

# THE MEN OF THE TREES

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PLANTING AND PROTECTION OF TREES

## NSW BRANCH

NEWSLETTER:  
2nd Quarter, 2009  
Vol 29, No 2



PATRON:  
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OBE LLD

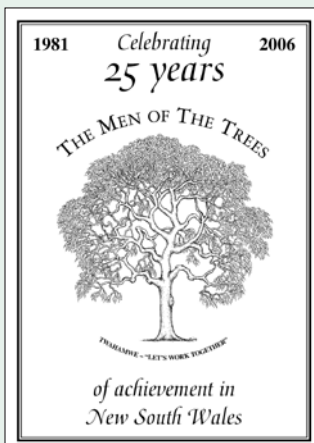
### Exciting Christmas



### Still Available!

Tea towels commemorating the 25th Anniversary of The Men of the Trees in New South Wales are still available for purchase! Printed on a Linen/Cotton blend for durability and in MOTT Green, at just \$10 each (or 3 for \$20) they make a clean&green

 **CHRISTMAS GIFT**   
for friends and family.



So don't delay, get yours now before they all disappear!

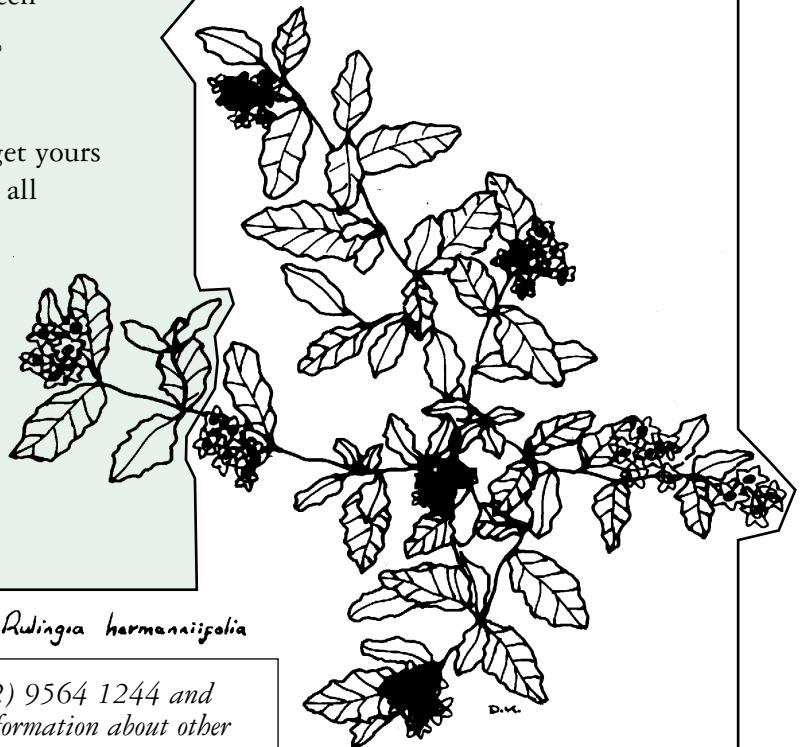
Phone Libby Braybrooks on 4572 8556 to order the quantity you need for the forthcoming Festive Season.

*Rulingia hermanniifolia*

Call Conservation Volunteers Australia on (02) 9564 1244 and Greening Australia on (02) 9560 9144 for information about other plantings.

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# Annual Report for 2009

of the Men of the Trees (NSW) Inc.

The MOTT committee for 2009 has only one change from 2008, with Colin Boston elected as a committee member. The remaining office bearers are Mark Anderson (President), Alex Mackenzie (Vice President), Bob Ashon (Treasurer), Libby Braybrooks (Secretary, minutes and correspondence/membership), Kevin Diletti (Editor), and Committee members Pam Regan, Sue Thomas and Margaret Longstaff. Thanks to Pam Regan for offering to hold the committee meetings at her home.

The only tree planting carried out this year was on Sunday, 16 August at A'Becketts Creek, Holroyd, in conjunction with Holroyd and Parramatta councils. MOTT members and council staff planted a mix of Eucalypts, Acacias, Dodonaeas, Dianellas and Angophoras. More than 400 plants were planted.

MOTT has been fairly active on the Schools Planting Project. This project started at the beginning of 2009 to help schools carry out plantings within their grounds. MOTT covers the cost of purchasing the plants, mulch, grow bags etc and gives assistance with species selection and planting, if needed. To date MOTT has assisted six schools: Neutral Bay Public School, Claymore Public School, Cattai Public School, Freemans Reach Public School, Kurrajong Public School and Brewongle Field Study Centre. A total of 430 native plants, 25 cubic metres of mulch, grow bags and stakes have been supplied. Thanks to everyone who assisted in organising the plantings at the schools. If you know of a school or a place for a tree planting in the coming year, please inform a MOTT committee member of the details.

Finally MOTT appreciates Kevin Diletti and Margaret Longstaff for organising the production and printing of the newsletter and everyone who contributed either by writing articles or submitting articles to the newsletter. Thanks also to Blackmores for their ongoing support in photocopying the newsletter.

*Mark Anderson*  
President

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## Planting Report

*by Alex Mackenzie*

### **A'Becketts Creek, Holroyd Sportsground, Holroyd**

After being washed out by a little rain back in May, a small band of enthusiastic planters girded their loins and got stuck into planting the now not-so-slippery slope above the A'Becketts Creek canal. After a long break from the rigours of volunteer planting one could be excused for thinking we went a bit overboard in getting in an amazing more than 400 plants. The species provided to us by Holroyd Council ranged from trees (*Eucalyptus*, *Angophora*, *Acacia decurrens*), shrubs (*Indigofera*, *Dodonaea*, *Ozothamnus*, *Acacia floribunda*), and lower plants for the understorey such as *Dianella*, *Einadia* and *Hardenbergia*.

As the organiser on the day I'd especially like to thank Margaret, Mike and Bob for turning up with very little notice and Holroyd City Council for giving us the opportunity to plant and providing two members of staff to give us a hand.

With good follow up, the planting should prove an impressive success and an inspiration for future planting events in the area.



# Planting Report

by Mark Anderson

## Schools Planting Project

The Schools Planting Project has now been in operation for just on one year, helping schools to carry out plantings within their school grounds. So far MOTT has assisted six schools, starting with Neutral Bay Public School (PS) where 24 endemic species were planted. Thanks goes out to MOTT member Bill Thomas for organising this planting.

Over the years MOTT has assisted schools with plantings in their school grounds and it was with great delight to see the results of a combined MOTT/Housing Commission/School Pupils planting that was held at Claymore PS in 1988, with around 775 trees and shrubs planted. The grounds were quite barren at that time when Claymore PS opened, and now the trees are large with plenty of shade for the pupils. This year MOTT assisted by supplying 48 trees and shrubs for their National Tree Day planting, held in the school grounds.

Cattai PS was supplied with 27 trees and shrubs, grow bags and stakes. The school is also keen to take students next door to Cattai Bridge Reserve to carry out some bush regeneration. This will also be of great assistance to MOTT's work carried out over the years at this reserve.

Freemans Reach PS carried out a planting on a small creek bank that runs in the corner of the schools grounds. MOTT supplied a total of 51 plants including: *Lomandra longifolia*, *Leptospermum polygalifolium*, *Bursaria spinosa* and *Dianella*. Staff from the local Bunnings store removed an old fence and erected a new one around the planting area, and supplied and spread mulch over the site.

Kurrajong PS held a planting on Schools National Tree Day in July. Myself and Linda Anderson helped prepare the site. This required spraying and hand weeding. Linda was on hand on the planting day to help the students. This involved digging the holes and showing the pupils how to plant. Each class from kindy to year 4 (infants) took turns planting. The following day the school held a working bee for the parents/relatives to move 25 cubic metres of leaf mulch to the planting site as well as spread the mulch over the entire site. Workers also planted some 20–30 remaining plants and carted water by hand to water all the plants . . . a good day's work was done by all involved. Species planted included: *Lomandra longifolia*, *Syncarpia glomulifera*, *Casuarina*, *Melaleuca styphelioides*, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *E. moluccana*, *Acacia fimbriata*, *Indigofera australis*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Callistemon salignus*, *Bursaria spinosa*. MOTT supplied a total of 122 plants and the 25 cubic metres of mulch.

Brewongle Field Study Centre (BFSC) at Ebenezer is a Department of Education institution that offers schools with all types of environmental projects. MOTT helped the BFSC by supplying them with 178 plants for schools that stay at the centre to carry out environmental works on the site or to assist schools to carry out plantings at their own grounds.

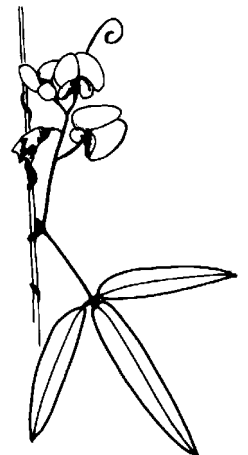
To date around 430 native plants, 25 cubic metres of mulch, 30 grow bags and stakes have been supplied to the Schools Planting Project. MOTT greatly appreciates the assistance given to this project by Judy McEwen (Principal, Kurrajong PS) and Marty Gauci (Bushcare Officer, Hawkesbury City Council) for informing and distributing information, in the Hawkesbury region, regarding the MOTT Schools Planting Project.



## Office Bearers for 2010

At the Annual General Meeting in September 2009, the following Office Bearers for The Men of the Trees (NSW) were elected for 2010:

Mark Anderson	<i>President</i>
Alex Mackenzie	<i>Vice President</i>
Bob Ashon	<i>Treasurer</i>
Libby Braybrooks	<i>Secretary: Minutes &amp; Correspondence/Membership</i>
Kevin Diletti	<i>Editor</i>
Margaret Longstaff	<i>Committee Member</i>
Pam Regan	<i>Committee Member</i>
Sue Thomas	<i>Committee Member</i>



# News Snippets from Around the World

## A Tale Of Two Autumnal Displays

The swathes of beautifully coloured leaves produced by deciduous trees each autumn are one of nature's great displays. But why trees in Europe tend to produce yellow leaves, while those in America and eastern Asia produce red leaves, has remained an enigma.

Now scientists from Israel and Finland, who have published a review of leaf colour and its causes in the journal *New Phytologist*, have a theory that could explain the difference.

They believe that red-leaved trees in America and Asia only exist because they and their insect pests managed to survive a series of ice ages long ago.

Until a decade ago, scientists understood very little about why trees produce leaves of different colours, and at different times of the year. Then came a surge of interest into why trees in temperate forests produce a range of hues each autumn. For example, the mixed forests of New Jersey turn predominantly red, as do maple trees in Japan, while beech forests in Patagonia turn red and orange.

Yet the forests of Europe turn predominantly yellow.

Leaves usually look green because they contain higher levels of chlorophyll relative to their other pigments. But leaves do not turn red or yellow because they are dying. Instead, trees produce less chlorophyll in autumn, so the yellow and red carotenoid pigments already in the leaf come to the fore. At this time of year, the trees also produce more anthocyanins, a red-purple pigment.

When the leaves start to die, they turn brown. There are thought to be various reasons for the colour change.

One idea is that the anthocyanins protect the leaves against the damaging effects of light, which are worse in the autumn as canopies become thinner and the plants fix less carbon due to falling temperatures.

That would allow the trees to keep healthier leaves, and to withdraw more nutrients from them before they drop. But the evidence for this remains inconclusive.

Another idea is that different-coloured leaves fend off insects that might otherwise eat them.

Deep-red leaves might signal to insects, such as aphids, that the leaves contain higher concentrations of toxic chemicals, lack nutrients or may shortly die.

And evidence for this idea is stronger.

One review of 262 tree species showed that those with red colours have a long evolutionary history with aphids. The insects try to lay eggs on the trees in autumn and the trees respond in an evolutionary arms race, signalling ever more strongly that their leaves are unappealing.

But these ideas cannot fully explain why Europe has more trees with yellow leaves than in America or eastern Asia.

### *Climatic trigger*

The scientists have proposed that the trigger for the difference first occurred millions of years ago in the Tertiary Period.

They suggested that temperate forests evolved from tropical plants during this time. Many young tropical trees produce red leaves they said, and old leaves in the tropics are also often red-coloured. So temperate forests inherited this ability to produce red leaves.

But 35 million years ago, the world started to drastically cool and warm, as a series of ice ages covered large swathes

of Europe and North America. Plants could only survive in a few southerly refuges.

North America and East Asia have mountain ridges that run north to south. As each ice age took grip, red-leaved trees migrated south along the mountain ridges into refugia where they survived, before migrating back north as the climate warmed.

In Europe, the mountain ranges run east to west. That meant that any red-leaved trees north of the mountains were trapped, and became extinct. The insects that had been engaged in a long evolutionary arms race with these trees also died out with them.

"The selective agents of herbivory that cause red leaves went extinct, resulting in lower selection for red leaves," the scientists said.

That broke the evolutionary arms race between insects and the trees, allowing those trees that recolonised Europe to put less effort into deterring aphids from their leaves.

As a result, European forests tend to produce glorious swathes of yellow each autumn.

"Red in a way is an old adaptation reflecting stresses from the Tertiary herbivorous fauna," the scientists said.

Further support for the hypothesis is that dwarf shrubs with red leaves, rather than trees, dominate the northern parts of Scandinavia.

That suggests that trees in the area were wiped out by snow and ice, which the low-lying shrubs could survive. As the trees were wiped out, so were their pests – a luxury not afforded to the generations of plants in America and eastern Asia.

MATT WALKER  
EDITOR, EARTH NEWS

## Pakistan In Tree Planting Record

A team of volunteers in Pakistan has set a new world record by planting more than half a million trees in one day.

Guinness World Records confirmed that 541,176 trees had been planted in the southern province of Sindh on 15 July, when some 300 volunteers, working in groups, planted mangrove saplings in the 750 acres of the Indus River delta region.

They beat the previous team record for tree planting which was set in India just last month when 447,874 saplings were planted in Assam state.

Pakistan's tree-planting marathon was witnessed by representatives of Guinness World Records and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Each group was issued saplings by a panel of experts, which also monitored the planting process to ensure that standards set by Guinness World Records were met, and that no old plants were included in the count.

Pakistan's environment minister, Hamidullah Jan Afridi, said the event was part of a series of events being held to observe the national year of the environment.

"The government has set aside one billion rupees over a three-year period to protect these plants and help them survive," Mr Afridi said.

Mangroves grow in delta regions where the fresh waters of the river mix with sea water.

Experts say the new saplings will have difficulty surviving because of diminishing river water in the region.

RIAZ SOHAIL  
BBC URDU SERVICE

☞ CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## Snippets *continued*

### Tree DNA To Fight Illegal Logging

One would not usually associate DNA tests with forests, but in Singapore such a test has been developed for trees. The aim is to help stamp out illegal logging, by proving where timber furniture has come from.

“Our approach is scientific,” said Kevin Hill from Double Helix Tracking Technologies, which tracks where wood comes from.

“We extract DNA samples in the forest and build databases,” he explained.

Until recently, the emphasis of DNA testing has been on human and animals. But advances in technology have made it viable to extract DNA out of trees.

“The tree DNA strand or ‘genome’ is 60–100 times longer than a human one. Within this genome, we can identify genetic differences between individual trees, even of the same species, and map out these changes according to their geographic location in a database.

“We can use this technique to do a spot check on wooden furniture to prove that it has come from certain forests.”

He said it would even be possible to match degraded DNA found in processed wood products against the database to determine its true origin.

### Forest crime

Illegal logging first drew global attention in 1965, when Brazil implemented its first law against the crime, but despite the magnitude of the problem, there are few instances of prosecution and punishment

The level of illegal timber harvesting in the Amazon has since fallen from over 80% to below half, according to the World Bank. The issue is obviously not solved but at least the government has been trying to address it.

But it remains extremely high in Asia. The World Bank estimates that up to 80% of Indonesian timber comes from illegal sources. The figure is even worse in Cambodia.

Over \$12 bn of assets and revenue are estimated to have been lost worldwide each year because of illegal logging.

“It is very profitable,” said Julian Newman of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA).

Loggers do not pay the usual royalties and fees to governments. They do not compensate local communities.

“But they can still sell the timber at market price and make huge profits,” Mr Newman added. Therefore the growing appetite for wooden products is being met by timber from illegal sources.

But such activities harm the livelihoods of 1 billion poor people, who depend on forests to survive.

Violations of protected areas also “threaten the conservation of forest resources and biodiversity”, according to the World Bank report.

Since the Bali Declaration was adopted at the East Asia Ministerial Conference in September 2001, governments around the world have been working together to tackle the crime.

But there has been no law – until now.

“Americans led on this last year, by passing a law called Lacey Act Amendments,” explained Mr Newman of EIA.

“For the first time, it is an offence in America to import any wood products which were made of illegal timber.” The European Union is due to debate similar legislation later this year.

But proving the country of origin is an expensive process.

“The supply chains involved in the timber industry are very complex,” said Mr Hill. “The current audit-paper based approach is very time consuming and costly.”

That is partly why only 7.3% of the world’s production forests are certified. Only 1.2% in Asia, according to the UK Timber Trade Federation.

There is a price for the certified wood products. At the moment, they cost customers an average of another 10 cents in the dollar.

“People say they are happy to pay that extra 10%, but when they walk into a store, they often leave with uncertified cheaper products,” Mr Hill said.

“Our aim is to make the tracking process more robust to make it very inexpensive.” It can reduce the cost of ethical furniture buying by half. That, in turn, could help save Asia’s forests.

MARIKO OI

BBC ASIA BUSINESS REPORT

### Listen To The Trees!

When most people look at a tree it’s often the leaves, flowers, branches and size of the tree we see, but have you ever wondered what goes on inside?

That was the exact question asked by Alex Metcalf, a designer/artist who works within the subject area of the ‘natural world’, exploring new ways of engaging people with this extremely important subject. It inspired him to combine art with science and design a device to help people hear what goes on inside a tree trunk.

One of the challenges Alex faced was finding a way to isolate the sounds that he wanted to hear from background noise. He had to work with some engineers to try to find something that would do the job. “We looked for something that would work but nothing was suitable so I had to find something new,” says Alex.

The microphone, which is the key instrument, has some noise-cancelling technology that amplifies very sensitive sounds when placed on the trunk. It took a year to design.

There are two particular sounds to look out for when listening to a tree. A rumbling sound which is the general movement of the tree and a clicking sound which is water mixing with air as it travels up the xylem tubes. The sound of each tree is so different that it is possible to identify a type of tree from just listening. This work and observations are being used by scientists to monitor the health and well-being of trees.

All this found its way into Alex’s Tree Listening Project at Fermynwoods Contemporary Art Gallery in Northamptonshire in England. The Project aims to “provide an experience that links both science and art by engaging the public with what happens inside a tree, and to excite and inspire a keen interest in trees”. Alex has installations around the world including Ontario in Canada. The exhibition at Fermynwoods will be there until November.

BBC NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



## *A True Companion*

Of all living things trees are the most companionable.  
Every breath of air animates them and they tune themselves  
sympathetically to the mood of the listener.

If he is sorrowful they seem to share his sadness; if joyful,  
they partake of his mirth.

When his mind soars to spiritual realms he feels that the  
trees aspire with him.

There is a sympathy in their silence, and in their presence the  
tree lover is never lonely.

from *Trees*  
*A Book of the Seasons*

The Newsletter's editorial committee welcomes comments on the Newsletter's substance and style, as well as contributory articles. These latter can be submitted as a Word file or in Text format via email to Kevin Diletti at [kcd@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kcd@ozemail.com.au). Please note that articles may be edited to fit.

For more details, contact Kevin Diletti at [kcd@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kcd@ozemail.com.au).

Note that MOTT is unable to check the accuracy of all articles contributed to this Newsletter. They are accepted in good faith and are printed for the information of MOTT members, but do not necessarily represent the views of MOTT-NSW or its Committee.

## JOIN THE MEN OF THE TREES!

The Men of the Trees is a non-sexist, apolitical voluntary organisation. Everyone is welcome to belong as individual members; alternatively, your club, school, association or society can become a group member.

Please join us and participate in our plantings, activities and meetings and receive our Newsletter. Donations of your time and effort, or of funds, in support of planting programmes will be greatly appreciated . . . and not just by The Men of the Trees, but by future generations living in NSW.

For more information, contact:

**NSW Branch of The Men of the Trees**

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**E-mail: [fbcc@zeta.org.au](mailto:fbcc@zeta.org.au)**

**Web Site: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~kcd/mottweb/motthomepage.html>**

*"Who does his duty is a question  
Too complex to be solved by me,  
But he, I venture the suggestion,  
Does part of his who plants a tree."*

from *Trees*,  
*A Book of the Seasons*

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