

Quarterly Newsletter

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Hello and Hope you are all staying well

We are currently updating our Facebook and Webpages to enable you to keep in touch with the latest news.

Our Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on the 2nd September via our zoom meeting.

All positions were declared vacant after reports were presented.

If you require a copy of the report and you have not received it, please let us know. info@fmvonline.com

The officer bearers for the next 12 months are:

President: Judy Ingram

Vice President: Rosemary Mc Kenzie

Secretary: Maelor Himbury

Treasurer: Boris Scignari

Grants Coordinator: Judy Ingram

Environmental Officer: Bernadette Gould

Web Site Coordinator: Warwick Somerville

Community Representatives: Ann Cassidy, Anne Robson, David Pepper, Rebecca Luxford and Virginia Tachos. We welcomed our new committee members and thanked them for stepping up at this strange and difficult time in volunteering

We thanked **Community Representatives** Lorraine Ratcliffe, and Robert Olerhead as well as **Environmental Officer** Simon Purves for their services in the past. A motion was passed that we do not apply now for future grants due to the current restructuring at Parks Victoria.

Planting – the FMV Way. Hints from Maelor Himbury

Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley have been planting and maintaining local natural sites for a little over 30 years now. The other day I was thinking, “What have we learned during this time.?”

Below is my attempt to answer that question.

There are four essential aspects to a successful planting project – Planning, Preparation, Planting and Maintenance.

1. Planning

Locate a site you want to work on. Visualise what you want to achieve - how will the site look when it is finished, what plants will you need, what other works need to be done. Contact the land manager and negotiate permission to get started. Apply for grants. Seek out partners such as other community groups or corporate volunteers to help get the work done. All of this is essential - often most of the work is completed before even a single plant goes in the ground.

2. Preparation

The site needs to be cleared of weeds well before you start planting. Clearing methods include slashing, spraying, raking and, where possible, mulching. When mulching first lay down a layer of cardboard or

newspaper followed by a thick layer of mulch. It is possible to mulch after planting, but it is much more effective (and less time consuming) to mulch first. Other methods we have not used but which we know have been effective in other locations are rip lines and terracing. With community days and corporate days there is a requirement to organise food, portaloos, access and signage.

3. Planting

On the planting day arrive early and drill holes for the plants. The holes should be slightly deeper than the length of the plant pot. Fill the holes with water. When everyone is ready to start planting divide them up. Some can use a Hamilton planter to make sure the holes are deep enough. Others can put out plants or make up guards or put out guards and stakes. When planting make sure you remove the plant from the pot by squeezing the pot and tapping it on the bottom. Avoid pulling the plant out by the stem as this can break the plant. With the type of planting we do it is usually unnecessary to tickle out the roots – just place the plant in the hole and replace the earth. Try to make sure there is a bit of a depression so that water will flow towards the plant. Put a stake through the guard (in through one slot and out through the other) and hammer it over the plant. Place the pot upside down on the stake. Later, when someone is watering the plant, they can remove the pot so that we know what plants still need to be watered. Sometimes we have put in water crystals just before planting – this can be quite effective when you have water intolerant soils. Collect up all tools at the end of the session and make sure the site is clean.

4. Maintenance

Sites need to be monitored. Often follow-up watering is required and there is always weeding to be done. A few of our sites are vulnerable to rabbits and other predators so sometimes double guarding is required or even replacing the plastic guard with a larger wire guard. We usually leave guards on a bit longer than normal in areas where we think plants may be under threat. Rabbits can ringbark even relatively mature trees. Sometimes we even must cut the guards off because the plants have grown too big. Better safe than sorry. We keep an eye on what plants survive and which ones do not – this helps us choose the species for follow-up planting. A couple of years or so after each planting we do a sweep through to make sure all remaining guards and stakes are removed. This process is not perfect and no doubt there are areas where we can improve but we have found that when we work this way, we get a much higher success rate.

VALE DON BROGDEN

We wish to inform members that Don Brogden, former long-term Treasurer of Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley, died in July. He had been unwell for some time and it became necessary for him to go into a nursing home in December last year. We understand that his death was due to these ongoing issues and not to Covid-19. As the times require there was a small family funeral after which he was cremated. However, the family hopes to hold a memorial service once this becomes possible. We will pass on any further information as we receive this as we are sure there are many who would wish to attend.

Don was an early, if not founding, member of FMV and represented us in meetings and VCAT inquiries as well as managing the finances of the group for many years. His quiet sensible approach to things always gave you confidence that he had a solid grasp of what was going on. He will be greatly missed.

We are winners

Brimbank City Council has announced and congratulated its winners of the 2020 We Are Brimbank Awards at a special virtual event. **Environment & Sustainability Award: Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley Inc.**

This award demonstrates outstanding contribution to the protection, enhancement, and awareness of Brimbank's natural and urban environment.