

December & January

Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

Welcome to Village Eco News. For more information about how you can subscribe or contribute see page 4



Five Reasons not to Spray the Bugs in your Garden this Summer

The weather is getting warmer, and gardens are coming alive with bees, flies, butterflies, dragonflies, praying mantis, beetles, spiders millipedes and centipedes. For some of us it is exciting to see these strange and wonderful creatures return. For others, it's a sign to contact the local pest control company or go to the supermarket to stock up on sprays.

But while some bugs do us very few favours – like mozzies, snails and cockroaches – killing all insects and bugs isn't always necessary or effective. It can also damage ecosystems and our own health.

There are times when insecticides are needed especially when pest populations are surging or the risk of disease is high but you don't have to reach for the spray every time. Here are five good reasons to avoid pesticides wherever possible, and live and let live

1. Encourage the bees and butterflies, enjoy more fruits and flowers

Flowers and fruits are the focal points of even the smallest gardens, and many of our favourites rely on visits from insect pollinators. We all know about the benefits of European honey bees and our own native bees, but also hover flies, beetles, moths and butterflies.

You can encourage these helpful pollinators by growing plants that flower at different times of the year (especially natives) and looking into sugar-water feeders or insect hotels.

Wishing all our readers a
*Merry Christmas and a
Happy and Healthy 2018*

Also a big thank you to the
Bangalow Farmers Market for providing
us with space to hold our monthly raffle
and the local businesses that help to
distribute this Newsletter.

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Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

2. Delight your decomposers, they're like mini bulldozers

To break down leaf litter and other organic waste you need decomposers. Worms, beetles and slaters will munch through decaying vegetation, releasing nutrients into the soil that can be used by plants.

If there are fewer bugs in the soil decomposition is slower – so we need to conserve our underground allies. You can help them out with compost heaps and worm farms that can be dug into the ground. Keep some areas of your lawn un-mowed, and to create areas of leaf litter. Keeping your garden well-watered helps your underground ecosystems.



3. An army of beneficial bugs can eat your pests

Mantis and dragonflies are just some of the hundreds of fascinating and beautiful bugs we are lucky to see around our homes. They are predators of mozzies, house flies and cockroaches. Broad-spectrum insecticides kill these beneficial bugs alongside the pests.

By reducing pesticides you allow populations of natural enemies to thrive. Many farmers grow specific plants to encourage beneficial insects, which has been shown to reduce the damage to their crops and avoid insecticide resistance.

4. Your garden will support more wildlife, both big and small

The more insects that are in your garden, the more birds, mammals, reptiles and frogs will thrive in your backyard.

Baiting for snails, for example, will deter the blue-tongue lizards that eat them. Keeping your garden well-watered, and including water baths, will also encourage a balanced ecosystem (but change the water baths regularly to avoid mosquitoes).



5. You and your family be will happier and healthier

Engaging with nature increases well-being and stimulates learning in children. Insects are a fantastic way to engage with nature, and where better to do this than in your own back yard! It will also teach them to value nature and live sustainably.

Domestic pesticides present a significant risk of poisoning, especially for small children. In reality, the risk of exposing your children to pesticides far outweighs the nuisance of having a few bugs around.

Think globally, act locally

Your backyard has a surprising impact on the broader health of your neighbourhood, and gardens can make significant contributions to local biodiversity. Insects are an important part of ecosystem conservation, and encouraging them will improve the health of your local environment (and probably your health and well-being too).

In the end, insects and spiders are not out to get you. For the sake of our environment, you should give them a chance.

Source: *'The Conversation'* edited by Dawn Lotty



Reduce Your Waste

By Noelene Plummer

Recycling is good but it's really the second best option. It's always preferable to reduce your waste. There is a lot of energy and resources required to recycle and do we really know what happens to our recyclables when they leave our home.

It's undeniable that we have a growing waste problem. Here are some simple steps we can all take to reduce waste:

- Eliminate items that only have a single use - half of all the plastic we use only once.
- Buy produce without packaging and take your own shopping and veggie bags. Shop at farmers markets and refuse plastic wrapped veggies.
- Think; do you really need it. We all have too much 'stuff'.
- Buy recycled or swap and share, especially childrens clothing or toys.
- Try a month (or six) of not shopping for clothes. it's amazing what's in the back of the wardrobe.
- Take your own cup when buying takeaway coffee.
- Buy reusable water bottles.
- If something is broken see if it can be repaired before buying a replacement.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- If you need an implement or tool for a short time see if you can borrow it from a neighbour.
- Try and use cloth nappies especially when at home; disposable nappies will still be around in 500 years (scary).



OVER OUR LIFETIMES WE CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN:

HUNDREDS OF DISPOSABLE RAZORS THAT WILL EXIST FOREVER OR JUST ONE STAINLESS STEEL REUSABLE RAZOR!

1MILLION women

The image shows two hands holding a blue disposable razor and a pink reusable razor. The background is a purple gradient with white and yellow text. The 1MILLION women logo is in the bottom left corner.



Trolley Buddy by Dawn Lotty

I've had my *Trolleybuddy* for at least 10 years. Made from 100% recycled polyester these shopping bags are very strong and durable. They have an insulated side pocket for milk, butter etc and another small side pocket for a phone or wallet. They are affordable at \$19.95 without the insulated pocket and \$24.95 with this attachment. Purchase online at: www.trolleybuddy.com.

Sign the Petition to Save Ballina's Koalas

A petition has been launched by Tamara Smith MP for the state seat of Ballina in an effort to persuade the NSW government to protect Koalas and other wildlife as the RMS starts tree clearing work as part of the Pacific Highway upgrade, see below. Already dead and injured Koalas are found by the nearby residents almost daily. To sign the petition log onto: www.tamarsmith.com.au



Byron Shire Flying-Fox Camp Management Plan

Readers should be aware that on the 26th October 2017, Byron Shire Council adopted the abovementioned Management Plan

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act) commenced on the 25th August 2017. Under the BC Act and the Local Government Act 1993 it is an offense for a person to damage any habitat of a threatened species or ecological community. Any unlawful activity relating to damage to flying-fox habitat will be investigated by Council's Community enforcement Team and/or the Office of Environment and Heritage.

The critical reproductive period for Grey-headed or Black Flying-fox is generally from August (when females are in final trimester) to the end of peak conception around April. Dependent pups are usually present from September to March. This is the period when Council receives a high level of reports relating to community disturbance e.g. noise and smell.

What can I do to help minimise flying-fox impacts?

The following information suggests some simple interim measures that you can take to help minimise the disturbance when you are living close to a flying-fox camp.

When flying-foxes are stressed or frightened, they make a lot more noise. Colonies tend to be noisiest when they are disturbed by people and quietest when left alone.

To prevent flying-fox droppings from spoiling clothes, take washing indoors prior to sunset. If washing is left out overnight, and if available install an undercover clothes lines e.g. under a veranda.

To protect fruit trees, OEH recommends the use of wildlife-friendly netting that is well secured and has a gap size of less than five millimetres. For more information go to:

http://byron.infocouncil.biz/Open/2017/10/OC_26102017_MIN_611.PDF



Green Tree Frogs

It's the Croak that Counts

by Dawn Lotty

The Australian Museum has launched a smart phone app to help what it calls "an urgent rescue mission" to save frogs that are endangered or vulnerable. The app is part of a national citizen science initiative to count our local frog population.

"Frogs are often difficult to identify by sight and one of the major obstacles in preserving frogs is a lack of knowledge" explained Jodi Rowley the Museum's frog expert but like humans each frog has it's own voice.

After downloading the app and turning on the location for identification all you have to do is hit record whenever you think you hear a male frog calling for a mate.

Frogs are easier to find than most people think just go to your local oval at night, or any parkland with water or you can find them in gutters and drains around you home. For more information go to:

www.frogid.net.au/about-frogs

Village Eco News

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

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