

October 1999

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Not Just Propagation

By Pat Coupar

Although dark clouds loomed, the threat of rain did not deter around a dozen people from enjoying the Thursday morning wildflower walk. The walk was timed to perfection with many wattles still flowering, bush-peas starting to bloom and a colourful array of creepers, climbers, lilies, orchids and other wildflowers. It was Fourth Hill at its best. And those who know the Hill well all agreed that the rabbit control program, undertaken by many of the local residents whose properties abut this area of the Park, had significantly reduced the number of rabbits and therefore lessened their impact on this wildflower haven.

One of the highlights of the walk was Brown Beaks. After not having been seen for over ten years, this orchid, *Lyperanthus suaveolans*, was rediscovered in Warrandyte State Park only three years ago. It appeared two years after a fire at the site of its last known location on Fourth Hill. Several leaves were found at that time, but only a single flower. The population was enclosed in a small fence to protect it from rabbits. The following year there were leaves, but no flowers. This year, to our delight, the population had increased and several of the orchids were flowering - some with up to three flowers on a single stem.

It has been pleasing to see a number of new faces at the Thursday group over the last few months. Advertised primarily as a propagation morning, Thursdays are more than just that. There are always some surprises in store. A few weeks ago it was pricking out tiny ferns grown from spore by the nursery manager at his home. More fern propagation is promised for the future and

undoubtedly, if the plants do well, ferns of local provenance will be available for members to take home.

Orchids, like ferns, are also popular. And it was exciting, the other week, to find a spider orchid, rescued from the Jumping Creek Road construction site, in full flower. In fact all rescued species of orchids and ferns, brought back and potted up at the nursery, have done very well. It is hoped that at an appropriate time and place many of these will be planted back into a secure location within the Park.

A bonus for the Thursday workers each week is a free plant or two or three. These are not the scruffy old 'free to good homes' variety, but a selection of healthy trees, shrubs, lilies and grasses from the current stock.

Over the years there has been the suggestion of starting a Saturday working group aimed at younger adults, but of course open to anyone who is interested. The possibility of this actually happening has resurfaced although it may not be until next year. However, if anyone thinks they might like to be involved they can contact a member of the committee. The more interest shown in the Saturday group, even at this early stage, the greater the chances of it becoming a reality.



Brown Beaks
(*Lyperanthus suaveolans*)

New Newsletter

Warrandyte State Park now has their own newsletter artistically compiled by ranger Brian Phifley. In brief it covers the following items:

Jumping Creek Reserve

- remains open during road & bridge reconstruction
- works expected to be completed by November

Mount Lofty

- new boardwalk, walking tracks & a bridge over Brushy Creek at Witton's Reserve
- picnic tables at strategic sites along the river
- dogs & horse riding no longer permitted in the area

Rabbit Information Field Day

- local councils have joined forces with residents to control rabbits
- priority areas include - west side of Ringwood/Warrandyte Rd & Betton Cr, Beveridge St, Blair St & Trezise St on the west side of Fourth Hill
- Rabbit Control Information Day is on **Saturday October 30th 1999**

For more information on any of these issues ring the Park on 9844 2659

Opportunity for the Musically Talented

The 1999 FOWSP Annual General Meeting and Nursery Open Day will be a Gala Sunday afternoon event (3.30pm-6.30pm), and the committee are looking for musicians and performers to provide atmosphere and colour. Remuneration will be FREE native plants and we'll gladly take ANY form of Music, Poetry or Juggling. Please volunteer for a five, ten or fifteen minute gig by calling Geoff Speedy on 9437 0894.

Musical Joke :

Question: *What do you get when you play a Blues song backwards?*

Answer: *Your wife comes home, your dog returns from the dead and you get your job back !!*

A Vote for Freedom

By Pat Coupar

It was not quite the peaceful Saturday I had been hoping for. From the moment I awoke - around 6.00 am - I heard them. It was probably they that woke me. Loud wailing calls ringing from the trees outside my bedroom window. Currawongs - the pied ones. There were dozens of them.

Throughout the day they came and went. They were restless, briefly alighting on the balcony for a nervous drink of water from the dish provided for all the birds.

They chased the cockatoos out of the trees. The cockies retaliated with yellow crests raised and raucous screeching. Still protesting loudly seven of the irate cockatoos landed on the balcony to soothe themselves with a drink. Then

came a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets incessantly squawking, as they do, for attention. These normally aggressive little birds were also driven away by the currawongs. And so the harassment continued. Twelve and a half hours later and with dusk approaching the currawongs were still at it.



What was it all about? It was election day. Did the currawongs know something we didn't? Maybe the birds were registering a vote for the retention of their habitat, the preservation of bushland and for wildlife corridors.

Did anyone else notice all this frenetic activity on Saturday September 18th in and around Brackenbury Street (the eastern one), or anywhere else in Warrandyte for that matter. And just what were the birds up to?

Worth Repeating

Greens see red over Yarra Valley wine boom

By Claire Miller

The bucolic charm of the Yarra Valley belies an emerging battle over the environmental costs of the region's dramatic resurgence in winemaking.

Behind the lines, drawn in a war of words through the local papers, are landowners and companies rushing to cash in on Australia's wine boom while residents and conservationists say enough is enough.

The area under vines in the valley has more than doubled over the past five years to 2500 hectares; the industry estimates another 800 to 1000 hectares could be planted in the next three years.

New entrants favour uncleared blocks because the land is cheaper, and then they raze the trees. With 92 per cent of the valley cleared even before the vineyard explosion, habitat preservation was already a critical issue.

The president of the Group for Lilydale and District Environment, Mr Kieran Martin, said residents were also concerned about noise - vineyards are at times 24-hour operations native

birds being shot, chemical sprays drifting across houses, and irrigation dams and chemical runoff affecting water quality and flow rates in streams feeding the Yarra River.

He said residents were worried that if vineyards went bust, the valley could be left with a forest of poles - instead of trees, and there would be increased pressure for subdivision on hardship grounds.

The Wine Grape Growers' Council warned in December last year that Australia faced an over supply of grapes unless the speculative developments ceased. The industry's 30-year plan has reached its target of 97,000 hectares under vines in only three years, fuelled by a 93 per cent rise in grape prices over the past six vintages.

The vice-president of the Yarra Valley Winegrowers' Association, Mr Alan Smith, said winegrowers also had a vested interest in the valley's rural character, which attracted city tourists. "If someone wants to clear a large copse of trees, we would be against that because it is part of the landscape and habitat," he said.

Mr Smith said that while there were some newcomers who made mistakes out of inexperience, his members wanted to be good neighbours and the association had worked with the Shire of Yarra Ranges on its recently released guidelines for prospective vineyards.

Source: *The Age* 22/6/99



APOLOGIES FOR THE CORNINESS (GRAPINESS) OF THIS CARTOON. YOU CERTAINLY DON'T NEED A DRY SENSE OF HUMOR. I'M SURE A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL SEE RED AFTER READING ABOUT YET ANOTHER SWEET, AGED, FRUITY VALLEY BEING SCREWED BY A TOTALLY DIFFERENT GLASS OF (PEOPLE). HOPEFULLY THESE PEOPLE WILL BE LABELLED YIDIOTS, TURN A NEW LEAF AND THE CONSERVATIONISTS AND RESIDENTS WILL RACK UP A WIN\$. THEN EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL WHITE. © R. THIEL

Consider the Environment

When shopping, choose the more environmentally friendly products and avoid excessive packaging. Whenever possible 'reduce, re-use, recycle.'

Fauna News:

Parks
VICTORIA

by
David Farrar
(*Frankie*)

The Warrandyte State Park Koala Survey is on again. It is expected that surveys will cover the same sites as last year. These sites are at *Pound Bend, Gold Memorial, Jumping Creek, Stane Brae, Bend of Isles and Mount Lofty.*

Last year a total of 33 koalas were recorded throughout the Park with 28 of these being found at Pound Bend.

The koala survey adds important information to current Park knowledge. This will be utilised and added to a formal koala research program if implemented in the future. Information on koalas surveyed on the day will be logged into the Victorian Wildlife Atlas of Victoria. The Atlas is a statewide Victorian database used by the Department of Natural Resources & Environment and Parks Victoria to establish sighting history records of Victorian fauna species.



If you are interested in participating in the survey "PLEASE COME ALONG"!

When & Where?

- This year the survey is on Sunday 7th November 1999
- Meet at the Park - Pound Bend Friends Folly, Pound Bend Road (Melways Ref- 23 C-10)
- Starting Time: 10:00am Finishing about 2:00pm

What to bring?

Comfortable walking clothing, supportive footwear and a good hat. Binoculars if you have them? Also a water bottle is a good idea with a snack.

Parks Victoria will supply sunscreen.

How to do the survey?

There are six survey sites to choose from and I will direct you to a site with a map and survey clip board with koala identification information, and a pro forma to fill out before you start. The main objective is to walk along your chosen transect line or walking track and take your time looking for koalas. *"An enjoyable way to spend a morning don't you think"?*

For further information on the koala survey and allocation of a survey site please contact **David Farrar on 9844-2659.**

Koala Management Pound Bend

Tree collaring using a clear polycarbonate sheet material will commence during November of this year with 26 of the worst defoliated trees tagged throughout the Pound Bend area to receive resting treatment from koala browsing.

Collaring is a technique used to reduce defoliation of tree habitat in known high koala populated areas in some parks. The collars will be on each tree for up to twelve months and each tree will have photographs taken to monitor the regrowth over each twelve month period.

For further information feel free to call David Farrar anytime on 9844 2659

Happy Days!

What to do if you have a koala in your yard.

Please do not attempt to handle a koala, they are not as cuddly as they appear.

- Koalas become stressed easily by dogs. Please put any dogs in the house or garage until the koala has left- usually overnight. Koalas have been known to inflict nasty wounds on dogs.
- Alert your neighbours that a koala is present and ask them to restrain their dogs.
- If practical, place a plank of wood securely from a tree to a fence, this can help a koala exit your yard without having to go on the ground.
- If your dog is barking please go and have a look. You may get a pleasant surprise it might be a koala.

For help with wildlife please call the wildlife care network ph. 0500 540 000

Fauna & Fire News

Warrandyte State Park

By David Farrar (Frankie)

Fire News: Three Management Burns ready to go

With the onset of yet another fire season preparations are scaling up once again. I can tell you that this 99/2000 season is shaping up to be another busy year!

Burn planning for two fuel reduction burns is complete. The first is a 15 hectare block in the middle of The Common which will be ready for burning during Autumn 2000. This burn will have ecological benefits as the site has not been burnt since the 1962 wildfire. It is known by Park staff that the Brush-tailed Phascogale also known as the Tuan frequents this reserve. In this burn block each notable tree and log has been raked around lightly to reduce habitat being burnt during the burn operation. This way we still obtain our objective of fuel reduction while retaining important habitat for Phascogale.

The second burn, also planned for autumn, is on School Track in Fourth Hill, next to the Warrandyte Primary School (6 hectares)

These two sites are being burnt to reduce vegetation - in fire management terms vegetation is fuel. The objective is to reduce fine fuels (anything less than 6 millimetres such as grasses and leaf litter) that could affect life and property assets. We also burn to protect the Park from large scale wildfires and fires entering the Park from private housing or urban properties.

The third site for a planned burn for ecological benefits is a 15 hectare block of Mount Lofty. This site has not been burnt since 1962 and a burn will add to biodiversity of flora & fauna. Native grasses such as Kneed Wallaby-grass (*Danthonia geniculata*) and Slender Wallaby-grass (*Danthonia penicillata*) are expected to benefit from the fire.

There will also be forward planning to look at ecological mosaic burn patterns for Mount Lofty and the rest of the Park over the next three, six nine and twelve years and into the future.

Eltham Copper Butterfly Annual Larval Count

Every Tuesday and Thursday from now until November 4th from 7.00pm to 9.30pm

The Museum of Victoria need your help with the counting of the Eltham Copper Butterfly larvae. It's great fun at dusk to observe the larvae and their unique relationship with the ants. The larval counts will provide valuable information on the health of the population and will assist with the management of this rare butterfly.

For more information contact Dr Beverly Van Praagh on 9284 0223 (B/H) or 9305 5154 (A/H)

World Weather Extremes

The world's wettest place is on Mt Waialeale, Hawaii, where it rains on average for 350 days each year. The annual average rainfall is 11,981 mm. By comparison, Sydney has around 1/10th of that on average.

The highest air temperature recorded was 58 C at Al'azizyah, Libya in 1922.

The world's coldest place is at Vostok in Antarctica. Minus 89.2 C was recorded on 21st July 1983. Antarctica also holds the record for, believe it or not, the driest place on earth.

Wurundjeri Plant Names

Berry Yung

Hop Wattle *Acacia stricta*



Green Wedge Seminar

The Future of Warrandyte's Orchids

Report By Alastair Traill

This talk by Pat Coupar and David van Bockel was the twenty-seventh in this series and was the most directly related to the Warrandyte State Park..

Pat and David's project started in the early nineties with the observation that orchid numbers and diversity appeared to be declining. After referring to earlier records their suspicions were confirmed. These earlier records were interesting - some were of limited value because neither date nor location were recorded. The records of Arthur Williamson (1960 - 1981) were more detailed than most and accompanied, in many cases, by photographic evidence. Arthur was able to show Pat and David the locations where some of the rarer orchids were still to be found.

However, even detailed records by competent observers do not necessarily convince the more sceptical botanists. Official records require specimens and collecting requires permits. Collections both wet (in 75% alcohol) and dry have been identified and lodged with the Herbarium to be stored alongside the collections of the likes of von Mueller. Not only have the dates and locations been recorded, but also the soil type and surrounding flora noted.

Victoria has 270 species of orchids of which 67 species have been recorded in Warrandyte. Those which have not been seen for 10 years or more are regarded as being presumed extinct even though some orchids have reappeared after an absence of 30 years. In Warrandyte 14 species are



presumed extinct. Only 18% are regarded as secure i.e. likely to be present 40 years hence. Endangered species are those at risk of disappearing in 10 ~ 20 years. In Warrandyte 18 species are regarded as occurring in

critically low numbers. Conspicuous species like *Diuris corymbosa* are becoming noticeably less common. *Pterostylis nana* is known from only five plants.

Orchids are threatened by obvious factors such as habitat destruction including weed invasion, grazing by animals particularly rabbits and introduced snails and slugs. Less obvious, are attacks by millipedes. Fencing off orchid rich areas ('hot spots') from rabbits and intensive hand weeding has lead to annual increases in orchid numbers and diversity. Experiments with hand pollination - in case the natural pollinator is absent have been trialled. Another approach has been to reintroduce plants from neighbouring areas (translocation). It is too early to say whether hand pollination and translocations are of value.

Further reading:-

The Victorian Field Naturalist Vol 115 (no 4) August 1998 p. 124 - 131 A Study of the Warrandyte State Park Orchid Flora from 1991 - 1997.

Sunday Family Activity

Fourth Hill Briza Pull & Wildflower Walk

Wildflowers and Briza are not a good mix. Quaking or Shell Grass (*Briza maxima*) is an introduced annual grass that is threatening some of Warrandyte's best wildflower areas. It is easy to control by hand pulling before seed drop. FOWSP have been steadily working away at the Briza on a section of Fourth Hill for several years with great effect. The grass is easy to identify and very easy to pull.

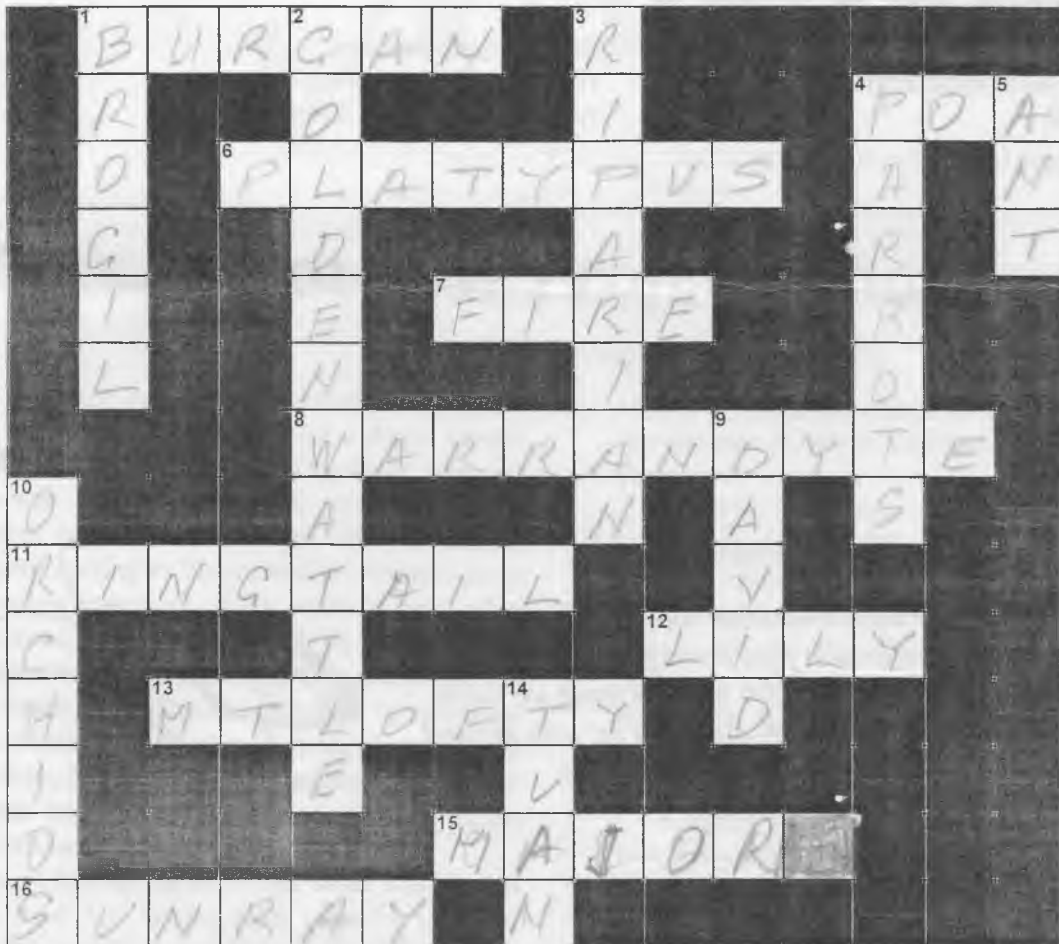


The morning will include a wildflower walk. Orchids, lilies, bush-peas are guaranteed. BBQ lunch will be provided by FOWSP. **Date & Time:** Sunday October 31st 10.00 am to 1.00 pm **Place:** Meet at the end of Tunnel St, Warrandyte (Melways ref. 35 F1)

Ranger-in-Charge, Andy Nixon will be on hand to organise the activity.

This month brings a new idea for the FOWSP newsletter – a simple crossword. The solution for October will be in November's newsletter. If you would like to contribute words or clues for inclusion in future newsletters, the clues must be no longer than 20 characters (including spaces) and the words can be no longer than 12 letters. Shorter words are also easier to include. Good luck !

FOWSP-1



Down

1. creek
2. national flower 6-5
3. riverside
4. noisy native birds
5. FOWSP treasurer
9. common ranger's name
10. terrestrial gems
14. phascogale

Across

1. kunzea
4. grass
6. egg-laying swimmer
7. summer threat
8. state park
11. small possum
12. mauve chocolate bulb
13. new section WSP 2-5
15. glossodia
16. hoary

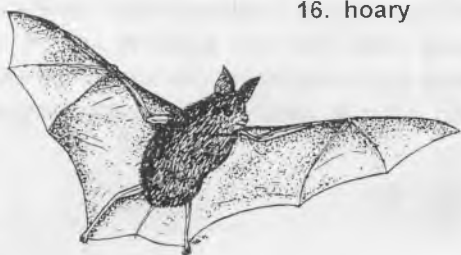
Greening Australia presents a community weed forum

Date & Time: Saturday 23rd October
9.30 am to 4.30 pm

Place: Burnley College, Yarra Boulevard,
Richmond

*Topics covered include - sociology of
weeds; emerging weeds; biocontrol*

For more information ring Kate Stothers on 9457
3024





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Forester Moth

This small, brilliant blue, iridescent moth is often mistaken for a butterfly as it flies during the day in spring and early summer. Watch out for it in the bush on warm sunny days. The Forester Moth can often be seen around guinea-flowers which are the foodplant for it's caterpillars.

