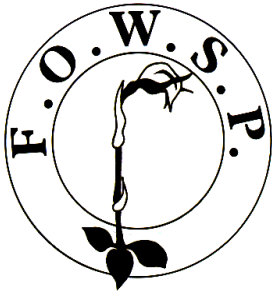


# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



## Newsletter

Website: [www.fowsp.org.au](http://www.fowsp.org.au)

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113  
ABN 94170156655/Incorporation No. A0024890C

### Editors Corner

Just when I think FOWSPians will pause for a well earned rest, someone starts another project; such as the wildflower garden beside the nursery. Some of our newest and youngest recruits dig right in (Photo R and story p. 9)

Carolyn initiated a native bee-house seminar and the number of enthusiastic participants means there are likely to be more in the future p. 2.

Not to be outdone, Joan Broadberry has discovered some ready made skink hotels p. 3.



Cathy gilds the lily by adding jam to the hot cross bun for Marion at a sumptuous morning tea.



Agata (mum), Natalia and Marcel, first time visitors to FOWSP enthusiastically assisted with this project. Learn more on page 9.

On page 4 Ken Crook, local historian, reflects upon Nilja, a 1920s home that's property is now part of Warrandyte State Park. Recent TAGs here have removed *Agapanthus*.

Be sure to check out various activities scheduled on pp. 4-6 and plan to help on the Market Trailer or occasionally transporting the trailer, info on p.7.

Importantly read about our native bush rats on p.7 to be sure you can differentiate them from the introduced vermin. See more of what is happening around FOWSP on pp. 8-9.

Read about the ranger's annual Phascogale count on p.9.

Photo left shows Cathy proving it was another jam-packed month. Enjoy ~ Linda

**Deadline for June 2015 edition newsletter is**

**Friday 23rd May 2015**

contributions can be emailed to Linda Rogan [editor@fowsp.org.au](mailto:editor@fowsp.org.au)  
or posted to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

### The Inaugural FOWSP Native Bee-house Seminar

FOWSPIAN CAROLYN NOEL, is a lady of many talents and skills: artist, teacher, trench-digger (see p. 9) and, I suspect, more yet to be revealed.

On April 2nd, Carolyn led approximately 14 enthusiastic participants through the process of making their first native bee house. Carolyn had chosen a few designs that could be created with recycled materials available from FOWSP. Materials used included bamboo stacks, wire, Corflute and recycled hardwood posts. Therefore, on this occasion there was no fee for materials but participants were asked to try to make 2 bee houses, 1 to take home and one for FOWSP. Some of the latter will be kept at FOWSP to offer alternative homes to our native bees and the rest will be sold to members and visitors.



Carolyn demonstrates techniques with wire.



Bee-houses, a family team activity.



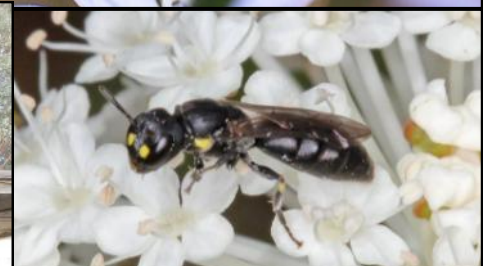
Completed tear-drop design bee homes.

It is likely that the members price will be \$15.

The houses made on this day were not expected to attract the popular Blue Banded Bee. They were more likely to attract lovely resin and leafcutter bees and masked bees (photos below) amongst others. There are many reports of native bee-houses being used in Queensland and further north. Not so many have been reported on within Victoria so the design and placement of the bee-houses is still, to some extent, experimental. Therefore we encourage all bee home makers to observe and report on “who” moves into their bee homes. We would expect this will include some native wasps and spiders as well as native bees. These holes will be too small to be of interest to the less desirable European wasps.

Many participants needed a bit more time and we already have a waiting list for the next seminar. It is likely to be announced on a Thursday and also by email at short notice. Contact Carolyn Noel [cnoe5355@tpg.com.au] if you wish to be notified of the next seminar.

Linda



Bamboo bee houses hanging at the nursery.(L) Potential residents (R) above a resin bee, *Megachile ferox*; below one of the masked bees, *Hylaeus quadricaps*. All photos by Linda

### SKINK HOTELS

AS I WALKED to my car after a mornings' work at the FOWSP nursery, I noticed a brief movement on the retaining wall to my right. I stood very still. There it was again! Looking carefully I saw a tiny skink. Its bronze head gleaming for a moment as it flashed into a hole. I slowly lowered myself to the ground and soon had the camera ready. As I waited and took photos, I realised that, by chance I had stumbled on an utterly delightful scene. A colony of skinks had adopted some of the holes in the pine planks as their home. Attentively I settled down to watch. Leaning slightly forward I counted three skinks just visible in one of the circular recesses. In another, two little heads peeped out, one on top of the other. (Photos below).



There were at least eight skinks active in the area. Some were basking in the autumn sun; others were popping in or out of the holes. A few were scurrying around in the vegetation below. My brain tossed up the phrase, "skink hotels". It seemed to be a perfect fit. After all, FOWSPians had been talking about and building "bee hotels" for weeks.

The reptiles were common garden skinks, all small in size; the largest, perhaps only 8 cm. long. These skinks, like all reptiles, are cold blooded and are therefore sun-lovers. It would not be accidental that they had chosen north-west facing hotels to book into. Garden skinks are grey-brown with a dark strip extending through the eye to the tail. On the body, a second flecked, yellowish stripe merges into it. The top of the head is rich bronze colour. These pretty creatures are also known as Pale-flecked Garden Sunskinks. You are very likely to have them at your place, as they are common in suburban backyards across most of southern Australia. I occasionally find them inside the house. They probably run in under the doors.

Garden skinks have small, sharp teeth and feed on invertebrates, including slaters, slugs, flies, grubs, cockroaches, earwigs and many other insects, which makes them an asset to any garden. Although beware, they also love strawberries. The females lay half a dozen small, white eggs between summer and mid-autumn, often in large communal clutches under rocks or inside logs. The common garden skink's main enemies are birds and especially cats. They employ a last-ditch protective strategy of dropping their tail if caught by a predator.

Note to self. ALWAYS bring a good camera to the FOWSP nursery. And take TIME to observe the enchanting natural world that is so close, but often overlooked in the rush to get 'important' things done!

*Joan Broadberry*

### AGAPANTHUS REMOVAL AT 'NILJA' Ken Crook

The TAG team has been very active in removing agapanthus from 'NILJA'. The Aboriginal name, 'Nilja' means 'Blue Hills'. It is believed that the Aborigines used the place below the house as a regular means of crossing over to the other side of the Yarra as it was quite easy to cross when the river level was down.

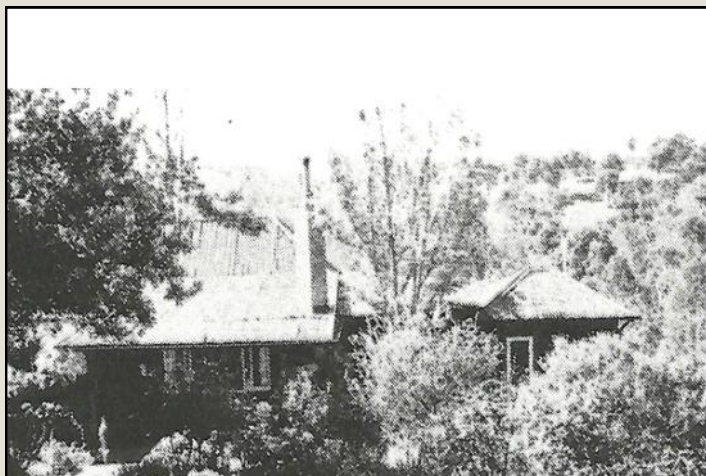
The property was originally part of Longridge Farm owned by Alexander Fraser. He sold 6.5 hectares to Doctor and Angela Booth in September 1919. When the Booths bought the land, there was no house on it and they moved a building from Port Melbourne in one piece to its new location. The house was of weatherboard construction with a corrugated iron roof. Angela Booth was a fascinating woman, well ahead of her time. She fought for social justice for women and was the first woman councillor to be elected in the Shire of Doncaster and Templestowe. Angela was only the third woman councillor to be elected in Victoria.

The Rutledge family bought Nilja in the spring of 1948 from the Booths. In 1953, part of the land was sectioned from Nilja. This new property was called 'Mulloka' and Margot Bennett and Dorothy Rutledge ran it as a children's home, opening in May of that year with ten children in residence. The home was destroyed in the 1965 bush fires. In 1975, the land was transferred to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW).

Dorothy Rutledge met and married Sir George Reid (who was a family friend and Member of Parliament for the area) in 1973, following the



Agapanthus – front driveway at rear of house 2007 Photo Ken Crook



Nilja – photograph taken in 1988

*(Continued on page 8)*

### **TAGS** (Thursday activity groups)

**TAGS meet at the nursery at 9.00 am for a 9.15 pm departure. Please remember to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather, and please bring your own filled water bottle. Contact number: 0408 317 327**

|               |           |             |                    |                           |       |      |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| <b>Thurs.</b> | 14th May  | 9am-12 noon | Fitzsimons Wetland | Planting                  | FOWSP | Easy |
| <b>Thurs.</b> | 28th May  | 9am-12 noon | Lower Orchard Tr   | Planting                  | FOWSP | Easy |
| <b>Thurs.</b> | 11th June | 9am-12 noon | One Tree Hill      | Aggies and Pittos weeding | FOWSP | Diff |

#### ***Difficulty ratings:***

**Easy:** Even terrain, some light lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Few tripping hazards.

**Moderate:** Uneven terrain, light to heavy lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Tripping hazards present.

**Difficult:** Steep terrain, light to heavy lifting, working in over-grown areas and lots of bending. Many tripping hazards and slippery surfaces present.

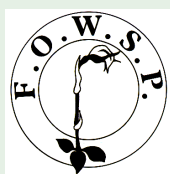
Check the website for any changes at <http://fowsp.org.au/activities.php>

**Please note TAGS and activities will be cancelled on Total Fire Ban days or when weather conditions are deemed hazardous.**

| FOWSP COMMITTEE 2014 |                    |                          | OTHER FOWSP CONTACTS        |                              |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Artur Muchow         | 0415 383328        | Secretary                | <u>Nursery Manager</u>      | Josh Revell                  |
|                      |                    |                          | <u>Nursery Phone</u>        | 0408 317 327                 |
|                      |                    |                          |                             | nursery@fowsp.org.au         |
| Lynda Gilbert        | 9844 0106          | Treasurer                | <u>Park Office</u>          | 9844 2659                    |
| Linda Rogan          | 9435 5806          | Newsletter editor        | <u>Newsletter assist</u>    | Joan Broadberry              |
| editor@fowsp.org.au  |                    |                          |                             | 9846 1218                    |
| Jason Patton         | mobile 0402 121838 | Webmaster and membership | <u>Wildlife Rescue</u>      | Adriana Simmonds             |
| jason@parau.com      |                    |                          |                             | 9722 2908                    |
| Cathy Willis         | 0418 142297        |                          | <u>Koala Rescue</u>         | Julie Pryor                  |
|                      |                    |                          |                             | 0417587798                   |
| Gray Ardern          | 0418 190261        |                          | <u>Librarian</u>            | Judy Green                   |
|                      |                    |                          |                             | 9844 2096                    |
| Caitriona Young      | 9844 2842          | Minute Secretary         | <u>Market Trailer</u>       | Caitriona Young              |
|                      |                    |                          |                             | 9844 2842/0411478410         |
|                      |                    |                          |                             | thefouryoungones@yahoo.co.uk |
| John Blake           | 0418 329 937       |                          | <u>Facebook Coordinator</u> | Kelly Wooster                |
| Kelvin Watkins       | 0488 039 774       |                          |                             |                              |
| Sarah Qualtrough     | 0431 268 344       |                          | Website:                    | www.fowsp.org.au             |

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of FOWSP

Newsletter Team this month: Linda Rogan, Peter Rogan and Jason Patton, Mel Coupar (Line drawings)



## FOWSP/Manningham Thursday nature walks

Leader: Cathy Willis



Each walk is paced to allow participants to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the area. Please wear appropriate clothing for the weather including a hat and sturdy footwear. Bring a water bottle and snack. All distances and finishing times are approximate.

**Thursday 28th May 9:30am The Yarra Brae Escarpment.** From the gentle river flats near the confluence of the Yarra River and Brushy Creek, we will climb over the steep rocky escarpment and back down to the Clifford Park river terrace. **Distance:** 3km **Time:** 3 hrs **Rating:** Difficult

**Thursday 25th June The Koornong Block** This section of Warrandyte State Park is directly across the river from Manningham's iconic Jumping Creek Reserve, offering beautiful views from the other side of the river. Fungi and mosses abound on the sheltered rocky track edges. **Distance:** 3km **Time:** 2.5 hrs **Rating:** Difficult

**Thursday 23rd July 9:30am Glynn's Wetlands** From the high ridge looking across the river to Pound Bend we descend through the Glynn's old farm on to Bob's wetlands. Here we pass some of the deepest holes in the river under the almost vertical Naughton's cliffs. **Distance:** 4km **Time:** 3 hrs **Rating:** Moderate

### Ratings:

**Easy** – Flat or undulating well formed tracks/paths with low tripping hazards.

**Moderate** – May include some moderately steep or narrow sections or have higher tripping hazards.

**Difficult** – Includes steep and/or narrow sections, slippery sections, or high tripping hazards.

**Bookings are essential as places are limited. Bookings open 2 months before the walk date.** Meeting points will be provided at the time of booking, to book call 9840 9362 or email [eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au](mailto:eeadmin@manningham.vic.gov.au)

Download the schedule for all 2015 on <http://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/walks-and-seminars> or pick up a copy at the FOWSP nursery.

## FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 9.30 am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. Propagation takes place from 9.30 am to 12.30 midday.

No prior experience necessary -

There is always someone available to show you the ropes.

### NURSERY OPENING HOURS

The nursery is open for plant sales every Thursday.

9.30 am to 12.30 pm and

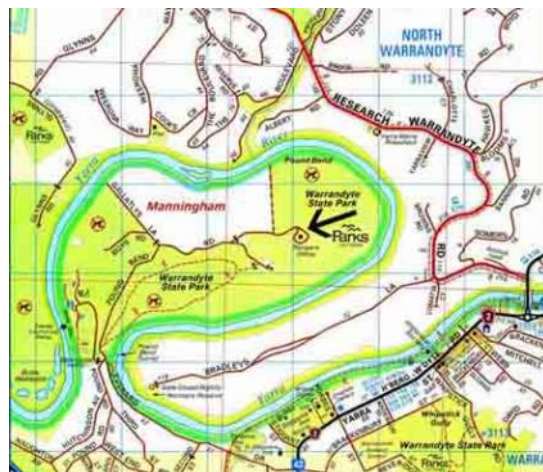
the first Saturday of every month, 9am to 1pm (to coincide with the Warrandyte Market) and the first Sunday of each month

2 pm to 4 pm.

**Closed Christmas and New Years day. Also closed to customers and volunteers on days of severe weather and on Total Fire Ban Days**

**Prices:** Members \$2.00

Non-members \$2.50



Copyright 2008 Melway Publishing Pty Ltd  
Reproduced from Melway Edition 36 with permission

## Manningham City Council Environment Seminars

The Environmental Seminars are held on the first Wednesday of the month.

Many of the seminars will be complemented with field sessions to facilitate broader education on the topics. No bookings are required for the evening talks; however, RSVPs must be provided for the field sessions. Due to popularity of the field trips, bookings are limited to 3 field trips per person. Bookings open now. You must attend the corresponding seminar to keep your field trip booking.

**Venue:** Bull and Bush Room at the Grand Hotel, Warrandyte **Time:** 7.30 pm

**Enquiries:** For more information, please phone Lyn Meredith on 9840 9326.



**Wednesday 3rd June 2015 Seminar: Geoscience Sites - what they are, why we need them and are we taking care of them** Dr Neville Rosengren has spent much of the past 40 years identifying sites of geological and

geomorphological significance across most of Victoria (and elsewhere). In this presentation, he will describe the concept of geoheritage sites, a methodology for identifying and evaluating them, and present a case for greater recognition and legislative protection. Case studies from varied environments will be presented with particular reference to the intriguing nature of the Yarra River and Yarra Valley.

**Thursday 4 June 2015, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm Field Trip: A Tortuous Course! The Gorges of the Yarra with Dr Neville Rosengren** This field trip will visit sites of geomorphological significance of the Yarra's tortuous course from Warburton to Warrandyte. Many of the gorges of the Yarra will be sighted. Bookings are essential as places are limited.

Download the schedule through **March 2016** on <http://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/walks-and-seminars> or pick up a copy at the FOWSP nursery.

### Next Committee Meeting

**Date:** 12th May Tuesday

**Venue:** Ranger Station, Pound Bend

**Time:** 19:30 pm sharp



## FOWSP MARKET TRAILER

Thanks to those who helped out on Saturday April 4th.

Diane and John Baird  
Lee and Graham Deacon  
Jeff Cranston and Peta Cumming  
Lyndy Gilbert and Ken Crook



Special thanks to **Jason Patton** who transported the market trailer. More volunteers are needed to roster for this task.

The Warrandyte market is held on the first Saturday morning of the month from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm at Stiggants Reserve. Volunteers are rostered in pairs to (man/woman) the FOWSP information trailer for just one hour.

If you are interested in being on the market roster in 2015 or can occasionally transport the trailer

**please contact Jan Falconer 0419 872 096 email [janece5@bigpond.com](mailto:janece5@bigpond.com)**

First timers are always paired with someone more experienced.

**Future market dates are:** Saturday May 2nd and June 6th

### IS THAT RAT, YOU JUST SAW, A NATIVE RAT?

Or more specifically South-eastern Australia's *Rattus fuscipes*? If you are not sure then consider these identifiable features and habits of the Bush Rat:

- Tail slightly shorter than body and head length( Black Rat, *Rattus rattus* has tail longer than body and head)
- Nocturnal habit – did you see it out at night time?
- Always located well away from sheds and dwellings ( *Rattus rattus* only nest in building and infrastructure )
- Rounded pink ears
- Brown/red/tan thick soft fur on back and greyish white fur on belly
- Yellow front teeth!
- Slightly pointed nose / face

The dead specimen pictured was found 15 August 2015 on a Wonga Park private property near to a Brushy Creek billabong. 'The Mammals of Australia', edited by Ronald Strahan explains that males and females have a high mortality rate in the autumn due to highly sexualised activity over the summer. The death of the older animals will allow the new generation to overwinter in burrows and emerge to a bounty of food resources in the spring. Bush rats are cute and secretive and favour fungi as a food source in the winter when other food resources are not available. The shy Bush Rat lives in woodlands well away from houses and sheds and make little grass nests in burrows. The black and white night time image was taken February 2014 with a fauna camera set up at Brushy Creek Billabong. I thought that it was an introduced rat but can now positively identify it as another native fauna record for the site.

Hooray! *Lyn Meredith,*

Environmental and Land  
Management Officer Man-  
ningham City Council

Quote from Discovery  
Centre Museum Victoria  
June 7, 2011 "Bush rats  
are **not** vermin; they are a  
native species and as  
such do not have the  
health and hygiene con-  
cerns associated with introduced rodents such as the Black Rat, Brown Rat and House Mouse." Ed.



Above: Native Bush Rat *Rattus fuscipes* notice the tail is shorter than the head and body together  
Below: yellow teeth and slightly pointed face.



**NOTE FROM JULIE:**

Thank you Linda for sharing your knowledge on native bees with Mitch and me That's what I love about coming to FOWSP . Always a learning experience for young and old. (Mitch has been coming for about 8 years! Ed)

This is a quote I love from an early FOWSP news letter.

IN THE END, WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE LOVE ;  
WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ; AND WE WILL  
UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT. **BABA DIOUM**

*Julie*

**VISIT FROM OLIVE above**

It was lovely to see Olive, a FOWSPian since at least 1988 when she was on the committee. She moved to Coochiemudlo Island some years ago. Above Olive (centre) seen here with her daughter (L) and Allison (R).

**STAR PERFORMERS FROM OUR CUTTINGS CREW**

Its a pleasure for the editor to stand with Alwynne and Irene, two of our long serving members who employ their expertise tirelessly propagating via plant cuttings. Photo right by Cathy Willis



*(Continued from page 4)*

death of his first wife. The Nilja property became their home until November 1988. Sir George and Lady Reid maintained their interest in Warrandyte through their Church and membership of the Warrandyte Historical Society of which they were Foundation members. The Reids were pleased that Nilja went to the MMBW after they moved to East Doncaster.

Unfortunately, the house was destroyed by a suspicious fire in 2007. However, the property's beautiful trees and wonderful view has been preserved for everyone to enjoy.

*Reference: Excerpts from a monograph on Sir George and Lady Reid, Warrandyte Historical Society, written by Bruce Bence*



Driveway to house looking northwest to Alexandra Road Entrance 2007 Photo Ken Crook

### A wildflower garden especially for native bees and pollinators.



Carolyn has been accused of digging trenches in honour of ANZAC Day. In reality she has broken the first sod and is guiding the creation of our emerging wildflower garden to complement the native bee hotel. In the photos above Gloria and Joy are practicing their digging skills and Val is demonstrating her proficiency with a pick. About this time, three most welcome new-comers joined in the effort (see page 1). Carolyn has chosen to dig deep swales along the contours of the slope that end with their low points in a small bog garden, to make sure that any rain that falls will not get away. Plants so far include Tufted Bluebell *Wahlenbergia communis*, Gold dust wattle *Acacia acinacea*, Spur Velleia *Velleia paradoxa*, some daisies and much more to come. Linda

### Brush-tailed Phascogale monitoring program April 2015

The yearly Brush-tailed Phascogale monitoring program was held over 5 days on the 3rd week of April. Rangers set out the traps on a Monday and they were checked early each of the next 4 mornings. The traps used are Elliott traps but they were hung on brackets in trees in an attempt to reduce the number of rats and unwanted catches that might occur at ground level. Traps were baited with a mix of peanut butter, oats and honey. A cylinder and some coconut fibre were added for comfort to any trapped animal.

Each morning the traps were checked starting at 6:30am, a time picked to minimise any discomfort for trapped animals. As luck would have it, the only day I could attend was the one where no Phascogale were trapped so I still haven't seen a live Phascogale. It was still an action-packed day with some good non-Phascogale finds. For this story, see the nature column in Warrandyte Diary for May.



Ranger Kylie and Lauren replace a trap.



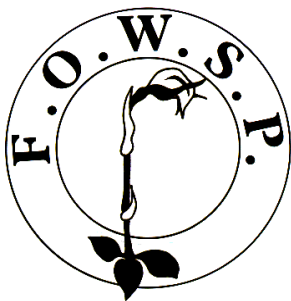
The Agile Antechinus above L was caught in a trap. The Slender-tailed Dunnart above R was found at home under a tile. Its feet (inset) confirm the species as being *Sminthopsis murina*.

However, one Phascogale was trapped on each of the other days for a total of 3. The most exciting news was that one was trapped 750m within the burnt area at Kinglake. Phascogale are badly affected by fire and none had been seen here since the 2009 fires. Importantly, this one was a female of a very healthy weight.

The Phascogale is a marsupial, about rat sized with a stunning black bushy tail. It is related to Tasmanian Devils, Quolls and smaller Antechinus and Dunnarts (these last 2 were seen

on my day), all in the Dasyurid (hairy-tail) family. Nearly all members of this family in Australia have been under pressure since the arrival of Europeans. The Warrandyte area is a core part of their present range and where cats are not present, they are known to cohabitate with humans in Warrandyte, a very special treat where it occurs.

Linda



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**



**Eastern Small-eyed Snake *Cryptophis nigrescens***

This snake is venomous. It should only be handled with care by experienced animal handlers. Its fangs are short making it less likely to gain a purchase on human hand except for the soft folds in finger webbing. This one had taken up residence in a Dunnart's tile home at Kinglake NP.

It is secretive and feeds chiefly on lizards. It may be seen if lifting bark or rocks in the bush. Larger snakes may also be found this way so great care must be taken. Of course whenever investigating animal homes, they must be carefully returned to their original status. *Linda*

**May 2015 Vol.33 no. 4**

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE**

**FOWSP Membership Renewal Form**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone no. .... Email .....

Membership (family) \$30  
Concession \$15

Newsletter by email ☐ (tick box)

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or renew on the website [www.fowsp.org.au](http://www.fowsp.org.au) with the option of direct deposit payment.

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper*

**Email photo bonus page**

Clockwise from above left:  
Marcel rests from his digging, Natalia helps with the  
planting while Carolyn waters in. See also p. 9.

Rangers Kylie and Jodie are pleased to find several  
Antechinus in an Elliott trap.

One Antechinus is pleased to make a quick exit after  
being sexed, weighed and marked.

Lastly an Elephant Snail, a type of limpet, found at  
Point Leo at low tide in April when the Victorian Na-  
ture Photography Group was exploring the tide pools



**Your photos can appear on this page (subject to space available) if you email them as follows:  
[lindarogan@netspace.net.au](mailto:lindarogan@netspace.net.au)**