

## Merri Park Billabong

Over 50 indigenous plant species have been planted at Merri Park Billabong. A number of weed species have also made their way into the Billabong and surrounding areas. Most of these weeds will compete with the indigenous plants for light, nutrients and space.

Weeds are dispersed either their seeds; transported by wind, water, animals or soil or by stem fragments or bulbs. Knowing the dispersal mechanisms of individual weeds allows you to know how they should be controlled. Some weeds compete with the indigenous plants more than others and should be targeted first.

Removing weeds before they have dropped their seed will reduce the weed seed bank.

Many weeds look the same as indigenous plants and this can result in the wrong plant being hand weeded. To reduce the risk of this happening, MCMC has selected weeds that are easier to identify and that are less likely to be confused with indigenous plants. We prefer that you target these weeds.

**Remember, only handweed those plants that you can identify**

## Target these weeds now:

### White Clover

*Trifolium repens*



A perennial weed. Looks very similar to the native Nardoo. Nardoo has 4 leaflets while the Clover has 3

#### How can I help get rid of it?

This plant has trailing stems that root at the nodes. Remove as much of the root material as possible. MCMC will use a selective herbicide to spray the regrowth. By preventing the long-lived seeds from forming, hand-weeding helps prevent this weed spreading by water.

### Prickly Ox-tongue (also known as 'Picrus')

*Helminthotheca echioides*



An annual weed with bristly stems and leaves. This plant looks like the rare 'Firewheel groundsel'. The Groundsel is a much finer plant without bristles.

#### How can I help get rid of it?

Only pull young plants. Old plants have tough root systems so cut these at the base and allow MCMC staff to spray the regrowth. Will produce large numbers of wind-blown seed so aim to avoid seed set.

### Small-flowered Mallow

*Malva parviflora*



An annual or short-lived perennial. Can become very large and woody. This plant has lilac flowers and wheel-like seedpods. The seed is very long-lived so be sure to remove any plant that is flowering to avoid seed setting.

#### How can I help get rid of it?

Only pull very small plants, otherwise chip at the base to prevent seed set. MCMC staff will spray the regrowth.

**The range of weeds will change depending on the season.  
Contact MCMC for which weeds to target!**

## Want to get involved?

Many residents visit the Billabong and undertake handweeding in their own time. MCMC acknowledges the role residents play in helping manage the wetland. To ensure a coordinated approach and to maximise effect of the work that both the community and MCMC does, please adhere to the following:

- **Handweed only those weeds listed.** You may wish to keep a journal to record the date and the weeds you were handweeding. You could also record bird or other animal sightings.
- **Confine your weeding around Billabong 3**  
Consolidating our handweeding efforts will reduce chemical usage and maximise the habitat values of this area
- **Stockpile handweeded material** at the designated location shown on the map. This will reduce the likelihood of weeds shedding their seed or piles of weeds being placed on top of indigenous plants.
- **Notify MCMC** of any piles of handweeded material that need collecting, report any interesting observations or sightings you have made. You can also contact MCMC to notify them of your handweeding or to find out what works they have scheduled.

The Merri Creek Parklands are of regional - State significance for habitat values - this shows how important it is that we all work to protect and enhance them. Local residents and Friends groups have been strongly involved for over 20 years in revegetating the creek parklands with trees, shrubs and grasses. *Habitat* is returning and so are the insects, spiders, frogs, reptiles, birds, mammals, fungi and other living organisms.

Maturing trees are creating new habitats; peeling bark, leaf litter, fallen branches and rotting wood. These have allowed many animals to return. Recent winter visits of the magnificent Yellow-tailed Black cockatoos and the sweet song of Grey Shrike Thrushes are a part of this unfolding diversity (see over).

As wilder areas of the city become manicured and tamed, patches of unmown native grasses & understorey become the last refuge to the insects & the animals that feed on them.



For more information;  
Merri Creek Management Committee  
Megan Jericho  
Ph. 9380 8199

# Handweeding



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