

Buzz Project Activities - September-November 2016

Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) has hit the ground running with urgent spring works for the Friends of Merri Creek (FoMC) Blue Banded Bee project.

Divide those Dianellas

A permit was granted by the Dept of Environment Land water & Planning in September for collecting propagating material from endangered lilies. These collections of *Dianella amoena* rhizome took place in October with specialist [Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative](#) (VINC) volunteers. Over 200 pieces of rhizome were carefully dug from 50 precious parent plants.



Volunteers then processed and potted up the pieces. Naomie Sunner, Propagation Manager at VINC reports that the rhizome pieces are doing well with new shoots already developing. This collection ensures that plantings of *Dianella* in 2017 will be genetically diverse. Volunteers also helped detect South African Weed orchid at [Ngarri-djarrang](#), assisting MCMCs teams' control of this weed that is new to the Merri.

Make it muddy

During a Celebrating Place event in Fawkner Library on the 22nd of October, the project was promoted with bee-themed skin art. Several Fawkner residents helped construct mud-filled bee nest boxes for placing in the grassland.

Count those pollinators

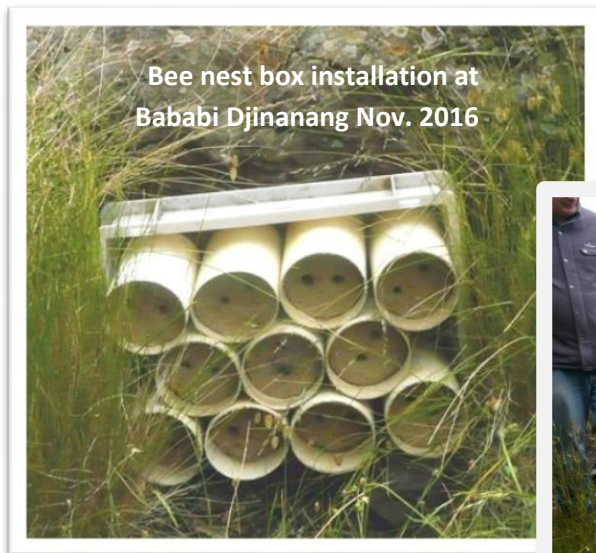
25 people attended the [Pollinator Count activity](#) on the 13th of November, linking with the national [Wild Pollinator Count](#) project. Attendees toured four of the planting sites in and around [Moomba Park](#), Fawkner, placed a Bee hotel inside the Bababi Djinanang Grassland (see photo) and learnt the procedure for conducting pollinator counts.

The unseasonably cool and rainy weather on the day meant that no pollinators were active but some of the participants conducted surveys at the marked wildflowers patches later in the week. Volunteers submitted twenty four count sheets and a volunteer also offered to enter this data. Local bee enthusiast and contributor to the [Pozible Campaign](#) development, Mercedes Ramirez, generously assisted on the day and brought along her display of native bee information and bee hotels.

Corporate volunteers from BP helped set up the pollinator count signs and road-tested the activity on a sunny day the week prior to the Pollinator Count. We saw Miner Bees of the genus *Lasioglossum* collecting pollen from early flowering Flax lily flowers, and even photographed a pair mating, but no Blue-banded Bees.

Talking it up

MCMC staff member and Friends member Brian Bainbridge presented a 'Pollination Pathways' talk at the [Friends of Merri Creek AGM](#) on 22nd November, where he received valuable feedback to promote and develop the project.



In coming months:

- Parkland crew at MCMC will continue to clear weeds from the selected planting sites to ensure that they will be thoroughly prepared for planting in winter 2017.
- Planting lists for the eight wildflower patches have been drafted for submitting to nurseries for propagation over the summer months.
- [Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative](#) will be making special collections of some nectar plants seed for the planting sites. Some of these plants are rarely requested in the numbers this project needs to provide a nectar source for native bees to complement the pollen from the *Dianella*.

How can you be involved?

Keep counting

The Wild Pollinator count is an ongoing project and the next count is in April 2017: <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/> Our count points in Bababi Djinanang in Fawkner and at the MCMC depot garden in East Brunswick will be in place till mid-December. If you have an eye for pollinators, would like to be a Citizen Scientist and add to our Merri Creek records during the lily flowering season please [be in touch](#) with MCMC on 9380 8199. Information on current pollinator activity in Merri Creek parklands may inform future planting needs.

Become a Bee (or wasp, fly, beetle...) expert

The [Bowerbird website](#) is a rich source of information and its Australian Bee Project is a great help on bee identification (BBBs are not alone; there are at least 200 species of bee around Melbourne!). Check out this project and the other resources at Bowerbird; <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/>

Spreading the word

We would love to hear your own stories around Blue Banded Bees and this project. [Let us know](#) if you would like to write a post, an article or submit a photo to share by emailing admin@mcmc.org.au, and/or post it on Friends of Merri Creek's Facebook page. We have also identified a great collection of resources in developing for this project. Is anyone interested in helping make an online resource list for the [FoMC website](#)?

Planting and weeding events are planned for winter 2017. Subscribe to [FoMC Facebook](#) events and keep any eye on your emails for further updates, event invitations and opportunities to register.

Keep buzzing!

