

The Value of Trees

Trees provide valuable habitat for local animals as well as birds.

We spoke to a local arborist, Leon Limberiou of *Goanna Tree Care* who said *"I can definitely appreciate the need to remove trees where there is risk to human safety or damage to property, however, having also worked previously as a zookeeper on a professional level for many years, I am deeply concerned about the continual pressure we are placing on our native wildlife as we continue to clear bushland for development."*

Cavities and hollows take many years to form and provide shelter for a number of different animals that are competing for a suitable home. As a climber, Leon is fortunate to see a lot of animals using these hollows and his clients are often amazed at what kinds of animals call their trees home.

Leon commented on old, dead or decaying trees saying that *"depending on the situation, trees can be safely maintained by simply reducing the crown of the tree or removing the hazardous section, retaining valuable habitat that has possibly taken decades to develop. Many trees are often needlessly removed due to termites, but not all species of termites are damaging to their host trees nor are they to our houses. It is important to get the termite identified by an entomologist before the decision to remove the tree has been made."*

Leon went on to describe how the Lace Monitor and termite are two of the many species that have a symbiotic relationship and depend entirely on trees for their survival.

"The Lace Monitors lay their eggs in particular types on termite mounds. The industrious termites quickly seal over the cavity and the whole termite mound acts as a perfect incubator, thermo regulating the Goanna eggs. The following season, the females will return to free the young who have already hatched inside the termite mound. Juvenile Lace Monitors are extremely elusive, wary and seldom seen. As soon as they are free from their termite mounds they head to the tree tops. Here they spend the first couple of years of their lives concealed in hollows and tree scars avoiding hungry kookaburras and other predators."

Next time you are in your backyard, have a look around your property and remember that we share our trees with more than just birds and possums.

For more information please see our website - StillCreekLandcare.com.au and visit our facebook page - facebook.com/pages/Still-Creek-Landcare/231335326904019

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