



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK Inc. June 1994 NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Is this the winter of our discontent? Certainly the fate of our environment over the past year does not give many reasons to believe "everything in the garden is lovely". It all began just before last Christmas when the renewal of wood chipping licences became due. Our hopes were raised when a Tasmanian senator hit the newspapers and threatened to resign from the Labour party if the licences were renewed. However he did not resign and on Christmas eve the Minister for Resources renewed all eleven licences in six states. Not long before this the cabinet had signed a directive calling on a moratorium on logging all old growth forests. This was supported by the then Minister for Sport, recreation, the territories, and the environment. [the title is obviously listed in order of importance.]

When Dr. Bob Brown from Tasmania asked the Prime Minister about this decision he was informed that " the greenies " had had a pretty good go for the past year ,and it was about time we concentrated on the economy. The fact that Australia now has enough plantation timber to meet local needs and could stop importing from underdeveloped nations did not appear in the directive as important, just as the millions of dollars made by private companies have never been revealed.

At the local level we are told of budget cuts to staff programs in most of our State Parks. There does not appear to be any shortage of money for building car race tracks because this represents jobs profits for our economically sustainable society. Along with this goes the excessive praising of volunteers, and the need for every citizen to exercise restraint in spending and to increase their savings.

Is there anything we could do to save our forests? Maybe follow Bob Brown's suggestion and write a personal (not typed) letter to Paul Keating now - seeing that the wood chipping licences are due for review again.

" The selfish wish to govern is often mistaken for a holy zeal in the cause of humanity."

Power manifests itself in conspicuous waste until conspicuous waste imagines itself power."

"Good people are only half as good and bad people only half as bad as other people regard them."

Elbert Hubbard (1856- 1915)

June 26th 1994 at 1.00pm. Sunday Family Day Normans Reserve planting of rare species. Nursery activities & talk(Ferns) by Keith Vagg

Meet at Normans Reserve to be led past the famous Antechinus Swamp and on to an area of threatened remnant rainforest. Joan MacMahon and Pat Coupar will show and tell you why protection and replanting of species here is so very important. We will be planting rare and extremely significant ferns and other plants into this damp sclerophyll area. The opportunity is there for you to learn to identify these and become part of the rare plant protection process.

Stage two of the day will be set back at the Nursery where Keith Vagg, our 'ferno' will give you a talk about local ferns. He will show you all the ferns which we are growing and members will be able to have some 'hands on' experience potting up some tiny 'fingerlings'.

All this will be followed by an afternoon tea at the Folly. (Ron also wants to tell you about his plans to put doors on the Folly, thus making it winter weatherproof!)

Please bring along something to share for afternoon tea.

HOT HOUSE

GOSSIP

Well number one item this month is another wedding. Ben Gotlib and Margaret Nichols, his lady of eleven years have decided to add romance and delight to all our lives and they eloped! He seemed a little mysterious when announcing a holiday for them in Adelaide last month, however Ben is often mysterious. However arriving at a party at Marg and Wayne Dimech's they announced quietly what they had been up to. Pandemonium followed with many ladies responding with a romantic tear. We wish Ben and Margaret the most happy of futures and toasted it over again at the Folly the following Thursday.

Now that is a hard act to follow!

The Koornong group has had its second birthday and welcomes any members to have a look (and add a hand) on any of the Wednesday work days. (Meetings are held on the first Wednesdays of every month.) Cathy Willis has been an inspirational leader who keeps the group going with lots of light hearted encouragement. The first thing they all do is admire the progress of 'Periwinkle Hill' which two years ago was a HUGE mound of rubble and fill covered with Periwinkle and now is an example of what indigenous plants do well in local gardens. Lots more has been achieved and Cathy is planning a 'pleasure walk' outing for spring. Phone her (844 1841) or watch in the Folly or Newsletter for details.

Keith Vagg has been busy organising the Shire of Eltham we note. The Thousand Steps area has had all the 'fill' which had been dumped there in the middle of the night, carted away. A sign has been put up threatening fines for rubbish dumpers, and we hear that the S.E.C. will soon be

contributing poles to delineate the 'lay-by'. See article for news of activities in this fascinating part of Warrandyte Gorge - a little known area of Warrandyte State Park. Keith plans a special meeting to involve locals in his sub-group on July 10th. Enquiries 844 1457

Over winter the building brigade diminishes somewhat with our skilled labour seeking warmer climes. If you are a talented person with skills in carpentry etc. don't just sit around at home all winter. Pop down to the Nursery any Thursday and see the exciting projects we have on the go. Or phone Ian Burke 844 1060 or Don Cameron 844 2389.

Most of the leaders of sub-groups on the Eltham side of the river enjoyed a dinner with Dr. Bob Brown in the Eltham Community Centre. Dinner was followed by a passionate address by this most extraordinary man. He hopes all of you will write to Paul Keating and ask for cessation of logging in East Gippsland. (Do you know that we HAVE sufficient plantation timbers to make logging in precious State Forest unnecessary) Address your letter to: The Prime Minister Paul Keating, Parliament House Canberra, ACT. We had plenty of opportunity to chat with Bob before and after the talk and found him a most gentle, friendly and humble individual. We presented him with a copy of Discover Warrandyte and an invitation to visit our Park, which he promised to remember for future visits to Victoria.

The visit to Mt.Lofty with Phil Honeywood was on the most perfect winters day possible. We ache to help get that area in our care and Doug Cordell was able to show just what a difference simple removal of the horses can make. One section has a horse and rabbit proof enclosure and it is carpeted with lush Kangaroo Grass. Phil was

unlucky leaving before the group as two Wedge Tailed Eagles thrilled us with an aerial display. We would like Melbourne Water to finish the transfer of this section of Warrandyte State Park without further delays, as per the Management Plan agreements.

A sad side of Fauna Management is the need to record sightings of *dead* as well as live animals. Osborne Rd, has had two wombat kills within the last month. This is appalling for a dead end, dirt surface road. Residents are angry and are looking at what can be done. Do they need speed humps?

Nursery activities can be rather cold work over winter so we decided, a few years ago, to introduce a warm up over lunch by way of soup. There is a roster and everyone who comes takes a turn at making up their favourite recipe. Some of the soups are simply out of this world. So come along, try the activity and the lunch and add your name to the roster.

Pat Coupar has been/is currently photographing every plant species in Warrandyte State Park. Marg Burke is computer information offsider. A grant from Melbourne Parks and Waterways has been applied for with the hope for some kind of publishing. At first we had hoped for multiple colour photocopies. Trouble is that M.P.&W. have been so impressed they have talked us into shooting for the moon, a book with all 600 pages of colour plates. Do we have any fabulously wealthy sponsors, individual or corporate, reading this? M.P.&W. promise to be looking for someone as the quality of the work is simply too good for such restricted distribution. Our dreams include a lovely deluxe (limited?) edition. Ideas?

Hope lots of you enjoyed the 'Kibbled' column in the Diary this month. It seems

Hot House Gossip cont.

poor Roger has found it tough being on the same page as Pat/the Coupar. A copy is available in the folly if you missed it. Course we all know that Pat gets others to bottle all the spider specimens she has in the Coupar fridge! Keep up the hunt for the unusual arachnids.....844 1650 if you have any tightly captive!

The widowed member with the flat for rental says it is still available. She has it all spruced up after serving as a

studio for years. Being a hoarder, the urge to fill it up is intense. So we need a single (or couple if they don't need a huge space) to save the day! Enquire 844 3440.

Friends of Stane Brae have decided on their program for working-bees, the first regular meeting was on June 15th. Meetings will take place on the second Wednesdays of every month at 10.00 am. Ron Taylor is the co-ordinator and he welcomes any enquiries on 844 4285. Next meeting will be July 13th.

The Nursery has been producing large quantities of ground cover plants for revegetation of areas where dense weed has been removed. (eg. ivy, periwinkle or blackberry) We are needing lots of plastic seed trays for these and hope members will help with recycled trays. Leave them at the Nursery, office, folly or for regular members to deliver. Seed punnets are useful and we hope members remember to return pots and polystyrene boxes.

FASCINATING FACTS FROM FLORA

This month I have chosen five members of a family of birds which frequent thickets and scrub. They take their generic name from the family name *Acanthizidae*. Vigors and Horsfield give the derivation of this name as “- *acanthion* - (thicket or scrub) and *zao* - (I live) a bird that lives in thickets and scrub” - an appropriate name for most *Acanthizidae*.

Acanthiza pusilla

L. *pusillus*, very small,

Brown Thornbill.

Acanthiza reguloides

L. *regulus*, kinglet; -oides, like.

Buff - rumped Thornbill.

Regulus is a European genus, Goldcrest and Firecrest (*Regulus regulus* and *Regulus ignicapillus*) which are two of the smallest European birds.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa

Gk. *chryson*, golden; *orrhos*, tail.

Yellow - rumped Thornbill.

Acanthiza nana

L. *nanus*, dwarf.

Yellow Thornbill

Acanthiza lineata

L. *lineatus*, lined.

Striated Thornbill

Apart from ants, I find Thornbills the most supremely busy creatures I know. Never have I seen one perched serenely to sing, contemplate its surroundings or to preen. They are always on the move, twittering constantly among the leaves in the quest for food.

By the way, “Thornbill” is not in accordance with the derivation. *Acanthion*, thicket, may be connected etymologically with *acantha*, thorn but there is no reference to the bill.

I'm always looking for connections between the names of birds and plants and there's a nice one here. *Acanthus ilicifolius* the spiny mangrove, is the only Australian *Acanthus*, a common shrub of coastal swamps of Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Acanthus mollis is an exotic plant common in gardens around Melbourne. You are all familiar with the very elaborate Corinthian order of architecture, with its bell shaped capitals adorned with rows of acanthus leaves. *Acanthus mollis* would have been the model.

You may also be interested to know that there are 12 Australian Thornbills and that Gerygones, Bristlebirds, and Scrubwrens belong to the same family.

Lots of digression this month, but its very hard to keep on the straight and narrow path with your nose in a book!

Flora Anderson.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Keith Vagg

HEATHS

June 1994

Three Members of the family *Epacridaceae* may be seen in late autumn around Warrandyte: the Common Heath - *Epacris impressa*, Cranberry Heath - *Astroloma humifusum* and Honey Pots - *Acrotriche serrulata*. These heaths are sun-loving plants which will grow in dry situations. They have bright, tubular flowers which are laden with nectar. Two of these bear edible fruit.

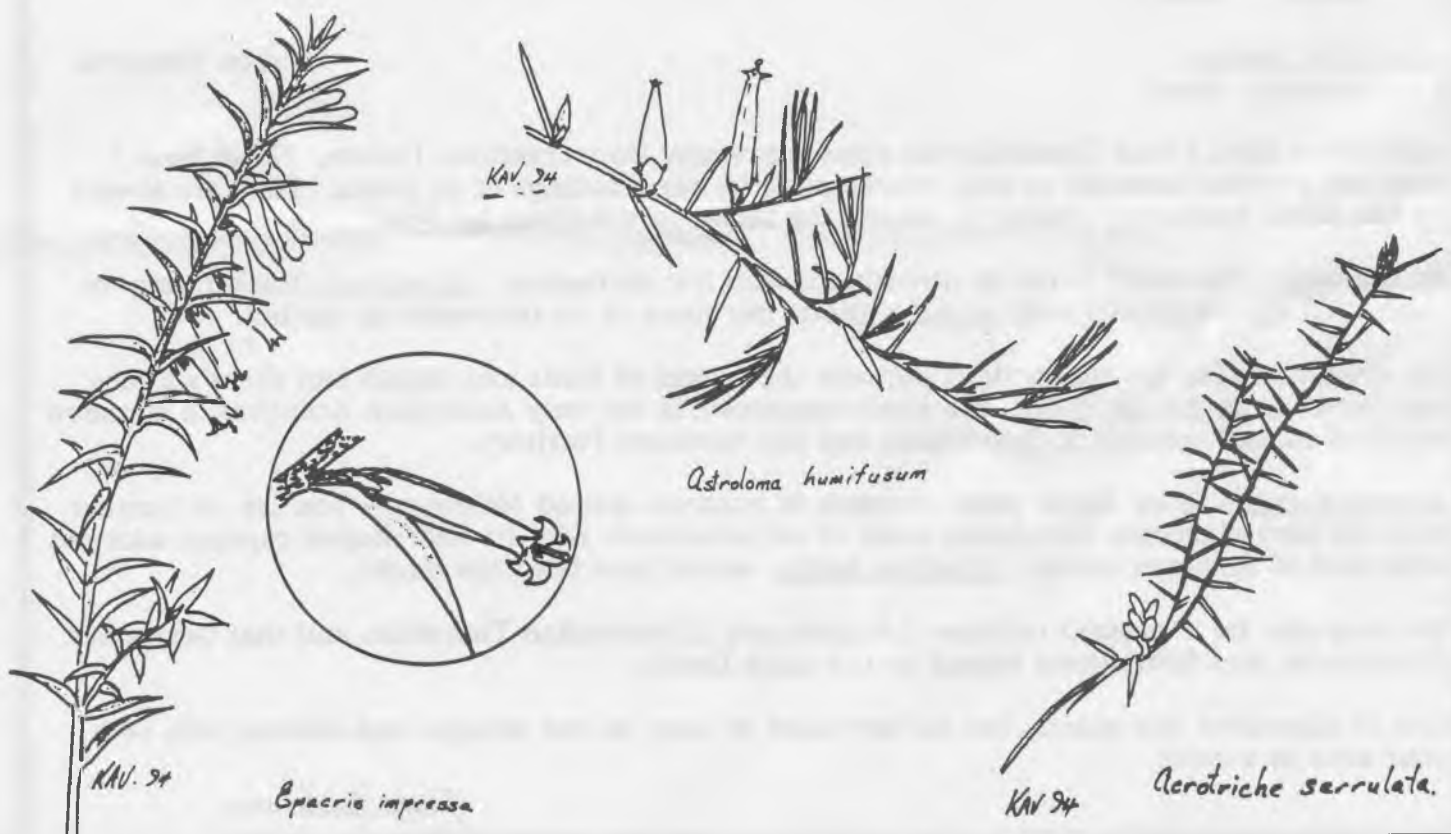
Acrotriche serrulata is a small heath found in dry, open forest areas. It can grow as a dense shrub, growing close to the ground and up to a metre high, however it is usually smaller and more open. It tolerates dry periods. The leaves are up to ten mm long, dull green, with tiny hairs, and taper to a fine point. Flowers are green and tubular, growing on old wood from May to October. The flowers produce sweet honey scented nectar which attracts honeyeaters, butterflies and other insects. The fruit is a five - celled capsule.

Astroloma humifusum is a small ground hugging shrub with stiff, narrow, spine - tipped leaves which have fine hairs along the margins. Flowers may appear at any time of the year, but usually from autumn to early spring. Bright scarlet upright flowers are hidden amongst the foliage. These are filled with sweet nectar which honeyeaters often feed on before the flower opens by piercing the side of the flower. The flower is followed by an edible green fruit - a drupe, which tastes like apple. This plant grows in dry, open areas of the bush where it receives plenty of sunshine.

Epacris impressa is Victoria's floral emblem. It is a small upright open shrub, to about 1.5 metres high, with stiff, narrow, pointed leaves. It grows in a variety of forest types. Each plant bears many flowers from autumn, through the winter to spring. The flowers are usually white, locally but may be bright pink or red in other locations.

Heaths are difficult to propagate from seed, but cuttings will strike if left in a humid atmosphere for about six months or more. They will often show signs of growth before the roots develop and should not be disturbed at this stage. They may be hardened and potted on when fine hair - like roots appear.

Other less common members of this family which occur in the Warrandyte State Park include Pink Beard Heath - *Leucopogon ericoides* and Peach Heath - *Lissanthe strigosa*.



Ferns- Beauty amid the dark and wet. by Pat Coupar

It is late afternoon in a deep shady gully. Even on the brightest summer's day sunlight barely penetrates the thick leafy canopy overhead.

The gully is a green fairyland of moss padded rocks, shaggy lichen covered logs and banks decorated with dripping, pendulous ferns. It is a place of abundant, luxurious growth. A sweet earthy aroma rises from the forest floor and fills the nostrils. In the soft, winter half-light of drifting mist and fine rain it is an eerie, mystical world.

This is not a fern gully in the Dandenong's or the Otway Ranges. These pockets of paradise can be found in Warrandyte. They are a legacy from a time when the climate was warmer and wetter.

Today, most of Warrandyte's hills are covered in dry, open forest and the area is known for its colourful wildflowers rather than its flowerless ferns. However, small gullies and creeks hidden in deep folds of the hills provide habitat for these moisture-loving plants. As many as 22 different species have been recorded in the Warrandyte area. Three of the most recent additions were discovered only this year.

The ferns vary tremendously in size and abundance; from an isolated occurrence of Rough Tree Fern in a sheltered gully to hillsides carpeted by lacy fronds of common Maidenhair fern. The ubiquitous Austral Bracken fern is quick to colonise open disturbed areas, especially after fire. In contrast, the smaller Rasp fern is usually only seen in deep shade, clinging to creek banks.

One of the most unusual species is the Pacific Azolla, a free floating fern that lives on the surfaces of billabongs and dams. It varies in colour from an incredible deep pink to bright green. Another species which often goes unnoticed is the dainty Necklace fern which struggles to find a footing in the crevices of rocks.

Ferns are primitive plants without flowers or seeds. Instead they produce minute

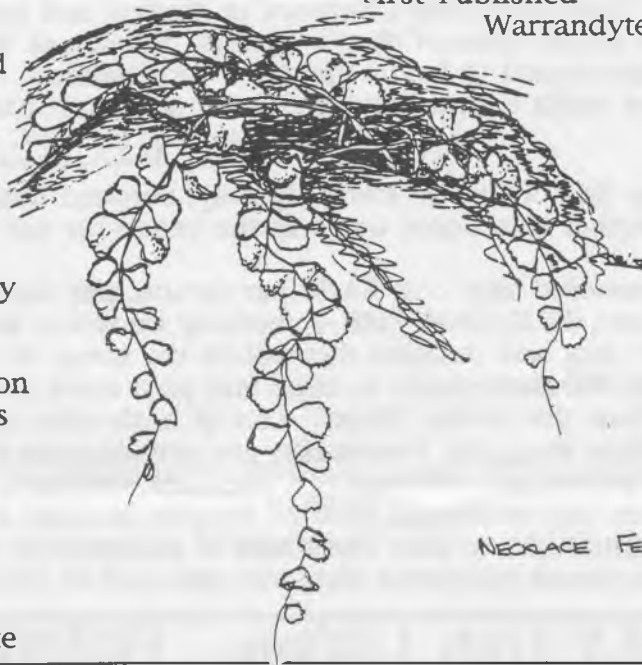
spores on the underside of their fronds which are dispersed by wind or water and germinate only in moist conditions. Ferns and their close relatives, clubmosses and horsetails, are believed to be the world's first land plants. The ancestors of today's ferns dominated the landscape 300 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed the earth. It was 200 million years later that the flowering plants (angiosperms) made their appearance.

Despite their lack of flowers, ferns are extremely popular plants for the house or garden. They flourish in a well protected shade-house or fernery and many species make excellent indoor pot plants. They enhance a room and brighten a drab corner with their fresh greenness.

Most nurseries stock a wide variety of fern species and there are even specialist fern nurseries for the real enthusiast.

In their natural habitat the intermingling arching fronds of ferns are spellbinding. Ferns are reminders of a primeval past and provide a bond with nature in a most profound way. On days when it seems as if winter is never going to end, it is time to don a pair of gumboots and head for the hills; to seek out those sheltered gullies that are a refuge for Warrandyte's most ancient plants.

First Published -
Warrandyte Diary.



ENDEAVOUR BANK - July Sunday Activity Site.

'Endeavour Bank' is situated along the Yarra, North of the Folly at Pound Bend, and is a new revegetation project lovingly guided by Anna Richtarik. This project has been named after the ship 'Endeavour' which Captain James Cook used to explore the east coast of Australia in 1770. The various revegetation techniques 'explored' on this site, may in future be applied on other areas of our State Park.

At the present moment, after an equally exploratory period, the rabbit population is at a healthy state - 0 - thanks to staff member Colin.... As part of the rabbit eradication, the area was burnt and since then a wide variety of flora have appeared. The rare *Pelargonium inodorum* was last sighted after the 1991 fire and it is hoped that they may be seen again.

With FOWSP and Staff support Anna hopes that this riparian revegetation restoration will transform this river bank. Certainly it is sure to live up to its name. See you all there July 31st.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON PROGRAM.

Thursday afternoon everyone is welcome to take part in a small project. These take one hour and the remainder of the time is spent learning about the Park and its Flora and Fauna. Various Rangers will join us to support the mini-project. Plant identification skills will be developed during the walks and you will become part of the rare plant support and survey group. You will have a most enjoyable and fruitful experience.

- 16th June. Pound Bend tunnel reveg. site inspection. Treeguarding. Walk, learning riparian vegetation, afternoon tea at the Folly. Ranger: David Van Bockel.
- 23rd June. Return to the dreaded Euphorbia site in the lower orchard site at Pound Bend. Follow up and replanting of the riverbank. Walk, see how this vegetation corresponds to last week, afternoon tea in the Folly. Ranger: Steve Anderson.
- 30th June. Planting at Whipstick Gully followed by a walk through the Gully. Learn the rare, and not so rare plants for this section of the park. Ranger Matt le Duc.
- 7th July. Production of species list of Jumping Creek Gully- practice I.D. Fern maintenance, weed/plant out. A'tea at Jumping Creek. Ranger Steve Anderson.
- 14th July. Rare plant reintroduction at Black Flat. Acacia stricta, Stipa densiflora. Walk - see how many plants you recognise. Ranger David Van Bockel.
- 21st July. General walk with Pat Coupar. Learn the Park secrets! Ranger Matt le Duc.

GRAMPIANS CAMPING TRIP.

Saturday 15th. to Sunday 24th. OCTOBER.

With our camping trip to Wilson's Promontory such a wonderful success, the Friends have decided that this should be a regular feature of our annual program. We will always endeavour to interest the local, appropriate Friends group to join in our activities etc - whatever they wish. Friends of the Grampians have responded enthusiastically to our planned visit, and we now exchange Newsletters in order to 'prepare' for the visit. This Friends group regret their isolation from the Friends Network in general and hope to show us lots of their achievements and learn about those of the Fowspians. Friends of the Grampians Newsletter will be up on the Folly notice board to begin the 'cross fertilisation'.

After much consultation and investigation, it has been decided to camp at the

ROSES GAP RECREATION CENTRE.

Roses Gap Rd., off the Western Highway, between Dadswell Bridge and Wartook. (Some people will remember that Roses Gap was the venue for the V.N.P.A. Friends Network Conference of 1989.)

Unpowered sites cost \$4.00 per person, per night, and we can have a bush area if we choose, with B.B.Q. CAMPFIRE -something we would have loved at the Prom. We will put up the F.O.W.S.P. tent and imagine this will be the scene of many happy evenings.

Keep the above dates in mind and plan some time off. We intend this trip to be even BETTER than that to the 'Prom!' Lots of bushwalks are in the planning, lots of flora and fauna I.D. the topic to study! Remember, you are welcome to come for even a part of this period, if that is the only time you can manage. (eg. First weekend, whole week, 'long weekend' etc) The proprietors say we should have no trouble booking at this time of the year, however Margaret Dimech would like to have some idea of numbers for the planning process. If you are at all interested please telephone Margaret now on 844 3812.

JULY 10th 1.00pm. FRIENDS OF THE THOUSAND STEPS - EVERYONE WELCOME!

This is the inaugural meeting of the newest of our sub-groups in one of the least well known areas in the State Park. The Thousand Steps is alongside the Kangaroo Ground Rd. (on the way to the Koornong/Osborne Rd.) Banners will indicate just where and Keith Vagg will be watching out for you all. First we will inspect the general area, and listen to him explain the initial projects. Some planting will be able to be done in the area supported by the S.E.C and the Shire of Eltham - roadside verge abutting the State Park. Keith will then lead a walk to introduce this remarkable mystery region to us all and show you just why the name has been fluctuating between Hundred and Thousand Steps! You will see how important this link is to the Park and to all the sub-groups on the North bank. (We now have groups all the way from the Pigeon Bank Creek to the Bridge!)
Enquiries Keith Vagg 844 1457.

THE COUPE IN MAY

Re-vegetating in the Old Orchard.

All readers of this Newsletter will know that bringing back the bush is an important ingredient in the lives of the Friends of Warrandyte State Park. Our revegetation plot on the slopes of the Yarra at Pound Bend Depot is a large area formed from the school children's planting in Arbor weeks over the past few years. The Friend's first direct seeding plot has been incorporated into the whole to make a new patch of growing bush.

How have we gone since I wrote of this last year? Have Ranger David Van Bockel's plans and strategies to fight the environmental weeds been successful? Are we managing to maintain the indigenous trees, bushes and ground covers that have been planted?

I think we can say "Yes" as far as the parts of the coupe we have been able to treat, but there is still a long way to go. You will remember that plan was to cover the area with carpet underlay to suppress the weeds and then to cover this with a thick layer of sawdust mulch. At the same time, David's idea was to plant around the perimeter with dense plantings of *Goodenia ovata* and Poas. These have been done.

We found that the *Goodenias* were extremely successful in establishing themselves. The Poas had more trouble but there are some healthy tussocks coming on which will add to the attractiveness of the area as they grow.

We found that the heavy mulch didn't stop the weeds totally and we needed the help of the Park Staff to spray with two or three types of herbicides to control them. Unfortunately even these measures don't eradicate them completely and we have to weed by hand to remove the weeds in sensitive places like around the base of new young plants.

Nevertheless Neal and I love to get down there to see what has happened during each week. We see dense growth like jungle in places where the young trees have grown thickly together. No place for weeds here! Later some of these trees will die off and the usual bush like habitat will return. We also enjoy our ground plantings where the trees are small and taking some time when enough rain has fallen for this years sowing and planting.

Soon there will be more Arbor Week plantings and Neal, Olive, Claire (from Park staff) and I have been busy covering new ground with carpet and mulch in readiness for the time when enough rain has fallen for this year's sowing and planting.

We've had some fillips to our enthusiasm lately when four large piles of mulch were trucked into the coupe. This beats trundling it up and down the slope. It was great to get our own barrow for use in the coupe. No more arriving on Thursdays to find all the parks barrows elsewhere! And finally, just when the burden of weeds and areas to cover seemed insurmountable, we had the spraying done and contractor Cathy to our rescue with carpet underlay manhandled on to the next section, mulch and more saving *Goodenias*.

Thanks to all for their help over the months - wonderful people like Par, Margaret, Jan, Elma and many more, NOT to forget David who is always ready with a suggestion despite having to cover so any areas in these days of cut - backs ad limited staff

From Elizabeth Sevier, with best wishes from Neal Tessier.

STOP PRESS: 12th May, 1994.

The Prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*) bush near the fence on the right hand side of the plot as you face the river has generated SEEDLINGS. Davis found about 24 young plants near the parent on this Thursday morning. We are all excited about this. Our forest is moving forward.

FAY'S WEDDING.

The sky was grim, the air was damp and the wind was anything but a balmy breeze. But that mattered not a whit to the most beautiful bride the Fowspians present had seen. Like a ray of sunshine our Parkcare officer arrived in a 1929 Chevrolet. Her frock was pure shades of the '60s, a silk sheath frock with short over jacket of guipure lace, and she carried a sheaf of white tulips into St Catherines Greek Orthodox Church, East Malvern, to become the wife of Paul Briffa. The three bridesmaids wore deep emerald, off shoulder, short dresses and carried vivid yellow tulips. Fay's 2 year old neice.....Those of us present joined in the service and wished Paul and Fay a wonderful future together.



FOSSICKING ROSS & PERCY POSS.

Write to me at
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WETLANDS.

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| FROG | WATER RAT | DUCK |
| YABBY | COD | REDFIN |
| TORROICE | | TURTLE |

Write the remaining letters here;

WHO AM I?

- I am not a bear, but I am cuddly. I live in gum trees and eat leaves. I am a -----.
- I am big and furry, and very strong. I live in a burrow. I am a -----.
- I can fly, but I am not a bird. I have fur and sleep in winter. I am a -----.
- Platypus and I lay eggs. I have spines for protection, if attacked I curl into a spiky ball. I am an -----.
- I laugh early morning and late afternoon. Sometimes I catch snakes, but I mainly eat insects. I am a -----.

FOLLOW THE LETTERS, THEN DRAW ME.

