

September 2005

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Something for Everyone

By Pat Coupar

Over the last year FOWSP has stepped up its activities program and now has on offer a more diverse range of walks and activity groups than ever before.

While Thursdays have always been propagation mornings and sales at the nursery, a sub-group of workers has evolved who carry out landscaping and planting around the nursery and in Frogland. As a result the entrance to the rangers depot is starting to look much more attractive. Morning tea and coffee and biscuits have now been upgraded to sandwiches, pies and sausage rolls!

A new addition to Thursday mornings has been the formation of the 'Thursday Activity Group' (TAG). Once a month, for two hours, the group goes out into the State Park to carry out works such as planting and weeding, usually under the guidance of a ranger. Already the group has learnt various management techniques such as honeysuckle control and Burgan thinning, as well as planting some rare species.

This year FOWSP has been running a program of walks in conjunction with Manningham City Council. These take place twice a month on the fourth Thursday from 1.00pm-3.00pm and the first Sunday of the month from 10.15am until lunch. The walks have so far covered a variety of topics from eucalypts, birds, fire ecology to the history of the area.

The 'Friends' trailer at the monthly Warrandyte market continues to be the shop front of our group. And its success is due to all those members who give up their time to be on duty at the information trailer every month.

A much lower profile group, formed two years ago, are the 'Friends of Wombat Gully'. The group which comprises of Fowspians, members of the Osborne Peninsula Landcare and locals, are restoring a linear strip of Warrandyte State Park adjacent to, and including, the northern river frontage reserve close to the Koornong.

This small, but enthusiastic Friends group meet every Wednesday at 9.00am and work for two hours on a variety of sites in the area. The gully which was once a neglected, weedscape is in the process of being transformed into a local bushland showpiece.

The group has also adopted another area of State Park further downstream on a terrace of the river. This is also currently under going weed control and planting (see 'National Tree Day' article this newsletter).

FOWSP membership has been growing steadily over the last couple of years. Our group is now more dynamic than ever and with so much variety of activities at the nursery, in the Park and educational walks, there is surely something for everyone.

Thursday Activity Group (TAG) Planting Morning

Date & Time: Thursday October 6th 10.00am

Place: Norman Reserve. End of Bradleys Lane (Melways 23 B12)

Morning tea will be provided

Bush Backyard

Contributions this month from *Steve Munro, Steven Katsineris and Pat Coupar*

The Persistence of Kookaburras

By Steve Munro

Over the last week or so in mid-August, I've been watching a couple of Kookaburras building a nesting space. The tree they chose is a mature manna gum, 35-40 metres high. About 15-20 metres up, there was a small hole where a branch had fallen out last season. It was this small hole the Kookaburras have been working on. Every day for an hour or so they would perch on a neighbouring limb of the tree, contemplate the hole and then, in turn, attack it in short bursts.

For the first day or so, the hole was too small for them to get any purchase with their feet. Their attacks on the hole over these early days were very short; only one or two pecks with the beak before falling away and returning to the nearby perch. After a few days, the hole was getting bigger and they were able to stay at the hole longer, for a couple of seconds of furious pecking, before falling away again and returning to their perch for more consultation with their partner.

After about a week, the hole was big enough to accommodate a whole Kookaburra head and part of the upper body. They have had to overcome quite some harassment from other birds to get that far. Crimson Rosellas and Rainbow Lorikeets get very noisy nearby when the Kookaburras arrive for their daily work. Apart from noise, the rosellas and lorikeets don't seem too disruptive to the Kookas' efforts. Currawongs seemed far more aggressively disruptive. Occasionally they swept down close to the Kookaburras, putting them off their nest-building. Often, one of the Kookaburra pair would perch higher up and several metres away to launch a more effective defence, and even pre-emptive strikes, against lurking currawongs.

I hope all their hard work and persistence gets rewarded by a satisfactory nesting site.



The Southern Brown Tree Frog

By Steven Katsineris

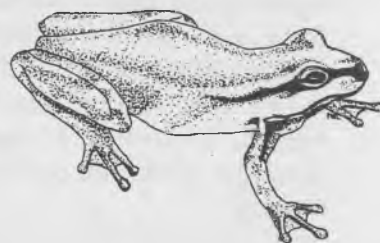
Over the years we have found several Southern Brown Tree Frogs in various cool or moist parts of our garden in Hurstbridge, sometimes inside shrubs, under pot plants, woodpiles, logs and rocks. They are also often heard in and around our ponds and areas where there is still water, mostly at breeding times. The male makes a rapid, loud and distinctive call, "creeee, creeee, creeee, cree, cree," repeated some five to fifteen times.

The last time I discovered one was while removing some gum bark that had fallen on a Mint Bush. I noticed the frog inside a tubular piece of bark, which I returned to the branches where I found it. It made me aware of the fact that animals require different types of habitat and that we should be careful about removing leaves, bark and other dead vegetation, as frogs and other wildlife need such places to shelter.

The Southern Brown Tree Frog, also known as Ewing's Tree Frog is a medium-sized frog, about 3-5cm. It is distributed along the south-eastern part of NSW through southern Victoria to south-eastern SA and is also found in Tasmania and its islands. It is common and widespread around Melbourne, and is as much at home in suburban gardens as it is in the bush and is quick to colonise backyard ponds. They will even lay their eggs in backyard swimming pools.

While other frog species have drastically declined or become extinct in the city, the Southern Brown Tree Frog has survived. It makes up half of all the frogs in the suburbs. The reason it is flourishing is that being a tree frog it is an agile climber, with large sticky discs on their toes and so can scale the walls and stone borders of ponds to breed.

They breed all year round, peaking in late winter and early spring. The eggs are clear jelly clumps attached to submerged objects, often near the surface. Tadpoles hatch within a few weeks of spawning and metamorphosis takes between 12 and 26 weeks.



Stealing Nectar

By Pat Coupar

The flowers of the Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*) that grows in Far East Gippsland are a brilliant scarlet and lime green.

With some difficulty we managed to propagate this species from cuttings and planted them in our Mallacoota garden, protecting them from the few resident rabbits with plastic guards.

On our most recent visit down there we were delighted to see the first stunning tubular flowers appear on our small shrubs. We thought that they



were large enough not to be grazed by rabbits and removed the guards so we could enjoy the flowers.

Our pleasure was short-lived for less than half an hour later a family of Crimson Rosellas found the unprotected Correas and nipped off all the flowers at their base to steal the nectar, leaving the tubular bells scattered on the ground. Oh well!

More Snippets Please

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

Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

There is not a lot to report on koalas this month as I have an injured wrist and I have not been working as a shelter.

Only two koala sightings this month they were in Stock Crt Donvale and Mitcham near where the freeway is going through!

I have been kept busy as I have been going to Healesville Sanctuary for a couple of hours a day and keeping two dingo pups company. They are about 12 weeks old and are double trouble. They investigate everything that moves. Their names are Alli and Rubin. They will be going to Thailand when they are a little older.

Currently they are on display for a few hours most days, but are not being handled by the public.



The older dingos come out daily to meet the public and they love a pat on the back.(not on the head - think what it would be like if a lot of people hit you on the head).

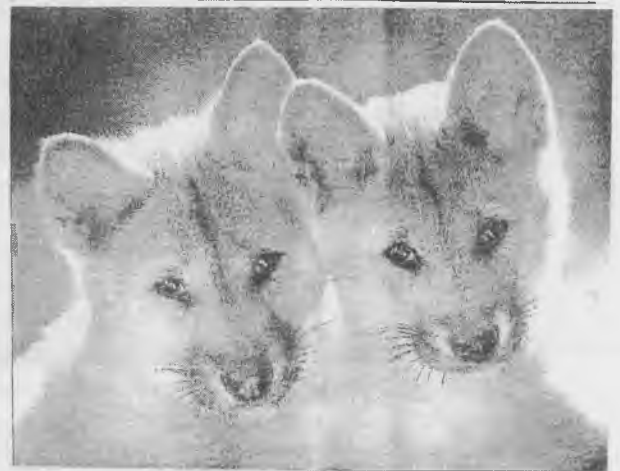


Photo Source: Sunday Herald Sun

New Treasurer

From next month FOWSP will have a new treasurer. Her name is Joan Broadberry, a FOWSP member for many years. Joan is also an active member of the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria and is currently a co-editor of the Field Nats News. So we are extremely fortunate that she has found time to take up the position of treasurer since the retirement of Ray Clarke.

Ray has done a fantastic job over the last few years and we are immensely grateful for his expertise and wish him well in his retirement.

Lucky Enough to be There

By Pat Coupar

I was one of six privileged Fowspians to go on an impromptu Thursday afternoon walk with ranger, Cam Beardsell. Cam took us to a little known Parks Victoria reserve – part of the Yarra Valley Parklands – called Morrisons, situated north of the river in a remote corner of Eltham.

Firstly we were shown the site of the Morrison family home with its abandoned Edna Walling garden complete with a massive Cypress tree, a couple of large old spreading Oaks and an army of Agapanthus. As the site is now classified historically, Parks Victoria is limited in what plants they can remove regardless of their weed status!

Once beyond the house site, down the hill, we entered what Cam called the 'fairy fence'. And what a fairyland it was. We walked on a carpet of soft green moss trying hard not to step on the extensive colonies of ground-hugging orchids which included three species of Helmet (*Corybas* spp.) and five species of Greenhood (*Pterostylis* spp.).

Leaving the green grotto we moved back up the hill and along a ridge to another rabbit exclusion fence where the vegetation was much drier. Here amongst native grasses and diminutive Woolly Wattles, Cam showed us the jewel in the crown – the rare, critically endangered Rosella Orchid (*Caladenia rosella*). One bright pink flower stood alone surrounded by a cluster of slender, erect hairy leaves – the result of Cam's hand pollination from last year. The story of this spider orchid is complex and extraordinary, involving an intimate relationship between the orchid, its pollinator – a small native bee – a fungus and a moss.



While we photographed the Rosella and the large colonies of Tiny Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*) that were scattered throughout the fence, we were unaware that we were being watched by a koala, high in Yellow Box tree. It was only when the animal decided to relieve itself – narrowing missing our group – that our attention was drawn to it!

We left Morrisons behind, but more treats were in store as Cam took us to another little known location owned by Parks Victoria. Not an orchid hot-spot this time, but a couple of Alistair Knox built houses that were once the bushland retreat of artist Gordon Ford. And another Edna Walling garden, this one with an imposing wall of huge boulders and a series of shallow ponds that went right up to the windows of the house. Until a couple of years ago the houses were still used by various 'artists in residence', but have now been deemed 'unsafe' by Parks Victoria due to uneven brick floors and other such normal quirks of these fantastic mudbrick buildings.

It was one of those afternoons to remember and I know everyone who was lucky enough to be there would like to give a big thank you to Cam for sharing these special places with us.

Worth repeating

Spring is in the air

The silver wattles are in full bloom along the Yarra. Early spring is here. All should see this beautiful sight.

Seekers after this scene of beauty will need to walk or ride their bikes upstream to where the natural indigenous vegetation still flourishes. They will then delight in the sight

of gold against the brown river water and grey skies.

This is Melbourne in early spring. We do not have to wait for the first of September or take photos of daffodils. We can enjoy our own Melbourne spring.

Elizabeth Seviar, Bulleen.

Editor's note: This letter was published in the Age on 22/8/05. Elizabeth is a long time FOWSP member. Congratulations.

FOWSP Committee 2005

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	<u>Assistant Treasurer</u> Ray Clarke	9841 8507
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary		
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		<u>Market</u>	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary	Marie Krause	9712 0498
Artur Muchow	0415383328			
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Publications Officer</u>	
Kyen Knight	0418149961		Kirsten Brunt	0438411278

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2005

5th October Heath Butler – “Growling Grass Frog”

2nd November Scott Watson – “Indigenous Garden Design”

7th December Paul Barnard – “Wildfire Behaviour and Community Safety”



Please Note: The seminars are now on WEDNESDAY nights

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:

Cynthia Danby 9840 9129

Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

Activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site. If you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG). No previous experience required.

6th October – Norman Reserve (Mel ref 23 B12)

Deadline for October Newsletter is October 2nd

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 Walks 2005

Meet at 1pm at the Nursery, Pound Bend Rangers Depot, Pound Bend Road Warrandyte (Melways Ref. 23 C10) to car pool to walk starting point. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours

September 29th Folly Dam. Aquatic Invertebrates by Trish Grant (to be confirmed)

October 27th Fourth Hill. Wildflowers by Josh Revell (to be confirmed)

Sunday Walks 2005

Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

For more information contact Cynthia Briscoe 9840 9129

September 4th Fourth Hill "Wattles and Wildflowers". Leader Cathy Willis. Meet at Tunnel St, Warrandyte Melways 35 F2

October 2nd Professors Hill. Leader David Cameron (to be confirmed)

National Tree Day

A wonderful planting day on Sunday July 31st. Many thanks to all who helped organise, prepare and support the day. Firstly we had a lovely day weather-wise. Couldn't have been better and the site is a very beautiful section of Warrandyte State Park riverbank. Despite its highly degraded state only two years ago, the river terrace is now being transformed.

The success of the day depended on the roles of various roles people: Pat Coupar's role in planning, long term cannot be underestimated, with much input from rangers David Van Bockel and Cam Beardsell. Contractors Pat Coupar and Annie Reid have done wonderful site preparation, they will follow up with more weed control to ensure replacement of a slope of weed grasses with lovely riparian grassland and middle storey shrubs.

Setting out guards and stakes the day before was a good idea. The State Park rabbit control program (many thanks Jodie) has made a wonderful difference and we hope this will be continued as it is critical for long term success.

The Osborne Peninsula Landcare Nursery provided all the revegetation species for the planting with the exception of several rare River Tea-tree (*Leptospermum obovatum*) supplied by Josh (FOWSP Nursery). With the opposite bank and the rapids both having important remnants this is now a site for a large number of rare and threatened species. Being a remote site should ensure protection of these species. It will also be a site to collect enhancement/rare species seed.

Ranger Col provided wonderful support on the day with delivery and collection of everything we asked for (only better). Having a Ranger presence, even for quite a short time, signifies the importance of what is being done.

Provision of a quality, simple BBQ lunch and a basket of apples to sustain and refresh the workers was, as previously demonstrated, well received. Richard Morton as cook deserves special thanks as does Shelagh, who organized most of the provisions. I hope she will relay our thanks to Flora the butcher who always provides excellent fare at a special price. One mistake we made was to forget to have a few veggie-burgers. The vegos had extra apples!

We had 32 eager, happy participants. Many of these were locals who use the trail and are highly motivated to improve the site. There is much positive feedback about the way this project (and Wombat Gully nearby) is viewed. One of the essential ingredients for such a well attended, motivated workforce we have shown to be advertising well and more than once. Newsletter first, follow up email Bulletins and about 3 days before a handbill to every local resident (extra's to FOWSP).

Thanks extend also to those Landcare members who cared for the newcomers to this revegetation role. Over the years having mentors has meant we have avoided most mistakes made by inexperienced workers. Special thanks here to Samantha Eadie. Rob Youl and Sigma Pharmaceuticals deserve our thanks for the significance of their contribution as grant broker and far sited private company providing funding for this very important work. Sigma gave a generous grant to us 2 years ago. This has allowed for a very well planned and executed project over a 3-5 year period which has made a significant difference to the Yarra Habitat Corridor. This is very much better than simply a grant for a one-off planting.

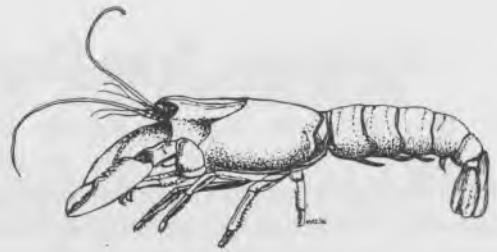
We plan another day such as this in 12 months. There will be many small increments to its success in this next year. We feel that this site should simply blend into the corridor as a special enrichment node - perhaps in a 5 year period. Any previous degradation will not be at all apparent. As a future project we would like to make the Sigma Site a little off river trail education nature walk.

This article was edited from an email sent by Marg Burke to participants following the planting.



The Yabbies of Yarrunga Creek

By Steven Katsineris



For over a year in 1996-7 we lived in Mittagong, a small country town, surrounded by bush and farms in the Southern Highlands of N.S.W. an hour from Sydney. It is a beautiful mountainous area, with a lot of picnic spots and bush walking trails nearby.

One of the places we particularly enjoyed visiting was the exquisite Yarrunga Creek and nearby Fitzroy Falls in the Morton National Park a short drive south of Mittagong, not far from Kangaroo Valley.

The Falls are a spectacular sight, with the water from Yarrunga Creek dropping over 80 metres down the rugged escarpment and flowing into the Kangaroo River. The region is filled with impressive deep ravines, lush vegetation and abundant wildlife.

We would picnic on the rocks beside the creek and bush walk in the area, but our favourite activity, especially that of the girls, was to go for a dip, paddle and play in the shallow rock pools of the creek. Our girls, Sian aged six and Chione aged four were very natural, adventurous and would frolic around the rocks and creek. This safe, cool and peaceful place was even more particularly pleasant in summer.

On our first trip to the area, there was another family with two young boys, who we noticed were catching yabbies from the water using meat on string. I overheard the oldest boy, aged about six or seven ask his mother that he had thought of

coming over to show the girls the yabbies, but wasn't sure if they would be scared. His mother remarked that while some girls would be frightened, those girls looked brave and unafraid of such things and said it would be fine to show them. I felt very pleased and proud to hear these admiring comments about our girls. We all joined in looking at and handling the yabbies, before they were returned to the creek.

From then on we always took meat, string and buckets to Yarrunga Creek and after some initial help the girls became very skilful at catching yabbies. After capturing the yabbies, we would always release them back into the creek. One of my fondest memories of this region and time in our lives was the wonderful sight of our happy children having such delightful fun at this enchanting place.

Yabbies are freshwater crustaceans (or crayfish). They live in streams, lakes, dams, canals and ponds in southeast Australia, where they hide under rocks and branches. Yabbies eat algae, dead and decaying plants and flesh, fish and other small animals. They have large claws used for defence, for holding food and digging. Turtles, water birds, water rats and fish eat yabbies.

Woody Weed Work on Fourth Hill

By Pat Coupar

Another very successful Thursday Activity Group (TAG) morning was held on September 1st. This one was organised jointly by FOWSP and Manningham Council and attracted over a dozen volunteers who met at the end of Tunnel Street, off Webb Street.

With guidance from local resident and FOWSP member Bev Hansen the group spread out across the shady southern slope of Fourth Hill in search of woody weeds. Many seedlings of Flax-leaf Broom and Cape Broom were hand pulled as well as Pittosporum seedlings. As we descended down into the gully we came across some larger Pittosporum, Cotoneaster and Irish Strawberry trees which were cut off with a hand saw and painted with neat Roundup.

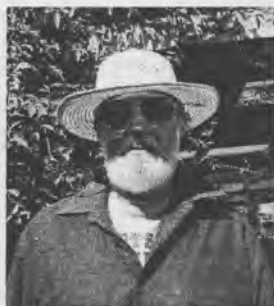
In the gully itself we attacked an isolated infestation of Japanese Honeysuckle that was strangling the native vegetation. On hands and knees we crawled underneath the dense climber and snipped and dabbed all the living stems we could find at ground level.

Moving up the gully we found small patches of Angled Onion and Bridal Creeper that were hand dug. A bonus here was an exquisite little nest of a Yellow Robin containing two mottled blue eggs.

Returning to the car we were rewarded with a delicious lunch of mixed sandwiches, passionfruit sponge cake and apple pie.



By B.G



Still Serving

Val Polley (who was a member of the first FOWSP committee) was purchasing plants at the nursery.

Val is presently a committee member of the Warrandyte Community Association.

Wonderful Wattles

A burst of preparation and sale of wattles by the Friends greeted spring.

Josh our nursery manager led a walk on Fourth Hill on the last Thursday afternoon in August.

And wattles were on sale at the FOWSP trailer at the September Warrandyte market.

Plants and Planting

Damian Coutts and Bronwyn Haines were getting plants for a screen area on their fence and also for planting out a boggy area.

Acacias Again

"On 16th July the Nomenclature Section of the XV11 International Botanical Congress in Vienna Austria, voted to accept the Spermatophyta Committee's recommendation to conserve the name Acacia by retypifying it with a new type as proposed by Orchard and Moslin (2002). This decision was subsequently ratified at the Plenary Session of the Congress on 23rd July.

This means that when Acacia is formally split, the new type *A. penninervis* and the name Acacia will be retained for the almost 1000 species currently ascribed to Acacia subgenus Phyllodinaea. The majority of these species occur naturally within Australia.....however"

Source: www.worldwidewattle.com

August Activity

Market stall helpers in August were: Marion Thomson, Ray Kruger, Sue Shephard, Jan Smidts, Michael Hubbert, Wolfgang and Marie Krause and Geoff Speedy.

Words on Wattles

- "And we laid him where wattles their sweet fragrance shed." **The Stockman's Last Bed.**
- "Where the gildin o' the wattles chucks a glow on ev'rything" **C.J. Dennis A letter to the front.**
- "They needn't say the fault is ours, if blood should stain the wattle." **Henry Lawson. Freedom on the Wallaby.**
- "So he went - they found the horses by the big mimosa clump." **A.B. Patterson. The Man from Snowy River.**
- "White men, turn quietly the earth of Acacia Ridge. Plough the guilt in cover and hide the shame." **Kath Walker, Oodgeroo (We are Going. My People**
- "And the night.....is astir with the fluttering of wings in the wattles." **Edward Dyson. The Rescue**
- "The sweet-scented wattle sheds perfume around. Enticing the bird and the bee." **The Reedy Lagoon.**

Worth Repeating

Victoria to help save world's seeds

MELBOURNE is to join a global conservation effort that aims to save 24,000 endangered plants from extinction.

Victorian Environment Minister John Thwaites said yesterday that the city would store 10 per cent of the world's seed-bearing plants, mainly from dry nations. Duplicate collections of the seeds will be stored in Britain as part of the Millennium Seed Bank Project. "Over the next five years, seeds from 450 Victorian native plants will be shared with the Royal Botanic Gardens in London," MrThwaites said.

Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens had begun collecting seeds, said its senior conservation botanist, Neville Walsh. Almost half of the state's native plant species are rare or threatened.

Source: *The Age* 25/8/05



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Australian Magpie
(*Gymnorhina tibicen*)

The scientific name of the Australian Magpie is “flute-playing naked nose”. I wonder who thought that one up! Maggies give us yodelling carols all year round. There are three different races that occur in Australia all with varying degrees of black and white plumage. In our area the males have a white back while the back of females is a dull greyish colour.

At this time of year when the birds are nesting they become quite aggressive so watch out for dive bombing Maggies if you are out walking or cycling.

The Australian Magpie is common throughout Australia. It has been introduced to New Zealand.



FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Email.....

Special Interest:.....

Membership \$20

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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