

October 2017

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

What's in a Name?

by Liz Gander

It has been a long time coming but finally tree identification labeling has become a reality along the Bangalow Land and Rivercare planting sites.

The labels have been financed by a generous donation from *Brookfarm* through our *Patron of the Environment* program where we ask the community to support our work.

Apart from using the funds to improve and beautify our environment the tree labeling is another way we thought to give back to our community.

Initially, approximately 50 labels will be placed on a selection of trees based on their size and diversity.

Labeling is now along the Bangalow Riverwalk from the Bangalow Parklands to the end of the Bangalow Sports Fields.

We hope this addition to the plantings will inspire a new appreciation of the rainforests we are so lucky to have. Contact:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

for further information or details on how you can donate to our work.



An example of the tree identification labels.

Val Rainthorpe, Noelene Plummer, Robert Lotty and Don Salter installing tree identification labels.

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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.

The Little Things - Balloons!

by Liz Gander

This one is actually a 'big thing' even though individually they can be quite little. Balloons were originally made from pigs bladders and animal intestines, sounds horrible but at least they were bio-degradable.

Modern day balloons are made from materials such as rubber, latex, polychloroprene, or a nylon fabric, all are chemically treated and can take over 5 years to break down.

Balloons in their various forms were invented for use in military communications, transportation and scientific experiments. The first rubber balloons were made by Michael Faraday in 1824, for use in the laboratory, but it wasn't long before people began to have fun with them.

A properly functioning latex balloon freezes when it reaches an altitude of about ten kilometers, breaks into slivers that look like spaghetti and fall back to earth. Balloons can be dangerous to sea animals including porpoises, turtles, dolphins, and whales, as they can become lodged in the animal's digestive tract (which could lead to starvation).

It's not only the balloons that pose a treat but the nylon ribbon commonly attached to them, tangle and strangle wildlife. Beach litter surveys have shown the amount of balloons and balloon pieces found on beaches has tripled in the past 10 years. Balloons are also a waste of Helium, a finite resource. Balloons can travel thousands of kilometers and pollute the most remote and pristine places.

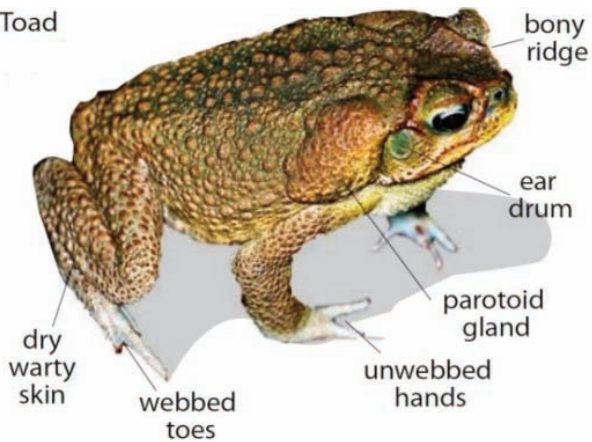
In a few states, cities, and countries, releasing balloons en masse is illegal, but this ban needs to be echoed worldwide. The state of NSW and the Sunshine Coast in Queensland are the only Australian places to ban the practice. Yet up to 19 balloons can still be released at a time in NSW, which poses huge threats to the environment.

The next time the occasion arises where balloons are considered try to be creative and think of an alternative. As releasing balloons is often done as a commemorative gesture do something more lasting like planting a flower garden or trees. Release butterflies, bubbles or doves instead or float flowers down a stream. Make or use pinwheels, bunting or paper pompoms for birthday parties. The personal touch is always better and the environment will benefit as well.



Native Frog or Cane Toad

Many people have difficulty in telling native frogs from Cane Toads, because they have similar features such as warty skin, visible ear drums or webbed toes. Unlike native frogs adult Cane Toads have all the features labelled below.



Cane Toads are a serious threat to the unique native wildlife in NSW because: They invade the habitat of native frogs and eat their food. They have a high appetite and even eat small lizards and frogs. They poison other animals who try to eat them, including quolls, goanas, kookaburras herons and domestic pets.

What you can do to make your home Cane Toad free

- ◆ Cover or bring pet food in at night as it attracts Cane Toads.
- ◆ Remove standing water as Cane Toads need access to water every two days to rehydrate.
- ◆ Remove rubbish and debris where they will find shelter.
- ◆ Keep outside lights off when not needed because it attracts moths and other insects for cane Toads to feed on.
- ◆ Dispose of Cane Toads thoughtfully even freshly killed Cane Toads can poison animals.
- ◆ Place them in your covered compost (they make great fertiliser) or garbage bin.

If you discover Cane Toads in your local area for the first time please report it to your National Parks and Wildlife Office.

For more information or to listen to a male Cane Toad call go to:

- www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- <http://www.amonline.net.au>
- <http://www.frogwatch.org.au>

Source: Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW

Frogs commonly mistaken as Cane Toads in NSW



Weed of the Month

Murraya paniculata 'Exotica'

by Dawn Lotty

Do you have a Murraya hedge? Pretty to look at but *Murraya paniculata* 'Exotica' is recorded as an noxious weed by many Northern Eastern NSW and SE Queensland Councils

Murraya paniculata 'Exotica' is a tropical, ever-green plant native to southern China and South-east Asia and India bearing small, white, scented flowers. Grown as an ornamental tree or hedge it is closely related to citrus, and bears small orange to red fruit, although some cultivars do not set fruit.

Not only spread by birds, the plants self-propagate and the roots are also invasive as they search for moisture. With these habits it easily invades the native bushland and is highly ranked on Australia's most invasive weed list.

Introduced to Australia and marketed as an easy to grow hedge it can however, when in flower, be allergenic. Potentially causing headache, blocked sinuses and breathing difficulties.

If you do wish to grow a hedge there are some wonderful natives, some of which are shown on the right, that can providing the same result with a bonus of both colourful leaves and flowers.



Hedging with Native Plants



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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