (President), Allan Bartholomew (Secretary), Chris Winfield (Treasurer), Chris Sharkey, Daniel Dragt, Jacki Staude, Robert Hall and Tony Farrugia. Our thanks to Michelle Kerr who stepped down this year and a huge thanks to Neil Day who relinquished the newsletter editor role after a memorable 7 years of fine service.

## Last Laugh

It will soon be the season. No, not just Christmas but more importantly, the cropping season! British comedian, Michael McIntyre, here provides his perspective on what will soon be a common occurrence in our district: large farm machinery on the road.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYNQn4yf0c>

(Warning: some bad language)

More seriously, keep an eye out for large machinery occasionally travelling the local roads over the next few months. Please be patient and give them plenty of room.