

October 1997

# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



## Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

### Bushfire Threat Looms

By Pat Coupar

Since the onset of the current El Niño event at the beginning of autumn, there has been an expansion of the area experiencing abnormally dry conditions. Dry autumn and winter weather was experienced over an area covering virtually all of Victoria, most of New South Wales and eastern South Australia, northern and eastern Tasmania, and parts of southwest Western Australia. The Head of the Bureau of Meteorology's National Climate Centre, Mr Bill Kininmonth, said that the indicators of an El Niño event continue and are unusually strong. He said "The waters in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean have warmed to such a degree that they have reached record high values for this time of year. In addition, the Pacific trade winds have eased significantly, and the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) dropped 10 points to a value of -20".

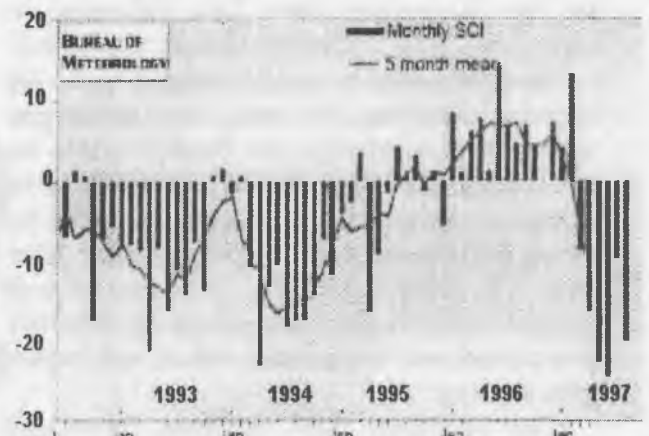
The outputs from computer models at the start of September confirm the historical pattern of development, and point to a high probability of strong El Niño conditions persisting for the remainder of the year. Consequently, eastern Australia faces a serious risk of total spring rainfall being significantly below average. This will exacerbate the current dry conditions and lead to an early onset to the period of high fire danger.

Basically there are two types of bushfire - grass fire and forest fire. A forest fire is more intense than a grass fire due to the thick vegetation, whereas a grass fire can move more quickly with the wind - each can be impossible to

control on a bad day. If a fire comes through Warrandyte this summer, it will be a forest fire.

As a result of the long dry spell (the driest 11 months on record), heavy fuels (leaves, twigs, branches etc) have dried out and will increase the intensity of a fire should it happen. The welcome rain over September, 73.5mm for the month in Warrandyte, will have slowed down the drying process. However, it would take above average rainfall over the whole of spring to reverse the current dry conditions. But good spring rains will cause grass to grow to its full height and this will only add to the fuel load when it dries out over summer.

So what can we do? It is best to seek advice now from the local CFA on how to prepare yourself, your house and your property for a bushfire. If you are concerned, as we all should be, you can ring either Jeff Adair (9844 3375), Nan Oates (9735 1511) or if you are interested in a fireguard group contact Steve Pascoe (9735 1511).



# The Bushland Response

By Pat Coupar

**T**he longest dry spell on record has been followed by a month of average rainfall. The effect on the bush has been interesting with both expected and unexpected responses.

As summer progressed into autumn with still no significant falls of rain, plants began to suffer. There was a distinct progression, leaves turned from green to yellow to brown and finally dropped. This leaf drop was excessive compared to 'normal' years. Trees lost not only leaves, but twigs and branches and some toppled altogether. The fuel load was mounting.

Autumn flowering plants had a hard time, some autumn greenhoods refused to flower at all, other orchids like the gnat and midge were late. And so the pattern continued. The Correas and Common Heath, both prodigious winter flowerers, didn't really get going until spring.

The behaviour of Warrandyte's wattles has been particularly interesting. It seemed to me that, with the exception of Lightwood and Black

Wattle which flower very late, the rest flowered more or less simultaneously. To see Silver Wattles still flowering along the river accompanied by Blackwoods is most unusual. As for the eucalypts, well Red Box is having a

bumper year. It's dense clusters of creamy flowers have been attracting the birds for many weeks.



I had expected it to be a very poor year for the spring orchids, and although it's not great, a number of species have been flowering over the

last few weeks - some in profusion. Once again, like the wattles, some species are late, some are early and some have got it just right.

Finally, we will not know the real long-term effects of the drought for many years. This is why monitoring is so important. If you are out in the bush, simply record your observations at the time. Who knows these could prove to be extremely valuable records for the future.

## Worth Repeating

### MP wants extra funding for park

**T**he Opposition spokeswoman on Environment, Conservation and Land Management, Sherryl Garbutt, has called on the State Government to provide extra funding for the Warrandyte State Park following its expansion.

The park was recently extended with the inclusion of the Mt Lofty area. Mrs Garbutt who is also the State Member for Bundoora, said the new section had been cleared and would need extensive restoration and revegetation. "If the money is to come out of the existing budget, other areas will suffer," she said. "The expansion is good news however the new area needs extensive pest control and revegetation which will require extra funding."

The additional 88.4 hectares, previously owned by Melbourne Water, have increased the park to 690 hectares.

At the head of the Warrandyte gorge, the Mt Lofty extension has significant geological, flora and fauna features. "Although the Government had promised an extra \$250,000 for the park at the last election, little of this has come through and at the same time staffing and resources have been slashed for the rest of the park," Mrs Garbutt said.

Ron Taylor, from the Friends of Warrandyte State Park, said there had been a loss of staff at the park over the past few years. "You have a situation where you have more added to the park and less people to look after it," he said. "There are just not the staff available to do weed control and maintenance." But a spokesman from Parks Victoria said a new ranger position would be created and that would bring the number of staff at the park to five. The spokesman said \$250,000 would be spent on the park over three years.

This year \$60,000 had been spent on capital works and \$30,000 on a management plan for the Mt Lofty area, he said. "The balance will be spent next year across the whole park," he said. "Our plan is to keep improving the park."

Source: *Diamond Valley News* September 3rd 1997

# "I SPY"

By B.G

## ***Market Matters***

Which crew of men, between them, put up and take down the 'Friends' stall at the Warrandyte market every month? Neal Tessier, Tim Bedford, Anthony Owen and Ross Coupar all may be seen performing this essential task early morning and early afternoon.

## ***Stall Staff August***

Kathy Papalia, Anne Warren and Katherine Byrne staffed the 'Friends' stall, answering enquiries, selling books and generally promoting the FOWSP activities. Well done.

## ***September Stall***

Eve Scopes, Wolfgang and Marie Krause, Antje Bauer and Tim Ferguson were all volunteers helping at the September market FOWSP stall. Thank you.

## ***Tourism Tract***

Andrea Jones (who used to work at the 'Bakery' years ago), is preparing 2000 word essay on "The Environmental, Social and Economical effects of tourism at Warrandyte State Park". Andrea is currently studying for a Certificate in Tourism at Box Hill TAFE.

## ***'Frogland' Phenomenon***

An enormous crater has appeared at the Park depot's 'Frogland'. It is completely covered (lined) with a thick rubber sheet. What is going on?

## ***Betty Better***

Betty Oke, whose consistent efforts have ensured our market stall is always well organised and staffed, is feeling better after a bout of illness.

## ***Xmas Cards***

The Warrandyte Diary's Xmas cards are available. They are different, appropriate to our present time and particularly suitable for overseas mailing. Available at the Warrandyte market or contact the Diary office or Jan Tindale (9844 3719).

## ***Sighting Series?***

Anthony "Ant" Owen is interested in following up the 'Sightings of Fauna Book'. We hope he will elaborate on this topic.

## ***Dry Rainforest***

On a fleeting visit recently to Lamington National Park in Queensland, and a Herculean climb up Mount Warning (Tweed Valley), it was obvious that the east coast of Australia is lacking rain. Rainforest paths were dry and dry leaves littered the forest floor. "The driest for five years" one bus driver said.

## ***"Cameron's Car Konks"***

Seen in the main street of Warrandyte at 2.00pm after his hard mornings work at the State Park, Don Cameron's reliable 1972 mustard-coloured 4WD with it's bonnet up. Trouble? Yes! And the vehicle even had to be towed away. However, all is well now.

## ***Gnome Liberation Front***

Fifteen garden gnomes found by the Ranger Swat Team were handed in to the Warrandyte police station.

## ***The Best Get Bogged***

How did Andrew Nixon, Ranger-in-Charge get bogged in the middle of the depot paddock?

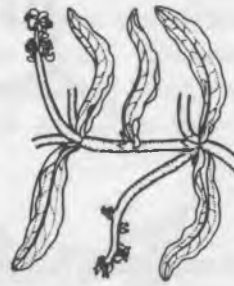


# Bittersweet Planting

By Cathy Willis

Planting some rare Mud Docks (*Rumex* *bidens*) at Mt. Lofty caused mixed emotions. Finally this special wetland and the magnificent surrounding hills are officially a part of Warrandyte State Park. The down side is that the Mud Docks were in desperate need of a safe home, having lost their billabong habitat immediately upstream of Mt. Lofty. This land has now been 're-formed' for the new golf course.

About ten of us turned up to plant species that grow only in wetland areas, which are few and far between in our area. All these species have their special niche, preferring varying depths and periods of inundation. This is reasonably straightforward in an average spring, but we quickly discovered both the wetland areas were totally dry. We wandered around the empty depressions looking for landmarks. "Wasn't it about two feet deep here last year?" "It was deep where that big rock is I'm sure".



Many wetland plants disappear in unfavourable conditions, usually reappearing when it suits them. Luckily some species were hanging in despite the big dry, so we took clues from

them - looking for associated species - those that like to grow in the same sort of habitats as the ones we were planting.

The soil was beautifully soft and rich, a joy to dig compared to our usual rocky slopes. In a couple of hours 'weed barriers' of dense rushes had been extended around the edges of the wetlands, everything was planted, the most precious guarded, and hundreds of young thistles removed.

Wetlands are continually changing. Next time we visit it may be in gumboots, or even waders. However, the plants have been through all these changes many times before. Some may disappear, but then there is always something new. Who knows what seed may be stored in the soil waiting for a 'different' season to appear? Come along next time and find out.

## HOOP Conference (Hand's off our Park's)

**Local people, local issues, local groups across Victoria**

**Date: Saturday October 18th 9.00am to 5.00pm**

**Venue: St Kilda Town Hall, Corner of Brighton Rd and Carlisle St.**

## "No Entry"

We have another new addition to the library. Save Albert Park kindly sent us a copy of "NO ENTRY". This is a beautiful photographic essay by Nina Landis, a collection of images of the protests to save Albert Park. I showed the book to a friend, who actually went to the Grand Prix. She looked through it quietly and then said

"this brings tears to my eyes". Black and white photography can be very powerful and these photos certainly are. Whether its the image of the bomb crater like site with a boy playing in the dirt where 20 people were arrested that gets you, or the dead possum starring up from the centre of the track, these are sure to provoke a reaction no matter what your position on Albert Park.

Cathy Willis

# FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

## **OCTOBER 9TH One Tree Hill Planting**

*Meet on site at 1.15 pm*

There are several boxes of plants that desperately need to go in the ground. Once this is done Diane will lead us on a walk to see how the wildflowers are faring in this dry year.

**Leader** Diane Silveri. Meet at the Watson's Ck car park Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. (Melways ref. map 272 F3)

## **OCTOBER 16TH Orchids and Other Wildflowers MORNING ACTIVITY**

*Meet at the depot to pool cars at 10.00am*

We will be touring various areas including the Butterfly Reserves at Eltham and Ironbark Rd, Diamond Ck to discover the rich diversity of wildflowers in the close proximity to Warrandyte.

**Leader** Flora Anderson. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

## **OCTOBER 23RD Beautification of Norman's Reserve**

*Meet on site at 1.15 pm*

The car park at the end of Bradley's Lane needs our attention. The central area has been sprayed to kill most of the weeds. We shall be planting some specials 'pretty' plants into these areas.

**Leader** Joan MacMahon. Meet at the car park at the end of Bradleys Lane, North Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 B12)

## **OCTOBER 30TH Briza Attack on Fourth Hill MORNING ACTIVITY**

*Meet on site at 10.00am*

Last year we removed quaking Grass (*Briza maxima*) from a good orchid area on Fourth Hill. The results are most encouraging so we will carry on from where we left off. More hands, less Briza.

**Leader** Pat Coupar. Meet at the car park at the end of Tunnel St, off Webb St, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 35 F1)

## **NOVEMBER 6TH A Trip to Kinglake National Park**

*Meet at the Jehosophat Gully picnic area at 11.00am*

Ex-Warrandyte ranger, Stephen Anderson, has very kindly agreed to show us around some of 'his' new park. We will visit two contrasting environments - heathland and mountain ash forest and see the now famous lyrebird location where Steve took David Attenborough.

**Leader** Stephen Anderson. Meet at the Jehosophat Gully picnic area just off the Kinglake - Healesville Rd. (Melways edition 24 ref. map 250 J8)

## **NOVEMBER 13TH Protecting the Nursery Garden MORNING ACTIVITY**

*Meet on site at 10.00am*

The planting outside the old hardening off area has grown fantastically. The plants are some of Warrandyte's rarest species. The trouble is we can't see them for all the black plastic rabbit guards. Today we will remove the guards and construct a small fence around the plantings.

**Leaders** Pat Coupar and Cathy Willis. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

## **NOVEMBER 20TH Propagation at the Nursery MORNING ACTIVITY**

*Meet on site at 10.00am*

There is still plenty of work to do around the nursery. Now is a good time to do some cuttings of those difficult to grow wildflowers.

**Leaders** Pat Coupar and Cathy Willis. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

**For more information on any of these activities contact Jan Tindale  
9844 3719**





# Calendar of Sunday Events

## OCTOBER 25TH - 26TH Spring Camp at Anglesea

It's the perfect time to see one of the best wildflower heathlands in the State. Come for the day or stay for two. Camp at the Anglesea Family Caravan Park.

## NOVEMBER 23RD Annual General Meeting and VNPA picnic at The Folly pring

A big day. The AGM will be held first. This will be followed by various walks to show VNPA members 'our' State Park.

## Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series



## Wildlife



6th November Andrew Bennet Wildlife Corridors  
4th December Linton Staples Foxes

Held at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month at the Warrandyte Community Centre,  
Yarra St Warrandyte  
Enquiries: Bill Mallinson 9840 9338

## FOWSP Committee

Mike Coupar 9903 9567  
Ron Taylor 9844 4285  
Flora Anderson 9722 1776  
  
Pat Coupar 9844 1650  
Joan MacMahon 9844 3213  
Anthony Owen 9844 1344  
  
Cathy Willis 9844 1841

Contact person  
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Public Officer  
  
Newsletter editor  
Newsletter editor  
Treasurer  
  
Secretary

Jenny Hoskin 9808 9231  
Alistair Traill 9722 1518

## Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

## Market

Betty Oke 9844 3763

## Park Office

9844 2659

# CD ROM Review

By Mike Coupar

**Y**ou won't be able to read these in bed as you would a book, but they do have their advantages, particularly in the amount of information they hold. Both can be borrowed from the FOWSP library, but you will need to find yourself a computer with a CD ROM drive to read them. Follow the simple installation instructions and away you go.

The **Victorian Flora Database** is produced by Viridans Biological



Databases with input from the Gould League and the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (as it was then called). It holds records of more than 4,500

indigenous and introduced species, descriptive text of 600 and 1170 photos. Rare and threatened categories are given where relevant. I particularly like the option to search for plants in discrete areas. Each area covers 270 square kilometres, that you can zoom into from a choice of 10 different maps of Victoria. The Landsat map is especially interesting because you can see the forests, deserts and farm land. Some of the other maps are of roads and towns, rainfall, topography and soil type. Once an area is selected your computer gathers all the data for each of the species. I selected the grid containing Warrandyte from the roads and towns map and

came up with 1001 species! This took my fairly slow computer about 2 minutes to find all this data from the disc. The species are arranged either by scientific or common name, from where you can scroll down and find the Victoria-wide distributions for each and get the 'big picture' of printable text and colour photos.

Those of you that have a copy of *Flying Colours* will be able to see the species of butterflies and moths covered in this book plus the same number of new additions in **Encyclopedia of Butterflies and Moths**. This CD ROM, by Kaleidoscope



Multimedia, enables you to search for photos and information on the database, by scientific, common or family name.

There are also sections on life cycles, predators, movies (small!), garden game (a quiz), teaching aid, and interesting facts. Say you want information about the Emperor Gum Moth. Go to 'index' and double click the families until you find it listed. (This could have been made easier by a simple 'search' option). All data has a photo of the caterpillar and adult, as in *Flying Colours*. However, some species have extra pictures, and the Emperor Gum Moth is one, where there are photos of the eggs and pupa as well. Be warned though; the picture quality is not as good as in the book and there are a few minor, but obvious errors and some omissions. However, to make up for this, the CD contains the printable text of *Flying Colours* and a section called 'Additions to *Flying Colours*' that might one day make it into volume two!

## A Feast of Bushland Management Seminars

**1: Fire Prevention with Steve Pascoe of the CFA**

**Date:** Thursday, October 30th,

**2: Land Management with Alan Noy of Indigenous Design**

**Date:** Thursday, November 27th

**3: Heritage with Murrundini of the Wurundjeri Tribe**

**Date:** Thursday, December 11th

**Time:** 7.00 to 10.00pm

**Place:** Currawong Bush Park, Reynolds Rd., Warrandyte (Melway ref. map 34 H6)

**Bookings essential (no charge) - Phone Donna Stoddart (9840 9307)**

## Worth Repeating

### Firebug jnr is a boy aged eight

By Stephen Cauchi

**J**uvenile firebugs are eight years old on average, two-thirds have a smoker in the family, and most are boys, according to the annual report of the Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program released this week.

The program, sponsored by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, the Country Fire Authority and the Royal Children's Hospital, uses firefighters to teach children and mentally disabled adults not to light fires. There are 332 people on the program.

The report says the worst offenders included a boy, 14, from a broken home who had lit 800 fires - including destroying a derelict house - since the age of three. He was introduced to fire by his uncle, a firefighter.

The report noted that after being counselled by the program, his behaviour improved so much that "a good report was received from his school". Other offenders included: A 12 year old boy who

lit more than 720 fires in the past year. Since the age of three, the boy had played with lighters and matches. An eight year old boy who found his father's cigarette lighter in the shed and set dry grass alight. He lit 200 fires in the past two years.

Mr Alan Rhodes of the CFA praised the program yesterday, saying that 90 per cent of those who joined did not light a fire for at least a year afterwards. Mr Rhodes said that it was to be expected that most offenders were male, but it was revealing that 67 per cent came from families with a smoker. He said family members who smoked were not only setting a bad example, they often left matches and cigarette lighters lying about.

#### RED HOT:

Each child on the prevention program

- Lit an average of 25 fires (one lit more than 200)
- 30 per cent have learning difficulties
- 92 per cent are boys
- 67 per cent have a smoker in the family
- 53 per cent lit fires inside the home
- 26 per cent lit fires in their bedroom



Source: *The Age Thursday September 18th 1997*

## Timber Reserve Treasures

By Mike Coupar

**W**hat a pleasant and productive Sunday family activity this turned out to be. A baby, kids, adults and an octogenarian all out-performed each other in spotting the contrasting subjects of wildflowers and rubbish in Timber Reserve. The rubbish collected on the way consisted of the usual 'heritage' artifacts - bits of cars, beer cans, paint cans, broken glass and crockery etc. Most was carted out in four bags for disposal elsewhere. Several Sweet Pittosporums were also uprooted.

Thankfully the orchids and other wildflowers vastly outnumbered the rubbish. Aply lead by Ranger Brian Phefley, the group spotted many

different species of orchids, including spider orchids, donkey orchids, greenhoods and pink fingers. These records were identified by Deb Webb and Jenny Hoskin, both armed with their copies of "The Orchids of Victoria" by Gary Backhouse and Jeffrey Jeanes.

The brains and brawn effort was rewarded with a barbecue banquet of snags and chops, hot coffee and chocolate biscuits.

Many thanks to all concerned for making this Sunday morning most enjoyable and rewarding.





# Eltham Copper Butterfly

It's the time of year for the annual Eltham Copper Butterfly larval counts. If you have never tried this activity, it's good fun crawling around in the dark looking for the tiny caterpillars of our Eltham Copper Butterfly. Staff from the Museum of Victoria will be conducting the count and need plenty of helpers as they are doing an intensive count this year.

Counts will run from September 22nd to November 3rd and will generally be held on the Tuesday and Thursday of the month. There is a possibility that one or two of the counts (other than the Western or Eastern colonies) could be held on a Sunday night.

If you are interested in helping out with this most important research and can spare one or more evenings, please contact Anna Richtarik on 9411 5158.



*friends of tindals wildflower reserve*

## Orchid Walk

Clive Gordes will be leading an orchid walk on **Sunday October 19th** at **Tindals Wildflower Reserve.**

For more information ring Rosemary Buxton 9842 3268

## It's nearly time for our **SPRING CAMP AT ANGLESEA** (Weekend of October 25/26)

Join us while we explore the heathlands and forests of the Anglesea area.

We've been inspired to visit this neck of the woods since our 'not so new' ranger David Farrar expressed his great delight at the time he spent working down at Airy's Inlet.

We'll be staying at the Anglesea Family Caravan Park where there are comfortable cabins as well as camping facilities.

It has beach frontage and is in Cameron Rd., 800m SE of the Post Office.

Telephone 052-631583

Call Pat on 9844 1650 or Joan on 9844 3213) if you'd like to come as we need an idea of numbers for Saturday evening's nosh-up!



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Warrandyte, 3113



**Stop Press:** Friends of Koornong have changed their meeting time to 9.00am. The meetings will still be held on the first Wednesday of the month.