

# MOORE to the point



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## Natural Resource Management Update Issue 15 Winter 2009

Welcome to the Moore Catchment Council's (MCC) 15th *Moore to the Point* quarterly newsletter.

The team have been productive over the last quarter with organising workshops, attending courses and meetings, and delivering various NACC incentives. Government funding and focus in NRM is unknown at this time causing uncertainty in future incentive programmes and employment of NRMOs, but the MCC will continue to seek alternative funding to operate and make sure the natural resources in the Moore Catchment are looked after for the future.

editor *Rachel Walmsley*

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## Great success for SMART Homes & Gardens



Over 50 people attended the first SMART Homes & Gardens 'Energy Efficiency' workshop in Dalwallinu on 19<sup>th</sup> May which was organised by the Moore Catchment Council and the Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Council. The Perth based Great Gardens team came and delivered a most interesting and engaging presentation on all the tips and tricks to being energy efficient without costing your wallet or the environment.

The wealth of energy efficient information included easy and inexpensive ways in which to cool your house in summer and keep warm in winter, home renewable energy costs and myths, water wise garden tips and ways to fertilise without buying a myriad of expensive chemicals. Everyone went home with a head full of useful and practical information as well as a goody bag which included an energy efficient globe, wetting agent, seeds, fertiliser and money off vouchers.



Chris Ferreira & Peter Coppin, part of the Great Gardens team, did a excellent job of engaging the workshop crowd. They competently explained the reasons behind being energy efficient



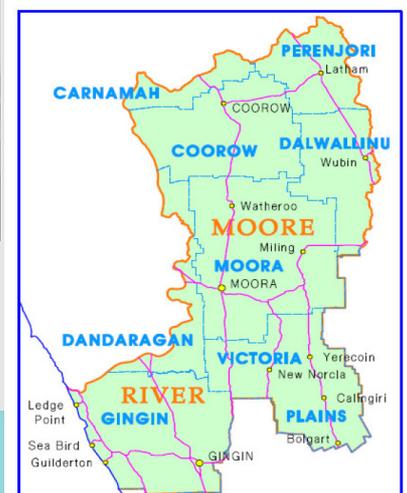
Garry Heady explains the importance of recycling garden vegetation by mulching - nature's fertiliser

and presented government incentives available as well as easy practical home energy saving tips and tricks

The door raffle prize of an array of useful home and garden goodies was won by a delighted Judy Gould. Everyone had a great day and feedback from attendees was all very positive.



Becky Cunningham & Barbara Dinnie with their SMART goody bags



## Brushwood Project continues with Growers Field Day

The MCC hosted a brushwood field day in Miling on 18 May as part of the 'Increased Adoption of Sustainable Brushwood Production' project. Helen Job from Avongro was on hand to deliver an interesting and informative presentation, and then answer questions. Although attendance wasn't as high as expected, the small group had some very useful discussion indeed.

### Some of the messages from the day were:

- ◆ the brushwood industry is on the **verge of taking off** and becoming fully **self-sustaining**;
- ◆ a **grower cooperative** is needed for the industry to become coordinated (yet flexible) between growers, harvesting and the processing facility (Helen says there should be cell groups within each region to address local issues);
- ◆ as yet, **supply does not meet demand** for the product;
- ◆ a **mechanical harvester** and fence panel packer have been developed in SA and will be **available in WA**;
- ◆ there is potential for **other products** from brushwood (eg. oil, bio fuel);
- ◆ the **growth potential** of brushwood is reasonably well-known but this is being further investigated by a CSIRO project which models growth according to site conditions (APSim) and can determine the optimal mix of farm enterprise and management to ensure **resilience** and **sustainability** into the future of changing climate. (Stay tuned for more information.)



**Above:** Helen Job delivering the good news about the developing brushwood industry in WA.

Helen says we can expect production of about 4 kg per stem in lower rainfall areas, with the first harvest at 10 years followed by 5 - 7 year rotations, depending on rainfall. There is a firm offer from SA of **\$200** per tonne of green weight brush.

MCC would like to fine-tune the match between species and site (having the right plant for the right spot), so previous growers will be receiving a simple survey form to complete, once the busy seeding period has ended.

**Right:** Well established young brushwood plantation at the Moore farm in Miling.



## Perennial Pastures and Grazing Management - amendment

**Note** on the grazing management article in the previous newsletter – unfortunately, the last line dropped off the bottom of the article.



### Growth Phases

- ◆ Phase I:
  - growth slow, mainly supplied by root reserves
- ◆ Phase II:
  - rapid growth, supplied by greater leaf area with high rates of photosynthesis
- ◆ Phase III:
  - growth slows or ceases, due to lignification (woodiness) and senescence (old age)

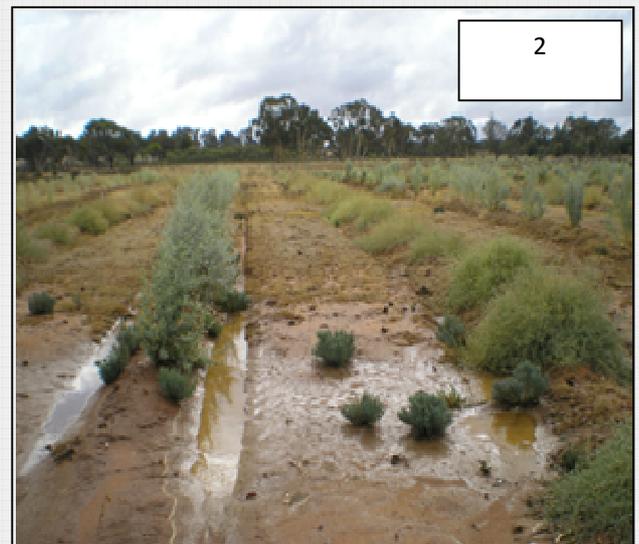
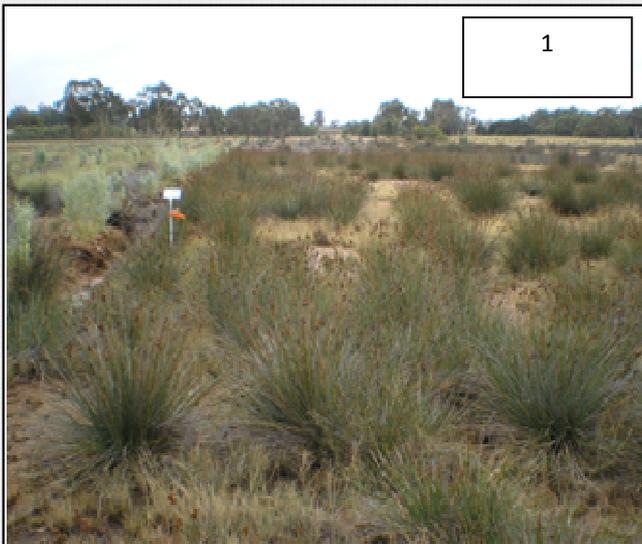
**Grazing plants only when they are in Phase II maximizes productivity.**



***Juncus acutus* (spiny rush, sharp rush)** is that nasty, spiky critter which loves moist spots on the farm and spreads rapidly by seeds and rhizomes, forming impenetrable masses of spines over large areas if not controlled. As it is such a successful coloniser, it can be very difficult to eradicate. This tough invader requires a brutal, multi-pronged approach, such as glyphosate spraying, followed by fire, followed by slashing, followed by ..... (eek) more sprouting and .... (gasp) more seedlings!

Recently, we were treated to a visit to the Spiny Rush Demonstration Site at the Kennedy farm in Bolgart. Bob Huston (DEC) and Prue Dufty (DoW) have established trials in this badly infested site (Photo 1) to demonstrate effective and achievable control. Various combinations of plus-or-minus burning (autumn), spraying (spring) and rotary hoeing (early summer) treatments were tested, based on farmers' preferences and reports of success with rotary hoeing in the West Midlands.

The clear winner was **burning combined with rotary hoeing** (Photo 2). Burning reduces the biomass and sets the plants back, and rotary hoeing does sufficient damage to finish them off. Although better burning could be achieved after herbicide treatment, it was found that seedling recruitment was reduced if the ground was shaded by other plants, so spraying was less successful.



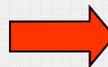
Bob and Prue also stressed that control needs to begin in the most upstream areas, if possible, to prevent re-infestation through seeds arriving with water flow. Seeds can also be blown into the site, so ongoing monitoring will be required. Above all, ensure that good ground cover is achieved (eg. creeping saltbush) to shade out emerging seeds of the spiny menace.

## Future

MCC is looking into sourcing funds for a rotary hoe that can be hired out. We would like to hear from landholders about their spiny rush problems, so please give Ingrid or Rachel a call on 9653 1355.

A rotary hoe is a mandatory tool in the fight against Spiny Rush

Photo: Prue Dufty



DAFWA hydrogeologist, Russell Speed, and DAFWA salinity adviser, Mike Clarke, recently visited an east Gillingarra farm to assess the feasibility of groundwater pumping to save infrastructure threatened by rising groundwater. The assessment included measurements in a production bore using EM 39 and gamma probes to ascertain whether there are impeding layers in the soil profile. Clay layers could restrict drawdown of groundwater in the vicinity of the buildings.

Good news for the landholders – the measurements showed that groundwater pumping may be effective and a proposal has been put forward to explore this option.

Russell and Mike also viewed some of the rising groundwater trouble spots in the West Koojan sandplains. They commented on seeps high in the landscape, which are likely to be expressions of perched aquifers. These wet areas can be managed and used as a resource for perennial vegetation. Management of sites affected by regional groundwater systems is more difficult and greater understanding of regional-scale processes is needed.



Russell Speed prepares the probe cable, while Mike Clarke sets up the computer to record measurements.

## Upcoming Events in 2009:

- ◇ 23rd June - **Perennial Pasture workshop**, Dandaragan - more info 9653 1266
- ◇ 24th June - **Liebe Womens Day**, Dalwallinu - more info 9664 2030
- ◇ 23-26th June - **Florabank course**, more info 9964 1005
- ◇ 3rd July - **Sandalwood Workshop**, Moora - more info 9574 5882
- ◇ 23rd July - **MCC OGM**, Coorow - more info 9653 1355
- ◇ 24th July - **Flora ID workshop**, Moora - more info 9653 1355

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*protecting the natural resources  
in the Moore River Catchment*



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