

September 2004

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Renovations for the Nursery

By Pat Coupar

Over the last few months the nursery has undergone a number of improvements. All the old rotted posts in the large green shadehouse have been replaced. Plants are now raised on metal gate tables like those in the white shadehouse and the hardening off area. This is better for the plants and better for the people who have to lift them.

A small roof has been constructed over the pot storage and sorting area, next to the potting mix bin, where diligent Thursday workers tirelessly sort tubes and make up black pot holder racks ready for the propagators.

The work area has been reorganised and is now neat, tidy and orderly. A cupboard has been installed for the tea, coffee, cups etc keeping them clean and away from the pricking out tables.

The 'white room' that houses all our seeds, tools, books and pamphlets has also been reorganised and has a new crushed rock floor. In fact the whole nursery complex is looking more continuous and less disjointed.

There is still some work to be done in the 'old' hardening off area where pots are either kept on the ground, on plastic pipes or raised on polystyrene boxes. The small bank below this area and above the car park is also having some attention. The old wire fence has been taken down, the weeds sprayed and the area made ready for replanting.

In addition, a small arboretum started by Joan MacMahon, is being developed at the entrance to the nursery.

As to the propagation itself, we are as busy as ever. We have been growing plants for the Park, FOWSP members and the community. There are plants for revegetation, species enrichment and plants of special interest like ferns and orchids. With Spring upon us and the best rain we have had for several years, everyone is keen to get out in the garden and plant.

We have just one request – please, please return your pots and moulded black plastic pot holder trays.



Enhancing Urban Ecosystems for Biodiversity

Dr John White, School of Ecology and Environment, Deakin University
Lecturer in Wildlife Ecology

Report by Michelle Hanslow

Australia is a long way behind the rest of the world in terms of biodiversity conservation. 85% of Australians live in cities. Melbourne's urban area is expanding and the number of people is growing. Can we sustain this growth and simultaneously maintain biodiversity?

The Melbourne 2030 Strategy is so-called because it is estimated that by the year 2030 the population will have increased by 1 million people. The Strategy is intended to guide planning, with urban sprawl to be halted at specified boundaries, with the population subsequently consolidated into the current areas of development. The Strategy also addresses the need to maintain biodiversity, with open space planning and the protection of green wedge areas featuring.

Urban areas have been neglected in terms of biodiversity studies. Urban areas are not devoid of useable vegetation for sustaining wildlife populations. Parks and home gardens provide a variety of habitat types and are probably less hostile to native fauna than agricultural areas.

Dr John White is researching how native and pest animals use the environment and how biodiversity responds to the different urban habitats in different ways. To do this he focussed his research on birds (and to a lesser extent, invertebrates). He set up 9 survey sites in 4 broad categories: parkland, urban streetscapes (with native trees and eucalypt canopies or with established exotic vegetation) and new developments (new or no gardens yet). Overall, 67 bird species were surveyed, including 7 exotic species. Bird communities were shown to vary between the various areas.

Although the diversity of native bird species is always higher than that of exotic birds, exotic birds dominate in terms of abundance in exotic streets and new developments, showing that native birds have a distinct preference for native vegetation.

So what were the differences between the urban habitat types? Dr White's research demonstrated that, in terms of abundance/hectare, there are similar densities of both native and exotic birds in exotic streetscapes and new

suburbs. There were far more native bird species found in parks and native streetscapes. Thus, whilst native birds can cope with both exotic and native vegetation, exotic birds do not have the same tolerance, showing a preference for exotic vegetation.

Streetscapes can have a lot to offer, so long as indigenous/native vegetation is utilised. (Author's note: exotic plants can also play an important role as food sources to many native birds and other fauna. e.g. *Buddleia* for butterflies. Indigenous species, however, have the additional benefits of providing habitat and being well suited to the local soil and environmental conditions.) New suburbs and exotic streets have lower numbers of insectivores and nectarivores and have many 'generalists' (and exotic birds), whereas native streets and parks have a greater variety of guilds.

In terms of streetscapes, increased urbanisation leads to decreased bird densities, decreased species richness, increased presence of exotic bird species, and simplification of the bird communities (with fewer insectivores and nectarivores).

Bird communities in remnant vegetation areas are highly variable. This may be for many reasons, including isolation from other remnant patches, the size of the remnant patch, the quality of the vegetation present and other factors.

Remnant bushland in urban areas plays an important part in biodiversity conservation, and can be used as educational tool for the public. It also provides a refuge for fauna in Melbourne when conditions

elsewhere are difficult (due to droughts and so forth). A perfect example of this is the migration and subsequent permanent residence of the grey-headed flying foxes, forced south to Melbourne's Botanic Gardens due to clearance of vegetation in their normal winter hideouts much further north (among other issues). Similarly, there is an increase in the numbers of Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets in urban areas of Melbourne when there is reduced flowering in Box Ironbark forests.

Continued on next page



Enhancing Urban Ecosystems for Biodiversity continued:

Native vegetation is under threat in urban areas due to conflicts between humans and wildlife (how often do we hear complaints from people about the possums eating their roses?),

the 'European' look and the great Aussie lawn, as well as the perception that European street trees will increase property values.

If we are to maintain an urban fauna population we need to protect remnant vegetation wherever possible. It is much easier to protect it

than to replace it. Remnant patch sizes should also be increased through revegetation to increase the numbers of species able to be sustained. Planting of native trees on "nature strips" (streetscapes) should be encouraged, as the use of indigenous species will serve as links between remnant patches, encouraging native birds back into suburbia. Last, but not least, mown lawns should be discouraged, and replaced with shrubs, or at the very least, native grasses. Every little bit of positive action helps.

Koala Update

By Julie Pryor, Wildlife Carer

Unfortunately the news is not good, again we have lost Koalas.

The first one, a beautiful big male, weighing 11.5 kg. This big boy came in from Smedley Road Park Orchards. He was found walking in circles on the road. Several days in the enclosure, he was eating well but he kept walking into the walls and we realised he was blind. A Post Mortem has been done and I do not have the final results yet.

The second Koala was a little female from the Montrose area. She was found in the gutter and her injuries showed a car had probably hit her. Because of her injuries we had to put her down. Why don't motorists stop when they hit our wildlife?

The third Koala we lost was Dally; the little female I received last July at 400grams. This was a most unexpected death, because she was fit and healthy. Again a Post Mortem has been done and as yet I do not have the final results.

On a brighter note if anybody is visiting Healesville Sanctuary soon one of the females has a joey out of her pouch. I visited two weeks ago and Mum was quite happy for junior to stick its head out from under her arm to delight the visitors.



More Contributions Please

Please keep your sightings and observations for "**Bush Backyard**" coming in. Remember they don't have to be confined to the local area, we like to hear about flora and fauna from around the State, the Country and even the Globe!

Also members might like to comment on any interesting books they have read. We would also like to hear about your favourite places for the "**My favourite locations**" segments on road/beach/river or whatever or wherever.

And don't forget "**My Worst Weed**" is ongoing, even if you have contributed before you are allowed another worst weed! A new segment last year was "**Food for Thought**" which covers just about anything and everything!

Contributions do not have to be long or perfectly written, drop us a line or two. Send by post to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au.



Warrandyte State Park

Draft Management Plan

You are invited to comment on the Warrandyte State Park Draft Management Plan that has just been released for public comment. The plan contains information on the resources of the Park, a review of past and present uses, management aims and strategies.

This is an opportunity for all FOWSP members to become involved in Park planning for the future. Submissions must be in by 22nd October 2004.

Copies of the Draft Management Plan can be obtained from the following places:

Warrandyte State Park Office
Pound Bend

Parks Victoria Information Centre
Level 10, 535 Bourke St
Melbourne 3000

Information Centre
Department of Sustainability & Environment
8 Nicholson St
East Melbourne 3002

The plan may also be downloaded from the Parks Victoria website 'www.parkweb.vic.gov.au'

News from the Committee

A guest at the August committee meeting was Richard Francis who is program coordinator for conservation and land management at RMIT. Richard and his students have worked with Warrandyte State Park rangers on a number of projects in the State Park and northern reserves. Richard explained to the committee the type of field activities his students undertake and provided a range of options of how his 'labour force' of students may assist FOWSP while gaining some valuable hands on experience. Some of the activities he suggested included propagation, seed collection and planting.

Josh Revell, our nursery manager, will liaise with Richard on behalf of FOWSP to determine the outcome of these options.

Missing

We have mislaid a member. Her name is Sandra Gough formerly of 25 Colman Rd, Warrandyte South 3134. If anyone knows where she has moved to please contact our membership secretary Lee Speedy on 9437 0894

Magpie Swooping Season

It's that time of year again. Swooping season. And it's not just the Maggies that swoop, other birds exhibiting the same behaviour include Magpie-larks, Butcher Birds and Masked Lapwing (Spur-winged Plovers).

We should not get too annoyed with these birds as they are only setting up their territory and protecting their hatchlings. Fortunately this aggressive behaviour only lasts for a short time during the breeding season.

Nevertheless it can be frightening when these birds swoop down out of nowhere clicking their beaks and flapping their wings. Thankfully, only a few birds actually make contact and even fewer cause any harm.

The best advice to prevent an attack is to avoid known swooping areas if possible. Bike helmets



and umbrellas will help as do painting or sticking eyes on the back of a hat.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has put together a kit for councils and individuals containing avoidance signs, stick on eyes and general information. The

kits are free and can be obtained from DSE Customer Service by ringing 136186.

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.



Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.

Thursday Afternoon Walks

On the fourth Thursday of every month there will be a short walk (about one hours duration) somewhere in the Park. If you would like to attend either bring your lunch and stay on after the propagation morning or meet at the nursery at 1.00pm.

Walks will take place on: September 23rd
October 28th

Sunday Spring Activity

Date & Time: Sunday September 19th 11.00am to 1.00pm

Place: Harris Gully Burn Site Meet at Harris Gully near Gold Memorial Drive
(Mel. Ref. 23 C2)

Join Ranger David Van Bockel to search for wattles, grasses and other seedlings that have germinated since the prescribed burn. David will explain the reasons for the burn and how the site will be managed post-burn

Lunchtime BBQ and tea and coffee will be provided

FOWSP Committee 2004

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Dick Thomsom	9850 9867	Treasurer	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Market</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Marie Krause	9712 0498
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213		<u>Financial Advisor</u>	
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary	Ray Clarke	9841 8507
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		<u>Nursery Manager</u>	0408800026
Melanie Birtchnell				
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797		<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577			



Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2004

7th October - Randall Robinson: Why do so Many Beautiful Plants Behave so Badly?"

Randall will look at the growing issue of environmental weeds and why some of our common garden plants are "going bush", as well as identify what we can do as gardeners to help tackle this problem.

Randall Robinson is currently undertaking a PhD on the regeneration mechanisms of Melaleucas, for the Sustainability Group at Victoria University and has an extensive knowledge of bushland ecology.

4th November - Hamish Allan "Currawong" - Past, Present and Future"

Discover the history, rich diversity of flora and fauna and challenges of managing Currawong Bush Park, gateway to the Green Wedge. Hamish will discuss current management strategies and future plans for one of the region's most significant conservation reserves.

Hamish Allan was Ranger at Currawong Bush Park for seven years and is now Conservation Planner at Manningham City Council.

The seminars are free and no bookings are required.

Supper provided.

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel 120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner at the pub before the seminars, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cathy Willis on phone: 9840 9122 or cathy.willis@manningham.vic.gov.au

Next Committee Meeting

Wednesday 29th September at Pat & Mike's house, 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte.

Deadline for October Newsletter is October 3rd

Bush Backyard

Contributions this month from Pat Coupar

Floating Foam Rafts

By Pat Coupar

It was a cool, drizzly night. The frogs loved it. Lying in bed I listened to the males of three different species of frogs proclaiming their territory and attempting to lure a female.

The calls were distinctly different and easy to identify as Ewing's Tree-frog, the Spotted Marsh Frog and the Common Eastern Froglet. The chorus was loud, but strangely soothing and it wasn't long before I was asleep.

In the morning I went out to look at the pond. Floating on the surface were nine white soap-sud-like rafts of foam floating on the surface of the water. Only one of the three frog species laid their eggs in such a nest of bubbles. It was evident the Spotted Marsh Frog had found his mate.



As for the other two, Ewing's Tree-frog deposits its eggs in a transparent jelly attached to submerged vegetation and the Common Eastern Froglet lays single eggs either attached to vegetation or loose.

After only three days the foam mats broke up as the tiny tadpoles hatched from the eggs. Many will be eaten by the dragonfly larvae and other predatory insects that inhabit my pond, but some will survive to grow into the next generation of Spotted Marsh Frogs and continue the night time chorus.

It's Spring! What's happening in your backyard?

More Snippets Please

The feedback on this segment has been very positive, but it does rely on you, the members, to keep contributions coming.

Don't forget snippets can be about anything of interest in the environment and do not necessarily have to be about Warrandyte.

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au

The Yarra River Waterkeepers

The Yarra River is under pressure. Water in its upper catchment is diverted into the Upper Yarra Dam denying the river water. It flows out into a flood-plain that supports an intensive viticultural industry, hobby farms for down shifters and more golf clubs than you could whack a ball at. Undaunted, the river flows on, reaching the suburbs where urban run-off, dog droppings and plastic bags add to the flow.

The outer suburbs give way to the industrial suburbs, then Dight's Falls, paved river banks and the tidal reaches. And still it is a river that Melbourne brags about - while apologising for its colour in almost equal measure! The Yarra is near and dear to our hearts.

When the Victorian government floated an idea to take water from the Yarra to make up a supply shortfall, community groups along the river were spurred to action. An initial meeting



called by Environment Victoria and Waterkeepers Australia saw more than forty community members agree to establish a Yarra Riverkeeper Association (YRKA). A second community meeting has appointed an interim YRKA Committee. The YRKA will become a licensed member of Waterkeepers Australia and enjoy the services and benefits we provide.

To register your support, please phone Greg Hunt on 9347 3810, or email greghunt@waterkeepers.org.au.

SEEKING SOLACE

Alone, walking the wilderness,
seeking solace in the mountains,
only nature's tapestry do I see,
wildflowers of myriad colours,
wattles and white gums,
wombats and wallabies,
on the track,
to my sanctuary.
A secluded spot,
surrounded by bush,
civilization far behind me,
my heart thrills the closer I get,
before the sun sets,
I'll be there.

Steven Katsineris October 2001



From the Plan

The park visitor

The park is popular with local residents and visitors seeking bushland settings for a range of informal recreational activities such as walking, picnicking, sight seeing, nature observation, mountain biking and horse riding. The park also provides access points to the Yarra River for swimming, canoeing and kayaking.

Access to most parts of the park is by secondary or minor local roads. Few areas are accessible by public transport (bus) and most visitors travel to the park by car.

The park is not a major destination for interstate or international visitors, partly because of narrow road access, the fragmented nature of the park, and its relatively low profile.

Observations indicate that Pound Bend and Jumping Creek are the most visited sites in the park. Areas with limited access, e.g. Yarra Brae, Stane Brae, The Common, the Timber Reserve and Koomong attract small numbers of visitors. Visits to Mount Lofty are limited by poor amenity at the main access point at

Wittons Reserve but Mount Lofty has the potential to become an important visitor site.

Visitor surveys conducted for Parks Victoria at Pound Bend and Jumping Creek in 1998 and 1999 indicated that 82% of visitors were from the eastern and northern suburbs and that only 29% were first time visitors. Nearly all visitors (98%) made a day trip from home and stayed in the park from less than 1 to 2-4 hours. Satisfaction with the park was rated as average or slightly below average compared with other parks managed by Parks Victoria. Improvements requested included more or better signs, longer opening hours and more facilities.

Opening hours are regularly reviewed by Parks Victoria. Visits to the park may have declined in recent years although changes in monitoring make this difficult to assess.

Visitor numbers from 1997-98 to 2000-01 ranged from about 98 000 to 138 000 pa (Parks Victoria Parkweb site).

Observations by staff suggest little change in visitor numbers at the main recreation sites during peak times since 1990.

Source: Warrandyte State Park Draft Management Plan



By B.G

Seven Hundred Sown

On Thursday 26th August Adrianna Simmonds walked into the nursery to return over 700 tubes that had contained indigenous plants grown by FOWSP.

Adrianna, her husband Fernando and children Anna Maria and Juan Fernando had just planted them on their land. They are working towards a 'Land for Wildlife' classification for their property.

Fungus Found, Root Rot

Phytophthora cinnamoni (Cinnamon Fungus) has been found in 26 London plane trees in Jolimont Road, East Melbourne. They are about 15 years old and will be removed while the fungus remains dormant during the cooler weather.

Backyard Buy

Chris and Pieta were at the nursery in August obtaining plants for their 'backyard'.

Kylie's Contribution

Kylie Tenace was at the nursery helping to prick out *Poa sieberiana*. She comes as often as she can and came to Warrandyte because she loves the bush. Kylie has a fashion degree and is currently in her second year studying for an Environmental Diploma at RMIT.

Schools Sowing the Seed

Sydney Road Community School has applied for, and received, a LandCare grant to help with the planting of locally indigenous species. Other schools involved in similar activities are Moreland City College and Antonio Park Primary School.

Committee Concept

One of our committee is expecting, Guess who! More news in Spring.

Simmond's Shelter

Adrianna Simmonds is operating a registered wildlife shelter for animals in trouble. She is currently caring for several possums. Contact telephone: 97222908.



Push for Partial Privatisation of National Parks?

"A first-ever study of visitation to Australia's protected areas conducted by the Sustainable Tourism CRC and the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia found that there are 80 million visits to conservation areas each year, with 90% of those being Australians."

Christopher Brown, Managing Director of the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia said "Our National Parks are facing a funding crisis" He reflected the organisation's view that investment short falls could be met by private sector investment.

Source: *Ecos July-August 2004*, page 5. Website: www.ttf.org.au

Evolving Ecos

Ecos, the journal of CSIRO is now published bi-monthly. It is a highly up-to-date magazine well worth reading.

Editor's note: FOWSP subscribes to Ecos. Anyone interested in borrowing the magazine can borrow it from the nursery.

Attention all Members

Would all members who have obtained plants from the FOWSP nursery please make sure they return the empty forestry tubes and more importantly the black plastic tube holder trays. These trays are specially made and have been bought by FOWSP at considerable cost. We cannot possibly keep track of where they all go, but many are not coming back. So would all members, particularly who put in large orders last year of several hundred plants, have a look round to see if they still have our plastic trays somewhere. They can be returned to the nursery any weekday between 8.00am and 5.00pm or on the first Sunday of the month between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.



Surface
Mail
only

Postage
Paid

REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST
PP 346802 / 0005

If undeliverable please return to
Friends of Warrandyte State Park Inc.
P.O. Box 220
Warrandyte, 3113



Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*)

Did you see the Golden Wattle's this year? How could you miss them. They flowered earlier and for longer than they have for many years. Hopefully they will go on to produce heaps of seed as last year there was none.

If you didn't know already, Golden Wattle is Australia's floral emblem it could also be Warrandyte's floral emblem as it is one of the dominant wattles of our dry stony hills.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20
Single \$15
Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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