

MACCY BIOCHAR MEMBER BULLETIN

No. 5 - February 2020

Published by maccybiochar. Edited by Brian Lewis.
Auspiced by the Macclesfield Community Association Inc.

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HELLO ALL.

Welcome to our 5th Member Bulletin.

Did you know that we are now just over 1 year old? The group began with the formation of the Steering Committee at a public meeting held in the Institute on the evening of Monday 22 January 2019.

Committee meetings are normally held once per month on the second Monday of the month in the Institute Supper Room starting at 7pm. All members are welcome to attend and take part in discussions and find out more about what we are up to.

HERE IS A SUMMARY of our plans and activities since the January bulletin:

- Biochar analysis;
- New Kiln;
- Mobile Kiln;
- New members;
- 2020 Job Campaign;
- Business Plan;
- Biochar for Beginners;
- Business/Fundraising Opportunities;
- Monthly Market Stall.

BIOCHAR ANALYSIS

An order has been placed on Adelaide company, ByGen, to analyse our biochar for carbon content, ash composition and contaminant levels. This will allow us to calculate our carbon capture quantities based on accredited measurements rather than estimates. It will also inform us and our customers of the nutrients in the ash trapped within the char; and hopefully confirm that our biochar contains no harmful contaminants. Watch this space!

NEW KILN

Local fabricator Firth Engineering is making our new larger kiln with a capacity of about 1 m³. The design is based on the Kontiki open kiln concept that allows the wood gases to be fully combusted thus avoiding atmospheric pollution. Because of its size it will include a stand and winch to help with tipping of the kiln to decant the biochar. Delivery is expected soon.

The combination of this new kiln with our original 2 small kilns should ensure a production capacity of 1000 litres of biochar per day of operation.

MOBILE KILN

A new mobile trailer-mounted kiln is also being planned that will allow us to offer a mobile service to landowners with burn heaps. The estimated cost is \$5000, based on a tandem trailer, liquid IBC, pump, hoses, and kiln. If we can raise the funds to make this mobile rig we will offer it as a free service in the first instance to bushfire victims in the Adelaide Hills to help them deal with their burn heaps but make biochar instead of just returning the carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. **If you happen to know any landowners who would avail themselves of this service please let me have their contact details.**

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new member Rodney Dyke of Macclesfield. Rodney attended our February committee meeting and this made me realise that we should advise all members that they are welcome to attend; hence my comment in the first paragraph of this bulletin. Thanks Rodney!

Please note if every member could just get one more member we could boast a membership of over 60 and obtain some useful additional funds **plus** additional potential volunteers **plus** give us more credibility when applying for grants. So please put on your sales hat when you are out and about and have a spare member form with you at all times to put to good use. Simply print one off from the website. Or call me for a copy.

2020 JOB CAMPAIGN

We plan to start wood collection sometime in April depending on the weather and the end date of the fire ban season and go through to the end of November. We are planning 1 collection day per week alternating between Tuesdays and Fridays. So there will be:

Tuesday Collection (once per fortnight).

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Friday Collection (once per fortnight).

Kiln operation is planned for alternating Wednesdays and Saturdays. So there will be:

Wednesday Batch (once per fortnight).

Saturday Batch (once per fortnight).

If you can volunteer your time once a fortnight for either wood collection or kiln operation please call me and let me know which group would suit you best.

HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATION

We have started a list of households and community groups who have tree litter to spare. Wood collection will start with these households. Those of them who register with us will be allocated CO₂ offsets from the biochar we produce from their wood. This will help them to become carbon neutral.

If you want to be added to this list simply go to the website and look under <https://www.maccybiochar.com/summary> to register.

BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan is being developed and has reached the stage where the main item needed for completion is a **section on marketing**. This requires some more work to assess the local demand for biochar in the various branches of agriculture and other industries where biochar has potential application. **Is there anyone who has some experience in this area who would like to advise us and/or assist with this? The draft plan is available to any member who is interested. Just call me for a copy.**

BIOCHAR FOR BEGINNERS

An informal training course will be presented by Brian Lewis from 7:30pm in the Institute Supper Room on Wednesday 18 March. The primary aim will be to inform home gardeners on how to use biochar in the garden, but if time allows numerous other aspects of biochar will be covered. **The course will be free to members and gold-coin donation for non-members. So come along for an informative evening and join in the discussion.**

BUSINESS/FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Biochar has numerous applications. While we are concentrating at present on production of raw biochar in bulk there are opportunities for community groups and local businesses to add value to our biochar and make some money. Some examples that come to mind are:

- Small tubs of granular char for seedling pots;
- Small bags of fine powdered char for use as household deodorants;
- Wire cages of granular char for use as pond water filters;
- Biochar crayons.
- Etc., etc.

MONTHLY MARKET STALL

The new monthly Macclesfield market provides an opportunity to promote our group and to sell biochar products. Such products may be our own products or made by others and sold on commission. We need to gauge the extent of interest in a biochar stall at the monthly market and find out who would like to run it and/or assist. **If you like this idea please call me.**

COMING UP:

18 March: Biochar for Beginners. 7:30pm.

April: Start wood collection & receipts at site.

May: Open Day. Details to be advised.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS at present are:

Brian Lewis – Chairman.

Kelvin Williams – Site coordinator.

Kath Thurmer – Community Liaison.

Greg Marlu – Technical advisor.

Stephen Heading – Technical advisor.

Ivars Eglitis – Operator.

Geoff Brockhouse – Operator.

Meegan Semple – Viticulture liaison.

For any enquiries contact:

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