

WOTT NEWS

It's been a while in the making but finally here it is! The inaugural WOTT NEWS!

Firstly, a big welcome to all newcomers to the WOTT Arboriculture Database contact list. Since its inception in September 2002, the Women of The Trees network has now grown from around 50 to over 80 members. The contact list is aimed at bringing together the many women who work in *and* around the industry to take advantage of the various networking opportunities often missed through a 'lack' of industry connectedness. It is hoped this newsletter will inform you of some of our recent activities, and highlight upcoming events:

ARBORCAMP 2003

Well after much planning and organising on the part of the WOTT Team, we finally arrived at *Arborcamp* 2003 ready for our inaugural women's events. Although the focus of *Arborcamp* this year was "Women in Arboriculture", we only had limited scope, resources and assistance to get the scheduled events underway. Given that *Arborcamp* gatherings are reasonably informal, we were able to generally go with the flow and run a program largely based around peoples interests and experience.

As we had no idea how many women were attending *Arborcamp* 2003 let alone how many would be keen to give climbing a go or hear about women in Arboriculture, we were somewhat reluctant to be locked into a fixed technical program. For those who weren't able to attend *Arborcamp*, here are a few of the highlights:

Great Women's Tree Climb:

This event was scheduled for Friday morning and it was a terrific success with many women keen to either give climbing a try for the first time or to simply dust the cobwebs off the harness and rediscover those forgotten climbing muscles. As it turned out, more than 30 women gave it a go and had a terrific time - we should add – there's definitely quite a bit of serious tree climbing talent out there!

The morning session proved so popular that we continued well into the afternoon and followed this up with an unscheduled half-day session the following day. It was fantastic to see everyone who wanted to have a climb give it a try, and most came back for more.

On the Saturday we added another couple of climbing lines and set up two belayed forty-foot foot-lock ropes. Quite a number of the women even gave this difficult climbing technique a go with tremendous effort and results! Thanks very much to Ali and Ge for all their impromptu help throughout the two days of climbing. The big tree climb proved so successful that even the boys started queuing up for a crack at it! (see attachment for a group photograph of the climb).

Lunchtime Talk:

At around lunchtime on Saturday, Kiah Martin welcomed everyone to an open discussion about women in Arboriculture. Firstly, she explained the idea and reason for the WOTT contact list, (see attached WOTT introductory letter) and then sought feedback from the group about:

- what sort of agenda WOTT should deliver
- general issues for women in Arboriculture
- how to spend the rest of our time at *Arborcamp* 2003 and
- the possibility of an annual women's program at *Arborcamp*

All women who participated in the lunchtime talk and climb, received a WOTT folder with great information and articles about women in Arboriculture. The folder included:

- welcoming letter
- information on careers and women in Arboriculture
- information on the Women in Trades and Services Directory, and
- a copy of the WOTT database

In appreciation for those women attending this session, our major sponsor for the women's activities, the CITY OF MELBOURNE provided all women with an "Arborcamp" travel mug. We extend our sincere thanks to the CITY OF MELBOURNE for their support and encouragement of women in Arboriculture. These unique mugs have already become highly sought after collectors' items!

Technical Talks:

Everyone at *Arborcamp* was invited to hear about new research being undertaken by women in the industry.

Sarah Bone recently completed her Masters in Applied Science at Burnley College where she investigated the provenances of *Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum). She spoke in depth about her research project and the implications for tree breeding specifically in Arboriculture but also generally through Horticultural applications.

Rebecca Ramsden followed this up with a description of her Burnley College Master's project – tree identification using DNA fingerprinting. Rebecca has had good success in DNA 'matching' trees and has developed a service for identifying invasive tree roots. The existing technology limits us to only identifying tree roots between species of different genera. This new technology now makes it possible for identification of tree roots between individuals of the same species - a first for Arboriculture in Australia.

Although not strictly part of the "Women in Arboriculture" program, Louise Wolf from MST Lawyers then presented an interesting and enlightening dialogue on 'Trees and the Law'. Louise also climbed the big tree in the afternoon and is now listed on the WOTT database. Thanks Louise for coming along to *Arborcamp* and we all hope to see you again next year.

WOTT Database:

An updated version of the WOTT Arboriculture Database is attached. If you have any feedback about the women's events held at *Arborcamp* 2003, or if you would like to amend your details on the Database, please send a return email to wott@isaac.org.au. Additionally, if you have suggestions for future events or gatherings, we would be thrilled to hear from you. Some suggestions already put forward include:

- a ropes and knots workshop - possibly at *Arborcamp* 2004
- foot-locking instruction and practice
- winter, wine and cheese evening - a chance to informally meet and chat
- weekend camping where further tree climbing instruction could be given

As a "member" of the WOTT Arboriculture Database, would you attend or support any or all of these events? Please let us know, as it is only through your support and participation that WOTT will grow. Drop us an email and please stay in touch.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Victorian Tree Climbing Championships (VTCC):

This year the VTCC is being staged at St James Park, Hawthorn on Saturday August 16 from 8am-5pm. Last year's great success in the Women's Division would not have been possible without the generosity of the following locally-based sponsors:

- Fitzpatrick & Co (Liability insurance for the industry)
- Horticus Arboricultural & Horticultural Consultants
- Gardens Shop, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
- McLeod's Trees

This year is set to be even bigger and better with over \$2000 on offer in prizes for women! It truly is an exciting and fun-filled day for competitors, spectators and volunteers. We are presently recruiting climbers, judges, scorers, sponsors, general volunteers and of course, spectators but would especially appreciate hearing from anyone interested in assisting. Regardless of how you may choose to participate, please come along on the day, bring your family and friends, enjoy the spectacle that is Victorian Tree Climbing, and help us make this the best climbing championship yet!

Jump on-line and climb higher with us!

The WOTT Team

Kiah Martin, Rebecca Ramsden, Sarah Bone

PS if you have photographs or experiences of tree related activities you would like to share (especially of *Arborcamp*), please send them through to wott@isaac.org.au and we will pass them on to the WOTT contact list for you and hopefully publish them in WOTT News Vol 1 #2).

28 March 2003

‘ Women of the Trees ’

Arboriculture Database 2003

Hi there

This is an introductory letter to invite you to join the Women of the Trees (WOTT) Arboriculture database.

It is hoped that by collating and utilising a comprehensive contact list of women in Arboriculture, we will assist in bringing together the many women who work in *and* around the industry to take advantage of the various networking opportunities often missed through a ‘lack’ of industry connectedness.

To keep women informed of current industry events and happenings and to aid in maintaining a connectedness to other female colleagues, the WOTT Team will send emails to the Arboriculture Database contact list encouraging support of and participation in the many arboricultural events scheduled each calendar year.

Inclusion on this Arboriculture Database is voluntary and through encouraging feedback already received from the many women listed, it is envisaged that specific “WOTT only” gatherings and seminars *may* be organised in the future. No firm plans are in place at present but as further contact is made over the course of the next twelve months, an agenda for future events and workshops will no doubt manifest. Please note, this is not a professional organisation. It is merely a means of connecting women working in, and interested in Arboriculture.

If you would like to submit your details for inclusion on this contact list or if you have any suggestions, comments or constructive criticism about the WOTT Arboriculture Database, please email wott@isaac.org or send written correspondence to the postal address below.

It is sincerely hoped that this communication tool will provide useful links to other women in the industry, and that through inclusion on and exposure to the contact list, women in Arboriculture will be able to forge new industry connections, or re-establish and strengthen old ones.

Jump on-line and climb higher with us!

WOTT Team

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