



Euroa Arboretum – a potted introduction

The Euroa Arboretum, or ‘The Arb’, sits on a 27-hectare site three kilometres south of Euroa. It was originally part of a sheep farm and in the 1980s was a storage depot for materials and heavy machinery used to build the Hume Freeway.

The Euroa Arboretum has converted a heavily compacted site to parkland. With the guidance of part time project managers over twenty years, and constant dedication from a Committee of Management, a Friends group and regular volunteers, the Euroa Arboretum is now a beautiful place to relax and commune with plants, to fish or have a picnic. Amenities include a picnic shelter with drinking water, public toilets, car parking, marked walking trails and a large dam for fishing and canoeing. A recent installation of large scale thought-provoking metal sculptures is particularly worth visiting.

The Arb’s extensive native plant nursery is open to the public on Mondays. We produce indigenous seed for revegetation projects, can offer site-specific advice about your property and even boast a Bush Crew for hire – skilled individuals who can carry out your environmental works.

So whether you are interested in undertaking revegetation projects, want some native plants to put in your garden or just feel like a walk through the bush, the Euroa Arboretum is the place to go.

Growing back the bush

However the Arboretum is much more than a recreational park. The Arboretum’s motto is *Growing back the Bush* and one of the main objectives of the Arboretum is to provide seed for revegetation work. As an example, species like the Silver Banksia, *Banksia marginata*, that was once widespread across the catchment and was a critical source of nectar for winter feeding honeyeaters and for migrating birds is now reduced to a handful of sites with only a few scattered plants.

The Arboretum has collected seed or cuttings from each of these parent plants and now grows them *en masse* with the objective of using the precious seed for revegetation work. We work closely with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to propagate and protect a range of threatened species from extinction.

Nursery

Each year the Euroa Arboretum nursery produces tens of thousands of plants for retail sale to individuals and community groups. These plants are used for anything from large-scale revegetation projects through to urban gardens.

We grow plants for farmers and landholders who want to undertake revegetation works on their property. We can sell direct to the public for those people wanting to plant species in their garden that attract birds or butterflies. We are also at the Euroa Farmers Market, every third Saturday of the month, selling plants to anyone willing.

Seed Production

The Euroa Arboretum has several intensive Seed Production Areas (SPAs). These aim to increase the genetic diversity and resilience of rare plants in our environment.

Seed is collected from plants growing in various locations in their natural environment. The seed is propagated in the Euroa Arboretum nursery and planted into our SPAs. The original location is recorded and guidelines that ensure correct genetic mixing of the various parent plants followed.

The SPAs are designed in a way that makes the seed produced from these plants easy to collect. Each SPA is covered with heavy-duty, UV-resistant plastic weave. As the seed falls, it can be collected off this cover – even by sweeping it into a pile.

In Spring 2014 we began harvesting seed from the new ‘Daisy’ seed production area. Daisies and similar flora are grown in wooden trays. The seed is harvested with a vacuum cleaner.

Revegetation trials

The Arb continues to trial various methods of woodland restoration. Burning at various intensities at different times of the year has been tried to see the effect on weed removal and bush regeneration. Recently a large area has been scalped (the top 10cm of soil removed to remove the weed seed bank) and then direct seeded to see the effect on bush regeneration. Trials such as these ensure the Arb stays at the forefront of regeneration techniques.

Education

Learning about nature can begin at any age. And once you start it’s hard to stop. The Euroa Arboretum is not only ‘growing back the bush’ but is also providing opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with nature and learn more about it. The Arb also provides education and training for people of all ages and expertise.

The Arb in conjunction with Euroa Kindergarten runs bush kinder, a chance for kids to experience nature in the bushland (and in the dam!) of the Arb. In addition an integrate schools program is run.

The Euroa Arboretum also supports local Landcare and Environment groups and holds a range of events including bush tucker and plant identification days. Annually the Arb organised the recognised Box Ironbark Ecology Course, Grassy Woodlands Field Days and for those with small plots of land the Clever Country Gardener dinner series.