

September 2012 in Our Catchment

Most places I've seen this month are still quite wet, but my impression is that this is a slow spring: cold nights, few rainy days and not that warm, or windy yet. I hope your place still has water, and there is some sign of returning vegetation.

Your Results

There are numerous sites where elevated pH has been reported this month. A reading of 9.2 at the top of Sullivans Ck is not uncommon, and as the water is in a drain and the creek is ground water fed it is not alarming. However, having a similar pH in Burra Creek just down from the pipeline is worth watching. The Queanbeyan River both above and below the dam is also alkaline at present, and all three of the reports from Lake Burley Griffin have alkaline readings in the edge waters. This may all be flow related, although the Queanbeyan is still moving a bit.

It was interesting to be told that the Lake has sprouted a green beard on its wall at Kingston. There are two likely culprits here, *Uronema*, the curse of cold water aquariums and the rather more interesting but closely related *Schizomeris*. *Schizomeris*' claim to fame, apart from being usual in the 'bathtub ring' of inland rivers, lies in its multicellular tube, not the usual single row in *Uronema* and the branching *Stigeoclonium*. They are an interesting lot the Chaetophorales!

Look for these returned marginals

As the weather warms up and the days get longer (we will have passed the equinox by Monday 24th) plenty of annual or short stature aquatic plants make their often short appearance. As well, the sedges and the rushes flower in October and November.

Here are a few examples worth keeping an eye out for. They also may be the very plants that need to be considered for any remedial work you or your Landcare group may be contemplating.



There are quite a number of club sedges, short, tussock-like with tubular green bits with the flower heads just a little way below the tip. *Isolepis habra* is one of the more common ones. They grow at the margins of waterways where the bank is gently sloping, silty and undisturbed. Although they are low in stature they are often numerous and hold the muddy edge together most effectively with their fibrous roots.



A little further back up the bank, especially where there is a reasonable proportion of sand in the alluvial deposits, there will almost certainly be a number of tussock sedges. *Carex appressa* and its close relatives are easily recognised, but the shorter, softer leafed *Carex gaudichaudiana* is worth a look. It has rather attractive white flowerheads that only stay conspicuous for a couple of weeks.



The spikerushes are very important in any water meadow, either along the flood runners of creek lines or in the back end of dams and pools. *Eleocharis acuta* is very common, but is rather undervalued as a wetland and marshland plant. It also puts on a spectacular display at this time of year.



Buttercups are always a joy to see, even the exotic ones like the Burr Buttercup that grows between the cobbles in many waterways. There are several local native species, including *Ranunculus papulentus* which has its type locality in the northern suburbs of Canberra. It is referred to as the Large River Buttercup but thrives in damp, silty soil almost anywhere in the region.



Willow herbs in other parts of the world can be spectacular and weedy... Rosebay Willowherb paints rough ground across England lolly pink in the spring! Our willowherbs are a little more discrete. *Epilobium billardioreanum* is one of several small almost undershrubs that enjoy having wet feet.

Calendar

Sunday 7 th to Saturday 13 th	Molonglo Catchment Group at Floriade	Every day in the Look & Learn tent
Sunday 14 th	Platypus Walk	Dane St, Karabar. Meet in car park at 5 pm
Saturday 20 th & Sunday 21 st	Waterwatch Monitoring	Your sites
Sunday 21 st to Saturday 27 th	Frogwatch Census 2012	Your sites
Sunday 28 th	Waterwatch Get Together	Lake Burley Griffin at locality to be advised [includes spring QA/QC]

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The operation of the Molonglo Catchment Group and Waterwatch program is assisted by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and the ACT Government. Some administrative assistance is provided by the Australian Government's GVESHO program.