

Biosphere Pty Ltd presents

# Wild Grasses of Victoria<sup>2009</sup>

 identification  ecology  management

- A short course of 24 contact hours over four weeks,  
late November until the week before Christmas

**21 Years!**

with  
**Graeme Lorimer, PhD**

Of all the families of plants, the grasses are the most important in ecological, economic and agricultural terms. There are around 230 indigenous grass species in Victoria, in many cases playing a pivotal ecological role. There are also around 170 introduced grass species growing wild, with enormous ecological and economic impact. In fact, there isn't much of Australia where you can understand nature in any detail without knowing the grasses.

This course can help you. No prior botanical knowledge is required. There is a social atmosphere, and four half-day field trips take you to very pleasant and interesting places: basalt plains grassland, foothills forests, Gippsland Plain grassy and heathy forests, wetland and bayside.

You will learn to recognise a set of easily distinguished 'key grass species', which are represented in practically any grassy area. You will learn to use botanical keys – written and electronic – to identify most other grasses. You will be able to assess the general ecological health of grassy areas. With the aid of a microscope, you will also derive pleasure and fascination from the unexpected beauty and intricacy of grasses.

The related plant groups of sedges, rushes etc. will also be covered, but in less detail.

On the practical side, there will be information on propagation and horticulture of grasses, and management of grassy vegetation.

## Three streams on different days – the same content

Each stream runs from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on the same day of the week over four weeks:

- **Tuesdays**, 24th November and 1st, 8th and 15th December; or
- **Wednesdays**, 25th November and 2nd, 9th and 16th December; or
- **Saturdays**, 21st & 28th November and 5th & 12th December.

Each session includes three hours of indoor class and three hours in the field, as follows:

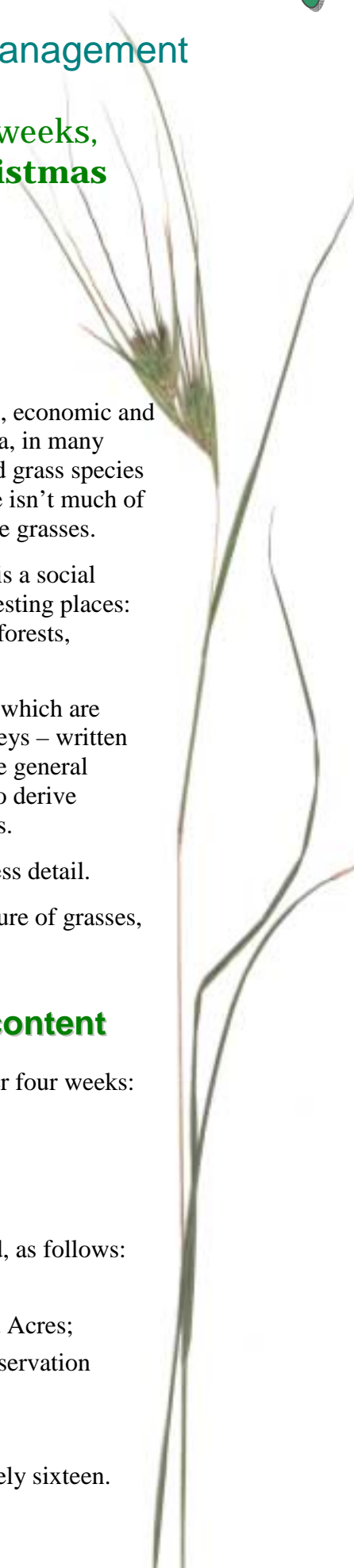
*Week 1:* Melton Community Hall & nearby basalt grassland;

*Week 2:* Domeney Recreation Centre in Park Orchards & the One Hundred Acres;

*Week 3:* Arrabri Community House in Bayswater North & Bungalook Conservation Reserves;

*Week 4:* Sandybeach Centre, Sandringham and nearby foreshore.

To maximise personal attention, the class size will be limited to approximately sixteen.



Basic snack food will be provided for morning and afternoon teas. Participants should bring the usual gear for extended periods outdoors, such as drink, sun protection or raincoats. Either bring your own lunch or buy it from local shops.

**Testimonial:** *'I found Graeme's hands-on course helped me enormously with grass identification, and the skills have been put to much use on and off the job. While the sessions felt relaxed, I learnt more than I hoped. I'd recommend the course to anyone with an interest in natural vegetation or grass family.'*

– Scott Watson, Senior Horticulture/Ecology Officer, VicRoads

## Certificate

All participants who complete the course and demonstrate satisfactory achievement will receive a certificate. The certificate is not issued under the national VET system.

## Cost and Applications

\$360 full price (including GST), or

\$310 (including GST) for Austudy students and holders of Health Care cards.

This includes 24 contact hours, course notes and snacks.

These courses always book out. Those who missed out in last year's ballot are given preference this year. Others will go into a ballot for remaining positions. Apply on the accompanying form by 30th September 2009.

## Texts, Notes and Equipment

Extensive notes will be provided, including specially designed keys with minimal technical language. This will be adequate for a fairly high level of identification of grasses, but not for every species and not for rushes, sedges etc.

For additional detail, an economical book is *Grasses of NSW* (\$49.95 plus postage in paperback from CSIRO publishing). There is more detail again in *Flora of Victoria Vol.2*, which covers native and naturalised grasses, rushes, sedges, orchids, lilies, ferns, conifers and more - but it costs around \$250.

Enthusiasts and professionals will want the excellent CD-ROM software, '*AusGrass - Grasses of Australia*', for \$110 from CSIRO Publishing. The software will be demonstrated during the course.

If you bring any of these resources to the course, you can rely on personal help to make use of them. If not, there will be copies available for use during the indoor sessions.

It is recommended to have a hand lens ( $\times 10$  magnification, larger diameters are better) and dissecting forceps (tweezers), both available cheaply from university bookshops. A plant press and an A4 display book are useful for compiling a collection of specimens.

## Further Information

contact Graeme Lorimer on 8711-3454 or [Graeme.Lorimer@biosphere.net.au](mailto:Graeme.Lorimer@biosphere.net.au)