

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]

No. 89, AUTUMN (April) 2019.



A publication of the Bankstown Bushland Society Incorporated
Reg. No. Y15576-12

<https://bankstownbushlandsociety.com>

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Rhodamnia rubescens listed as Critically Endangered in NSW

by Skye

Rhodamnia rubescens (commonly know as Scrub Turpentine or Brown Malletwood) was once relatively common at The Crest, Bass Hill and Marion Reserve, Yagoona, but on recent inspections only one plant could be found at each site.

This shrub is severely threatened by an exotic rust fungus called *Austropuccinia psidii* (Myrtle Rust), pushing the plant onto the Critically Endangered list.

There is no effective or practical chemical, biological or management options available. Monthly applications of fungicides on concentrated populations may be feasible but impractical for

widespread control due to *A. psidii* being predominantly airborne and easily spread by human activity and its vigorous infection rate.

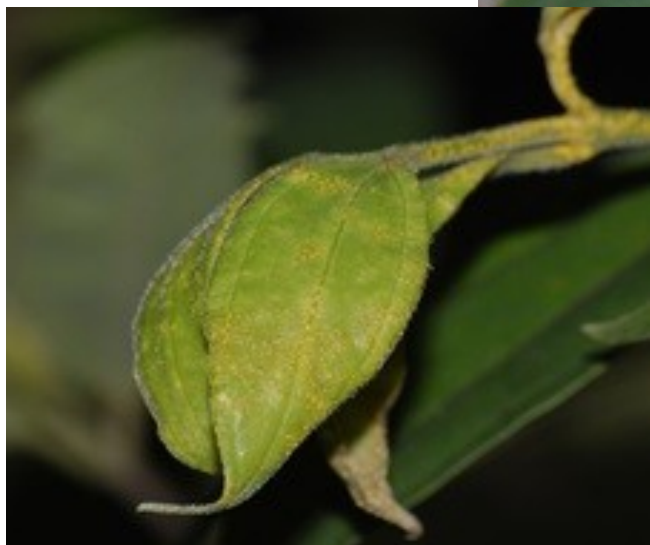
Research into the impacts of *A. psidii* resulted in finding the plant is rated 'Highly to Extremely Susceptible' to infection with no resistance shown to this date. Indications that *R. rubescens* is being impacted by this Myrtle Rust include:

- Brown spotting on leaves
- Yellow rust spores
- Deformation of leaves

- Can effect all parts of the plant
- Dieback of leaves, branches and/or entire plant

Other pressures associated to the shrub's decline include land-clearing, fragmentation of populations and weed invasion. Once on the Critically Endangered list it is only a step away from Extinction. Refer to OEH Link for more information:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/determinations/>



Plant effected by the Exotic Myrtle Rust



Rhodamnia rubescens at The Crest (Nov 2018)

Adventure Playground threat to Deerbush Park at Fairfield Showground

by Col Gibson

Following concerns raised with us by local residents, the Society has written to the Mayor of Fairfield, Mr. Frank Carbone, requesting a meeting with him regarding the planned expansion of playground facilities in Endangered bushland habitat in Deerbush Park at Fairfield Showground, Prairiewood. These facilities, we are informed, include bicycle tracks, trampolines, climbing net, sandpit, a flying fox and a water feature. Deerbush Park contains a large stand of Broad-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*) – a habitat type now rare in the Fairfield LGA, and although these structures would be appropriate on parts of the park where there is no bushland or treed areas (as at the top of the park), within bushland habitat they threaten the viability of locally and regionally rare flora and fauna.

Native bushland in Fairfield is a resource much valued by the community, and BBS recognises its very positive management in recent years by Fairfield City Council, particularly regarding creeks and wetlands. With specific reference to Deerbush Park: following recommendations by NPWS in 1997 (see *Urban Bushland Biodiversity Survey of Western Sydney*), Council established protection measures that included cessation of mowing within the bushland to allow the regeneration of native understorey species. This resulted in the spontaneous regeneration of a wide range of species and the site is now known to support at least three that are listed under the schedules of

the former Threatened Species Conservation Act (now Biodiversity Conservation Act), being *Acacia pubescens*, *Marsdenia viridiflora* and *Pomaderris prunifolia*. The development as proposed within bushland is incompatible with the protection of these species and their habitat.

Deerbush Park is also listed as Heritage Item No. 201 L39 in Council's own heritage report (*Fairfield City's Heritage Items*, prepared in 1993). The basis for this, according to the aforementioned document, was the "Small but very significant" stand of "indigenous forest, complete with understorey species". Taking this into account, we find the opinion of Council's ecological advisors in their recent *Heritage Assessment of Fairfield Showground*, 2017, that Deerbush Park "is not significant in its own right" to be a misrepresentation of the facts. The consultant's assertion that Deerbush Park "would not satisfy the significance criteria for listing as a stand-alone item" is unsupportable.

The fact is, in 1993 it was considered suitable for heritage listing, which was done. Why are they looking to delist it now? The consultant's recommendation that the heritage listings of Deerbush Park and the old timber grandstand be removed should be rejected.

The scientific value of this area has been recognised with students from Ryde TAFE and University of Western Sydney coming to the site to study its flora. A National Tree Day held here recently was attended by around 200 people. The problem is that councils are now looking at parks like this for adventure playgrounds because of the suitable bush settings. This was done a couple of years ago at Fairfield Park in a rare stand of *Eucalyptus bosistoana* and *E. beyeriana*. Conservation values should not be relegated to make way for developments of this kind when there are suitable alternative locations nearby that do not contain Endangered bushland habitats.



Aerial Photo of Fairfield Showground and Deerbush Park

Protecting Deerbush Park from inappropriate development

by Ian Bailey

Precious little of the unique woodlands of the Cumberland Plains of Sydney remain in original or near-original condition. In the Fairfield LGA and the neighbouring Liverpool and Bankstown LGAs, less than 7% of that woodland remains and is now Critically Endangered.

To ensure any semblance of our bushland in the Sydney Basin remains for future generations, we need to protect and preserve every last tree, understory shrub and native grasses we can. We seem to have forgotten that wildlife needs a continuous forest and corridors of tree cover at least 500 m wide to survive into the long term. Generations of all fauna must be able to move to new areas and share a gene pool to retain health and viability of each species.

Deerbush Park and adjoining

bushlands at Fairfield Showground are situated close to the Orphan School Creek to the north and west and Clear Paddock Creek to the east and south. Not too far to the west are Prospect Reservoir and the Western Sydney Parklands, while within reach to the east we have Lansdowne Reserve, The Crest of Bankstown and Duck Creek.

This is all we have left and a bigger effort needs to be made to regenerate these bushlands. One important bushland reserve close to Deerbush Park is the Fairfield Indigenous Flora Park and Fairfield City Council has sponsored that reserve very proudly including the chain-wire fenced area.

As a consequence we ask Council to consider the future of our bushland heritage by preserving every last tree left standing. Once they are gone, they are gone forever. We propose a careful examination of all remaining green reserves and avoid developing places where a sound ecosystem is in place:

- Rather than develop Deerbush Park with unsuitable infrastructure, fence the area like Flora Park.
- Provide a "buffer zone" of green park or garden lands which are natural, cool, and water absorbent.
- Register every tree standing as a "Significant Tree" and evaluate how regeneration will occur over time.
- Plan to expand the bush reserves wherever possible by removing exotic plants and animals.

Deerbush Park and the Fairfield Showground bushlands are Fairfield's chief link to the other important bushlands in central western Sydney. Fairfield Council should do everything in its power to protect it.

Figure 8 Proposed recategorisation of Fairfield Showground (2018)



Source: Fairfield City Council



Deerbush Park Adventure Playground concept plan

BBS Submission to the Riverlands Conciliation Conference 1st February 2019

Introduction: Bankstown Bushland Society has been commenting on rezoning and development applications for Riverlands since 1989. Local community concern goes back several years before then. At this point we want to express our support for the concerns raised by the Local Planning Panel, which come to us as no surprise

of a future development application. The design of future development will need to be sympathetic to the existing native trees and should retain as many as possible." In December 2015, when Council's application for Environmental zoning was before the Department of Planning, the Department wrote to the Society telling us that Council's

Minister chose to apply Residential instead of Environmental zoning, we were soon after told by the Department that development controls were included to "*require the consideration and management of biodiversity*". (Ashley Albury, Acting Executive Director etc, to BBS 7-11-2016). This, we believe, was the purpose of Clause 6.11 inserted at the time by the Department in the Bankstown Local Environment Plan.



Forest at Riverlands Golf Course

as they cover issues that have been on the table the whole time of the present ownership of the site and long before. These issues specifically concern the environmental values of the site identified over a long process of studies by ecologists working for Council, other government agencies and for the developers.

Environmental Significance: BBS points out that Council, in its Planning Proposal of 2015, let all parties know that "*the locally significant native trees on the residential zoned land will need to be considered further as part*

application "reflects the sensitivity of the site and the importance of using a strategic planning approach whereby some appropriate residential development can enable environmental outcomes to be achieved." (Brett Whitworth, Acting Executive Director, Regions Planning Services NSW Planning & Environment to BBS 3-12-2015). The Department acknowledged Council for taking "*advice from the Office of Environment & Heritage about the maximum retention and long term protection of habitat trees.*" Although, in October 2016, the

Proposed Tree Removal: However, before the Minister had made his decision the developer had submitted an application for earthworks and the removal of "*all of the trees present*". The Local Planning Panel is critical of this and what it says is the developer's "*failure to preserve trees in reserved plots*". These plots are those identified by ecologist Anne Clements in her Flora Assessment, in which she identified nearly 1,300 trees in 49 groups; 41 of these groups she indicated were of "*high local conservation significance.*" The developer has responded to this advice simply by declaring that the preservation of the trees would "*achieve little or nothing in terms of biodiversity conservation*". Few would agree, and we think the Panel's concerns are legitimate.

Extensive Filling: The Local Planning Panel disapproves of the developer's proposal to cover three quarters of the site with fill. The Panel states that the developer has provided no justification for this and points to the fill being unnecessary and

(continued on page 5)

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inconsistent with the Bankstown Local Environment and Development Control Plans. We see no reason why the developer should be exempt from these controls. This fill will not only kill every tree in the affected areas, but will drastically alter the existing storm and floodwater drainage systems that currently operate on the site and adjoining riverflat floodplain. We would add to this our concern about the proposed access road along the riverflat which will require massive amounts of filling, resulting in major alterations to the natural wetlands at the base of the riverine levee bank. This chain of wetlands conducts floodwater into a large stand of Coastal Swamp Oak Forest (listed in 2018 as an Endangered Ecological Community under the Federal EPBC Act) from where it gradually returns to the river. This natural process should not

be interfered with. As far as we know there is no road easement on the riverflat, and for good reason.

Open Space: The Local Planning Panel points out that the development proposal contains no allocation of open space. Open space provision is an issue of increasing concern throughout the metropolitan area, and it is hard to see any justification for not having any in a place as large as Riverlands, which has many natural features that could be accommodated in open space.

Design Layout: The Local Planning Panel is critical of the development for clashing “*with respect to existing landform topography and natural features*”. Essentially, despite all the studies, advice and community concern, the development will destroy everything of natural value on the

site. The proponent simply denies that there is any valuable or significant habitat on the site worthy of being taken into account.

Conclusion: Riverlands is not an urban wasteland: golf course construction here in the 1930s and 40s made a point of retaining natural landscape features that are integral to the site to this day. Native flora and fauna abound: why is it that all but the developer can see things of environmental value here? The Council and the agencies can see it; the ecologists can see it; the community can see it, and it is clear to us and to the community in general that, as outlined by the Local Planning Panel, there are serious problems with the development application, and good reasons for rejecting it.



Riverlands Golf Course Rally March 2018

Filling the Georges River Floodplain

by Col Gibson



A mountain of fill on the riverbank at Moorebank

With development pressures increasing in Sydney, great changes are being made to the floodplain of the middle Georges River, including in the Liverpool and Canterbury-Bankstown LGAs. Since the 1980s, vast amounts of earth fill several metres deep has been dumped on the floodplain on the site of Bankstown Airport, particularly for industrial developments in the east and in the South West Precinct.

In 1988 Robert Miller and I managed to get this to stop in time to save Deverall Park Bush, though filling continued on other parts of the Airport, including on the site of the old Bankstown Paceway training track (which was owned by the Airport). In the South West Precinct in the 1990s the site was filled right up to the boundary fence adjoining Airport Reserve. The filling of Airport Reserve itself has been fought off by BBS on more than one occasion.

No bigger recent example of this is the Moorebank Intermodal which lies parallel to the river above

Liverpool. Here, despite very determined community opposition, an amount of fill the volume of the Pyramid of Cheops is being dumped on top of the floodplain. A little downstream, redevelopment of the Boral site for residential development also involves large quantities of fill, as does converting part of New Brighton Golf Course to Residential.

On the opposite side of the river, between Henry Lawson Drive and Milperra Creek, CBC approved the contaminated Flower Power site to be covered metres deep in fill to permit its redevelopment. And this despite that Bankstown Council had previously opposed land filling on the nearby Airport and felt thwarted by the fact that Council has no part to play in the approval process of such land as comes under Federal authority.

On the other side of Henry Lawson Drive, south of Vale of Ah and adjoining the former Turf Farm, the Society, in about 2000, took action to stop illegal filling well underway

on part of the riverflat. Council stepped in and fined the owner but did not order the fill to be removed; it sits there to this day. The owner of that fill now owns the whole of Riverlands, and the recent Development Application (rejected by CBC) gives clear cause for concern that the developer would, if permitted, fill the whole of the floodplain from the river up to and above the 1:100-year level from Vale of Ah down to Deepwater Park.

Land filling of course happens everywhere, but it shouldn't happen on the alluvial riverflat. Past uses of the floodplain were based around open space, recreation, low density residential, extraction of river materials and farming. (The former Collins Turf Farm adjoining Riverlands former golf course is the last remaining land zoned Rural in Canterbury-Bankstown). Those uses, for the most part, did not dramatically interfere with the natural function of the floodplain, at least not to the extent of completely obliterating it.

What is going to be the effect of this? How will filling the floodplain affect the wetlands at Chipping Norton, Voyager Point, Milperra and Deepwater Park? What will be the knock-on downstream (and upstream) effects if there is no alluvial floodplain left to speak of? How will it affect water quality and how will intensified floodwater runoff affect Botany Bay? No single development will destroy the health of the overall catchment, but the important role of the alluvial floodplain to naturally absorb and release floodwater needs to be given priority and no more of it should be filled for development.



***Check out BANKSTOWN
BUSHLAND SOCIETY on
FACEBOOK***

The BBS Facebook page provides us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment and flora and fauna of our bushland regeneration projects, nature walks and such. Anyone interested in the Georges River and bushland generally is welcome to join our page.

ELECTRONIC BULLETINS

The Bushland Bulletin is available electronically to members who so desire. All you have to do is send your email address to the Bulletin editor (see front cover). Members are entitled to both printed and electronic forms, but if you only want the electronic form instead of the printed please let us know.

Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall, Ryan Road, Padstow, on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except December & January), in the WAL BROWNING MEETING ROOM at rear of hall.

**Time: 7.00pm.
Tea and biscuits provided.
All welcome.
Further enquiries ring Col on 97886232.**

**BUSHWALK at
WURRUNGWURRI
BUSHLAND RESERVE
MOOREBANK
led by ecologist and
indigenous flora specialist
DANIEL SMART**



**Meet at entrance to New
Brighton Golf Course on
Nuwarra Road at 9.30am
Saturday 18th May.**

.....
**Volunteers needed to help
with the BBS stall at
HARVEST FESTIVAL &
ECO MARKET at
Panania Public School
23 Lawler Street
on Sunday 26th May.
Stalls run 10am - 2pm,
Setup from 8am,
Festival finishes 3pm.
Contact Skye on
0411584295.**

.....
**Keep your eye on
BBS Facebook
for notices of other activities
including bush regeneration
days, or contact Col on
97886232.**

**BANKSTOWN
BUSHLAND
SOCIETY
COMMITTEE for 2019**

President:
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0411584295

Vice President:
Brian Shaw

Secretary:
Colin Gibson:
9788 6232

Assistant Secretary:
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Treasurer:
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Committee Members:
Darryl McKay
Chris Brogan
Erica Brogan
Wal Browning
James Deli
Peter Mahoney
Ian Bailey

***Bushland Bulletin
Editor:***
Colin Gibson



Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

BBS is dedicated to protecting and caring for our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown and adjoining areas
- To assist other persons in the protection of the local environment
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

Bankstown Bushland Society has lobbied effectively for the protection of bushland and the natural environment since 1988. With your support we can continue the work. By joining the Society you can make an important contribution to our local environment.



Yes, I wish to join the
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number: _____

Attached please find my payment of:
(\$.00) _____
(amount in words)

Membership fees

Family/Group - \$20

Ordinary - \$15

Concession - \$10

"student/unwaged/pensioner"

Send payment to:

**The Secretary,
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

Or pay by direct transfer to

**BSB 512 170 Account Number 100087319, AND put
your name on the transfer form.**



**Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

