



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter

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What's news in the Brisbane Ranges and Balliang Plains?



At our first Landcare meeting for 2019, Roger MacRaid, Landcare Facilitator for Moorabool Landcare Network, will bring us up to date with what is going on in our district. Learn about all the latest news, grants and opportunities, rabbit virus release results, technological developments (eg, microwave weed control) and other hot gossip!

We look forward to seeing you at the Balliang Hall on Thursday February 21st at 7:30pm.

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Pest of the Month – European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Taking out the award yet again, the rabbit's award winning persistence shows us that we have to be even more persistent in our application of controls to take ground back from Australia's most costly pest animal for the agricultural sector¹.

Did you know?

- The first release of rabbits on mainland Australia occurred at Barwon Park Mansion in 1859, just 53 kilometres from Balliang as the rabbit hops in a straight line!
- By the 1920s, rabbits had colonised most of the southern half of Australia and were present in extremely high numbers. The rate of rabbit invasion varied from 10-15 kilometres per year in wet forested country to over 100 kilometres per year in the range lands. The invasion of the rabbit in Australia was the fastest of any colonising mammal anywhere in the world.
- A single pair of rabbits can increase to 184 individuals within 18 months and as few as one rabbit per hectare can impede the normal regeneration of native plant species.

How to control and manage rabbits was covered in our [January 2018 newsletter](#).

How BRLG can help: In conjunction with Maude Landcare, BRLG can again help with the purchase (see below), collection and delivery of Pindone bait to your property on each of Friday 22 Feb, Monday 25 Feb and Thursday 28 Feb. If you are interested, email newsletter.brlg@gmail.com or phone Robert on 0401-404-899 **by Saturday February 16** with the quantity you require for each feed. PRICES are: 20KG BAG \$70 or 10KG BAG \$40 or 5KG BAG \$25

Special offer for BRLG Members:

Up to \$200 total per BRLG member family is available to fund the purchase of rabbit bait.

BRLG Working Bee – Sunday 3rd March

Our first working bee will be at the Triangle on Sunday 3rd March. Meet from 9am and we will run through to a BBQ lunch. Please come along, it would be great to see you there.

We would like to mix these practical working bees with informative activities where we visit a property where someone has something of interest they would like to share with others – maybe an interesting aspect of their property or something they have developed that they think others would be interested in learning about. Do you have something you would like to share? Do you know of someone that has or does something interesting that you would like to nominate? Send through your ideas!

BRLG Calendar 2020 – we need your input!

Over the course of 2019, one of our members will be collating local images and text to design a local calendar for the year of 2020.

Do you have any great local images that you would like to send through for possible inclusion in the calendar? Ones that capture the seasonal variations, particular aspects of our local landscape or anything connected to the land. Please send them through to the calendar editor, Nina Bird, at fly2nina@gmail.com

¹\$206 million in losses each year to the agricultural industry. See: Gong W, Sinden J, Braysher M, Jones R (2009). [The Economic Impacts of Vertebrate Pests in Australia](#). Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, Canberra.

Tips for Building a Backyard Nesting Box

All animals need to meet their basic needs of something to eat and somewhere to live. Australia's fauna is particularly reliant on hollows for shelter and breeding - possums, gliders, bats, kookaburras, parrots, treecreepers, reptiles such as geckos and even frogs need hollows.

Hollows are a highly limited resource in today's forests. Hollows may begin to form in any aged tree, even relatively young trees if the conditions are right. In some countries, woodpeckers create hollows in trees. Here in Australia, the bark needs to be damaged in some way – either by wind, lightning, fire or removal by animals (such as galahs) so that termite or fungal activity may begin to create a hollow. Galahs and other parrots love to chew bark. Are they ecosystem engineers creating hollows for the future, or just larrikins sharpening their bills?



Entrance

Although animals will use a range of hollow entrance sizes, for nest boxes it is best to choose the smallest entrance size. They really like to squeeze through entrances. Small entrances provide better protection from predators and a cosy internal environment in the hollow or nest box. If the animal flies (e.g., birds and bats), the entrance is placed at front of the nest box. If the animal crawls up a tree (e.g., phascogales and gliders), the entrance is at the back or side.

Materials

Use CD grade pine ply that is 19 mm thick. CD grade pine is relatively cheap, accessible and sustainable, and has roughness for small feet to grip onto. Use a hinged lid, with the hinge placed on the side, not the back of the nest box.

Wall thickness (19 mm) is important - too thick makes the box too heavy and too thin doesn't provide enough insulation, meaning the animal can overheat in summer and freeze in winter. There is no need for wire or graduations inside the box, except for micro bat boxes. Micro bats like a piece of old denim or woollen blanket to cling inside the box.

The pine ply is adequately protected by a couple of coats of external acrylic house paint. Even hardwood boxes need painting. The colour does not matter, but bear in mind some colours are very hard to see in the bush when you want to find and check the nest box!

Installation

Nestboxes must be carefully located to maximise their success as animal homes. Check there are no existing hollows in the tree before you install a nest box, to avoid disturbing or displacing any animals already using the tree. Climbing animals may prefer trees with rough bark, such as box trees.

Height and orientation

Placing boxes approximately 3 m above ground level is ideal. Nest boxes should be high enough to be out of harm's way (e.g., safe from foxes), but not so high you cannot check the box or carry out maintenance and monitoring.

Orientation facing southeast is best, as this means the box is shaded by the trunk when summer sun is at its hottest. A large six inch nail is nailed into the tree at an angle and the box positioned so that it is hooked onto the nail. This technique does minimal damage to the tree.

These notes were adapted from those prepared by Tanya Loos at a Connecting Country nest box workshop with Miles Geldard in autumn 2018. Miles' nest boxes are available for purchase at www.wildlifeneboxes.com.au

Other good web references:

[Birds in Backyards Nest Box Plans](#)

[Birdlife Australia nest boxes technical information](#)

Landcare Resources

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

Last



Laugh

