

# SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

## Local Biodiversity Strategy 2022 - 2030



Grey Fantail image courtesy of Liam Carlier.

The Shire has recently updated its Local Biodiversity Strategy, bringing elements from a number of previous plans and strategies into a single document.

The Shire cares for important natural areas within local conservation reserves, but they will not be viable in the long term without strong connections to natural areas managed by individual landowners and the State Government.

Comments on the draft Strategy 2022-2030 are welcome from residents, environmental volunteers and interested organisations. The Shire is particularly keen to hear suggestions for practical support for conservation on private land, and which actions should be prioritised over the next five years. The draft Strategy can be found at [www.mundaring.wa.gov.au](http://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au).

**Submissions close on Wednesday 25 January 2023.**

Shire of  
**MUNDARING**

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### Have your say!

Written comments can address any part of the draft Local Biodiversity Strategy. Comment forms can be found on the Shire website.



### **Birak - December to January**

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. During Birak, the hot easterly wind begins to blow and many fledgling animals venture out of their nests. Reptiles are more active and start to shed their skin, and baby frogs mature into adulthood.



## Solar panels - to clean or not to clean?

You might wonder if the cost of cleaning solar panels outweighs the benefits in improved performance? The effect cleaning solar panels has on output varies depending on site-specific conditions such as panel angle and how dirty they are.

For panels angled more than 10 degrees, rainfall may be sufficient to clean them. If panels are flat or angled less than 10 degrees, rainfall may not be enough to keep them clean and regular cleaning can be worthwhile.

Depending on how dirty panels are, cleaning may only bring about a small increase in output. The Clean Energy Council suggests that on average, the effect of dirt and grime on panels can account for a 5% loss in output. If you pay someone to clean your panels, it may cost more to have them cleaned than savings gained from a slight increase in output.

Even if you cleaned the panels yourself, you need to weight up the risk to your safety (from a potential fall). It may not be worth the potential savings.

For more information on solar panel maintenance visit [www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)

## Watercourse Hierarchy Strategy

The Shire of Mundaring has an extensive watercourse network, totalling a length of 2307km. Approximately 40 percent of the watercourses traverse through privately owned land and around 60 percent traverse through public reserves.

Watercourses play a vital role in sustaining biodiversity in the Shire and are also vital to the community's sense of place and wellbeing. They also define the Shire's distinct landscape amenity and sustain a range of social, cultural and economic values. Healthy waterways are therefore integral to delivering the Shire's vision of A Place for Sustainable Living.

Watercourses and the riparian zones along the banks are under threat. Key threats include changing rainfall patterns, land use and development pressures and increasing impervious surfaces causing erosion and sedimentation. Preparing a Watercourse Hierarchy Strategy was identified as a priority task when the Western Australian Planning Commission adopted the Shire's Local Planning Strategy in 2013.

The Watercourse Hierarchy Strategy has been developed to identify the key issues and threats facing the management of watercourses in the Shire. It provides a series of recommendations for improved management efforts that correspond to strategic, planning based and operational actions both within the Shire and across the wider community. The Strategy has identified key areas for improved management of watercourses including:

- Better control of storm peak-flow velocities to reduce erosion
- Greater focus on protecting and rehabilitating watercourses to restore ecological function
- Improve coordination of watercourse protection and restoration between responsible agencies and communities
- To facilitate and support increased community awareness of watercourse ecology and function
- Improve sharing of information about bushfire mitigation and ecological restoration efforts along watercourses

The draft Strategy will be available for comment from **25 November 2022 to 25 January 2023**. Copies be viewed at Shire libraries, Administration Centre and the Shire website at [www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/consultations/](http://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/consultations/)

For more information email [planning@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:planning@mundaring.wa.gov.au).



# Myrtle Rust - a new threat

Myrtle rust is a serious disease that kills plants from the Myrtaceae family including eucalypts, bottlebrushes, paperbarks and peppermint trees. Originating from South America, the disease is caused by a fungus called *Austropuccinia psidii*, which spreads via wind-borne spores. The fungus was found in Australia for the first time in 2010 and it was detected on an isolated property in the east Kimberley in June 2022.

Bright yellow masses of spores are a distinguishing feature of myrtle rust. It attacks actively growing shoots, stems and other soft young tissues such as fruits, flowers and emerging seedlings. WA is home to over 1,800 native myrtaceous taxa and if the disease reaches our biodiversity-rich south-west, the consequences could be disastrous. Myrtle rust can also affect industries including nursery, forestry, cut flower and apiary.

Early signs of the disease include raised spots which are brown-grey with red-purple haloes. Within two weeks, yellow spores will begin to appear. Look for infection on the softer underside of leaves, as well as shoot tips, fruits, flowers and new growth.

If you think you have spotted myrtle rust:

- **Do not take a sample or touch it because spores can be easily spread**
- **Immediately report your sighting using the MyPestGuide app or website ([mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au)) or contact the DPIRD Pest and Disease Information Service on 9368 3080 or [padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au)**

WA bush walkers and travellers to northern WA are encouraged to look and report signs of myrtle rust and to take precautions to prevent spreading it. For more information visit [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au).



Myrtle rust is readily identified by its unique bright yellow or orange spores or pustules on leaves. Image courtesy of DPIRD.



Native Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)

## Grasses not weeds!

The Northern Jarrah Forest boasts approximately 62 species of native grasses. Sadly, it also has 91 species of introduced grasses, many of which are highly invasive in bushland.

Although native grasses form an essential part of our local bushland, they can sometimes be quite difficult to spot!

Unfortunately, native grasses can also look like introduced weeds and mistakenly pulled out by well-meaning gardeners and bushland managers.

Correct identification is essential if you are weeding bushland or undertaking revegetation projects and want to plant local native grasses.

The Shire has a number of helpful publications that can assist with identifying native grasses including:

- Common Native Grasses Poster\*
- Wetland Grasses Poster\*
- The Value of Fringing Vegetation booklet\*
- Native Grasses of Perth Hills: a field guide to identification (available from Shire libraries)

\*The posters and booklet can be viewed and downloaded from the Shire's at website [www.mundaring.wa.gov.au](http://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au)

## Landcare projects showcased



On Saturday 5 November, Friends and Catchment Group volunteers joined local residents to learn about the conservation efforts of Friends of Glen Park Reserve in Darlington and Friends of Strettle Road Reserve in Mahogany Creek. This self-drive tour showcased the diversity of our local environment, exploring majestic granite outcrops, the tranquility of Nyaania Creek and the enchanting nature of a Sheoak forest.

The Friends Groups shared their rehabilitation success stories and challenges in weed control, repairing creeklines, managing Dieback and protecting local reserves and waterways. Participants were able to network with like-minded environmental enthusiasts, sharing knowledge and building connections with a cuppa and a cookie.

Thank you to Friends of Glen Park Reserve and Friends of Strettle Road Reserve for showcasing their conservation efforts and landcare learnings.

If you would like to join a Friends or Catchment Group or find out how to form a new Friends Group to care for a local reserve, contact the Shire at [shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au).

## Landcare Calendar - Tips for Birak



- You might need to water newly established native seedlings through their first summer, until their roots are well established
- Heavy, occasional watering 2 to 3 times a week is best (light, frequent watering can result in shallow roots and low drought tolerance)
- At each watering, wet at least the whole depth of the root zone
- Using mulch will keep more water in the soil
- Check wildlife, pet and stock water supplies daily (placing water supplies such as birdbaths and troughs in a shady spot will reduce evaporation)

*Six Seasons* has been prepared by the Environment and Sustainability team at Shire of Mundaring. For comments or to subscribe to our mailing list, email the team at [shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au)

## What's On

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### Future Homes Expo 2022

Sun 4 December, 11am to 4pm

Bush Court, Murdoch University

Presented by the Sustainability Practitioners Network, this FREE event focuses on home building and design that allows you to live better whilst impacting on the environment less. It will feature exhibitors and expert presentations to provide information on products relating to eco-design, construction, landscaping, and appliances. There will be food and coffee vans available along with a full schedule of public talks and lunchtime entertainment. Tickets available from <https://events.humanitix.com/future-homes-expo-2022>.

### Birds in the Burbs

Tues 15 December, 10am to 4.30pm

Manning Community Centre

All are welcome to attend this FREE community event presented by Birdlife Australia. The aim of the event is to highlight recent successes and current challenges in urban bird conservation within the Perth metropolitan area. The symposium will feature presentations from leading experts and conservationists. Bookings essential. Tickets available via <https://birds-in-the-burbs.eventbrite.com>.

### Draft Forest Management Plan 2024 - 2033 Public Consultation

Submissions close at 11.59pm Sunday 18 December 2022

The Draft Forest Management Plan 2024-2033 is still open for public comment. The decision to end large-scale commercial logging of WA native forests takes effect in 2024. The draft plan has been prepared by the Conservation and Parks Commission (through the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions). For more information or to make a submission visit [www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/forests/forest-management-plan](http://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/forests/forest-management-plan).