

National Tree Day

29th July 2007 (by Terry Lane)

I arrived at the park office to find a small gathering of Friends of the Organ Pipes with Rangers Mike and Hayden and new recruit Russell Whipp from Essendon, a final year Engineering student at Melbourne.



Russell Whipp

Today was to be another big planting day on the FOOPs workingbee calendar and along with Zoë's Brimbank crew and the Friends of Kororoit Creek, Friends of Taylors Creek, Friends of Maribyrnong Valley, Conservation Volunteers Australia, girl guides and local residents, we were to join thousands of others around Australia for Planet Ark's National Tree Day.

The planting site was in Sydenham Park the next property downstream from the Organ Pipes National Park

Sydenham Park is owned by Brimbank Council and is not yet open to the public. It is a picturesque valley where the confluence of Jacksons Creek and Deep Creek become the Maribyrnong River.



Sydenham Park

After a quick cuppa and the usual chat, we drove to the meeting point past the Keilor Golf Course and met Hayley Mackie from Brimbank Council setting up the barbecue in the marquee.



Let's get started

We were to plant a variety of species on a gentle slope going down to the creek.

Tree Violet, Clematis, Yellow Box, Managum, Redgum, Blackwood, Lightwood, Silver and Black Wattle.

The weather was kind, on the slope it was cool with a slight breeze and the soil was beautifully moist and easy to dig, and instead of the mats and plastic tree guards we would have normally used, Pizza base's (an idea of Hume's Jason Summers) were used as mats and cardboard milk cartons used as guards with bamboo stakes.



The volunteers spread out.

Two water tankers were needed for the 1000 plants we were to put in and soon everyone found themselves a job to do. Some just made up guards and frames, others dug the holes, and some just planted whilst others kept them supplied with water, guards and pins to hold down the pizza mats



Tracy Casser from Brimbank Council keeping the supply chain going.

It was great to see so many people working together for a common purpose, people from a variety of environmental organizations and people of all ages, mothers, fathers, children teenagers and tots



Ian Smith from the Friends of the Organ Pipes

For the 12th annual National Tree Day, an estimated 350,000 volunteers would be planting 1.5 million trees and shrubs.



Keilor Girl Guides: Kate Duggan, Guide Leader Heather Buzza with daughters Kiera and Maddison

It was soon time for a well-earned lunch break, and the tired volunteers slowly made their way up the hill in dribs and drabs to the barbecue that Brimbank Council had provided



A well-earned lunch for the multitude

As lunch was well underway, Rhys Collins from Melbourne Waterwatch pulled up with the Waterwatch trailer and showed the crowd samples of water from Riddells Creek (which flows into Jacksons Creek) containing Stone fly larvae that would indicate the creek to be quite healthy as this bug is very sensitive to water quality.



The Bug Mobile



A forest in the making

It was a magnificent effort by the volunteers one that all involved should be proud of. This is going to be a wonderful place for future generations to enjoy.

After lunch the FOOPs members returned to the Organ Pipes to plant some Poa (Common Tussock Grass) and some Redgum trees that Ian Taylor had donated from his nursery (Western Plains Flora)

This part of the Organ Pipes is known as Costas Block, and is close to the boundary of Sydenham Park. The land was once owned by Mrs Costa a Keilor Councillor.

We put wire frames around the trees along the creek to protect them from the Wallabies, Kangaroos, and Rabbits and planted the Poa on a gentle slope above.



Redgum in wire tree frame



Neil Duncan waters in the Poa with creek water.

We finished up about 3.30 and headed off home looking forward to our next planting day.

Sat August 25th Holden Flora and Fauna Reserve

