



Upcoming events being planned...

- **Pasture Improvement**

On 26th February at 6.30 PM at Steels Creek Community Centre, we will be having a **workshop and information session on pasture improvement for small properties**. Aimed at properties 10-20 acres (4 to 8 hectares) there will be information on how to maximize your pasture, minimize your weeds and improve your soils. The cost will be only a \$2 coin donation to the SCCC.

At this event we will also have on display some of the equipment which we have available for use by Landcare members. Fertilizer and seed spreader, spray units, log splitter, rabbit smoker to name a few. Please RSVP to Angie Lloyd (0412343 242) for catering purposes.

- **A community Log-splitting Weekend is planned for April**

Many in the valley have had trees felled, which are too big to move on their own. We plan to nominate one or two weekends in April where as **a community we help each other to get ready for the winter fires**. Log splitting is easy work if there are three or more people available. However, many in our community only have one or two adults in their household or the physical work is beyond their capability. The new Landcare log splitter makes the job very easy.

If you would like to be part of this community event, either because you have wood that needs splitting or you would like to help out those who need assistance, **please email your interest to steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com** .

The expectation is that people whose wood is to be split will assist where they can (even if it's just making a cuppa for the workers). Those who are volunteering their time will be organized into suitable times so we don't exhaust anyone.

If you would like to borrow the splitter to do your own wood, please email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com or call Angie Lloyd 0412 343 242

Just one more good reason why it's great being a member of Steels Creek Landcare!

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 114 (April-May 2015)

'FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VALLEY'

Equipment Available at SCCC

Community members may not be aware that there a number of items of equipment at the Community Centre that can be used by the Community, at SCCC or elsewhere.

Why not come along to a Steels Creek Market morning (10.00 AM sharp on the second and fourth Saturdays in each month at SCCC), to take a look at what is there.

You can also find out how to go about borrowing it.

Items belonging to SCCC include:

- 6m x 3m gazebo, with sand-bag anchors, and Large 'eskys'.

Items provided by Steels Creek Association located at SCCC include,

- Chainsaw safety chaps, Protective helmets with mesh visors and earmuffs attached,
- Table-tennis table, net, bats. The coffee machine at SCCC was also provided by SCA, and is available to all for use at SCCC for a gold coin donation per cup.

Other equipment, including a star picket driver, spray equipment, and a log splitter, are also available to **Steels Creek Landcare Group members**.

Please contact Angie Lloyd (0412 343242) for further details concerning Landcare membership and equipment use.

Membership Not yet a member? The committee has decided to accept a pro rata membership for the balance of this financial year, but in order to be eligible you need to pay for the 2015-16 financial year at the same time. So your choice is to pay \$20 for this year (expiring June 30th) or pay just \$30 and your membership continues until June 30th 2016. So if borrowing a log splitter or spray unit has appeal, download, complete and send back the membership form from www.steelscreeklandcare.org.au



Activities Two successful soil information events have been held. First, Rosie from Hoogies generously came out and filled us in on soil testing and fertilisation. Then on 28th March David Davidson from Davo's worm farm discussed the merits of using worm castings on a large scale to improve your pastures. Both were fascinating and informative sides of the same story. Blackberry control The blackberry spray season is winding up for this year. A gentle reminder that in order for us to process any rebates through the NYBAG program you MUST be a financial member of the Landcare group. So please get your membership dues in before you send your rebate form or you may miss out.

Rabbit control Now is the perfect time to reduce your bunnies. With the summer at its, close the rabbits will munch up your pindone oats for a good result. Lots of information on the website. An interesting discussion was had this week with the officer in charge of rabbit control at DEPI who said that a change of policy will have the potential for people to be prosecuted if they do not take steps to control their rabbits. Like blackberry control it is our legal obligation but I would like to think that Steels creek residents are more motivated by just being good neighbours.

Landcare Volunteers Programme

As reported elsewhere, a group of eight Year 9 students, and their mentor/driver, from Fairhills High School came to the Community Centre on the 18th March. They assisted with building of a retaining wall and spreading of soil so that maintenance and mowing will be easier in future. The students were a delight to work with and, on a warm and sticky day, worked hard and enthusiastically to finish the project. These groups of young people are available, from time to time, to assist landholders in the valley. The next group of students coming out will be from Billanook College on 14th April. If you have any suitable projects please contact the coordinator Jennifer Duncan (9730 1313) to see if they can help.



Steels Creek Landcare Group AGM - Friday 14th August 2015 at 7pm

Booking is essential for catering purposes

A talk on the importance of bees to our planet's survival and how they fit into an urban garden followed by a honey inspired meal to share with your fellow members. BYO Drinks. Free to financial SCLG members (visitors \$15) Please also consider joining the committee, it's not hard work and having input and ideas from more members is essential to the wellbeing of our Landcare group. Nomination forms are available from the secretary. steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com



A weekend workshop on **Natural bee keeping** will be on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August. Numbers are limited. Open to financial members of SCLG only. Fully catered. This is a friendly reminder that it is time to

Renew your 2015 – 2016 membership of the Steels Creek Landcare Group. We ask you to continue to support us in making this valley a healthy vibrant one. The cost is only \$20 per household with all money going to activities and equipment to benefit our members.

Urban membership now available We also now encourage Urban memberships and include all of Yarra Glen as many of our information events are equally interesting to those on a urban sized block as well as those living on rural land

Steels Creek Landcare group

would like to invite all current members, past members and any possible future members to our last event for 2015 on November 29th for a lunch to celebrate the end of the year.

The event will be at Angie and Graham Lloyd's home 491 Steels Creek rd and you will have an opportunity to have a look at the equipment available for members as well as inspecting the many project completed after landcare information events (worm farming, natural bee keeping etc).

We ask that you BYO drinks and a plate of something to share (cake, cheese or salad) a bbq and some pizzas will be provided.

RSVP and details email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com

Volunteers needed 12th December

We have been lucky enough to get a booking to run a **Bunnings sausage sizzle on 12th December**. If you could spare us a couple of hours of your time it would help enormously **contact Angie on 0412 343 242** or

steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com

European Wasp Control

The **Friends of Burnley Gardens** have provided this information to enable us to rid ourselves of the dreadful European wasp problem each summer. This trap costs only a few cents to make, and if we all do it, it should make a big difference to the wasp population in the coming months.

Spring is the time to catch the QUEEN wasp before she makes a nest using a simple environmentally friendly method.

Commence in October as this is the optimum time for success.

Method:

- Use a 1.25 litre soft drink bottle with 3 holes approximately 10mm in diameter and about 100 - 150mm from the bottom of the bottle.
- Use a bait made from honey, water and a little pure vanilla essence (which has alcohol in it) this ferments in the sun.
- Make up a solution of 4-5 tablespoons of honey in hot water with a little pure vanilla essence. This will do 4-5 traps. • The bait will take a couple of days to activate.
- Divide the bait between traps, top up with water to just below holes, replace cap and hang in a sunny spot in the garden - Fruit trees with curly leaf is a good place.
- Shake every few days to let bait dribble out.
- Keep in place until January. • Strain out when full, reuse and top up bait with water.
- The traps need a little tending until January, meaning once full you need to remove the catch (wasps), reusing and topping up the bait, then replace the cap

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 118 (December 2015-January 2016)

Landcare

On Sunday 29th November 21 Landcare members joined together to celebrate all things social and Landcare, a BBQ lunch followed by a tour of aquaponics systems, wicking garden beds, tools and equipment for loan and natural bee hives formed part of a lovely social afternoon. The weather was lovely and the company even better and the desserts that had been brought to share were delicious.



Time to spray your blackberries NOW!

The Blackberry group (NYBAG) has started again for the 15-16 season, if you need to borrow spray equipment or just want some advice on how to eradicate your problem please contact Rob Fallon on 0417 471 009

Our next committee meeting is on Sunday 31st January at 5pm. It usually only lasts for an hour, is light hearted and social and we would love to see any members who would like to come along to give advice or just tell us what you would like us to do over the next year.

Email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com for details





Steels Creek Landcare Group



www.steelscreeklandcare.org

Saturday 12th December we set off to Bunnings in Croydon. Bunnings had allocated SCLG the day as a fundraiser so stocked up with 2 eskys full of the 65kgs of snags, 48 loaves of bread, 20 kgs of onions and 6 litres of sauce that they estimate is required however by 9 am we thought the day was going to be very, very busy and we were right.

It was not too hot, but fine, about 20deg C and from the first cooked sausages the people kept on coming. 12 noon saw an SOS call to Paul Kelly to bring extra food when he came for his shift, then again at 2pm his wife Sharen cleaned out Coles of sausages and a couple of extra cartons of drinks, by 4pm we had sold over 100kgs of sausages (approx. 1100) and there was not even a crust left over. It is however a fun day with everyone smiling and a great way to raise funds for the group.

This year we have 2 dates booked (Sunday 24th April and Friday 16th December) and if you could spare a couple of hours we would really love the assistance.

[Email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com](mailto:steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com)

Our Next **committee meeting** will be on 14th February at 5pm, usually only taking an hour we would love any members to come along and give your input
Venue 491 Steels Creek Rd (Lloyd residence)

Member's survey

If you are a current member, a previous member or think you may in the future become a member of SCLG please take 5 minutes to complete our survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JHVYV2Z>

Note; membership is open to anyone in Steels Creek or Yarra Glen



STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 120 (April-May 2016)

Steels creek Landcare Group

We have a **Bunnings BBQ on Sunday 24th April**. If you are able to give us a couple of hours help it would be appreciated, either morning or afternoon. This is a great way for us to raise funds to run events or purchase equipment but it does need your help.

Email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com or phone Angie Lloyd 0412 343 242

Our next committee meeting will be in Sunday April 10th at 5pm,.

We would love to see anyone who is interested in seeing what we do or who would like to make a suggestion to the committee.

Expressions of interested from any Landcare members who would like to attend a **subsidised ACUP (Chemical users certificate) course**.

Cost to the members would be \$100 with the balance (of \$250) being covered by the Landcare network.

If you would be interested, please contact the Landcare groups (Chum creek, Dixons creek or Steels creek) to register your interest. In order to run the course we need confirmed participants.

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 121 (June-July 2016)



Put **Friday 29th July** in your calendar, not to be missed **the SCLG AGM**....I know AGM's are normally avoided much like the plague but this year we are using the opportunity to celebrate all things gourmet in Steels Creek by having a Harvest Feast. Mmmmm slow cooked lamb, local wines perhaps a local honey panna cotta, local cheeses, fruits and vegetables will give us a delicious reason to get together.

Details: Yes **you do need to book**, we are asking for a \$10 donation which will give you a ticket in the door prize and I have it on good authority that the prizes will be plentiful. This can be paid along with you membership renewal (details below). You do need to be a member of SCLG which brings me to our next item,

Membership fees are due by 1st July

Memberships of \$20 per household can be paid by -

- Cheque made out to SCLG and sent to P.O. box 562, Yarra Glen
- Direct deposit to Steels creek Landcare group Bendigo bank BSB 633-000 account no 124262114. Please include your name as a reference.
- Cash to Graham Lloyd (Treasurer) at the SCCC market

Please renew your membership details **by mail to PO box 562, Yarra Glen 3775 or email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com** for a membership form if you are a new member.

And finally **please consider joining our committee**, we really are nice people and it's not hard work. You have much more to offer than you realise...so please...just think about it and maybe join as a general committee member; after all you might be the person who has the idea that will make SCLG even better than it is now.

Steels Creek Landcare Group

WOW! What a wonderful fun, friendly night was had by all who attended the Steels Creek Landcare Group A.G.M. on Friday night.

This year it was decided by the Committee to have a “Harvest Feast” with our meeting, so we set about sourcing local produce---and even though it is winter we found lots--- goat’s cheese, olives, herbs, spices, lamb, salad vegetables, honey, eggs, wine, lemons, limes, blood oranges and even rose petals (to make rose syrup).

Once we resourced this wonderful local produce our very own “Magic Master Chef”, Angie Lloyd worked on producing a very tasty meal which was enjoyed by all.

The evening began with pre dinner drinks and nibbles, main meal (with short meeting)--- then everyone was treated to a door prize each----followed by a table full of varied desserts.

Much to our delight four wonderful people put up their hand to join our Committee, which is fantastic as we are always looking for new ideas, and between the four they bring a lot of experience and enthusiasm.

It was wonderful to see friends and neighbours meeting up over a delicious meal and new friendships being made with people who have a common interest:

“to actively care for the land and water that sustains us”

Jennifer Duncan
Committee Member.

Steels Creek Landcare Group

Who Can I Call for THAT?

The Steels Creek Landcare Group Committee has welcomed a fantastic member suggestion of **collating a Local Skills Index**.

“What on Earth is a Local Skills Index?” I hear someone ask.

“Is there a test at the end?” whispers one.

“Sounds like a tax!” shrieks another.

Well, it’s simple really. We are aiming to create a go -to list of a few specific Landcare skills, such as fencing, vermin control (rabbits/foxes etc.) and small-scale hay baling.

We want the list to be a helpful reference for SCLG members to more easily identify & contact other members of our community who may be equipped to help.

So how can YOU help?

- Do you have a Landcare -related skill that you would be happy to offer other members (either free or paid)
- What are some professional skills relevant to Landcare issues that you think would benefit a number of our members?

Primarily it would be great if households could **offer up their own skills & knowledge**, but this needn’t be limited to SCLG members. We just figure that maybe we all know someone, who knows someone else, who

might be able to help with the Landcare related tasks which we all find ourselves in need of from time to time.

So perhaps you are a professional fence-builder keen to provide competitive quotes to other members?
Or maybe you keep a beehive and would be happy to help other members who may just need a spare set of hands with harvesting their honey?

So if you have a chainsaw and are good at cutting wood or you understand about fixing, repairing, wrangling anything, this is possibly for you to promote your skills

For example one of our committee members will do small scale hay baling, so if you need a couple of acres baled this year there is someone who can do this.

Whatever your area of expertise, or what skills do you have trouble resourcing please email us with your skills and ideas at: steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com

Landcare and Local Community Working Together

On Monday 12th. September 15 students and 2 teachers from Billanook Secondary College came out to Steels Creek Community Centre to do some volunteer work. The tasks were to plant out the embankment, plant down two boundary sides and weed. (A few weeks prior to the visit Angie Lloyd sprayed as many weeds as she could get to).

Prior to the visit Chris Fletcher came out to see what planting was required...then she went away to plan and organise the most suitable plants for the task. When we arrived on Monday morning Chris had placed all the plants where they needed to be planted.

A big "Thank You" to you Chris. Despite the weather being wet and cold the students set about completing the tasks set...not once did I hear anyone complain about the weather or suggest we stop. As usual I found all the students to be so friendly, well -mannered and anxious to please....an absolute pleasure to have around. I also was aware of the wonderful rapport between teacher and student ...so friendly and respectful toward each other.



I think the students did a fantastic job and I hope you all agree.

I would like to thank Steels Creek Gardening Club, Steels Creek Landcare Group and Steels Creek Community Centre for their generous donations which allowed me to purchase 300 plants.
I would also like to thank Angie Lloyd and Jane Calder for the plant guards, stakes and weed mats to protect our new plants.

All in all I think it was a wonderful example of people in our Steels Creek Community working together.
Jennifer Duncan.

Steels Creek Landcare Group

Bunnings sausage sizzle is on Friday 16th December and help is appreciated, please **contact Angie Lloyd** on 0412 343 242 if you are able to help for a couple of hours.

Goat farm visit and social dinner



On Saturday 21st January starting at 5pm and going to about 8pm (or whenever the chat and wine runs out)

We will be visiting Brockspur Eco farm at 57 Harvey road Steels Creek where **Ed and Amanda Williams will show us their goat dairy herd** (including milking –you might even get to assist).

This will be followed by a social BBQ dinner. We ask that you *either bring a plate of salad, nibbles or dessert to share* and the *SCLG will provide bread and meat.*

BYO drinks.

RSVP is required to allow for catering and is open to the whole community

Either **email** steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com or **phone** Angie 0412 343 242

Brockspur Eco - farm Story

Edd and I brought our property in 1979 after migrating from England the year before.

Land here sold cheaply in those days but even so we started our life here under a shed roof with no power, or amenities at all. We were young then and even with three small children we were happier living outside than in a suburb.

In England we lived on a smallholding with chooks, dairy goats and a horse and cart.

Growing vegetables on the Yorkshire moors was challenging and we hoped that the milder Yarra Valley climate would make our self-sufficient life easier.

We soon discovered that Australia is a land of extremes and we began the slow process of adapting to the new environment. I have never lost my joy at being able to pick my own citrus fruit and walk each day surrounded by multicoloured parrot-type birds but we had a lot to learn about growing food and animals in mineral depleted soils.

Our plan was to have a commercial goat farm, so we built up our herd numbers and constructed a dairy. It was a large operation for those days with a refrigerated bulk tank and swing over milking machines. I started work at 6am every day and worked for two hours before organising the children and getting them off to school. The day was spent working on paddocks and vegetables and then we milked again before cooking tea in the evening.

I will never forget the morning Australia won the America's cup. A friend turned up in the milking parlour with a bottle of champagne and a radio so we could listen as the boats sailed over the finish and celebrate!

In the nineties we left the farm and our children with friends and went to work in the Tanami desert taking our youngest son, Josh. This was the best adventure of my life and I shall always be grateful that I had the opportunity to live with Aboriginal people and learn about their culture. We also had time to read and think things over so that when we returned to the farm five years later we had more ideas to try.

At this stage I did the Permaculture Design course with Graeme George. At last I had found a group of people who had similar ideas about how to live. Now we could begin sharing knowledge with others and things

progressed fast. With the help of woofers we set up in business as a host farm. This was great fun and we met interesting people from all over the world.

This period ended in 2009 with the bush fires. We felt as if thirty years of effort had vanished overnight. Oh well, at least this time we knew what to do, so we started again from scratch. Luckily my eldest son, Alvyn, is an architect and he helped us design a new house and sheds.

Our house is designed like a cave and stays at about 22 degrees all year round and we have included many features that we think will help in the case of future fires. Sheep keep the grass under control on our roof and we still have a few goats and have a dairy to make cheese.

The ruins of our old house have been adapted to provide an outdoor living area complete with shelter shed, kitchen and pizza oven. The old garden has been retained as a food forest and chooks live in nearby orchards.

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES -NO 125 (February 2017 – March 2017)

Steels Creek Landcare Group

Goat Farm Visit & Social Dinner



The evening could not have been more perfect. Glorious weather, an undeniably robust social attendance and a thought-provoking insight into what can be achieved with positivity, good old-fashioned hard-work & perseverance!

It was intended to be a simple social gathering. A New Year's get-together for SCLG members and interested locals; to visit a goat farm & chat away the hours as the sun set over the valley. How terrific it was when a total of 38 excited folk descended on Brockspur Eco farm - the remarkable property of Ed & Amanda Williams – bringing with them a plentiful feast of salad & dessert creations to share later in the evening. Oh, and a drop or two of local wine, of course! But first, we were all keen

to learn more about their house. Hearing about an eco-friendly home is one thing – seeing one is altogether another! The house is impressive but unassuming. Hidden from the road, not so much underground as nestled into the side of the embankment; it looks just as if it had evolved organically and was meant to be there. In two groups we were led around, inside and out, to marvel at their inspiring abode. By design, their living quarters are a constant 22 degrees year round –

reducing the need for any additional heating & cooling. A separate warm perimeter cocoons the house, allowing for the cultivation of plants such as turmeric & ginger, humbly complimenting Ed & Amanda's admirable efforts to be self-sustainable.

Outside, skylights protrude from the earth to provide ample light for the rooms below and sheep graze the grass on the 'roof'. Soaking in the view from this unique rooftop, where gutters can be cleaned without a ladder, I thought about how some of us may hear the occasional possum on the roof at night, so does that mean Ed & Amanda count sheep? Then, as if on cue from some invisible orchestral conductor, a ewe cried out in a vibrating manner looking up at the sky as if calling for rain. And in the peaceful twilight I'm sure I heard some cattle reply in a deep, resounding moan.



At Brockspur, the chickens roam freely and happily, clucking noisily as if providing the percussion and Amanda's goats join in the livestock ensemble, bleating in the distance and drawing us inquisitively toward them. Five of the kid goats lined up to welcome our arrival –front hooves leaning high against the fence, with outstretched necks straining toward us, their bleats growing louder as we approached.

Amanda showed us how to feed & milk the goats, then quickly put us to work –offering us the opportunity for an enjoyable, hands-on experience and encouraging us to muster the goats in & out of the shed in groups of 6. One by one, those of us who were so inclined, stepped forward to feed & hand-milk the goats. Some of us, having milked cows before, remarked at how well-behaved and clean the goats were: no poop here - not one pellet!

Amanda multi-tasked with absolute expertise - hand-milking one goat with her left hand, attaching a mechanical milking device to another goat with her right, and all the while keeping us enthralled with fascinating facts about the goats, the farm and the inspiring history of how they have changed and adapted the property to be where they are today.

Afterward, we drifted back down to the inviting

outdoor space that Ed & Amanda affectionately refer to as “The Ruins”-a tranquil spot re-invented from the ruins of their original home, which perished in the Black Saturday Fires and although we are nearing the 8th anniversary of February 7th 2009, sitting among “The Ruins” I felt unwound & re-invigorated. What could have



been left as a constant reminder of such

heartbreak has instead been given new life and new hope by this delightful couple who have created such a vibrant & relaxing setting, complete with a kitchen, pizza oven and a bountiful vegetable garden.

So as Paul and Graham tended the BBQ, we savoured some of Amanda's wonderfully creamy goat's cheese, we drank wine, we relaxed. And we shared our stories with one another under an azure summer sky.

Everyone who attended deserves a pat on the back for creating such a great night of dining and drinking,

relaxing and chatting among friends.

Thanks especially to Ed & Amanda; for their warmth, kindness and generosity in sharing



<http://steelscreek.vic.au/goat-farm-visit-and-social-dinner-21st-jan-2017>

STEEL S CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES NO 126 (April – May 2017)

Steels creek Landcare Group

Our next focus is on **making water saving vegetable gardens**.

On **Sunday 21st May at 2pm** there will be a wicking garden workshop at **Angie and Graham Lloyd's** home (**491 Steels Creek rd**) where Angie will demonstrate the ease with which you can build a water friendly vegetable garden.

Imagine only having to water once a week during summer!

Open to everyone even if you're not a SCLG member.
Please RSVP

BEE NICE, is the motto of our newest support group which aims to support both urban and rural bee keepers and those who just want to know more about planting a bee friendly garden, we will be holding further workshops on building a bee hive, bee diseases and what to do about them, planting a bee friendly garden.

Email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com if you would like to **BEE** on our mailing list for events

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES -NO 127 (June - July 2017)

Steels creek Landcare Group

A reminder that **your household membership** (still only \$20) becomes **due by 31st June**, as we have to notify the FTLA of our membership list to ensure insurance cover, late payment may mean you have a delay if you wish to borrow equipment.

BEE NICE, is the motto of our newest support group which aims to support both urban and rural bee keepers and those who just want to know more about planting a bee friendly garden, we will be holding further workshops on building a bee hive, bee diseases and what to do about them, planting a bee friendly garden.

Email steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com
if you would like to BEE on our mailing list for events.