

July 2002

---

# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



# Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

---

## New FOWSP Publications

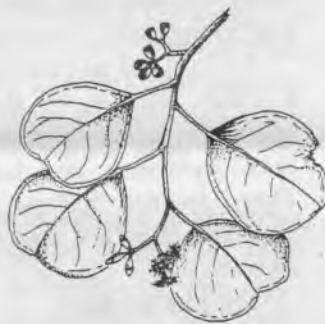
By Pat Coupar

The FOWSP brochures are now in the final stages of production. Last year our group was successful in obtaining a grant of \$5,000 from Parks Victoria for the publication of a series of educational brochures.

After much discussion, it was decided to produce three separate brochures – covering wattles, eucalypts and wildflowers. The brochures will be in full colour with a brief description of each species and approximate height and flowering time. Each will be illustrated with a small colour photo to aid identification.

The brochure on the wattles will feature all common species found in the Warrandyte area, excluding the introduced species. The eucalypt brochure has all nine Warrandyte species - River Red Gum has been excluded as it only occurs on one small site at Mount Lofty. A selection of twelve wildflowers including creepers, climbers, lilies and colourful herbs have been chosen for the wildflower brochure.

The brochures are intended as a guide to the identification of the most common wattles, eucalypts and wildflowers that might be encountered when in the bush, roadsides or on your own block. A list of other reference books for further information is given on each brochure.



The brochures will be free and, once printed, available to members and non-members from the nursery or the FOWSP trailer at monthly Warrandyte market.

Simultaneously, but self-funded, FOWSP is putting together a 'Planting Guide for Indigenous Gardens'. The concept has been spoken about at committee meetings and amongst members for some time, but the decision on how it should be done and in what format had not been worked out.

A strong advocate of such a publication has been Fowspian and book designer Zoe Murphy, well known and highly regarded for her work on local books Discover Warrandyte, The Last Cry and Green Over Gold. Despite ongoing book designing deadlines and a busy family life, Zoe has offered her time and skills to this project.

Already it is well underway. Unlike the brochures, the focus of the 'Planting Guide' is not identification, but what to plant where. The guide will include all the common species grown at the nursery, and a few of the less common and harder to grow species too. The plants will be divided into groups according to size and habit. Category guidelines include soil types, position and uses.

It is hoped that these publications, along with similar excellent indigenous planting guides produced by the local councils, will encourage more people to take out those aggies, cootas, sallows and the like and replace them with some of our stunning indigenous species.

---

# 'Burgan, Bellbirds and Eucalypt Dieback'

## A Land for Wildlife Field Day

Report by Pat Coupar

### Part One – Bell Miners and their role in eucalypt dieback - Speaker Richard Loyn

**R**ichard Loyn is an ornithologist working for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. His talk was on the effects that Bell Miners have on the vegetation, especially their association with Burgan and eucalypt dieback.

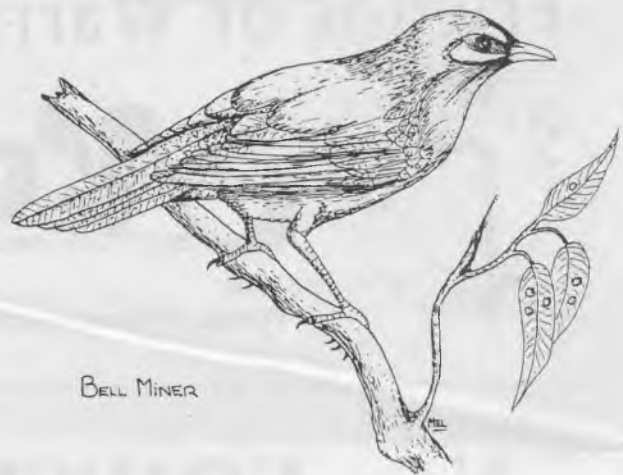
Bell Miners, often referred to as Bellbirds, are native birds that live in large communities with extensive territories, but with a fairly small geographic range. Over several years colonies move, often oscillating along riparian systems. The birds defend their food source aggressively, driving away other birds including those much larger than themselves.

Bell Miners belong in the same family as the honeyeaters, but they are specialist feeders. They eat tiny sap sucking insects called psyllids and lerps - the sugary scale-like shelter made by the insects. Their preference though is for the lerps. Uncovered and vulnerable the psyllids continually make new shelters which are subsequently eaten by the Miners. By harvesting the sugary cases, the birds are often said to be 'farming' the lerps. Meanwhile the psyllids continue to suck the sap from the leaves resulting in sick and dying eucalypts.

Burgan provides shelter for Bell Miners. The birds use the thickets to hide in and for nesting, allowing numbers to build up.

Richard told of an experiment that had been conducted where a colony of Bell Miners were removed from a site of severe eucalypt dieback. Before their removal and again after, numbers of other insect-eating birds were counted. It was found that once the Bell Miners were removed flocks of other birds including Pardalotes, White-naped Honeyeaters, Striated Thornbills, and Eastern and Crimson Rosellas moved in and began eating the psyllids and lerps at a greater rate

than the Miners had done. After about three weeks the numbers of these other forest birds began to fall as the supply of insects dried up.



Removing Bell Miner colonies is obviously not a practical option. However, Richard did recommend some habitat manipulation techniques such as thinning, control burning and slashing to reduce the psyllid population in the hope that the Miners will abandon the site, albeit then move to another.

Richard mentioned that varying water regimes and soil disturbance are a cause for increased nutrient levels in the leaves – a requirement for psyllids. He said that some trees are more susceptible to dieback than others. Peppermints for instance, because of the high phosphorous and nitrogen content of their leaves, were particularly prone, while Candlebarks and Messmate were more resistant to attack. Our Warrandyte experience at Black Flat, and in other areas of the Park, has shown that most species of eucalypt suffer dieback especially Candlebark, Messmate, Red Stringybark, Long-leaf Box and Red Box.

Richard did talk briefly about the Noisy Miner, a close relative of the 'Bells' and also an aggressive colony-former. These birds prefer an open understory and have a more varied diet. They do not harvest lerps like the 'Bells' however, they are also associated with eucalypt dieback.

The plot thickens.

Next month - David Van Bockel, Ranger from Warrandyte State Park, on 'Burgan thinning trials at WSP'



Burgan



# Draft Management Plan Warrandyte State Park

By Cam Beardsell

*Cam Beardsell, botanist and WSP Ranger, has written a comprehensive report on the current status of the Park's flora and fauna for the forthcoming and final update of the WSP Management Plan.*

## Part One - Vegetation

Over 80% of the indigenous vegetation of the Yarra District has been cleared for agriculture or urban development. Much of that remaining is fragmented or degraded to varying degrees of which only about a quarter is considered intact. A large component of the latter is contained in the biological reserve system along with over 50% of the districts' threatened plant and animal populations. This percentage continually increases with the loss or degradation of habitat by land settlement.

Warrandyte State Park (WSP) supports 486 indigenous vascular plant taxa (species, sub-species and recognised varieties and hybrids). These include nineteen taxa listed rare or threatened in Victoria. Six are vulnerable and thirteen are rare or poorly known. The vulnerable *Caladenia oenochila* (Wine-lip Spider-orchid) and *Pomaderris vacciniifolia* (Round-leaf Pomaderris) and populations of *Bolboschoenus fluviatilis* (River Club-sedge), *Dianella* aff. *longifolia* (Arching Flax-lily) and *Cardamine papillata* (Forest Bitter-cress) are significant at the Victorian level. An additional 81 taxa are listed regionally rare or threatened (Beardsell in prep.). A preliminary list of 38 non-vascular plant species has been recorded. The Park also supports approximately 250 alien plant species, 50% being environmental weeds of which over 50 are considered pernicious.

Fifteen vegetation communities comprising twenty five sub-communities occur in WSP (Beardsell in prep.). Fourteen of the sub-communities are considered regionally threatened. Communities listed threatened in Victoria include creekline herb-rich woodland, floodplain riparian woodland, swampy riparian woodland and valley grassy forest. There are several other communities in Warrandyte Gorge which have a naturally disjunct distribution. These include riverine escarpment scrub and riparian shrubland.

The vegetation communities of WSP occur in two broad landtypes, riverine and foothill. The riverine landtype includes riverbanks, alluvial terraces and associated gullies, floodplain wetlands, escarpments and cliffs. The landtype occurs along Warrandyte Gorge from Pound Bend to Mt Lofty. Vegetation communities include alluvial terraces herb-rich woodland, floodplain riparian woodland, floodplain wetland, riparian forest (river), riparian shrubland, riverine escarpment scrub, riverine escarpment woodland, swampy riparian complex and swampy riparian woodland. The latter two communities and floodplain riparian woodland are represented only as degraded remnants.

The most intact stands of vegetation are alluvial terraces herb-rich Woodland, riparian forest, riverine escarpment scrub and riverine escarpment woodland at Blue-Tongue Bend and riparian shrubland at Mt Lofty. These are amongst the finest stands in Greater Melbourne and Port Phillip Region.

The riverine landtype supports the most substantial populations of the vulnerable *Cardamine papillata* and poorly known *Bolboschoenus fluviatilis* in the region. The primary populations of both are at Blue-Tongue Bend. The landtype also supports 50% of the populations of the poorly known *Carex chlorantha* (Green-top Sedge) in the region. There are numerous regionally significant plant species and the most substantial populations in the region of the regionally endangered *Anogramma leptophylla* (Annual Fern), *Bulbine semibarbata* (Leek Lily) and *Cheilanthes distans* (Bristly Cloak-fern) and regionally rare *Chiloglottis reflexa* (Autumn Bird-orchid).

Sections subjected to high levels of recreational disturbance or adjoining cleared areas support a large component of environmental weeds. The most pernicious of these include *Salix* species (Willow), *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Wandering Jew) and *Asparagus asparagoides* (Bridal Creeper) and several newly established species along the river including *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Parrot's Feather), *Hypericum tetrapterum* (Square-stem St Johns Wort) and *Hypericum androsaemum* (Tutsan).

Continued on next page



### Draft Management Plan for WSP continued:

Priority management actions for vegetation of the riverine landtype include weed and vermin (notably rabbit) control and revegetation of previously cleared terraces and escarpments. The most important is the lower Stane Brae Biolink Project for which over 10,000 plants have been grown by the 'Friends' at the nursery. Recreational pressures on the river such as canoeing and angling will require ongoing monitoring. Reference stand vegetation at Blue Tongue Bend needs to be formally protected and managed as a conservation area.

The foothill landtype includes creeks, gullies, valleys, hill-crests and hill-slopes. It occurs from Fourth Hill/Andersons Creek to Timber Reserve and at The Common with small but significant stands along lower Jumping Creek and Pound Bend Road. Partially degraded stands also occur in Jumping Creek Reserve and Yarra Brae. Vegetation communities include box-stringybark woodland, creekline herb-rich woodland, grassy dry forest, herb-rich foothill forest, riparian forest (creek) and valley grassy forest. The most intact vegetation is box-stringybark woodland in the headwaters of Fiddler Gully and adjoining section of Timber Reserve, grassy dry forest at Fourth Hill and herb-rich foothill forest in Hansons Gully and Fiddler Gully. These stands support a highly significant orchid assemblage (50 species) and numerous other rare plants.

Herbivore fences have been erected for ground flora hotspots at School Track, Betton Track, Fiddler Gully Track, Harding Road and Haslam Track. The most significant species are the vulnerable *Acacia verniciflua* (Bacchus Marsh

Varnish Wattle) and *Caladenia oenochila*. School Track fence supports the largest population in the region of the poorly known *Dianella* aff. *longifolia*. Wildcat Gully and Hansons Gully support viable populations of the vulnerable *Craspedia* aff. *paludicola* (Billy Buttons) and regionally endangered *Lobelia simplicicaulis* (Narrow Lobelia). A substantial population of the regionally endangered *Pterostylis plumosa* (Bearded Greenhood) and the largest reserved population in the region of the regionally endangered *Hibbertia obtusifolia* (Grey Guinea-flower) occurs in the Fiddler Gully - Timber Reserve area.

Fragmentation through clearing and bushblock development of surrounding land and recreational disturbance are ongoing threats to the vegetation. Grassy weeds including *Anthoxanthum odoratum* (Sweet Vernal-grass), *Briza maxima* (Large Quaking-grass) and *Ehrharta erecta* (Panic Veldt Grass) threaten indigenous ground flora. *Pittosporum undulatum* (Sweet Pittosporum) and *Allium triquetrum* (Three-cornered Garlic) have invaded the creeks and gullies. Rabbits and native herbivores threaten grazing sensitive ground flora.

Priority management actions for vegetation of the foothill landtype include weed control and creek recovery programs (notably Andersons Creek), maintenance of herbivore fences, rare species population recovery programs, monitoring of recreational pressures such as horse riding and prescribed burning programs.

**Next month**  
**Part Two -Fauna**

## Tip of the Month

### Replace weedy wattles with natives.

For Cootamundra Wattle plant Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) in dry areas, or Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) in moist areas. Both these local species have similar fern-like, true leaves and sprays of fluffy yellow balls similar to the Cootamundra Wattle.



For Sallow Wattle and Floribunda Wattle plant Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*) and Hop Wattle (*Acacia stricta*) in dry areas and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) in moister shady areas. All these indigenous species, like their introduced counterparts, have phyllodes (flattened leaf stalks) rather than true leaves and pale yellow flower balls.

Contact the nursery manager for availability of these species.



# FOSCCers Start Weeding!

By Steve Munro

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Friends of Stony Creek Catchment (FOSCCers) started the clean up of Stony Creek. After instruction from Mark Gardner on weed-pulling techniques, and on how to apply herbicide to prevent weed re-growth, the group started rehabilitating a patch of land near the Colan Rd. bridge.

The area was selected because it was only moderately infested by weeds. The three most prominent weeds were Cape Broom (*Genista monspessulana*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and, of course Blackberry (*Rubus procerus*). Small broom plants were pulled, with care being taken to minimise disruption to the soil cover. Larger broom plants were cut and Roundup™ applied to the cut surface. Similarly, blackberry canes were cut and painted with herbicide.

The cut and pulled weeds were piled for later collection or burning in spring. A

large number of dumped bottles was also recovered and piled for later collection.

The reward for the two hours of work was gaining access to the creek and seeing a small but very attractive stand of ferns emerge from under a cover of blackberry.

FOSCCers will meet again on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July to explore the aqueduct, do some more weeding and maybe waterwatch testing. On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August there will be more instruction on weeding techniques and waterwatch testing again. All activities start at 1pm at Colan Rd in North Warrandyte. Any FOWSP members are welcome to join us.



---

## Whose Park is it, anyway?

By Geoff Speedy

The managers of our park recently made a decision which would affect our amenity, without consulting us. Naturally, we were miffed, considering the huge amount of time and effort that Warrandyte residents and FOWSP members make to preserve our local amenity.

Our group, "Friends of Warrandyte State Park" is vitally concerned with Park issues. Over the past 5 years we have raised for Warrandyte State Park over \$28,000 in direct grants, over \$15,000 in subscriptions, donated plants valued at over \$60,000 and volunteered time which outweighs these cash amounts.

In addition to our economically-valued involvement, the fact that we choose to live in Warrandyte, (many of us for over 20 years), gives us a social and environmental claim to ownership. We see management come and go at the Park, sometimes better, sometimes worse. We have to live with Park decisions over a much longer time span than those making the choices.

We have over 300 paid-up stakeholders in the Park.

We are opposed to the decision to close the mines and we feel that the stakeholders have not been adequately consulted.

Access to the mines is considered a positive benefit to living in Warrandyte, and the freedom to display the mines to visitors has not been infringed over the past 100 years.

If there is a case for closure, the evidence must stand public scrutiny, alternatives must be considered, and time allowed for the community to work through the issues and adapt to any loss of freedom.

Luckily, the managers of our park are responsive to public concern, and have decided to involve the community in any future decisions about the mines. We are now waiting for a meeting date to present our concerns. The mines closures are currently on hold. Hopefully, we will be consulted about the next substantive issue prior to any decisions being made.

## Worth Repeating

### Creepy-crawlies reduce train to a snail's pace

Fergus Shiel

**M**illipedes stopped the Melbourne to Ballarat train dead in its tracks in the early hours of Good Friday morning.

The sprinter service carrying football fans was unable to continue on its journey because the plant-eating insects had coated the tracks.

Once a year, millipedes are said to invade kilometres of train line between Deer Park and Ballan.

For more than an hour the driver attempted to nudge the train at crawling pace.

"Would it help if we all got out and pushed,"

one passenger wondered. Another asked: "This might sound like a stupid question but do you have any brooms?"

The driver's best efforts proved futile, and the train returned to Bacchus March at 1.35am.

The 42 passengers, most of them Tigers and Magpies supporters, completed their journey by bus.

Several teenage girls called home on mobile phones to tell their parents that millipedes were keeping them out late.

Having left Melbourne at 11.18pm the passengers finally arrived in Ballarat at 3.15am after their millipede-impeded marathon.

Other Ballarat-bound trains, including a freight train on Wednesday night, were delayed by the millipedes this week.

Source: *The Age* 30/3/02



## Botanical Meanings

*Callistemon*

Beautiful stamens (Gr.)



By B.G

### **Banana Baggage**

"The bright green Eastern Dwarf Frog (from Queensland) has been found in Chirnside Park,.....it is believed to have been breeding in a backyard pool".

The frogs have been travelling to Melbourne in cases of bananas.

"(The) Amphibian Research manager likened the battle for survival between the intruders and local frogs as 'Chemical warfare'.....It is a similar situation to the cane toad".

Source: *Local Maroondah Newspaper, May 2002.*

### **Edendale at Eltham**

Cheryl Mutch from the Edendale Farm at Eltham came to our nursery one day in May and participated in our Thursday nursery activity. The 'farm' is a Community Environmental Centre in Nillumbik Shire. It has an indigenous nursery, open every Wednesday from 10.00am to 3.00pm, selling plants (local provenance only) for \$2 per tube.

Landcare and Friends group people come and propagate plants for revegetation work.

The nursery is just one of its programs. Interested? Phone 94398113.

### **Revegetation Reasons**

Lyndal Crocker was also helping the 'Friends' at WSP. Lyndal came to help and also learn about indigenous plants. Why? She and her husband Steve want to revegetate their block.

### **Ravaged and Ruined**

"Almost all the areas through which they drove to the coast in the 40's now consist of ruined salt ridden waterholes.

The Gorden River (W.A?) where they used to swim, fish and catch marron (freshwater crayfish) is now lined with dead trees."

*Extract from an article about the life of one folk music musician – in 'Australian Tradition', June 2002.*

### **Botanic Gardens Bookings**

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne are running a Winter series of lectures.

Sunday July 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday August 11<sup>th</sup> have topics about 'Cities and Wildflowers', 'The Merri Creek Project', 'The Role of Fire' and 'River Catchments'.

Interested? Book with Brenna – Jane Waller on 5990 2200.

### **Paucity of Pieces**

The limited items this month are due to a vicious virus attack on the author, lasting several weeks.

---

#### **Editor's Note:**

If you're looking for a good read on these cold Melbourne winter nights, try Australian author Tim Winton's new book 'Dirt Music'. Set in Perth and on a small island off the north west Kimberley coast, it will transport you to warmer climes with words that build extraordinary images of isolation, desperation, loneliness and love. A beautifully written book worth reading more than once.

---

## **Worth Repeating**

### **Britain ban on imports as fungus threatens oaks**

LONDON. A new disease called "sudden oak death", which has sparked fears that the English oak may suffer the same fate as the elm and be wiped out in Britain, has led the government to ban plant imports from parts of the US where the disease is rampant.

The fungus, *Phytophthora ramorum*, which occurs in garden shrubs as well as oaks, has been

found in four British nurseries in West Sussex, Lincolnshire, Dorset and Lancashire. The plants involved have been burnt.

The alarm was first raised in the US where oaks have been dying in their thousands in the past two years. In California, Oregon and other states, cankers develop on trees, which seep sap and appear to bleed to death. Infected trees die in months. Plants with the disease include rhododendron, viburnum and vaccinium, the family from which the cranberry comes.

Source: *The Age May 2002*



Surface  
Mail  
only

Postage  
Paid

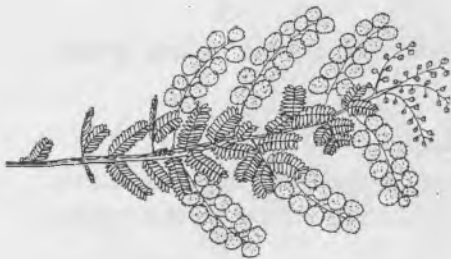
**REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST**

**PP 346802 / 0005**

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

**Cootamundra Wattle**

*(Acacia baileyana)*



Originally from a small area of NSW near Wagga Wagga, after which it was named, this introduced wattle has become a major invasive environmental weed.

Its attractive silvery grey foliage and prolific flowers in sprays of fluffy yellow balls, make it a popular a garden plant. It produces copious seeds which germinate readily in the bush.

**FOWSP Membership Form**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. no. ....

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

**Special Membership Offer**

**Receive a discount if you renew your membership for three years**

**Single: \$40.00**

**Family: \$50.00**