



HUME CITY COUNCIL
RE-SOURCE
Rural Environment Newsletter
Autumn 2020

 hume.vic.gov.au/resource





Controlling Gorse

Gorse or furze (*Ulex europaeus*) is a dense, prickly, perennial that will overtake native vegetation and pastoral land.

It grows well in poor or disturbed soils, where it will form impenetrable thickets that clog waterways, increase fire risk and provide a home for pest animals.

The plant has distinctive narrow spiny leaves along the branch with a sharp spine at the tip. It produces a mass of bright yellow pea-like flowers that mature into small seed pods containing two to six seeds.

Gorse seeds can remain viable in the soil upwards of 25 years, often germinating after soil disturbance.

Treatment of gorse can occur year-round, but treatment before December prevents seeding. Gorse control works best when multiple methods are used as part of a long-term plan including; mechanical removal, mulching, ploughing and chemical control.

Multiple herbicides exist to control gorse, so speak to your chemical provider to determine what suits your purpose and always read the label.

For more information and assistance with gorse control, contact the **Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT)** on info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au, **0428 335 705** or visit vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

The cover photo of this edition is of *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass) an important indigenous species. Taken in Greenvale.



Carrying capacity – are you overdoing it?

To maintain a healthy property, it is important to only graze the number of livestock that your property can support without degrading its long-term productivity and environmental values. This amount is known as your property's 'carrying capacity'.

To determine if you are exceeding your property's carrying capacity, estimate what percentage of the soil in your paddock is covered with plants (living or dead) when it is at its lowest level, such as late summer.

For most of Hume, which is flat with heavy clay soils, you should aim to retain at least 70 per cent coverage during this time. If your property is steep or prone to erosion, then at least 90 per cent coverage is advisable.

If you would like to calculate the number of livestock you can sustainably carry on your property, known as your potential carrying capacity, search for 'sustainable carry capacity' on Agriculture Victoria's website, agriculture.vic.gov.au, and follow the steps.



ABOVE: This paddock has been reduced to approximately 50 per cent coverage, therefore will degrade over time and is prone to weed invasion.

Competitive pasture: a barrier to weeds

Removing weeds can be time consuming and expensive, so prevent them from establishing by maintaining a dense and diverse coverage of pasture grasses.

Also known as 'competitive pasture', this technique allows pasture grasses to develop more root mass, preventing weeds from establishing as they struggle to compete with the pasture for nutrients, water and light.

When pasture becomes overgrazed – often due to high stocking rates or dry conditions – patches of exposed bare soil develop. These bare patches lack competition from other grasses, making them ideal locations for weed with windblown seeds (such as thistles and serrated tussock) to germinate.



By avoiding overgrazing and maintaining a competitive pasture, the amount of time and money required to control weeds can be greatly reduced.

If you would like a copy of Council's WEEDeck to help you identify weeds on your property, please contact the Sustainable Environment department on **9205 2200** or at resource@hume.vic.gov.au

Report injured native wildlife easily with Snap Send Solve.

Wildlife Victoria has teamed up with Snap Send Solve, an app that helps community members identify and solve issues.

Using this app you can now report injured wildlife to Wildlife Victoria by following these steps:

Step 1: Open the app

Step 2: Snap a photo of the animal or situation

Step 3: Confirm the location (the app will automatically locate your position using GPS)

Step 4: Confirm the incident type (Animals, Wildlife – Injured Native)

Step 5: Press send

After your request is sent, Wildlife Victoria operators will assess your

report and photo and contact you to discuss the next step.

Snap Send Solve is free to download from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



ABOVE: Koala, Image courtesy of B. Van Praagh

Agricultural Land Use Rebates extended!

Due to the continued review of the rebate program through 2020, Landholders who are currently receiving the rebate will automatically be extended for another year.

This change will allow for any recommendations from the review to be implemented in the 2021 application year.

Landholders will be sent out a letter informing them of the extension.

Contact the **Sustainable Environment** department on **9205 2200** for further information.



Rural strategy Update

The continuation of the Rural HIGAP Project will see the release of a Draft Rural Strategy for community review in the coming weeks.

Sign up to the Rural Strategy mailing list to get the latest news and updates of the Rural Strategy by emailing contactus@hume.vic.gov.au with 'Strategic Planning Rural HIGAP' in the subject line.

Rural Hume, Rural Home success

Plans are underway for the public release of the *Rural Hume, Rural Home* documentary following the success of a private screening with landholders.

Rural Hume, Rural Home is a tale of Hume's unique grassland, woodland and waterway landscapes.

The documentary premièred to 33 landholders who participated in a tour of Hume's hidden gems in October last year.

Council partnered with Tree Wishes Consultancy to take these landholders to some of Hume's unique private properties, showcasing the great work of local landholders as well as the challenges they face.

A public screening of *Rural Hume, Rural Home*, which will also include guest speakers, will be held later this year. Details of this event will be available soon.

If you would like to register your interest to attend the screening of *Rural Hume, Rural Home* please email resource@hume.vic.gov.au with you name, property address and contact details.



Sign up for the RE-Source e-newsletter to get the latest news! Email resource@hume.vic.gov.au with the subject line 'Subscribe' and include your postal address to receive RE-Source as an email.



Indigenous chocolate lily growing in pasture. Image courtesy of John Lakey.

Expressions of interest for 2020/21 conservation project grants

Eligible landholders, managers and environmental community groups can now express their interest to apply for a Conserving our Rural Environment (CORE) 2020/21 Project Grant.

CORE grants aim to conserve and improve the natural and environmental assets on private rural properties. Project Grants range from \$301 up to \$10,000.

Council can fund a range of activities including on-ground environmental projects, capacity-building activities and community engagement initiatives. Examples include:

- Noxious weed control
- Environmental weed control
- Pest animal control
- Revegetation works
- Materials and equipment
- Land management and project plans
- Flora and fauna assessments
- Training and development
- Community group activities.

Applicants must have a land management or project plan that is less than five years old, or apply for the development of one in their application. Applicants must obtain at least two quotes for each activity proposed as part of their project.

Council officers will undertake a property visit or site meeting with applicants to discuss projects prior to the application being provided.

Expression of interest postcards will be sent out shortly, with applications closing Friday 30 March 2020. To learn more about the Project Grant please contact Council's Biodiversity Project Officer at coregrant@hume.vic.gov.au or 9205 2200.

Thinking of starting, expanding or growing your agribusiness?

Hume City Council's Economic Development Department can help.

The Economic Development department can offer a range of support, including:

- Assisting with business connection, programs and workshops.
- Facilitating connection with the tourism industry and other stakeholders.
- Hiring assistance, local staff and vacancy advertising.
- A range of other supporting services.



Contact the Economic Development department on 9205 2200 or visit hume.vic.gov.au/business for more information.

Transition to sustainability showcase

Learn how to live more sustainably with environmental designer and co-originator of the permaculture concept, David Holmgren.

David is also author of *RetroSuburbia: The Downshifter's Guide to a Resilient Future*.

This event will be jam packed with practical ideas and information on how to transition to a more sustainable and resilient community, home and life.

**Saturday 23 May
1.30pm – 4.30pm
Hume Global Learning
Centre – Sunbury
44 Macedon Street**



Have an idea for a feature or photos of rural Hume that you would like to see in *RE-Source*? Let us know! Contact us at resource@hume.vic.gov.au