

November 2004

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

The Return of Rubra

By Pat Coupar

The Salmon Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra rubra*) is a reluctant flowering orchid, not often seen in Warrandyte. But in late September I was lucky enough to witness a spectacular flowering event of this reclusive orchid at Fourth Hill.

It was a warm sunny afternoon - the first and only opportunity I have had this spring to indulge my passion of wildflower watching and photography.

Although I knew of a couple of small occurrences of the Salmon Sun Orchid in the State Park, I had never seen them at this location before.

I came across the first *rubra* at the edge of the track, but my excitement grew as I found more and more, each one in full flower displaying its aptly-named pale salmon pink petals and sepals surrounding the yellow-topped column. I counted over thirty in an area of about 25 metres across. Awesome.

Although this was a part of the Hill that I visit regularly every year, why had I never seen them here before?



The problem is that without flowers, the slender, narrow leaves of *rubra* are difficult to distinguish from other sun orchids. Added to that, they do not flower every year. In fact, they may not flower at all for many years and when they do, they open only briefly on warm days. Timing is everything and this year I had timed it just right.

While the drought may not have officially broken, the rains have come at the right time for the spring orchids. Following so many years of drought, the rains were probably the key to *rubras* prolific display.

The day got even better as I encountered a good population of the Donkey or Wallflower Orchids (*Diuris corymbosa*) - another species that seems to come and go. In addition, there were tall Tiger Orchids (*D. sulphurea*), Brown Beaks (*Lyperanthus suaveolans*), Beard Orchids (*Calochilus* spp.), Musky Caladenia (*Caladenia gracilis*) and Waxlips (*Glossodia major*) galore.

Also in flower was one of my favourite orchids - the Bearded Greenhood (*Pterostylis plumosa*) - a generally uncommon species with a typical green translucent hood protruding from which is a distinctive long yellow-haired 'tongue'.

As well as the orchids, the Hill was ablaze with various orange and red peas, bright yellow daisies, blue, purple and white lilies and the misty-blue Love Creeper.

What a season. What a year. What a place. Warrandyte State Park on a warm spring afternoon - the place to be.

Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor



Another Koala came in for a short visit this month. As usual the person who hit this koala on Yarra Street Warrandyte did not stop. Fortunately for this koala another motorist did stop. These people are members of FOWSP, unfortunately I did not get their names, but I do know the koala managed to bite the gentleman. These people took the koala to the Warrandyte Police Station and Policeman Pete was able to help.

After a Vet check by Derek Fairley it was found the Koala was not real flash. Kal El as he has been named, (as he will need to put in a super effort to survive) has been a pleasure to handle. He has lost his two top front teeth, he has cuts on his tongue, his chin is grazed, he has a few stitches across the top of his nose and as well as this the car managed to run over the big guys groin, so this area was a bit grazed a few bits of fur were missing.

First thing to consider was would will he be able to eat with no top teeth? The network was put into action, several phone calls later, (to other shelters to ask if koalas can survive with these teeth missing). The major problem with this injury is to watch for infection on the gum line.

The other injuries this koala suffered were not life threatening and will heal with time. He came in weighing 10.5 kilo. The next day our question

was answered, nothing was going to stop this boy, he was sitting in his branches eating. Nine days later, and weighing 13 kilo, the big boy has been released, back where he was found - along the river in Warrandyte, hopefully on the right side of Yarra Street.

Two days later Kal-El had moved off. Many people walking their dogs along the path saw him and said they would watch out for him hopefully if he gets into trouble again he will be found quickly. We will know if he comes back as he is micro chipped.

A kangaroo in Warranwood needed to be put down as it had a broken leg after it had been hit by a car. The ladies car did not look too good. Unfortunately large kangaroos need to be put down if they have a broken leg, because as soon as they feel a bit better they try to stand on the leg and re break the bone. However, a joey has a chance with a broken bone, as it is easy to confine a pouched animal.

Another kangaroo got into mischief in Croydon Hills. He managed to jump onto a shed roof! The roof gave way and the kangaroo rode the roof to the ground, he was left standing, uninjured, in the shed. As there was a lot of equipment in the shed, the kangaroo was sedated and relocated to Stane Brae.

Another kangaroo was hit by a car in Stane Brae Court Wonga Park. Again the driver did not stop, and Derek Fairley was called to put it down. The kangaroo had a smashed pelvis.

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. **NB** Dog attacks account for 2000 koala deaths per year Australia wide.
- 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.



Ian Lambert Burke

17 May 1930 – 12 October 2004

Written in elegant italics in the front of my copy of 'Discover Warrandyte' are the following words:

"There can be no secret in life and morals, because Nature has provided every beautiful thought you know, and every precious sentiment you feel shall shine out of your face, so that all may see, know, understand and appreciate. You keep things only by giving them away."
Signed Elbert and friend.

Elbert is Elbert Hubbard an American writer and philosopher and the friend Ian Burke. The words chosen by Ian reflect the man he was – gentle, kind, a deep thinker with a love of nature and in particular Warrandyte. Ian felt strongly about conservation and wrote the chapter on that subject in the book 'Discover Warrandyte', one of FOWSP's greatest achievement's published in 1993.

Ian and Margaret Burke moved to Warrandyte in the mid-eighties and quickly sought out a voluntary group that would fulfill their needs of caring for the environment – that group was the Friends of Warrandyte State Park.

They involved themselves wholeheartedly in the group. For over a decade they were the mainstay of FOWSP, both of them instantly recognisable in their matching blue and purple woolly jumpers. While Margaret was the driving force, Ian was always there in the background sharing the responsibilities, dealing with recalcitrant sprinkler hoses and sagging shade cloth.

Ian was instrumental in obtaining a number of grants for various projects. He was part of a dynamic building team that gave us a shelter to work under for propagation, installed a much-needed polyhouse, constructed the 'Folly' and carried out many other nursery renovations.

Ian will be particularly remembered by long-time Fowspians for his thought-provoking, front page editorials in the monthly newsletter. He wrote from the heart speculating and philosophizing on political, social and environmental events both local and global. His missive always ending with a quote or two from his friend Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915).

Socially, you could find Ian tending the barbeque, a glass of red wine in hand. In fact just last year FOWSP and the Osborne Peninsula Landcare held a joint planting day on the banks of the river Although his health was beginning to fail Ian was there ready to lend a hand wherever it was needed, cooking the sausages, organising drinks making sure everyone was catered for.

Ian Burke was a thinking man, quietly spoken, a gentleman in every sense of the word.

Pat Coupar



All members are invited to attend

The FOWSP Annual General Meeting (AGM)

To be held on Sunday November 28th at 4.00pm

The meeting will be followed by a social BBQ. BYO meat and drinks

The Little Fella

By Sandra Jones

There I was minding my own business, sitting on the garden bench at the end of the driveway enjoying the morning sun, when something caught my eye. I noticed some rustling in the grass under a tree on the other side of the street. Thinking it was the local Noisy Miner family scratching in the dirt, I wasn't going to give it another thought, but then I realised it was not the birds, but an active young echidna. Now that was the last thing I was expecting to see. I did a double take and sure enough it was an echidna.



I
got up
and
strode
across
the
road
for a
closer

look and to see where it was heading. After reaching the pine tree nearby, the little fella was arrested by the local Noisy Miner family. So I came to the rescue and moved the birds along.

Once the Miners left my new friend started to move on, but I saw trouble in store as it was

heading for busy Webb Street. I stood over the echidna trying to head him in a new direction, knowing I needed help to move it to safe territory, (no matter how cute it was I was not going to pick it up on my own).

Just when I really wanted my brother to come walking up the road returning from work, I saw my neighbours Frank and Belle and called out for help. Frank arrived with a bucket and an old shirt. We tried to pick up our little friend, but the shirt was too thin and when we tried to get our spiky friend into the bucket he started to dig into the ground. The echidna was not going anywhere.

Then extra help arrived – my brother Kevin was strolling up the road. Two extra hands were going to make a big difference. Using the gardening equipment he had with him Kevin was able to dig around the young fella, pick him up with thick gloves and place him on a piece of old carpet we found. Then we took him to the bush block on the other side of the road.

A little later Kevin checked on the little fella, but it had moved on. So if you live along Mitchell Avenue and were outside on the evening of 19th October and saw a young echidna wobbling past he may be 'my little fella'. But you know what? In all the excitement and confusion I forgot to give him a little tickle on the nose.

From the Plan

Management directions

Major management directions for the park are outlined below:

Conservation

- Areas of high natural value in good condition will be maintained.
- Threatened and significant vegetation communities will be maintained and restored.
- Populations and habitats of threatened species will be protected and maintained.
- The original range of vegetation communities within the park, with characteristic species and structure, will

be restored and maintained to a self-sustaining condition with representative age classes in the long-term.

- Self-generating, genetically viable populations of threatened species will be restored and preserved in the long-term.
- Links between habitats will be restored to extend and link wildlife corridors to enhance connectivity.
- Pest species including new and emerging pest plants will be controlled and eradicated where possible.

Source: Warrandyte State Park Draft Management Plan

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: November 25th
December 23rd



**Deadline for December Newsletter is
November 30th**

FOWSP Committee 2004

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Market</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Marie Krause	9712 0498
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary	<u>Assistant Treasurer</u>	
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		Ray Clarke	9841 8507
Sharon Mason	9844 4370			
Melanie Birtchnell				
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797		<u>Nursery Manager</u>	0408317327
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659



Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2004

2nd December - David Van Bockel and Anthony Owen – “Fire Ecology”

David and Anthony will talk about fire as a conservation management tool and illustrate its role in bushland ecology through a series of local case studies.

David Van Bockel, Ranger at Warrandyte State Park, has over 10 years experience in fire ecology, controlled burning and wildfire fighting. Anthony Owen is an environmental consultant who uses fire as a management tool.

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

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.

High Rise Accommodation

By Laurie Safstrom

What have I learnt over the years of providing quality accommodation for out wildlife? In earlier years I loved climbing extension ladders, so putting the boxes as high as possible was no problem and a challenge. We become wiser as the years go on, or should – these days my extension ladder is much shorter, but with any ladder, remember the old sailors rule ‘one hand for the ship and one for yourself’ still applies. Carrying a nest box and the bits and pieces for fixing same, and holding on to the ladder with one hand is not for everyone. This may help. If possible throw a rope over a higher branch and have someone haul the box up to the position you have chosen, then fix it without holding the weight of the box.

Remember that nest boxes have to be serviced for the tenants such as removing any dead creatures, removing buckets of bits of plastic



carried in by Indian Mynahs – you have to admire their persistence. Other services include discouraging bees and putting fresh shavings and sawdust in each season, old homes get smelly.

I have found that Indian Mynahs cause most of the problems as also do bees. Letting the Mynahs lay their eggs, usually five (may be more than once in a season) and removing each clutch of eggs discourages them. A very long stick to reach the hole with a stopper on the end to place in the hole is another option.

Bees. On all places where I have hung a ‘pest strip’ outside the entrance hole the bees have gone elsewhere. Powerful Owls need good tucker – Ringtail Possums. By providing Ringtails with a breeding home helps the owls. The entrance hole for Ringtails needs only to be about 45 millimetres in diameter.

The Gould League publishes a wonderful little book about nest boxes. This is also available at the Bird Observers shop in Nunawading.

Owlet Nightjars need a number of roosting cavities in the area as they are poor fliers. As a great thrill when you spot a little face watching you from the home you have provided. But what about our larger birds. They need a spacious home. Have you wondered where? Where are the large holes for our Wood Ducks, Galahs, Corellas, Cockatoos, Gang-gangs and Owls? None of these birds build nests. Without homes our local populations could plummet. They are long-lived but locally they are not reproducing.

So you handy people, up and start building – it’s good fun.

Freesias Project

This is a copy of a letter sent to the residents of Haslams Track, Warrandyte at the beginning of September. Unfortunately Michaela has experienced some vandalism at her Haslams Tk site with many plants being pulled out along the roadside and just thrown onto the roadway. We are publishing the letter to increase the general knowledge of her project so as to help reduce further vandalism. If anyone is in the area please do not unintentionally weed out plants that Michaela is studying.

My name is Michaela Walsh, and I am a PhD student at Burnley College, The University of Melbourne. I have an honours degree in horticulture, and my project is on the ecology of freesias as weeds. I would like to inform you as residents of the area that I am going to be working here in Warrandyte on ‘The Common’ reserve next to Haslams Track over the next three years. I will be here mainly in spring, counting plant numbers and monitoring seed production. My supervisor, Professor Roger Cousens, or other students from Burnley may be with me. In summer I may collect some plants for use in experiments.

Please be assured that I have the appropriate permit from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and approval from Warrandyte State Park. My permit number is 10002932. Dave Van Bockel is my contact at the Warrandyte Parks Victoria office. You could assist with my project if there are freesias in your garden that have become weeds and require removal or management. If you have any concerns about the project or you would like to discuss anything with me, please contact me at the address above, or email me at the address: m.walsh1@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au

Bush Backyard

Contributions this month from Elizabeth Sevier
and Michelle Hanslow

Front and Backyard Events

By Elizabeth Sevier

The Red Wattlebirds start their raucous calling at 4.30 a.m. Interspersed by short bursts from a Magpie and a Blackbird from over the fence. They are joined by their related species, Striated Honeyeaters or Little Wattlebirds (silly name! They have no wattles).

I take my first cup of tea back to bed and open the curtains to watch the antics of the Wattlebirds as they dart about sideways and upside down to enjoy the nectar from the Ironbark in the front of the house.

The sun is up on a promising morning so I continue my breakfast outside, ducking under some low-hanging branches from a Black Wattle. I am very glad that I ignored the dark mutterings from my tall son about a chainsaw when he needed to visit the shed nearby. The branches hold a delightful mass of fluffy, creamy blossoms just where I have my wooden seat. Further back, the Lemon Bottlebrush is crammed with blooms and joined by the red-flowering bush behind.

There are little red flowers too on the new non-indigenous melaleuca - one of the plants donated as compensation for casualties by the Council contractors despite specific instruction from me for local plants from local stock.

I am gradually indigdising my garden. However, I have got to admit that the bushes are very pretty. The mauve mint bush is flowering too, but so is

Prostanthera lasianthos

despite having its main flowering branch hanging by the smallest strip of bark from the trunk.

Nothing will last forever. The morning wears on. Two Turtledoves peck for seeds among the good and bad grass before going back to the lady at the top of the hill who feeds them! I have been missing the thornbills. I hope they return soon. There are fewer Lorikeets now too. Some come in the late afternoon whistling and screeching about the Manna Gum which seems to be flowering high at its top.



The blackbird sings, the baby Wattlebirds peep constantly for food to be put down their well-fed throats and the day ends.

So are the events of my back and front yard. How about yours?

My Non-Bush Backyard

By Michelle Hanslow

Apart from my Harley-Davidson riding neighbour, I am yet to have a stranger visitor to my unit in Heathmont than the one I had late last Sunday afternoon. My partner called to me, saying that a strange big black bird was on our driveway.

We have a permanent puddle in the middle of the concrete drive that provides an almost constant, although slightly oil-infected, water supply for local pets and birds.

I responded that it was probably a type of Raven or perhaps one of the Pied Currawongs I had seen recently, but he insisted it was not, that it looked kind of weird. And weird indeed it was, but only because of its unusual presence.

It was a Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus*

funereus). I took a couple of photos, surreptitiously through the front door as it tipped its head on one side to take several long drinks from the puddle. Eventually it flew into the Blackwood growing alongside the drive, and then disappeared from sight.



It returned again today to do the same thing. I am so pleased. I have often heard them calling and I have seen large groups flying overhead, but I have never seen an isolated bird walking around clumsily on a suburban drive.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are easily identified by their black plumage. Most of their body feathers are edged with yellow, which is not visible at a distance. The only yellow I could see was the yellow check spot until it suddenly stretched its tail feathers wide, revealing a band of yellow colour hidden there. The female has a larger yellow cheek patch, with a pale brown bill (grey-black in males) and black marks in the yellow tail panels. Young birds look like the adult female, whilst the young males have a smaller cheek patch.

Worth Repeating

Tree frog survives in city as others croak it

Xavier La Canna

If you stroll through Melbourne's parks and gardens at night you may notice the high-pitched trilling of a frog.

What you may not be aware of is that the southern brown tree frog, and its distinctive call resembling a "brr, brr, brr, brrrr" is alone in the inner urban environment. Eight to 10 varieties once lived in the city; now this tree frog is the only species found. It makes up about half of all frogs in the suburbs.

A study recently completed by Deakin University's Kirsten Parris has been unlocking the mystery of how this tough amphibian is beating the odds.

Dr Parris said the secret of this super frog is that being a tree frog means it can scale the bluestone borders of the ponds and water features in Melbourne's parks and use the aquatic environments to breed.

While other varieties of frogs could sometimes, get into the ponds to lay their eggs, the resulting baby frogs drowned when they developed lungs and

"They have large sticky toes so they can get in and out of the ponds," she said. "A wall that is 30 centimetres high is pretty daunting to a small frog."

Frogs are an important part of the ecosystem, and provide food for tortoises and fish as tadpoles, and for birds and snakes when fully grown.

Dr Parris said that if the decline of urban frogs was to be reversed, some of the pond walls would have to be removed and more shrubs planted to give the amphibians a chance to hide from predators.

Busy roads that disrupt natural movements are also a problem.

Some frog species that have disappeared from our parks and gardens may have to be relocated from other areas to repopulate the areas in which they once lived, Dr Parris said.

Source: *The Age* 20/9/04

Take Time to Stop and Smell the Roses

By Alwynne Buntine

I walk along suburban streets of gardens neat and ordered,
Full of roses and imported things, by privet hedges bordered.
While these gardens are a beauteous sight and perfume fills the air,
I know a secret garden, different flowers are blooming there.

There's grevilleas and banksias and several kinds of peas,
With correas and chocolate lilies growing amongst gum trees.
Many hooded orchids in differing shades of green,
And tiny blue love creeper with all of these are seen.

The boldness of the roses and camelias is not there,
There's a subtlety of beauty which is quite beyond compare,
It is a bushland garden created by nature's hand,
A place for us to enter, to sit or just to stand
And gaze upon the carpet spreads before our feet.
A million different colours where light and shadow meet.

The effect I feel when pausing within this hidden place,
Restores my soul, lifts my heart and brightens up my face.
I see many exquisite flowers in attitudes and poses,
Whenever I stop and make the time, to smell my 'native roses'.





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Quaking Grass
(Briza maxima)

Also known as Shell Grass, this attractive annual grass is unfortunately introduced from Mediterranean regions. Flowering plants range from less than 1cm to 60cms and readily invade bushland. Quaking Grass is easy to remove by hand pulling or large areas can be treated using a weed burner before the plants set seed.

Follow up weed control over several years will dramatically reduce infestations.

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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