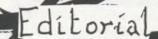
FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE
STATE PARK

NEWSLETTER

March 199



The last month has seen many important events both globally and locally. The cessation of the war in the Middle East with its terrible consequences for millions of people, and the devastation to the environment, and closer to home the very threatening bushfires at Warrandyte and other places in Victoria.

Our bushfire produced some interesting reactions from the local residents. Community spirit suddenly blossomed in many areas. A lot of people arranged meetings to discuss plans in any future fires, and expressed the desire to help their neighbours. One noticed a mixture of surprise and embarrassment when people discovered there were many people in their street who had been there many years and they had never spoken to them.

This illustrates the modern trend of 'the nuclear family' and its many disadvantages that most of us have come to accept. The dictionary defines nuclear family = Father, Mother and children.— and no more! The family is in many ways comparable to the atom with its nucleus and electrons binding together tremendous energy in its complex. Some of this energy needs to be released and react with its surroundings before changes can be seen in its environment. What we need is a catalyst to release some of the energy bound up in our nuclear families. We hope that the Friends group and others like them can provide such a stimulus. There is a two fold advantage in this, People become involved with others and together they can contribute benefits toward conservation of our fragile environment.

"My view is that to sit back and let Fate play its hand out and never influence it is not the way man was meant to operate."

John Glenn- Astronaut.

" To live only for some future goal is shallow. Its the sides of the mountain that sustain life, not the top. "

Robert Persig

You are what you think, and not what you think you are."

Elbert Hubbard.

Warrandyte Market

COMMITTEE MEETING .... April 9th. 7.30pm.

At the Park Office.

Acacia leprosa in bud.



FEBRUARY SUNDAY FAMILY MEETING



The intrepid Fowspian Ivy Pullers who turned out on the February family meeting really deserve a medal. About 25adults and sundry Fowspianmites met in Wildcat Gully. The temperature was 39 degrees and the northerly wind was setting the scene for the drama of the next day's bushfire. The Hansen family met us to inspect the site of last years Ivy pulling....marvellous results—hardly any regeneration! With a will we removed any regrowth, still with a will albeit"wilted" we moved on to the next Ivy area along Anderson's Creek. There, gritting our teeth, we attacked a very tenacious breakaway. We removed as much as the weary bodies could manage then repaired to the depot for afternoon tea, a planning session for the Festival and to listen to Bev Hanson tell us all about the latest on the landscape plans for the new Community Centre (In which we defeature prominently.....remember to keep May 5th free!) Afternoon tea was a feast and the









HOT HOUSE GOSSIP

Bushfire was just so horrifying but it did have the wonderful effect of galvanising activities to modify the end result. Friends arrived at the Park all week to work to save plants, collect injured animals, survey the effects on the Koala population, clean up and in fact rebuild some of our Nursery. The response of C.O.D.A.T in actually purchasing pots and general population sympathy and practical help.....Marvellous!

Regional Manager Bob McGrath deserves a special mention for his fire fighting skills- he and Marg Humphreys actually saved the Nursery. Maybe all three should claim a special tree to plant to celebrate their success. In fact the Friends will gladly supply ALL the fire-fighters with a plant for their gardens as a special "thank-you". See Marg or Pat.

The Mystery Reporter has been remarkably slack this year. We keep getting enquiries about when he might return to his "investigations" and all the editorial staff can say is..... Next month...maybe!

As the "bushfire nerves" settle Pat Coupar begins a big stocktake. The Nursery population and its magical recovery is a joy for all. If you doubt the amazing resilliance of native plants just come along and see the new growth. We plan to plant out all our "fire Hardened" - do

As we reeled from the shock of the loss of the 3000 rabbit guards so carefully collected with our labour, we do have an edifying collection of offers of help. The news that the Go Green people had reviewed its position with regard to an application for funds was very cheering. Several other offers and suggested sources are being checked out AND Organ Pipes responded with an offer of all the spares they have....thanks Matt and your Friends.

The V.N.P.A. Conference was a venue for renewal or establishment of friendships and contacts between groups. We made so many but the notable DATES made were with Friends of Organ Pipes who intend to visit our Nursery and Park, and Friends of French Island who have invited us down for a visit in spring. These dates will take place on weekends and you will be given lots of notice. The second second

Speaking of the Conference ... a piece of gossip if ever we had one ... Gretna Weste who does leave many folk worn out after a walk etc. was alloted a bed in a 10 bed "ward" at the Lady Northcote camp. Seems she had 9 "bedfellows" all male.... "No problem at all she was heard to reflect! Well if you want to find out more, go along to the next one.

Membership continues to grow. We have people seek us out these days and it is gratifying to see the respect with which such applications are tendered. We welcome all our new Fowspians and hope our relationship will last long and be mutually satisfying.

Felt almost inspired to tears of joy as the rain fell on our roof this week. The difference that will make to the blackened bush....to the dried out landscape in general is part of our mother earth's time tested cycle of renewal....but our spirits are likewise able to revive, and to know that the edge of the bright threat of fire is dulled, made sleep in the coocoon of my bed, lulled by the less than gentle patter, a special and secure journey.

The Friends have a Librarian at long last. The number of books, journals etc. has grown and we need to manage this resource carefully. So we announce the appointment of our honourary Librarian....Iris Davies. Iris is now catalogueing, covering, organising and ordering our Library. Should you like to have a look, possibly borrow something or donate any books, please contact Iris at the park most Thursdays or at her home Books on Flora, Fauna, Warrandyte gratefully by phone....844 2593.

CAD'S CANC ... Sunday April 14th. Locals and visitors at Stoney Creek with Mark Gardner. This regeneration project is how to learn the way to do such things in the most efficient and personally satisfying way. "Bradley Method" used with Mark's variations has many implications for all Warrandyte gardens and blocks. 10 till 12. Enq. 844 3799.

BIG MELBOURNE CLEAN-UP......Sunday March 24th.....Stoney Creek and Eltham Copper Butterfly.

These Groups both took part in the "clean up". Stephen reports that at Eltham they had about 10 people, including Don Saunders and family, who worked well. The rubbish was all cleaned out and Pat Coupar had time to collect some of the precious seed of the variety of Bursaria spinosa the caterpillars require for survival. Mark Gardiner (with Glen Terry from Eltham Council) report about 20 volunteers who signed on. "The people to rubbish ratio was really excellent!" Between 8am and 1pm. a huge collection was made and the Council will collect it on Monday. Mark "Gad's Gang" Gardiner also reflected that what people saw will hopefully inspire more local helpers to the Stoney Creek Regeneration meetings every second Sunday of the month.

## Festival Weekend

FOWSP kept up a high profile at the Warrandyte festival held 16 and 17 March, 1991. Although much work was put in behind the scenes, erecting our new tent and mounting displays, etc. the festival traditionally started with the Grand Parade down Yarra Street and Alex Manson, Gail Roche et al are those we can thank for our presence, 'on parade'. Congratulations to WEL for winning a prize for the most Warrandyte float wel deserved! Meantime, down on the river bank the market was swinging into gear with the sun shining on what proved a successful weekend. Our thanks to so many people to Alec again for his ingenious shop-front decorated by Jan Pierce in her inimicable style, to Brenda Hunter for her unfailing support in so many areas and her calm presence throughout the two days, to Ross Coupar - general fac totum and Ian Burke for much behind the scenes slog. Judy Thompson ran the billy tea and damper area admirably with help from many including Iris Davies and Noni Seymour, the tent painting with special banner paint was a great successinvolving junior members and others and is now a joy to behold (presently on loan to Frankston for the 'clean-up' weekend) and Graham Madley's recycled paper press made possible the success of the paper-making demonstration, run by Gail Roche, and sale of half our stock (more envelopes needed please). Coupar's propagation demonstration let visitors know what we are all about and thanks to the generousity of the community replacing our pots we were able to give away tubes of Melaleuca Ericafolia. The face painting proved such a success we will be running this activity at the monthly market and charging a surcharge for non-indigenous flora and fauna. Gay, Kylie, Mark, Shirley M, Shirley S, Ian and Gail Roche were adept at turning their hands to anything from kangaroos, greenhood orchids, koalas and wombats to penguins, snakes, Bambis and even Swiss watch faces! Despite some competition Shirley Mandemaker lured some customers to have their portraits done and then turned her talents to integrating the artwork on the back of the tent with a meandering wonga vine. Over the 2 days, a rapport developed between the Board of Works, Conservation and Environment, WEL and Friends which culminated in a round-the-fire sharing of conversation and victuals while listening to the Paradiddle Bush Band. Thanks to all concerned - it was truly a team effort

ONCASTER AND TEMPLESTOWE NEWS, Wednesday March 13, 1991 -

## **Group needs** rabbit guards

THE Friends of Warrandyte State Park
have put out an urgent plea for 3000 rabbit guards to replace
those lost in the devastating bush fire two
weeks ago.
The guards consist of

The guards consist of two wooden stakes and a circular, plastic rabbit guard, costing about \$2 each, to protect plants. A member of Friends of Warrandyte State park.

A member of Friends of Warrandyte State park, Mrs Margaret Burke, said the group was desperate for any type of assistance, whether it was second-hand guards, financial donations or advice as to what they should do next. "We have about 3000 plants that ahould be planted as soon as the rain comes but unfortunately none of our our guards survived the fires." she said.

fortunately none of our our guards survived the fires." she said.
"Goodness knows what will happen if we put the plants out without guards and it would break our hearts to feed them to the rabbits."

them to the rabbits."

Mrs Burke said the
Friends lost between 300
and 400 plants in the
fires and all of their pots.

However, she said, the community had "rallied around" and the Friends were especially pleased that Doncaster-Templestowe Council had given them 2000 small pots to replace those destroyed by the fire.

Mrs Burke said each year the Friends planted 5000 indigenous ahrubs, made up of 100 species, in Warrandyte State Park and also gave them to local schools and community groups.

Mrs Burke said the Friends were relieved the fires did not destroy their ahadehouse or polyhouse but that their watering system was inoperative for several days.

"We had to carry buckets of water from the dam to our plants and for two days after the fire we had about 20 workers submerging each plant twice in water," ahe said.

Anyone who can help the Friends in any way should phone Mrs Burke



:137MF12

MARGARET Burke of Friends of Warrandyte State Park. They are appealing for 3000 rabbit guards to replace those destroyed in the recent fires. Picture:

MARK FRECKER.



Chapter Two

The predecessor or our eucal trees, that fringed the contres must have already por equipped them to radiate in birthday of our ancestral encyears ago. Remember that 30 million years before and before that (at 140 million years before and the million years before and the

The predecessor of our eucalypts was a species of tree, or group of trees, that fringed the contracting Rainforests. Situated here, the trees must have already possessed some characteristics that equipped them to radiate into the increasing arid regions. The birthday of our ancestral eucalypt was approximately 34 million years ago. Remember that the Myrtaceae made their appearance 30 million years before and the Angiosperms 76 million years before that (at 140 million years)! So, on a relative plant time scale, the eucalypts are not as primitive as they appear.

Through many generations new and beneficial characteristics were selected by exposure to harsh environmental conditions.; characteristics in particular that allowed the trees to cope with relatively sparse amounts of water and soil nutrients. Today we can see the amazing results of these transformations in the hundreds of species of living eucalypts. Unlike rainforest trees eucalypt foliage is relatively open and individual leaves are tough, pale green and hang vertically to minimize exposure to the midday sun. Plants with this type of foliage are called sclerophylls (meaning "hard leaves") and they are strongly represented in Australia. Additionally, the seeds of sclerophylls are contained in hard capsules contrasting dramatically to the soft, juicy fruits of rainforest trees.

The reason why petals and sepal are absent from Eucalyptus flowers is again related to their repertoire of adaptations to dry conditions. Highly modified sepals and petals protect the delicate stamens and stigma (male and female reproductive parts respectively) at the bud stage. The covering has the appearance of a lid, hence its name "operculum". This is the unique floral characteristic of eucalypts from which their name was derived from the Ancient Greek - Eu: well, kalyptos: concealed. So the subtle flowers of eucalypts are revealed only when their embryonic sepals and petals are discarded!

The last truly petalled eucalypt probably became extinct far back in the natural history of the genus. There are, however, several Eucalyptus-like species that do indeed display petals. One occurs in a similar habitat to that of the ancestral eucalypts. Its foliage is dense, its leaves dark green and each flower bears five small yellow petals. The tree is Kanooka or Water Gum (*Tristania laurina*) which is a close relative of eucalypts along with the Angophoras. It is amazing how we have living clues as to the course evolution might have taken. All that is needed to detect them is a trained eye. Charles Darwin knew all about that!

We have many reasons to marvel at our unique eucalypts. They are the plant genus that typifies Australia; the botanical solution to survival in our harsh Island Continent. They are relatively modern plants which originated from the southern (Australian) region of Gondwana. Also, eucalypts have long supported a myriad of animals, both vertebrates and invertebrates, as well as plants such as mistletoes, mosses, vines and orchids. As such they occupy a crucial position in most Australian land ecosystems. The ability of eucalypts to support so many animals and plants is partly due to their vigour and resistance to stress. For instance, they can loose up to 50% of their foliage production due to insect attack. Yet they thrive. One response to this onslaught has been the development of chemical warfare. Eucalyptus leaves contain toxic compounds such as tannins and Eucalyptus oil. In addition, their leaves contain only meagre amounts nitrogen, an essential element for insect as well as plant growth. That so many insects have evolved ways of overcoming these dietary problems suggests that herbivorous insects have been associated with eucalypts for the greater part of their natural history.

Eucalyptus oil paints the blue haze into Australian bushscapes as it evaporates into the air above the canopies. Although many groups

Eucalyptus polyanthemos



polyanthemas

of insects have developed means of detoxifying and excreting the oil its production is not wasted since it also helps to minimize water loss.

Eucalyptus oil is one of a family of closely related chemicals called "volatile oils". We best know this group as those gastronomic fragrances present in many culinary herbs. However, the closest acceptance Eucalyptus oil has gained in cooking has been in brewing billy tea! The oil is also a useful natural medicine for easing respiratory congestion. The oil consists mainly of a compound called cineole. Some Eucalypts produce significant amounts of other volatile oils in addition to cineole. For example, Peppermints produce menthol and Lemon-scented Gum (E. citriodora) citral.

The oil is manufactured in specialized glands in the leaf from where it is secreted like perspiration onto the surface. Here some reacts with oxygen to form a thin water-retaining film. But in life such benefits often carry a cost. Bushfire. Its awesome force severely damages or even kills the trees outright. Australians are justifiable paranoid about the high flammability of eucalyptus trees and their discarded leaves, twigs and branches. The bush, and eucalypts in particular, seem to tempt self-destruction.

Bushfires, as a result of lightening strikes, have been a natural and predictable cycle of destruction and regeneration for millions of years. Eucalypts hold supremacy above other plants in their ability to resist or even tolerate the ravages of fife. The fibrous trunks of Stringybarks insulate the delicate underlying layers of growing wood. Energy is stored in trunks and branches to feed dormant (epicormic) buds which quickly restore and replace the burned canopy. Energy is also stored safely underground in lignotubers which are modified roots. These are particularly large in fire-prone species such as Mallees but absent in some fire-sensitive species such as Mountain Ash (E. regnans). Also, Eucalyptus trees shower the ground with small seeds. These accumulate in the soil over decades; sometimes centuries; lying dormant until conditions are optimal for germination. The warm ground vacated in the aftermath of a bushfire is the ideal condition. Here, in the blackened deserts of destruction, nutrients have been released. Autumn rains arrive, perhaps just days after the electrical storm that set the fire on its course. Now, after the acrid stench of smoke has dissipated the eucalypts that would normally be excluded from unburnt habitats are ready to establish.

Eucalypts have developed a repertoire of adaptations to life where fire is a natural occurrence. They occupy the mosaic of habitats that is so typical of the Australian bush: vegetation communities at different stages of post-fire succession.

ucaluptus

Over millions of years the growth and subsequent burning of sclerophylls has contributed to the recycling of carbon. This has been captured from the air in the form of carbon dioxide, a waste product of animal respiration. Carbon dioxide is used by plants to help build roots, leaves, stems and eventually mighty trunks. The combustion of this woody material is a chemical reaction that links its carbon with atmospheric oxygen to reform carbon dioxide.

Could eucalypts actually encourage and use fire as an element along with earth, water and air? The fact that they manufacture such large quantities of combustible oil and resin, rather than fire-retardents, suggests that fire-promotion is one of their survival strategies. If this is so, then the eucalypts are the plant equivalent of Phoenix, the mythical bird that set itself alight to rise rejuvenated from its own ashes!

This article will also be available

in a complete booklet form at the market stall.

By Mike Coupar

We have begun the task of putting together a list of local plants which can be considered FIRE RETARDANT indigenous species. Sources for this information have been Lillydale Council, C. F. A. listaavailable from W. E. L. and local botanist David Cameron. We hope to research further and have a handout available at the market. Plants mentioned are of course even more effective if they are well watered during the summer period to keep the moisture content up in their foliage.

Acacia melanoxylon...Blackwood Acacia myrtefolia...Myrtle Wattle Acacia pycnantha...Golden Wattle

Pandorea pandorana....Wonga Vine

Blechnum spp.....Water Fern
Polystichum proliferum..Mother Shield
Fern.

All local ferns.

Pomaderris aspera......Hazel Pomaderris Pomaderris racemosa.....Slender Pomaderris Spyridium parvifolium.....Dusty Miller Bedfordia arborescens....Blanket Leaf

Rapanea howittiana......Muttonwood

Olearia lirata.....Showy Daisy

Goodenia ovata...Hop Goodenia(well watered prity)

Lepidosperma spp.Sword Sedge Dianella spp..Flax lilies.

The Friends Nursery will endeavour to supply people with Fire Retardant Species. Non Active or Non Members will be expected to make a suitable donation and return all pots after planting we will try to give advice on suitable plants etc. Phone Pat Coupar or Marg Burke.

5th, Bienniel Conserence MARCH 9 - 11, 1991

In a delightful rural setting the 5th Friends' conference was held about 8 km out of Bacchus Marsh. Much cooler weather added to everyones enjoyment. There were many delegates from a large number of groups, and very close to 100 people attended. They came from Park Groups, Flora and Fauna groups, a large number representing conservation societies, marine groups and other wildlife reserves.

The first day started with the Welcoming addresses by Stephen Johnson (President of VNPA) and from Don Saunders (Director of National Parks and Public Land). This was followed by a series of special talks from leaders of various Friends groups. Among these were Dr Gretna Weste who provided us with an erudite and stimulating discourse on the threat of Cinnamon Fungus. Margaret Burke spoke of the ways in which a successful Friends Group can be established.

The following day there were a series of workshops on diverse subjects and so many one could not attend them all. Kim Robinson (some will remember as a Ranger at W.S.P.) and who is now.a Pest Plant Officer in the Department of National Parks, informed her groups on weed recognition and methods to deal with them. A well attended workshop on Butterflies and Moths was given by Pat and Mike Coupar, well known Naturalists and Friends of Warrandyte State Park. As well, plant propogation, native grass identification, Geology, Archaeology, were included in the workshops.

Sunday afternoon was the opportunity for many to participate in seven different walks in Brisbane Ranges National Park, Werribee Gorge and the Long Forest Mallee.

On the final day talks were given concerning the adoption of a more formalized structure between Friends and the VNPA. It was decided there was a big advantage to all Friends groups, particularly small and new groups, who often have difficulties becoming established. The groups would maintain their autonomy, but there would be greater recognition and acceptance as they could speak with a single voice. There would be increased opportunity for inter-group liaison and joint approaches to problems. The whole network idea seems appropriate since there has been a large increase in Friends groups over the last three to four years (from 38 to 80).

A most important award was inaugurated at the meeting, named The Best Friend Award. It was set up to recognise any volunteer making an outstanding contribution to a Friends group. This was awarded to Don Marsh, a pioneer and founder of a very early group - The Friends of Organ Pipes. He accepted the award, making the trip despite his severe health problems.

Finally, we were pleased to be addressed by the Hon. Mark Birrell who is the shadow Minister for Conservation and Liberal Leader in the Upper House. He spoke of the great value of people working in conservation and his willingness to receive positive suggestions from them.

The meeting concluded on Monday lunch time and nearly everyone expressed their pleasure at attending such a productive and optomistic conference. We have no doubt that Friends groups are becoming a very important part of the Conservation movement.



## Nates for the Calendar

April 6th.....Warrandyte Market, Stiggants Res..... April 9th ..... Committee Meeting...7.30pm.... Park Office, Pound Bend. April 28th .... Skip Moyle Hut Renovation and Refurbishing ... Black Flat. B.B.Q. After Enquiries Alec Manson or Ian Burke. April 14th.....Gad's Gang at Stoney Creek 9.30am.-11.30. Enquiries Mark Gardnerr 844 3799 May 5th ... Sunday ... Community Planting at Warrandyte Community Centre. More Next Newsletter. May 24th. Friday ... Slide Evening .... Skip Moyle Hut ... With the Coupars.

Every Thursday ..... Running the Nursery ..... All welcome .. 10am .... Bring lunch ... Walk in afternoon.

May 26th In the morning Steve and the Eltham Copper Group welcome your help. 844 2659

May 26th .. Sunday .... Follow up walk with Pat and Mike Coupar

In the planning stages.... Visit to the Bend of Isles Slide Night with Arthur Williamson Watch at the Market or next rewsletter! Social...by Butterfly Be prepared for a call ..... Retrieval and recycling of Rabbit Guards ..... Folly building.

COMMITTEE

Margaret Burke......Co-ordinator..844 1060 Ian Burke.....Editor.....844 1060 Doug Seymour.....Secretary....844 2740 Judy Thomson..Treasurer...844 1590 Mark Gardner......Groups Adviser...844 3799 Anne Bedford......Assistant Sec....438 3216 Gay Terris.....Social Secretary....844 1448 Gail Roche......Craft Groups.....722 1926 Olive Walters.....Propagation Asst..846-4729

Alec Manson...Works & Equipment ager....844 2557 Pat Coupar...Propagation & Publications....844 1650

Correa glabra

P.O. Box 220, Warrandyte.



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