

November 2006

## Friends of Warrandyte State Park



# Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113  
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

## New Management Plan for WSP

By Mike Coupar

The Warrandyte State Park Management Plan was released in July this year. It is very much thinner (51 pages) than the draft management plan of 1990, but this seems to be the norm these days. Nonetheless it contains valuable information including four maps and lists of management strategies.

In a nutshell, the Park will continue to be managed as a major habitat corridor. Flora and fauna values will be protected and enhanced as well as its cultural heritage sites.

Control of pest plants and animals will be a priority and carried out in cooperation with other agencies and the local community. The Park has recorded approximately 250 pest plants and 15 introduced animals (10 birds and 5 mammals).

Fire is recognised as a major threat. Parks Vic works closely with DSE, CFA and local councils on fire management both in fire fighting and control burns.

The report also says that works will be undertaken to reduce safety risks at old mining sites. Hasn't this been done already? How many more shafts and tunnels are there to close?

Pound Bend and Jumping Creek Reserves will remain the focus for visitors (both given a 4 star rating in last month's newsletter). Orientation and track signs are to be improved and interpretation updated at key sites.

It appears that Park notes will no longer be available in boxes on site anymore. Instead they will be placed on the web. There will still be information boards in existing shelters.



It is proposed to provide basic orientation information signage at lesser known reserves such as The Common,

Timber Reserve and The Island.

I was pleased to read that the Park will liaise with neighbours to remove intrusions and repair damage caused by boundary encroachments. This has sadly neglected since the demise of Parkwatch.

The plan acknowledges FOWSP's valuable partnership in propagating indigenous plants, restoring vegetation, monitoring flora and fauna and obtaining grants.

FOWSP and other community groups, Park neighbours and local councils will be encouraged to continue their involvement in the planning and management of the Park. We look forward to this into the future and thank the rangers for all the support and encouragement they have given us over the years.



# Bush Backyard

## Some Like it Hot

By Pat Coupar

**A**round Warrandyte, in the bushland and in gardens, it is looking more like February than October.

Lack of any spring rain has caused many plants to shut up shop early in preparation for the long dry, and inevitably hot months to come. Some grasses such as the Spear Grasses (*Stipa* spp.) have not flowered at all this year and others are struggling and turning prematurely brown.

However, it is not all bad news, some indigenous species have positively thrived in the drought. In one rabbit exclusion fence Cinnamon Wattle (*Acacia leprosa*) and Myrtle Wattle (*A. myrtifolia*) – planted back as part of a species enrichment program a couple of years ago – are flourishing. As is the Gold Dust Wattle (*A. acinacea*) that occurs naturally in the area. Likewise seedling Golden Wattles (*A. pycnantha*) are popping up all over the place.

In another fence on Fourth Hill the brilliant yellow daisy flowers are a welcome splash of colour.

Sticky Everlasting (*Bracteantha viscosa*) and Grey Everlasting (*Ozothamnus obcordatus*) are two uncommon species that have been propagated at the nursery and planted back into the bush. It is heartening to see these daisies and also some of the rarer Warrandyte wattles doing so well in such harsh conditions.



## The Hurstbridge Grevillea (the Hurstbridge form of *Grevillea rosmarinifolia*)

By Steven Katsineris

**W**hen we moved to Hurstbridge, the house we bought had been empty for a year and the garden was in poor condition, parched and in some areas covered in weeds. While weeding in a flat sunny part of the

yard amongst a lot of long, dry grasses I found three very small Grevilleas. They were in a dreadful state; one was dead and the other two looked almost finished. Despite my efforts to revive the remaining two by getting rid of the weeds and watering they also perished. I noticed another larger Grevillea in the yard that looked the same, but unlike the other three it was doing fine.

I later found out these grevilleas were a local species, called the Hurstbridge Grevillea. Knowing that grevilleas are a hardy variety of flora and that the indigenous species should survive on local rainfall and in the local soil, it was difficult to work out why three of them didn't endure. I wondered if they died because of lack of water, being choked by weeds, too much hot sun, or being in the wrong position?

The Rosemary Grevillea, including the Hurstbridge form will usually thrive in a low maintenance garden. They should be watered rarely and need little attention after planting as long as there is good drainage and full or part sun. Whilst mulch can be laid, they do not need any imported garden soils or phosphate rich fertilizers. After that the Hurstbridge Grevillea ought to grow well without any other attention.

The Hurstbridge Grevilleas thick prickly foliage provides excellent nesting places for birds and habitat for other wildlife. It is also a fire resistant plant. Planting this unique Hurstbridge variety of Grevillea will help preserve this indigenous plant, save water and money and also provide protection and food for native wildlife.



The Hurstbridge form of Rosemary Grevillea has a limited distribution, but can be obtained from local nurseries in Nillumbik Shire, specializing in indigenous plants. To help the genetic integrity of the local form, try to obtain Hurstbridge Grevilleas that have been sourced from local plants.

## What's happening in your backyard this month?

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at [ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au)

## Worth Repeating

### Happy bird day – forest reveals a new species

By Lauren Dake, Bogota

A colourful bird new to science has been discovered in an unexplored forest, spurring efforts to protect the area.

The bright yellow and red-crowned Yariguies brush-finch was named after the indigenous tribe that once inhabited the mountainous area where it was discovered. The Yariguies committed mass suicide instead of submitting to Spanish colonial rule. For conservationists the discovery of the species came at a crucial time.

Thanks in part to the discovery, the Government has decided to set aside 200 hectares of the pristine cloud forest where it lives to create a national park.

"There are about two new birds found in the world every year," said Thomas Donegan, one of the two who discovered the bird. It's a very rare event."

To reach the bird's isolated habitat, Mr Donegan and his partner, Blanca Huertas, regularly hiked 12 hours into the nearly impenetrable jungle. "It's a huge patch of isolated forest that no one knew about, not even in Colombia," Mr Donegan said.



The new finch, the size of a fist, is native to Colombia's eastern Andean range, and is considered by its discoverers to be near threatened and in need of close monitoring to prevent it winding up on a list of about 100 bird species endangered in Colombia.

One of the two birds caught by the team was released unharmed after they took pictures and DNA samples, while the other died in captivity.

With as many as 1865 different species, Colombia has long been considered a bird watchers' paradise, although a risky one because of four decades of civil war and drug trafficking.

*Source: The Age 11/10/06*

## Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

A koala was sighted in Antonio Park on Maroondah Highway Mitcham, 2 koalas were



sighted in Oakland Drive Warrandyte and another 2 koalas were sighted in Pound Road Warrandyte. 2 koalas were sighted in High View Crt Balnarring Beach. These 2 stayed around for several days, much to the delight of the property owner.

We have not had any further sightings of the koalas in Blackburn or Warranwood. A koala was found dead on a track at Pound Bend, Warrandyte and another died after being hit by two cars in Beauty Gully Road, Park Orchards. The first car to hit this koala was stopping to help the animal when he was hit by a second car. A Post Mortem was done as this koala was very thin, the result was injuries from the accident and

this koala was very old.

Please remember to check your own yard for koalas on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of November as this is the day we are having our suburban koala count this year. Please ring me if you find a koala on this day. Julie Pryor 97221117

## FOWSP Koala Count

FOWSP is holding a koala count at Pound Bend on **Thursday November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10.00am.**



If you are interested in attending, please make sure you are at the nursery (Melway 23 C10) by 9.45am.

## Where Mountain Ash and Tree Ferns Grow

By Alwynne Buntine

On Tuesday morning October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9.00am, we left Ringwood to meet Josh at the car park opposite the William Rickett Sanctuary in the Dandenong Ranges. Three of us decided to leave early and indulge ourselves by calling at the Churinga restaurant and coffee shop, opposite the sanctuary, for an early morning latte while awaiting the arrival of the rest of the group. Imagine our disappointment on reaching the coffee shop to find that it was still operating on winter trading hours and not open on Tuesdays. "Oh well, back to Nescafe and hot water from the thermos." However, it was a sunny spring morning and standing in the car park, surrounded by huge Mountain Ash and tall tree ferns showing many new unfolding fronds – even Nescafe tasted good!

As we were finishing our coffee, Josh and Gray arrived telling us that we five were 'it'. Fortunately we had our own moss, liverwort and lichen expert, Bruce Fuhrer, with us and the sanctuary provided, not only the wonderful William Rickett sculptures and a history of their creator, but many mosses, lichens and liverworts to see and investigate. Small numbers didn't matter and we spent a fascinating hour or so wandering the many pathways of this tranquil place.

Leaving the sanctuary, we journeyed via Sassafras and Sherbrooke Road to Grant's car park and picnic area in the Sherbrooke National Park. Here we found that we could have obtained our latte coffee at the café, but

by now the desire was gone, so once more, thermos coffee sufficed.

After lunch we walked the two or three kilometres return trip of the Hardy Gully – Sherbrooke Falls walk through the cool temperate rainforest. Part of this walk is self-guided so people unfamiliar with the



vegetation can discover it for themselves.

Some of the plants we saw on our walk were: monstrously large Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) which appear to be hundreds of years old but, according to the track notes, have reached these heights only since the bush fires of the 1920's.

There were several types of ferns present including Soft Tree Fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), Rough Tree Fern (*Cyathea australis*), Bat's Wing Fern (*Histiopteris incisa*) and Mother Shield Fern (*Polystichum proliferum*). We also think we may have seen the Slender Tree Fern (*Cyathea cunninghamii*) but closer examination was not possible to confirm our findings.

The Musk Daisy-bush (*Olearia argophylla*) was blooming in profusion, as was the Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*), Banyalla (*Pittosporum bicolor*) and the Stinkwood (*Zieria arborescens*) whose unfortunate perfume really lives up to its name. We even found bird orchids (*Corybas* spp.) growing up the trunks of tree ferns over a metre above the ground, but as the first was still in bud and the second had finished flowering, we were unable to identify these with any certainty.

It was a most enjoyable day and on behalf of Irene, Bruce, Gray and myself, thank you Josh for another interesting activity.



# FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

## PLEASE NOTE

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday. Please note new opening times for Thursdays 9.30am to 12.30pm and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

### New Prices

Members 80 cents

Nonmembers \$1.20

## Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.



---

## Sunday Walks 2006

Held on the first Sunday of each month. Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

Walks are FREE. Bookings are ESSENTIAL. For more information contact Jeanette 9840 9129

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>:** 'Yarra Brae.' Anthony Owen. Meet: Clifford Park Scout Camp, Clifford Drive, Wonga Park (Mel Ref 24 J6)

## Thursday Walks 2006

Held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 1.00pm. Meet at the nursery, Pound Bend Rangers depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10). Walks will last approximately 2 hours.



## FOWSP Committee 2006

|                  |            |                      |
|------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Joan Broadberry  | 9846 1218  | Treasurer            |
| Pat Coupar       | 9844 1650  | Newsletter Editor    |
| Peter Curry      | 9844 0958  |                      |
| Geoff Speedy     | 9437 0894  |                      |
| Lee Speedy       | 9437 0894  | Membership Secretary |
| Mike Coupar      | 9844 1650  |                      |
| Karen Reynolds   | 9712 0797  | Minutes Secretary    |
| Martyn Hiley     | 9844 4547  |                      |
| Artur Muchow     | 0415383328 |                      |
| Gray Ardern      |            |                      |
| Winsome Coutts   |            |                      |
| Michelle Hanslow | 0402251577 |                      |

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market

Marie Krause 9712 0498

## Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2006

The seminars are FREE

Held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, no bookings required

Time: at 7.30pm



Please Note: NEW VENUE: South Warrandyte Hall, 66-68 Hall Rd, Sth Warrandyte (Mel ref. 35 J8)

December 6<sup>th</sup> 'Bush Heritage Fund'

Paul Foreman

## Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

The activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site.

So if you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG).

There will be NO TAG Activity in December

A new liaison person is required if these activities are to continue next year. (See article)

## Deadline for December newsletter is December 3<sup>rd</sup>

contributions can be sent to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or  
email [ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu](mailto:ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu).

## Worth Repeating

### As one of only 27 in the world, it's love at first sight

By Graeme O'Neill

For the first time, scientists and plant lovers have witnessed the flowering of a rare banksia species found in remote Western Australia.

It was discovered by a bushwalker in 2000, but its bright yellow flowers - which resemble tennis balls - had not been seen before last month.

Botanists believe the banksia finally flowered after storms spawned by cyclone Glenda dumped the equivalent of a year's rain on its drought-ridden home in one day at the end of March.

Its precise location has been kept secret to protect a number of plant species found in the area, many new to science. What is known is that it lies on a cattle station on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert, south of Mount Magnet.

The banksia's discovery has been compared to that of the "dinosaur" conifer, the Wollemi pine, in the Blue Mountains in 1994.

Stawell botanist Neil Marriott and Sydney colleague Peter Olde named it *Banksia rosserae*, in honour of self-taught Melbourne botanical artist Celia Rosser.

Only 27 *Banksia rosserae* plants have been discovered, within a radius of about 20 kilometres. Mr Marriott says they are extremely old, with massive lignotubers - swollen bases that store water and resprout after fire. "We suspect they germinated before (Captain James) Cook reached Australia," he said. Mr Marriott said there were many seed cones on the plants, but no sign of seedlings. The combination of a wildfire, which releases the seed, followed by cyclonic storms may occur once every few centuries.

Late last month Ms Rosser, 75, flew to Perth and drove hundreds of kilometres with a party of

botanists and banksia enthusiasts to witness the flowering of the plant.

"It's such a special flower, gorgeous and round," she said. "Until last week, I doubted I was ever going to see it in flower in the wild. (The area is) so remote - if you got lost out there, nobody would ever find your bones."

Ms Rosser brought home four flowers so she could paint them in her studio. The artist spent 25 years on *The Banksias*, acclaimed as one of the 20th century's great botanical artworks. She started in the 1970s and finished - so she thought - in 1990 with two species that came to light during a national survey for *The Banksia Atlas* in 1987. The atlas survey was supposed to rule a line under Australia's most botanised wildflower genus. Most experts doubted any species would be found in the arid zone. They were wrong.

The *Banksia rosserae* had not flowered since bushwalker John Cullen stumbled across it in 2000. About a year later, Mr Marriott and Mr Olde came across the plant. Although it carried no flowers, they knew they had seen a new species of banksia.

West Australian botanist and banksia expert Alex George, a member of the expedition that visited *Banksia rosserae* last week, said it was amazing that new species of Australia's most thoroughly studied plant genus were still being found 236 years after European settlement. "Based on this discovery, it's conceivable we could find other new banksias, along with new species and genera of other heathland groups," he said.

Banksias belong to one of the world's most ancient flowering plant families, the Proteaceae, which evolved in the mid-Cretaceous period at least 110 million years ago. A fossil banksia, *archaeocarpa*, found in 50 million-year-old sandstone in Western Australia's Kennedy Ranges, is nearly identical to the WA species *Banksia attenuata*.

---

## TAG Liaison Person Required

By Pat Coupar

The Thursday Activity Group (TAG) has been running successfully for a couple of years now. Held on the first Thursday morning of every month, the group of willing workers have weeded, planted, cut and painted woody weeds and collapsed rabbit burrows. Some activities have been carried out in conjunction with Manningham Council and their volunteer groups - these are always followed by a delicious lunch.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments, I am no longer able to organise the activities each month, although I am happy to be involved in the planning. Ranger, Jodie Godfrey, who will be the FOWSP ranger next year is keen to keep the TAG activities going. It just needs someone to liaise with Jodie once a month to help organise the activities. No experience is required. If anyone is interested in helping Jodie either call me on 043984229 or ring the Park 9844 2659 and speak to Jodie.

## Pamplemousses

By Shelagh Morton

The famous gardens in this village (named after the citrus trees cultivated there) in the then Ile-de-France, were started in 1735 and progressed under the direction of French horticulturists to become the Jardin du Roi, then the Jardin National in 1790 and finally, when the country (by now Mauritius) gained independence, the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Gardens.

Many of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century botanists visited this wonderful plant collection, including the great French naturalist, Labillardiere on his homeward journey from New Holland. He would have enjoyed the botanical splendours grown there including the nutmeg, cloves and coco-de-mer palm, which had been introduced for trading purposes.

I was fortunate to visit the gardens earlier this year and enjoy the stunning tropical vegetation. There is an amazing variety of palms, bottle and royal I knew, but sealingwax and raffia I did not. The air was heavy with frangipani perfume and different honeyeaters were in abundance.

The centrepiece of the gardens are the ponds covered with *Victoria amazonica* water lilies up to two metres across and the shape of a tea tray. They have a white flower one day and close the next with a red one.

I found an Australian connection in a memorial plaque stating that the Duchess of

York (later Queen Mary) planted two *Araucaria excelsa* pines in August 1901. Obviously their ship had berthed in the British colony, on its way home from Australia, where they had been present at the opening of the first Parliament of Australia in Melbourne. Nearby was another plaque commemorating the planting of two *Araucaria cunninghami* trees planted by the Duchess of York (later Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) on June 2, 1927. She and her husband had been to Australia to open the first Parliament House in Canberra and had visited Mauritius on the way back to England.

There was a small stone pyramid inscribed with the names of the botanical benefactors of the gardens and on the base a saying by Bernadin de St Pierre (a Mauritian writer).

"The gift of a useful plant is more precious than a mine of gold, and a monument more durable than a pyramid"



---

## Otway Black Snail

By Steven Katsineris

While we were on holidays in the Otways region, in southwest Victoria, we went on several bushwalks in the Great Otways National Park. On one such excursion, we visited the Grey River Picnic Area and walked through the magnificent, shaded rainforest to a lookout near a waterfall.

Returning along the track we saw a black-shelled snail crossing the trail. It was an Otway Black Snail, an endemic rainforest species, found nowhere else in the world. These are the largest snails found in the Otways, growing up to 3cm. The snail has a glossy black shell with a brown to yellow coloured tip. The shell is lightweight and fragile compared with those of other snails, because it lacks calcium carbonate.

The Otway Black Snail is carnivorous, feeding on worms, slugs, other snails and invertebrates. When the prey is located, the snail projects its tongue, which is covered in sharp, slender teeth and spears the prey. Once it is caught, the tongue is retracted and the prey is dragged back into the snail's relatively large mouth.

Otway Black Snails have a restricted range and are dependent on the dim, moist rainforests. They are consequently at risk in the event of any habitat loss. For this reason they are listed as vulnerable.

We were very lucky to have observed one of these unique snails in the wild. So, if you go walking in the Otways remember to watch where you step and keep an eye out for this interesting little creature.

## ***Snakehandler Display***

In October the Snakehandler Sean McCarthy came out to Warrandyte to give Fowspians an educational display of his reptiles. He began the show with some harmless long-necked turtles, these were followed by Blotched and Eastern Blue-tongue Lizards.

Then out came the snakes. First he produced a harmless python before finally introducing the venomous variety which included a Copperhead, Red-bellied Black and a Tiger Snake.

There was fascination and fear amongst the audience – from the adults, not the kids. They loved everything and probably would have patted the deadly Tiger Snake if they had been allowed.

Sean gave a most informative talk dispelling many myths and answering heaps of questions.





Print  
Post

346802/0005

Postage  
Paid  
Australia

**REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST**

**PP 346802 / 0005**

If undeliverable please return to  
Friends of Warrandyte State Park Inc.  
P.O. Box 220  
Warrandyte, 3113



**Imperial White Butterfly**  
*(Delias harpalyce)*

This attractive butterfly has been on the wing in Warrandyte for several weeks now. Predominantly black and white on the inside of the wings, when resting it displays dramatic patterning in red, yellow and black on the underside of the wings.

Caterpillars of the Imperial White are gregarious. They spin a silken web amongst the leaves of mistletoe upon which they feed, usually at night. Mass pupation also occurs on this web. The butterfly has two generations per year - pupae that overwinter are black, whilst those that occur in the warmer months are bright orange.

**FOWSP Membership Form**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. no. ....

Email.....

Special Interest:.....

Membership     \$20

Concession     \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper*