

A scenic photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a pond surrounded by tall, golden-brown grasses. In the background, rolling hills are covered in similar grasses, with some trees and a few buildings visible under a cloudy sky.

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Re-Source

Rural Environment Newsletter

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hume.vic.gov.au/resource



Interview: Shelter Belt Planting

Phil Gerber and his wife, Jane, moved into their new home on Riddell Rd, Sunbury in 1985, with only one tree gracing the entire property of 12 hectares. Phil felt the property was barren and so began a journey to reintroduce predominantly local native trees and shrubs. Phil gained advice through the former Sunbury Landcare Association and the Western Plains Flora Nursery and now has around 20% of his property planted out including the entire perimeter.

"We live on a fairly windswept plain above Sunbury township. Planting windbreaks has created a much better microclimate on the property. Wind speeds have been reduced. There is improved shelter for the horses on our property. Planting indigenous trees and shrubs has provided shelter for birds and thus bird varieties have increased around the property."

Phil enjoys strolling around his property, pushing his young grandson in his pram amongst the shelterbelts, and seeing birds such

as the red-browed finch and the butterflies. Maintenance involves replacing the odd dead plant and cutting grass to provide a walking trail through the shelterbelts.

Phil's advice for other property owners in the area and where trees are few and far between is that it's worthwhile planting shelterbelts on your property. The act of doing the planting itself is pleasurable!

For more information on the benefits of shelterbelts visit sustainablefarms.org.au/on-the-farm/shelterbelts

For more information about Landcare locally visit landcarevic.org.au
Contact Landcare Facilitator Clare Watson at udc.landcare.facilitator@gmail.com or phone **0409 142 110**.

Local indigenous plant supply:
Western Plains Flora Nursery
628 Wildwood Road, Wildwood VIC 3429
Phone: (03) 9740 3178 / 0409 946 939



Before planting (June 2005)



After planting (April 2022)

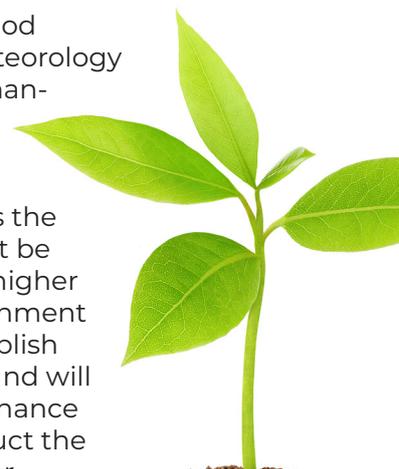
TAC Wildlife Victoria

Take extra care, reduce your speed and be alert whilst driving on regional roads to ensure animals and humans are safe. If you encounter wildlife injury, contact Wildlife Victoria on **8400 7300** or visit wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/drive-safely



Take advantage of high rainfall period

As the La Niña weather period weakens, the Bureau of Meteorology is still expecting a higher-than-average rainfall for the next few months. This is a good opportunity to get some planting done now as the weather conditions may not be as favorable next year. The higher moisture level in the environment allows young plants to establish their root systems quicker and will give them a much higher chance of survival than if you conduct the same planting in a drier year.



Rural Strategy

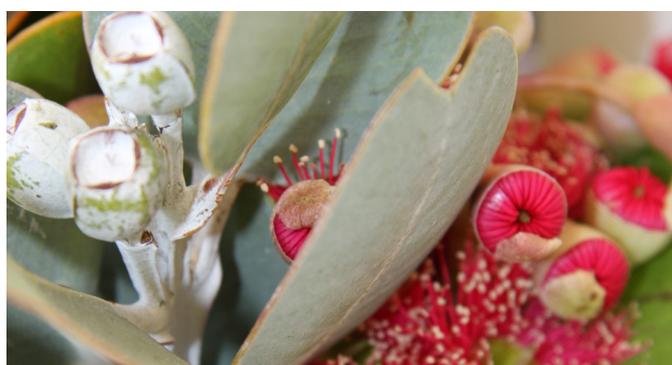
On 11 April the Rural Strategy was adopted as Council's policy for Hume's rural areas for the next 15 years. The Strategy recognises the vital role the rural areas play in protecting Melbourne Airport, maintaining Sunbury as a satellite township and preserving Hume's Green Wedge so that local people can enjoy its spacious natural beauty less than an hour from Melbourne's CBD.

The Rural Strategy has been developed with an appreciation of the various needs, challenges and opportunities of the rural community. Throughout the Rural Strategy project

agricultural viability and land management concerns have been raised by owners of land on both small and large lots.

The Strategy contains more than 60 directions and actions focussed on how Council can provide certainty, support and engagement with the rural community. It empowers the community to make choices for how they can use and manage their land and aspires to a vision that sees the rural areas as a valued place to live, visit and work.

To read the Rural strategy 2022, please visit hume.vic.gov.au/rural-strategy



Get out the chainsaw, loppers, or handsaw – It's a great way to warm up your body and get you outside during Winter

The herbaceous weeds aren't growing very fast at the moment, so if you can get on top of the slow-growing woody weeds you won't need to worry about them for another twelve months.

Another job to consider with those cutting tools – apart from cutting your firewood - is thinning out thickets of Eucalyptus seedlings. Often Redgums seed prolifically in one area and hundreds of saplings can come up together. In the original environment, most of the seedlings would have been killed by various causes, such as fire, and only a few would be left to grow to maturity. Where there is a dense group of saplings, they compete for resources such as water, light, and nutrients. This often causes the group to be stunted and not able to reach their full potential. You can help them by choosing a few healthy-looking individuals and cutting out the ones around them. You will end up with much happier, healthier, and faster-growing trees. Keep in mind that each one of those saplings should grow into a massive tree and will need a lot of space around it in the future.

It's time to start thinking about your initial spray run for any of those Broadleaf Herbaceous weeds

You know the ones - Cape weed, Patterson's Curse and any of the Thistles are examples. They have large flat leaves that form Rosettes and will start going bonkers in Spring.

If spraying is one of the methods that you use at your property to control any of these species, their large flat leaves will protect any small germinates from the herbicide spray – you can be sure that they will be sprouting up underneath. Only undertaking one spray run a year can create frustration because when Spring comes around the survivors will start growing very quickly and you will feel like you have been wasting your time and money.

Spraying herbicide is only a single step in controlling weeds on your property and other methods must be utilised to obtain effective weed control. The end goal is to create strong competition from other plant species that you do want to keep on the property.

Whether you undertake spraying yourself or employ a contractor, ensure that you understand the safety controls required. For broadleaf weeds use a selective herbicide that will not affect any grass species.

You can easily look up the safety requirements for any herbicide sold in Australia by typing '*PRODUCT NAME* SDS' and '*PRODUCT NAME* LABEL' into a search engine or asking for the Label and Safety Data Sheets (SDS), at your local agricultural supply store.

If you would like help with developing an effective weed management plan, don't hesitate to call one of Hume's Rural Environment Officers on **9205 2200**.

Rural Engagement and Melbourne Water Grants

Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) 2022-23 Opening

Applications open on 1st July 2022, for rural landholders who'd like to do land management activities such as weed control and revegetation works. To apply or for more information visit

<https://hume.smartygrants.com.au/RLMG23>

Primary Producer Rate Rebate

The Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR) provides a 30% rate rebate to agricultural businesses in Hume. To assess your eligibility for the program please read the PPRR Guidelines on Council's website, or contact the Rural Environment Team.

Melbourne Water Grants

Melbourne Water supports the community in undertaking a range of activities to improve the health of our waterways, from revegetation, weed control, fencing off a waterway from stock. Please check out Livable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program at melbournewater.com.au

Upcoming workshops

Land Management Networking Forum – Spring 2022

An upcoming free sustainable land management forum hosted by Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire Council will be held in Spring 2022. The Forum will have a number of presentations covering an array of topics and will be an opportunity to meet and chat with others in the rural community.

Chat to our Rural Officers!

Our rural officers at Council can offer a wealth of knowledge and resources from identifying weed and native species, grant assistance, land management advice and much more! To organise a property visit or chat contact:



Anne Fitzpatrick (West Hume)
Annafi@hume.vic.gov.au
0477 753 303

Manni Skopellos (East Hume)
Mannis@hume.vic.gov.au
0438 397 149

Useful Resources

Equiculture course

<https://www.equiculture.net/equiculture-free-mini-course>



Self-paced, subsidised course for horse owners. Normally \$125, but only \$25 for Hume residents.

Further information: equiculture.net or contact the Biodiversity Project Officer on 9205 2465 to register and receive your discount coupon.

Agricultural Victoria Services



<https://agvicservices.com.au/>

AVS helps improve the productivity and competitiveness of Victorian farmers where a private sector route-to-market for research outputs is needed.

Agriculture Victoria



<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/>

Agriculture Victoria works in partnership with farmers, industries, communities, and other government agencies to grow and secure agriculture in Victoria. See Support and resources.

Virtual Extension Officer



<https://virtualextensionofficer.com.au/>

A new interactive tool designed to help you manage three of Victoria's worst invasive species - gorse, serrated tussock and rabbits.

Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party



<http://serratedtussock.com/>

Everything you need to know about the management of serrated tussock.

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to Elders past, present and future.

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