

December 2006

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

The End of Another Year

By Mike and Pat Coupar

It's been a fairly quiet year for FOWSP. One of the highlights for the group was the launch of our newest coloured brochures – 'Fungi' and 'Mosses and Liverworts'. FOWSP member, Bruce Fuhrer, provided the photographs and text for both of these excellent brochures.

Another event that was well attended was the Snakehandler Display by Sean McCarthy. This was held at Pound Bend in October.

The monthly TAG (Thursday Activity Group) team have been busy throughout the year, weeding, planting, cutting and painting woody weeds and assisting ranger with rabbit control works.

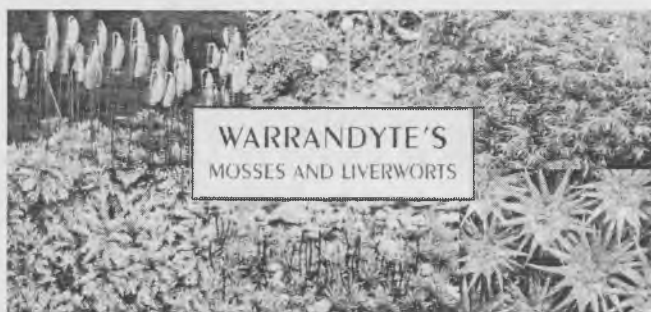
The program of Sunday walks, in conjunction with Manningham Council, and the monthly Thursday walks, have proved popular once again.

Our AGM was held on Sunday November 12th at the Folly. This was followed by a barbeque and a slide show with music by Cathy, Martyn and Trish on their trip to Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge). It was an excellent presentation made all the more

dramatic by a loud thunderstorm that lingered overhead.

At the AGM a new committee was elected for 2007. Ten of the previous committee were re-elected, while Michelle Hanslow and Geoff Speedy have resigned. Michelle has been an enthusiastic member for several years, but is unavailable as she is no longer based in Warrandyte.

Geoff Speedy has given much to the group over many years. We thank him for his enthusiasm and hard work. Some of his many achievements include obtaining a grant for the purchase of our market trailer and overseeing its fit out, as well as building the trailer for our canoes. Last year he organised the appointment of a publicity officer, Kirsten. He spent much time supervising her in the production of our frog posters and the brochures. Geoff has also been involved in delivering and returning the market trailer.



Bush Backyard

Bush Regeneration

By Fiona Cannon

My husband Ian, and I have lived on our property at Kangaroo Ground for almost 13 years and fortunately for us, there were some bush remnants on the land when we arrived.

During the first 9 years we were involved in a full time farming business and therefore had very limited time available to work on improving the bush. We had various zones on the block and this proved to be very useful when I had more time available to revegetate. We were also members of the local Landcare group and we received a grant for some revegetation works on various properties, including our own. This was the incentive I needed to begin revegetation.

Some of the plants were sourced from seed or cuttings found on the property (and grown at Edendale farm) and others I sourced from indigenous nurseries, including Warrandyte State Park. Over the last few years, I have planted some 600 plants. Often I would put in 10 plants at a time and on other occasions a few more, but it is amazing how many you can plant if you just persist with a few planted at every opportunity.

When planting I studied the various zones and tried to match my plantings to the various zones I found certain species growing in. I also used one of the early 'Live local, plant local' booklet published by the

Nillumbik Shire which had a zoning map in it and was guided by several people who advised me on where certain plant species would be found growing.

Since my plantings we have had a couple of fairly dry seasons which has added some stress for the plants and approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ are still alive now.

I have found it necessary to keep the plants well guarded as the kangaroos like the young wattles and the rabbits will destroy any plant material they can reach. We had rabbit proofed a large portion of our property but as adjoining

neighbours do no rabbit control, they have managed to breach the fences.

In recent years, Ian has also fenced off our gully area which consists of reeds, *Eucalyptus ovata* and various groundcovers and 3 of the *Eucalyptus ovata* I planted have survived. This area occasionally floods and we decided that the area needed to be fenced off from livestock to preserve the vegetation.

Earlier this year Ian and I purchased a new property at Eppalock, near Bendigo which we move to in mid-December. Knowing that I would not have the time this year to grow seedlings myself, I have arranged to have 500 locally indigenous plants grown by Tree Project for an autumn planting.

The property has some massive Yellow Box trees on it and some younger ones planted by the present owners. However, as the land was once farming land which has been subdivided, all of the undergrowth has been cleared. Fortunately, with state forest nearby and a listing of indigenous plants found in the area, I can begin work again. And so the regeneration project continues.....

I have enjoyed reading the monthly newsletter and would like to take the opportunity to wish all the FOWSP members the best for the future as we move on to a new chapter of our lives.

P.S. I have 2 Hurstbridge *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* which I have planted in semi-shaded positions and both are thriving (see Steven Katsineris' article in the November newsletter).

Wildflowers in Bloom

By Marjory Burgess

Every spring for the last twelve years I have chosen a day on which to list every wildflower actually in bloom on that day in our small piece of bush. These are not planted – just natural.

This year's list was made in September. It is always tempting to list plants that have just finished flowering or not quite out, but I don't.

Perhaps others will be interested in this idea.



Correa



Wildflowers in Bloom *contd.*

List of Plants Flowering in September

Beard Heath	<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>
Groundsel	<i>Senecio</i> (2 species)
Love Creeper	<i>Comesperma volubile</i>
Cranesbill	<i>Geranium potentilloides</i>
Grey Parrot-pea	<i>Dillwynia cinerascens</i>
Creamy Candles	<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>
Twining Fring-lily	<i>Thysanotus patersonii</i>
Early Nancy	<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>
Green Correa	<i>Correa reflexa</i>
Pinkbells	<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>
Variable Plantain	<i>Plantago varia</i>
Rice Flower	<i>Pimelea humilis</i>
Button Everlasting	<i>Helichrysum scorpioides</i>
Small Poranthera	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>
Raspwort	<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>
Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia virgata</i>
Wallflower Orchid	<i>Diuris corymbosa</i>
Pink Fingers	<i>Caladenia carnea</i>
Waxlip	<i>Glossodia major</i>
Maroonhood	<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i>
Nodding Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>
Dogwood	<i>Cassinia aculeata</i>
Red Box	<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>



Early Nancy

At Last!

By Joan MacMahon

We've lived in Bradleys Lane (near where Anderson's Creek joins the Yarra) for fifteen years without ever spotting any echidnas or blue-tongue lizards. We do see the occasional koala and kangaroo and there's always plenty of wombat poo on the track behind our place.

So imagine my surprise and pleasure when, on a recent sunny Friday afternoon, about 10 metres from the back door, I spied a dark brown furry thing covered in paler spines. It waddled towards me and then tried to bury itself when it saw me. So I left it alone and retreated inside.



Couldn't resist having another look a bit later though, and as luck would have it the neighbours children arrived home so I could show Tom (8), Molly (6) and even younger Patrick (2) our surprise visitor.

Their mum was also fascinated and would you believe as she returned to her car she saw a kangaroo bounding through their front yard! Fantastic! Kangaroos are a rarity here – too many fences and woofy dogs?

How much longer before we see a Blue-tongue Lizard? I'll let you know when we do!

Many Thanks

The editor would like to thank all those contributors who have shared their Bush Backyard stories with us throughout the year.

There will be no newsletter in January, but please keep a record of anything interesting that happens either in your garden or local bushland over summer and let us know for the February edition of Bush Backyard.

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

Acts of Vandalism

By Mike Coupar

Two months ago, on the front page of the October newsletter, I reviewed several of the Warrandyte State Park reserves. One of the highest rated was Pound Bend Reserve. Although, I was concerned that this most popular reserve is not locked at night despite a sign proclaiming 'Gates locked 6.00pm'.

Unfortunately the inevitable has happened. A couple of weeks ago a car was abandoned and set alight at the Tunnel end of the car park. The fire was so hot it totally melted the four tyres into the ground. All that remained of the Commodore was a metal shell and a charred number plate reading SPARX! Of most concern was a section of the nearby grassy bank that had caught fire. The potential for a bush fire starting can only be imaged.



Also in my previous article I had praised the installation of an audio panel erected by Manningham Council at Whipstick Gully. I regret to report that this has been vandalised. The metal front panel has been dented so badly that it no longer works.

In this terribly dry year any fire lit in the State Park is a worry. On Melbourne Cup day a fire was lit at the popular swimming spot in the Koornong reserve in North Warrandyte. As well, the perpetrators had cut trees and left broken bottles. There is also evidence of fires having been lit at Norman Reserve.

Another highly rated reserve in my article was Jumping Creek. This too has not been immune from trouble, with a serious incident occurring only recently in the reserve.

While it seems that summer has been with us for 3 months, in effect it has only just started. These incidents do not bode well for the long hot, dry months ahead.

People in Plants

By Shelagh Morton

Billardiera scandens (Apple Berry)

Jacques-Julien Houtou de la Billardiere, (1755-1834), is a long flowery name to bestow on a pretty climber. La Billardiere was the botanist and medical doctor on the Bruny D'Entrecasteaux expedition ("La Recherche" and L'Esperance" 1791-1796) sent by the National Assembly of France to search for the lost ships of La Perouse and to actively increase the knowledge of science and natural history. He collected over 4000 plants many not previously known, in King George Sound, near Esperance and Tasmania.

We know him in our area by the varieties of *Billardiera scandens* and also the dense tussock, *Poa labillardierei* we plant so much. He named the floral emblem of Tasmania (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and of Victoria (*Epacris impressa*).

He wrote accounts of the voyage that included generous observations on the Aborigine, and published definitive works on the vegetation of the southern lands. His *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* (1804-1806) is regarded as the first general flora of Australia.

Labillardiere's name is commemorated in palms, mosses, lichens, mushrooms and algae; not to mention a peninsula, a cape, animals and skinks. The genus *Labillardiera* was named in his honour by Sir James Edward Smith, the first president of the Linnean Society in London. His collection is now in the museum in Florence. I read that he was an independent, active, versatile and devoted naturalist as well as a committed republican.

From his *Relation du voyage a la recherche de La Perouse* I have found a moving quote when he was on one of his botanizing expeditions to Mt La Perouse, Recherche Bay 1793: "...solitary in the midst of these silent woods, the majesty of which was half disclosed to me by the feeble gleam of the stars, I felt myself penetrated with a sentiment of admiration of the grandeur of nature, which it is beyond my power to express."

Habitat Corridors Project

Manningham City Council has commenced a project to determine the location and effectiveness of habitat corridors in the municipality, as well as the opportunities for improving the mobility of wildlife, pollen and seeds across the landscape.

The project is supervised by Council's Ecologist, Dr Graeme Lorimer, with two assistant zoologists. Completion is due in June 2007.

Dr Lorimer is seeking **assistance** of locals who have observations of the movement of fauna, e.g.

- Observed movements of birds, koalas, kangaroos etc.;
- Seasonal use of particular areas, e.g. breeding grounds or summer feeding grounds;
- Month-by-month, or seasonal, observations of fauna at a site.

To contribute or obtain more details, please contact

Dr Graeme Lorimer, Manningham City Council

Phone 9840 9121 (Tues, Wed, Fri) or 0403 229 862 any time

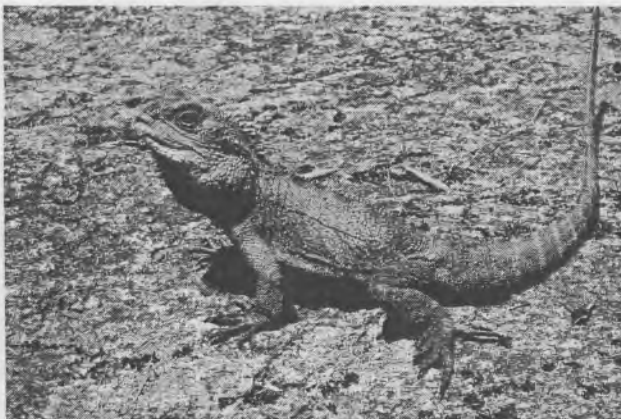
PO Box 1, Doncaster 3108

Dragons of the River

By Pat Coupar

I had heard they were there, but until the other week I had yet to see the Dragons of the Yarra.

We had been spraying weeds close to the river bank in North Warrandyte, when my co-worker exclaimed loudly. Knowing her to be a longtime 'snakeophobic', I assumed she must have seen a serpent. But when I looked to where she was pointing at the edge of the river, the object of her fright was not a snake, but a Gippsland Water Dragon. And it was huge - nearly a metre in length from head to tail.



These impressively large reptiles are not native to the Yarra, they occur naturally up the east coast of Australia – just reaching Victoria in the far east. Their presence in our Yarra is through captive animals escaping or being released deliberately when they became too big for their owners to cope with!



Water dragons hunt lizards, yabbies, frogs and fish, but they will also feed on insects, spiders, flowers and fruit.

I would be interested to hear from anyone who knows what the population of this introduced reptile is in the Yarra River and what impact it is having on the native fauna.

We watched the dragon basking for a while – it was unconcerned by our close proximity. Then it turned around and dived under the water disappearing into its murky depths.

Full Moon

A velvet sky of midnight blue,
where stars hang like drops of dew,
that twinkle and sparkle
as if caught by light.
Like myriads of diamonds,
they shine in the night.

Along the eastern skyline,
the darkness lightens.

As the moon appears,
the night sky brightens.

A large golden orb,
a harvest moon.

Turning night into day
with a ghostly gloom.

The earth is seen in sepia,
tones of fawn and brown.

An eerie look, an eerie feel,
as the moonlight shines around.

It lasts all night
as the brilliant moon arcs across the sky,
but fades at dawn and turns to grey
as the earth bids night goodbye.

Once more the sky is tinged with pink,
the shade that heralds the dawn.

The sun returns to greet the earth
as another day is born.

Alwynne Buntine



Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the November Warrandyte market: Ray Kruger, Marjan Kiewert, Lynne Vary, Jan Smits, Tony Honeyborne, Cath Andrew and Marie Krause.

The trailer was delivered by Peter Curry and returned by Wolfgang Krause. Unfortunately the trailer was not delivered for the October market

Anyone who would like to be rostered on to help with the trailer, even for just one hour, can contact Marie Krause on 9712 0498. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary.

"I SPY"

By B.G



Various Visitors

Gisela Spleiss, from Switzerland came with Barbara Coker to visit the nursery during September. They helped out, removing weeds from plants in tubes.

Theo Buskes and Janet from the Warrandyte area were obtaining grasses and shrubs for clump growing.

Anthony Dipietra visited and hopes to be a volunteer at the nursery once a fortnight.

Sandy Burgoyne visited, as did Martyn Hiley, a part-time ecological sustainability development project officer.

Pardalote Parking

An on the spot survey by our nursery manager Josh, asking the question "Where do Pardalotes nest?" elicited the following responses from members:

"In a bluey jacket hanging in the shed"

"In a clay bank next to the driveway in North Ringwood"

"In Ray's pile of brick sand"

"In the excavation of the in-ground pool"

"In a trailer frame"

"Gold Memorial car park"

And what brought this topic to the fore? On Thursday 16th November Pardalotes were observed flying in and out of holes in the compost pile at the depot.

Beautiful Book

Pat Coupar was heard to comment "The Friends library has acquired a beautiful book – Yellingbo, a Special Place".

Nursery Natives

Spotted were native bees, Choughs and a Brown Tree Frog and *Pseudophryne* sp.

Cotton Conundrum

In Queensland, the largest mega-irrigation property in the Southern Hemisphere – "on the edge of the Murray Darling system – boasts 130 square kilometres of irrigation based on the audacious proposition of simply appropriating floodwaters, in arrogant disregard of the health of the downstream environments in two other states.

It can store 480 giga litres of inflow this year."

Source: *The Bulletin*, October 17th 2006. An article by Bob Carr.

Count Down

On Thursday 23rd November 2 groups, consisting of 8 volunteers, and led by two rangers – Kylie and Jodie – walked along the Pound Bend slash break and river track.

Seven koalas, all adults, were sighted. "Very low numbers on last year" according to Jodie.

Gray Ardern was the main 'weed warrior' on the walk.

Westerfolds/Warrandyte

Conrad Annal is the team leader of the 'Environmental Program'. He operates between Westerfolds and Warrandyte State Park. Conrad came to us quite some time ago from the Gembrook office which manages Bunyip State Park.

Border Bother

On a recent television series based on 'Border Control' mention was made of 'guava rust' as a potential threat to our eucalypts. What is 'guava rust'?

Short Snippets

Whipbirds have been heard at Currawong Bush Park. What is the 'sustainability tree' at Currawong Park? More on this later.

Water, Water Everywhere and Not a Drop to Drink

Poor management of flows, inefficient irrigation, nearly 1000 uncapped artesian bores, evaporation and seepage from more than 70,000 kilometres of unlined and uncovered irrigation channels and high evaporation from storage all mean huge losses. Up to 50% of all water supplied is lost from open channels

Source: *Business Age Supplement*, Tuesday 8th October 2006, by Steve Burrell.

Cricket Clicks

We thought we had a new species at the Park, however, it turned out to be the quiet murmur, clicking and snicking heard on the radio concealed in the nursery. And it all started on Thursday 23rd November this year.



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Bogong Moth (*Agrotis infusa*)



In Spring thousands of Bogong Moths migrate to mountain tops in the Australian alps, where they remain more or less dormant over summer. The flight path of the moths takes them over the cities and suburbs of Melbourne and Canberra where they are attracted to artificial lights.

Over summer the moths congregate together in caves in the mountains. In days gone by Aborigines of the region would feast on the fat-rich moths.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Email.....

Special Interest:.....

Membership \$20

Concession \$10

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