

May 2001

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

FOWSP'S Festival

It was a whole new look for FOWSP at Warrandyte's Festival 2001.

First was our street banner designed and created by Lee Speedy. Then there was the display trailer used at the festival for the first time this year. As always the free plants were a great success.



Can Australian Plants Be Weeds? (Part Two)

A Seminar presented by the Weed Science Society of Victoria on February 22nd 2001

Report by Flora Anderson

Geoff Carr concentrated on **"Australian Plants as Weeds in Victoria."** Geoff drives his message home with all the devastating facts at his disposal. His frustration and anger that so little has been achieved in weed management and, moreover, that the level of management expertise is so low, is palpable and, I might add, justified.

Many good people have been warning responsible authorities for a long time that "After two centuries of European settlement there are few parts of the Australian bush that lack introduced plants." Loss of biodiversity and impairment of visual impact are the sad consequences of ignorance and neglect. Geoff is concerned also about the number of new hybrids appearing among Grevilleas, Acacia and Correa. Vivienne Freshwater remarked that in the Dandenong Ranges, *Pittosporum undulatum* has hybridized with *P. bicolor*.

"Industry Initiatives in Utilizing Native Species" was discussed by Jolyon Burnett CEO Nursery Industry Association of Australia. Here I have to confess that my notes have let me down because I was so busy writing down questions I wanted to put to Mr. Burnett that I failed to note down what was being said.

The first impression I received from the speaker was that the NIAA had been besieged by people asking why environmental weeds and 'garden thugs' were still being offered for sale and I suspect Mr. Burnett was feeling a little defensive. However, he did produce a document still in draft form titled "Garden Plants Under the Spotlight" - an Australian strategy for invasive garden plants (Feb 1999) an excellent example of Government and Industry working together. What a disappointment to find a notice on the first page saying that the Australian Nursery Industry has not yet endorsed the draft strategy. This situation, I was told later has not changed in the two years since release.

Mr. Burnett declared he had received only two submissions and so, at the earliest opportunity, I asked for a copy thinking that The Australian Plants Society - Victoria should comment. I believe CRC Weed Management Systems have received submissions. So, there's hope for us all.

Recommendations contained in the Strategy cover:

- Regulations
- Education Program for gardening public, horticultural media etc Logos and Slogans
- Labeling
- Education Material

Aims are to maintain profitability of the industry and to obtain co-operation from industry and media to promote sale of environmentally friendly alternative plants. The importance of an education program about invasive plants was featured, not only for the gardening public and media but also for the industry.

Scott Coutts Parks Victoria, Rosebud spoke on **"Control of Australian Woody Weeds on the Mornington Peninsula."** The fact I remember vividly about Scott's presentation is that 18 out of Geoff Carr's list of Victoria's worst environmental weeds are present in the Mornington Peninsula.

From **"Biological Control of Native Species"** - El Bruzzese KTRI we learned about legislation and bodies controlling biological control viz. The Biological Control Act(1984) The Australian Weeds Committee, AQIS, and Environment Australia.

And finally Tim Low on **"A Challenge to Our Values: Australian Plants as Weeds."** Here are just a few quotes from Tim's address:

- Garden plants as weeds are a worse problem in Victoria than elsewhere Mount Martha is the worst site nationally for garden weeds gone bush
- There's a potential problem in Western Australia with introduced Australian native plants.
- All WA plants should be termed 'exotic' in the eastern states. Red-backed spiders are exotic in Sydney.
- Global warming will have an effect on plant distribution. *Lomandra longifolia* is weedy in Tasmania.
- Growing Australian plants is a selfish exercise. (Actually it's not fair to quote that out of context. It was said to illustrate a point about the need for ethical gardening.)
- Analyze what you are doing We may have good intentions but we must tread lightly.
- Plant local indigenous but observe what happens in re-generating areas.
- I'm not a radical; I'm not a ratbag; I'm a greenie like you!

What's in a Name?

By Cathy Willis

Thursday mornings in the nursery could be likened to being in a beehive. A buzz of activity which to the uninitiated could appear a little chaotic. One of the essential tasks for the propagators is labeling, every box pricked out must bear the correct botanical name. Different species of the same genus can look almost identical when young, so unless seedlings are labeled as soon as they are pricked out they can easily be confused and make the nursery manager's job a nightmare.

We always use botanical names on labels. I am often asked "what is the common name of this plant?" I often have to reply that I can't remember, which always seems to amaze people. Common names are notoriously unreliable, changing over time and space. What we call a Manna Gum here is a Ribbon Gum to others. In NSW Golden Wattle is the common name for *Acacia longifolia* – to us an environmental weed that we call Sallow Wattle. Talking about Blue Gums is a bit like asking where Stony Creek is – which one?! So over the years I have learnt to use botanical names to avoid confusion, and yes, they do eventually stick in your head.

The binomial naming and classification system was developed by a Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus, who aimed to classify, describe and name all living things. In 1753 he published "Species Plantarum" in which he divided living organisms into two kingdoms. After nearly two hundred and fifty years the binomial naming system is still recognized and used worldwide, although scientists are still debating how many kingdoms the living world should be divided into.

Most botanical names are Latin, but many are Greek. Plants can also be named after a person or place. Knowing what the words mean helps to remember them, even though sometimes the reference may be to an obscure feature of the plant.

The following examples will be very familiar to the Thursday group, some perhaps too familiar!

Allocasuarina littoralis – Black Sheoke

allos – similar to;
casuarina – the genus
Casuarina, which is
from casuarius, referring
to the drooping
branchlets resembling
cassowary feathers;

littoralis – of the sea shore



Correa glabra – Rock

Correa

Correa – after Jose
Francesco Correa de
Serra (1751-1823) a
Portuguese botanist; *glabra*
– refers to the glabrous
(smooth) leaves

Eucalyptus viminalis – Manna Gum

eu -well; kalyptos –
covered: refers to the
caps on the buds;
viminalis – with long
flexible shoots suitable
for weaving



Goodenia ovata – Hop

Goodenia

Goodenia – after Samuel Goodenough (1743-
1827), Archbishop of Carlisle and a member of
the Linnaean Society; *ovata* – refers to the ovate
leaves

Leptospermum lanigerum – Woolly Tea-tree

lepto – slender; spermum – seed; laniger – wool
bearing, probably referring to the fruits

Melaleuca ericifolia – Swamp Paperbark

melas – black; leuco – white: from the contrasting
colours of the bark; *ericifolia* – refers to the heath-
like foliage

Microseris lanceolata – Yam Daisy

micro – small; seris – chicory; lanceolata – refers
to the lanceolate (long and narrow) leaves

Pomaderris aspera – Hazel Pomaderris

poma – lid; deris – skin: refers to a membrane in
the capsule that opens to release the seed; *aspera* –
rough, probably referring to the leaves

Prostanthera lasianthos – Victorian Christmas- bush

prostheke- appendage; antheros- anther, a



The Perfect Bend

By Pat Coupar

It was one of those pastel-coloured mornings. Windless and hazy, with a distinct chill in the air. Typical of late autumn.

About fifteen Fowspians met at Marie and Wolfgang's immaculate mud brick house at the end (or beginning) of Catani Boulevard. The first thing that strikes you, apart from the nifty use of recycled timber, is the view. There is something about a view, even from a city skyscraper they are compulsive. They demand attention. This one was no exception with its vast panorama of densely wooded hills, the river, Mount Lofty's network of trees and tracks, manicured golf links and beyond to Lilydale's cluster of housing. On this day the Dandenong Ranges were obscured by the haze.

After refreshments, we set off down the narrow, dusty Henley Road passing, along the way, houses new and old, each one unique. The road petered out and we gathered at the fenceline at the edge of a steep paddock. Across the river the full scale of the yet to be completed Heritage Golf and Country Club could be seen in all its multi-million dollar glory. The artificial wetlands, Marie assured us, were better than the weedy farmland that was there before, but there is obvious concern about the planned bridge across the river to future links.

From this vantage point we turned our eyes skyward to watch a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles circling high in the pale washed-out sky, only to spot another couple of large birds overhead –

these were pelicans, attracted by the water no doubt. Through binoculars, we observed a black-shouldered kite sitting on its nest in a lone Yellow Box tree.

Leaving the view and the birds and the unbuilt bridge behind, we made our way down a steep track to the river. A small but dense patch of Stinkwort (*Ditrichia graveolens*) was found, covered with balls of fluffy dandelion-like seed ready to blow. This aromatic plant is a declared noxious weed in Victoria, but because the sticky glandular leaves are highly irritant to touch we could not pull the plants out without gloves.

We walked a little way upstream to a large bend of the river, opposite the site where several years ago the celebration to mark Mount

Lofty's incorporation into Warrandyte State Park was held. Onwards and upwards through stands of dense Burgan, across mossy carpets and out into the open again. Back on the road, we returned to Marie's where some of the group stayed on for a relaxing lunch sitting at the table overlooking that view.

For those who had not been to the part of Kangaroo Ground South known at the Bend of Islands before, it was a great introduction, and for those who know it, the visit was a welcome reminder of the values of living in such idyllic environment. Many thanks to Marie for sharing her house and showing us this very special place.

As one of our more vocal Fowspians put it "It's all perfect, something must be wrong!"



RED DOT

Subscriptions for 2001 are now overdue

A RED DOT on the front of this newsletter indicates that we have no record of your subscription for this year. If you have a red dot but have already paid your membership for the year 2001 please ring our membership secretary Lee on 9437 0894.

If we have not received your renewal by JUNE 3rd membership will be discontinued.

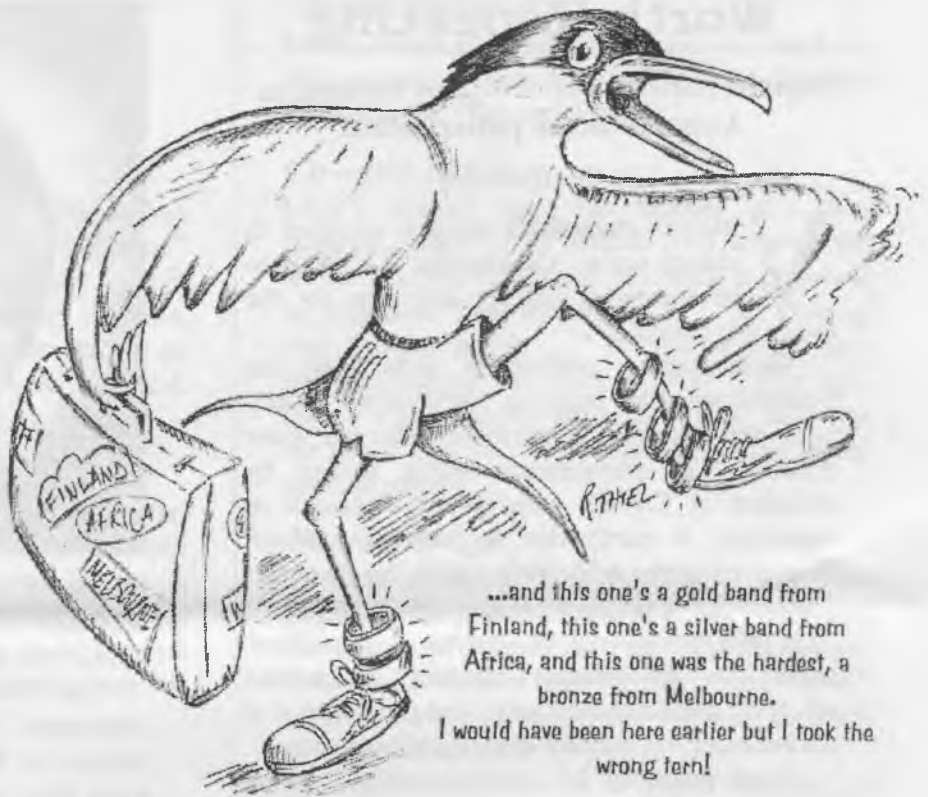
To renew your membership to FOWSP for the coming year please fill in the form on the back of this newsletter and send it to the secretary FOWSP, PO Box 220, Warrandyte

Record Breaking Rotamah

In January 1997 a Common Tern was banded by the Victorian Wader Studies Group near Rotamah Island. Nothing too unusual about that, but this bird had been banded as a chick in Finland, just six months earlier.

The bird was originally banded in a lake in central Finland and had performed a trip of 26,000kms, the longest recorded journey by a bird anywhere in the world. To put the feat into perspective, that's 120km's for every day of its life. Given that it was a only a chick when banded and probably would have needed to build up some strength before it left, it has probably travelled closer to an average of 200kms per day.

Common Terns from Finland normally travel down the Atlantic coast and winter in southern Africa but this bird seems to have shot around the



...and this one's a gold band from Finland, this one's a silver band from Africa, and this one was the hardest, a bronze from Melbourne.
I would have been here earlier but I took the wrong tern!

Cape of Good Hope and kept going until it came across Australia. Amazingly the bird was excellent health when caught and was released for the return journey.

Class of 2001



The Thursday morning workers gather at the nursery

Worth Repeating

Sunnier, drier times ahead for Victoria as
Antarctic ocean pattern shifts

By Geoff Strong

Victoria's changeable weather is about to change again. On average, it is likely to be somewhat sunnier and drier for the foreseeable future.

While that is particularly unfortunate for Sydneysiders who lampoon Melbourne's usually cool, wet climate, it is worse news for our water supplies. The phenomenon being studied by scientists at CSIRO Atmospheric Research in Aspendale, is partly due to an ocean pattern discovered in the mid-1990s called the Antarctic Circumpolar Wave.

It was recognised as having a significant impact on the weather affecting landmasses adjoining the Southern Ocean, but right now it is not behaving as its discoverers initially expected.

When found by US satellite images, it was essentially a doughnut of water around the Antarctic with two relatively warm peaks and two comparatively cool troughs. The difference between the two was no more than two degrees. The whole lot took about eight years to rotate around the world and each wave was several thousand kilometres across.

It was thought this was a regular pattern and when we had a cool phase off southern Australia things would be drier; when it was warm it would be wetter.

When discovered, the Pacific was in the depths of a severe El Nino event, with much of eastern Australia experiencing drought. Since then, it has been replaced by a La Nina - the reverse of El Nino - with parts of northern and eastern Australia getting the highest rainfalls on record.

But Victoria remains in the grip of a drought which, after four years, is the longest recorded and researchers don't know why.

If the circumpolar wave behaved as initially expected, we might have been able to expect wetter conditions when our turn came with the wave. But this has not happened.

The CSIRO's Peter Baines said that instead, the wave had broken up into masses of small cells, each too tiny to have an impact on climate.



He said a paper on this event was due to be published in the US-based *Journal of Geophysical Research* in the next few weeks.

"The reason for the break-up is not understood, but it appears to be a disruption in the patterns of El Ninos which used to come along every four years, but for some reason are now becoming irregular."

Dr Baines said that the current La Nina was now breaking up and the Pacific could expect another El Nino to develop in about a year or so, bringing drier conditions.

"Unless there is some unforeseen event, it is likely southern Australia will not get the increased rainfall it has been expecting. We can only hope."

Another researcher studying the effects of the wave, Warren White, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in California, makes an even more specific prediction for southern Australia's weather. Based on the wave's behaviour he believes we will now have below-average rainfall until August.

Melbourne Water's general manager for water supply, Ross Young, said Victoria's rainfall was extremely variable and that currently storage levels were at 51.3 per cent. Three to four years ago they were at between 70 and 80 cent.

"We have designed the system around needing water restrictions every 20 years or so and currently we are 15,000 megalitres above needing restrictions. The total storage capacity is 1,787,500 megalitres." He said the message of water restraint appeared to be getting through to consumers.

Source: *The Age* 21/4/01



Argentina Australia

Recent visitors to the Thursday activity were Ana Maria Molina, Director of "Arturo E Ragonese" Botanic Garden, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Ana is a grass taxonomist), and Marcela Sanchez, Manager of living collection (Marcela is an orchid taxonomist). They were here on work experience.

Potting Shed "Pricking" Out People

Seen helping in early April were Barbara Coker, Alison Beanland with baby Amy, Rita Tauschke (who has finished an Environmental Degree at Melbourne University and is currently seeking work), and Sue Shephard, a Pound Bend resident whose plants, bought at the nursery, are all growing well.

Chimney Cunning

Look carefully at the woodstove chimney repair in the Folly.

Crothers Conservation Concepts

Luke Crothers, a reliable hard working volunteer for quite a while, thought he needed to do something more for the environment. He is working on how to promote the use of local plants using commercial venues. Even Don Burke has been targeted.

Margaret Mead(e)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

Further Friends

Margaret and Jack Bayliss from Doncaster, who recently joined the 'Friends', were preparing and 'planting' cuttings.

Bullock's Boxes

Polystyrene boxes for plant tubes were obtained at short notice recently with the help of Lyle Bullock and son Cameron. Lyle, owner of IGA supermarket Warrandyte, shifted several large crates by fork lift in the early morning so we could get some urgently needed boxes.

"Prom" Promenade

David 'Frankie' Farrar is going to work at Wilson's Promontory National Park for the next seven months. "Faraway Frankie."

Co---per Pairs

I-Spy's special spy was reading the New Scientist, (page 11, 10th March 2001 edition) and let his mind run riot on the following in an article on fermions. "new technique" "to team up into 'Cooper pairs'" "Cooper pairing isn't going to happen this week or next" Hulet says. "but it could happen this year." Now, why was the special spy worried about these quotes getting past the editor?

Two Turn-Ups

1) Luke Johnston (BSc La Trobe) has been helping in the nursery. Luke is also a member of the Friends of Organ Pipes, Friends of Diamond Creek and Friends of the Platypus groups. He will soon be looking for a job, preferably in the field of Natural Resources.

2) Kylie McQualter from North Balwyn, is waiting to do honours in zoology at La Trobe next year. Kylie too was helping out at the nursery and hopes to continue to do so.

-83-84-What For?

Seen around the depot, two overalled contractors spraying and counting small blue circular areas to produce weed-free 'starts' for thousands of our propagated plants. Some paddock and ridge areas are also being so prepared.

Thug Things

"In the last 25 years, roughly 25% of our weeds in Australia were deliberately brought into the country for ornamental use" Source: Kate Blood in an article on "Garden thugs gone bush".

Anderson Activity

Flora Anderson's Open Garden weekend at her Wonga Park home had over 300 people turn up. Part of the entry fee was donated to the Australian Bush Heritage Fund.

Marine Moves

The State Government is currently considering a report and recommendations to set up a system of marine protected areas in Victoria. The Government is about to make its decision in regard to the State budget. Have been heard?





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The Death Cap Toadstool *(Amanita phalloides)*

Keep a look out for this deadly introduced toadstool. Already three people have been admitted to hospital after mistakenly eating this poisonous species.

The toadstool, which is known to associate with oak trees, usually has an olive-green or yellow-green cap, although it can be brown or almost white and may be confused with the edible mushroom.



FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10