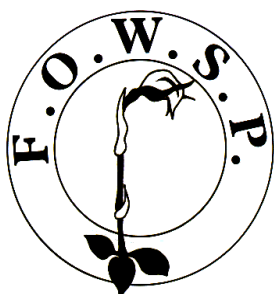


May 2026

Volume 44 Number 4

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Website: www.fowsp.org.auFriends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/Incorporation No. A0024890C

Editor's Corner

Hi

Well, apart from a cold weekend mid April, we continue to have this amazing autumnal weather. That's the good news. The bad news is we have had well under the average rainfalls in Melbourne this autumn. Our gardens should be getting a bit of a soaking to allow some planting but it is a struggle at the moment.

Still, the nursery is well stocked. In fact, it is bursting at the seams so, if you need plants, come in and buy.

In this newsletter we have more reviews, from Lyn, on books donated by Carol Page. There is also an article on a monitoring programme, run by Manningham Council, with nest boxes recently installed around the city. This initiative is hoped to improve the environment for some of our shy mammals as well as for nesting birds (except Noisy Miners — they can fend for themselves!).

The TAG team are out and about, although their programme is being curtailed somewhat by the dry conditions. It's good to see that there are a number of younger members joining the TAG team each week. Groups like FOWSP need younger volunteers, not just the pensioner brigade.

John

Above: a family of Krefft's gliders (*Petaurus notatus*) photographed in one of the nest boxes discussed on pp. 4 and 5 (though not in Doncaster).

Below: A Brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), sadly not seen when FOWSP members went searching.



**Deadline for May's newsletter is
Friday May 29th, 2026**

**contributions can be emailed to [John Young editor@fowsp.org.au](mailto:John.Young@fowsp.org.au)
or posted to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113**

Around The Traps



Above: Don and Anne owned up to a birthday in April. I think, for Don, it was a significant milestone! Sybille did them proud with a chocolate fudge cake.



Above: a St. Andrews Cross spider (*Argiope keyserlingi*) found in my orchid house. Not sure why this only appears in the summer but it is a regular visitor. This will be a female as it is around 20mm across, whereas the male is only 3-4 mm. They are common throughout the eastern seaboard, usually in more enclosed environments as they don't tend to spin webs between trees.



Above: possibly a species of bolete mushroom (*Xerocomus sp.?*). Found in one of my raised garden beds. Not for mushrooms on toast.

Anzac biscuits

This recipe is from the Women's Weekly *The Big Book of Beautiful Biscuits* (save it for next year)

Ingredients

1 cup rolled oats
1 cup plain flour
1 cup sugar
3/4 cup coconut
125g butter (I use unsalted)
2 tablespoons golden syrup
1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1 tablespoon boiling water.

Method

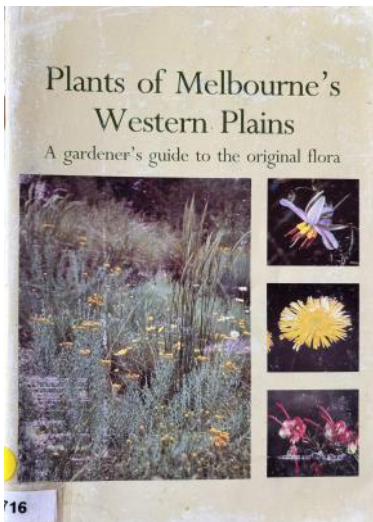
Combine oats, flour, sugar and coconut in a large bowl.
Combine butter and golden syrup, stir over gentle heat until melted.
Mix bicarb soda with boiling water and add to melted butter mixture.
Add to dry ingredients and mix well.
Place tablespoonfuls of mixture on lightly greased oven tray, allowing room for spreading. (I formed the tablespoonfuls into a small ball)
Cook in a slow oven for 20 minutes.
Loosen while still warm, then cool on the trays.
Makes about 35 biscuits.

Sybille

Book chat with Lyn

This month I have four more books added to our library to tell you about, all kindly donated by Carol Page.

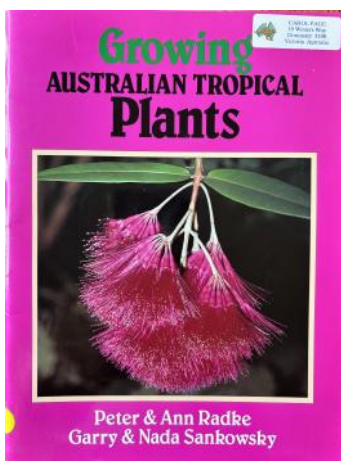
PLANTS OF MELBOURNE'S WESTERN PLAINS



The full title of the book is *Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains: A gardener's guide to the original flora*. The book contains general information about the Western Plains and also about creating and maintaining a garden. It has photos of

many plant species with a description and information on cultivation and landscape use. It could also be useful for identifying plants when visiting the area. The library reference number is FL716 (yellow sticker).

GROWING AUSTRALIAN TROPICAL PLANTS

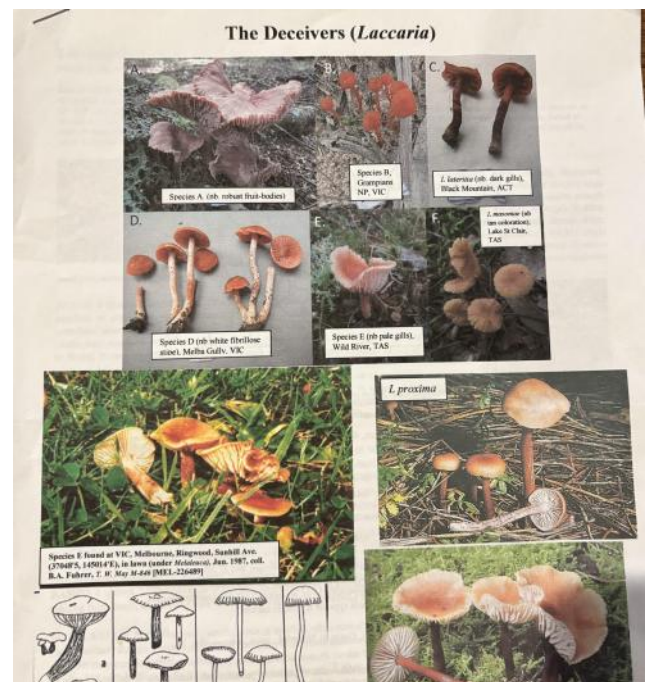


This book has photos and descriptions of 102 species of native plants from the tropical rainforests of north Queensland, ranging from small herbs to tall trees. It includes information on garden preparation and maintenance, as well as tips on cultivation and landscape use

for each plant. I think the photos and descriptions here could also be useful in identifying plants when visiting north Queensland.

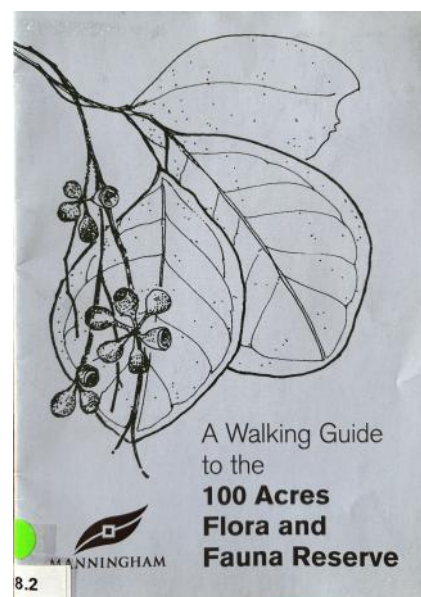
If you sometimes prefer online books, an online version is available here <https://www.anpsa.org.au/APOL12/dec98-1.html>. The library reference number is FL715 (yellow sticker).

THE DECEIVERS (*Laccaria*)



This will be of interest to fungi enthusiasts. It is 5 photocopied pages to assist in identifying *Laccaria* species. The library reference number is FL714 (yellow sticker).

A WALKING GUIDE TO THE 100 ACRES FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE



This is a guide to the 100 Acres Flora and Fauna Reserve in Park Orchards. It has a map and a description of 20 points of interest. A PDF version is available below

https://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/uploads/100_acres_pages_-_for_web.pdf

The library reference number is EN598 (green sticker).

Searching nesting boxes



Above: one of the new nest boxes. This one designed for cockies or corellas

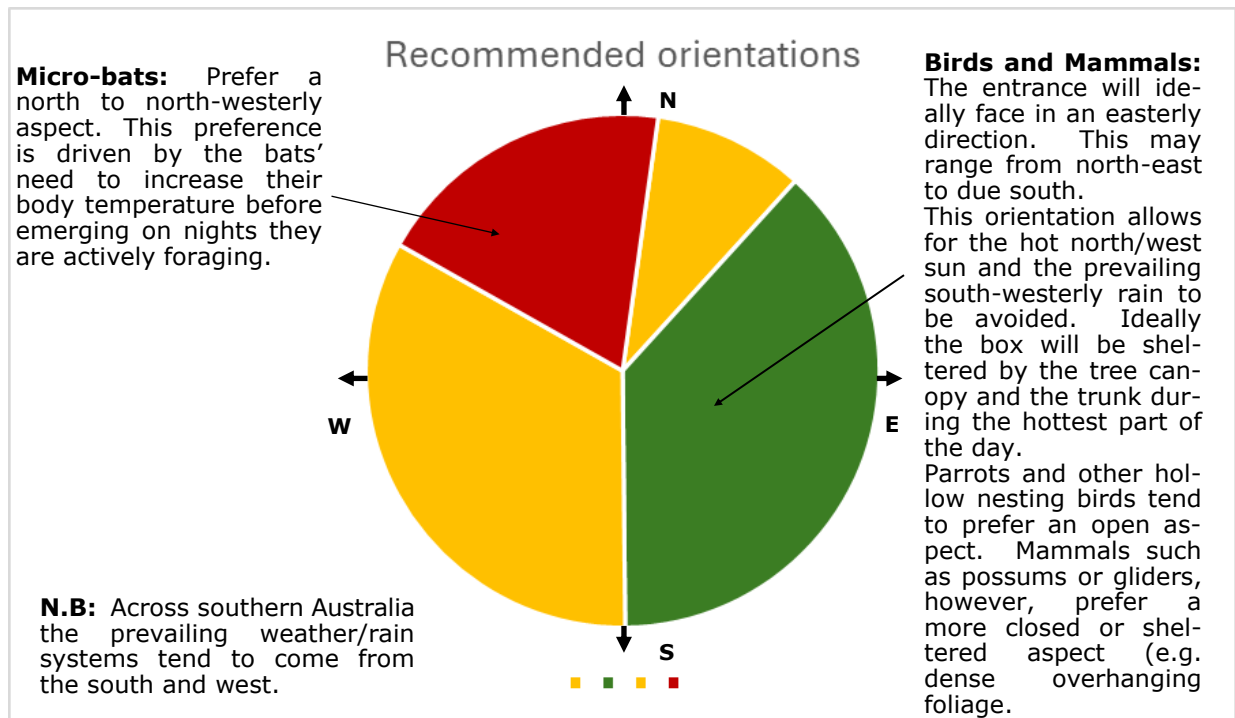
Manningham Council (through their biodiversity and Environment group) have installed a number of specially designed nesting boxes throughout the smaller reserves in the city. To monitor what is happening in them, they have purchased a special camera and pole (a repurposed window cleaning one) to see if anything is going on. There are quite a number of these boxes and, realising that they did not have the resources to check them out at regular intervals, called on volunteers from FOWSP and elsewhere to help.

Earlier in April, Pam, Lynda and yours truly met up with Sam Gilbert at the Tullamore development in Doncaster (on the old golf course) to see if we had any takers. At left, I am gingerly manoeuvring the camera into a box. A light on the end hopefully illuminates the inside and the camera is running. A still is taken and recorded by Sam.

On this particular morning we failed to find any nesting birds or gliders, probably it's the wrong season. We did check out any likely looking hollows and old boxes and found a ringtail and a possible micro-bat. Better luck next time.

John

Recommended orientations for installing a wildlife box



Many species of wildlife rely on natural tree hollows for nesting and shelter. However, in eucalypt trees, small hollows may take over 70 years to develop and large hollows many decades longer. The range of hollow sizes and types is matched by the range of wildlife able to use them — small for Feathertail Glider, large for Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

Loss of natural tree hollows is a major concern for the protection of our wildlife. In this environment, nesting boxes can play an important role, particularly in urban areas that have been depleted by human development.

Nest boxes are not a long-term substitute for natural hollows (they typically last around 10 years compared with maybe a century for a large hollow) but they do help, provided they are well designed and well located.

Therefore, before deciding on putting a nest box on your property, consider your objective. What species (single or multiple) are you targeting and why?

For example:

- To provide additional habitat in areas of short supply
- To support the persistence or reintroduction of a species

A knowledge of the local area is also helpful. Are there sufficient food resources to attract your target species?

Nest boxes are available commercially or can be built by anyone with reasonable woodworking skills. The internet contains recommended box dimensions for different species as well as detailed plans.

In looking to buy or build a suitable nest box, consider the following:

- The size of the opening. The animal or bird should just be able to squeeze into the box so as to avoid predators and deter competition
- Depth — some species need deep vertical hollows and some a gently sloping one
- Space — some animals nest communally (Leadbeater's Possum) and some are solitary (Phascogales), at least until breeding
- Nesting material — most small mammals provide their own material whilst parrots benefit from the addition of wood shavings to mimic natural decay
- Insulation and ventilation — see the above guidelines but the box should be comfortable for the species.

Hopefully, with these basics and additional research, you can welcome animals to your property.

The above chart and general information is based on documents provided by DEWLP and Manningham Council

Sexual dimorphism

Many species exhibit sexual dimorphism, a posh name for the male and female having different appearances. Usually, the male is larger and, perhaps, decked out in some sort of finery to attract a mate, whilst the female is smaller and has greater camouflage to hide whilst rearing young.

Birds are no different. Often the female is dull brown and the male, at least in breeding plumage, can be gaudy. We are all familiar with the fairy wrens where the dull brown female contrasts the brightly coloured male.



This is not always the case. Sometimes the female is very different to the male and not just for camouflage. Australia's most striking example is the Eclectus parrot (*Eclectus polychloros*), where the male is bright green and the female bright red (see photo top right).

A more subtle example is our familiar Magpie Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) where the male has a black line through its eye (like a Zorro mask) and in the female has a black line down through the eye and a white throat. It took me years to notice this difference! (male centre right, female below)



Interestingly, in a number of genres, the male and female are identical (at least to our eyes), many parrots for example. Having said that, there are a large number of parrot species where the female is duller than the male, confirming the camouflage hypothesis. Why that should be so, must come down to the evolutionary path and environment in which the species developed. There is probably a learned paper on this somewhere.

Other examples are included on the next page, where the females are very different.



From the top — the male is on the left in each case. White throated rock-thrush (*Monticola gularis*). Snowy-browed flycatcher (*Ficedula hyperythra*). Siberian Blue robin (*Larvivora cyane*). Victoria's Riflebird (*Ptiloris victoriae*).

John

TAGS (Thursday activity groups)

TAGS meet at the nursery at 9.00 am for a 9.15 am departure. Please remember to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather, and please bring your own filled water bottle.

Contact number: 0408 317 327

Difficulty ratings:

Easy: Even terrain, some light lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Few tripping hazards.

Moderate: Uneven terrain, light to heavy lifting, kneeling and bending involved. Tripping hazards present.

Difficult: Steep terrain, light to heavy lifting, working in over-grown areas and lots of bending. Many tripping hazards and slippery surfaces present.

Check the website for any changes at <http://fowsp.org.au/activities.php>

7/5/26	Harding/Red Beard fence	Phil	Weeding and planting	Easy/Mod
14/5/26	Candlebark Park	Cathy	Weeding and Planting	Easy
21/5/26	Pauline Toner Reserve	Cam	Planting 300 plants	Easy/Mod
28/5/26	Endeavour Bank	Artur	Fencing and Planting	Easy
4/6/26	Spadoni's Yarra Glen	Phil/Cam	Weeding and Planting	Easy
11/6/26	Walert Creek	Don	Woody weeds	Mod

TAG report

April has been a dry month, so we have mostly avoided planting, except for Pauline Toner Reserve, where Cam can maintain watering until we get some rain.

At the Reserve, we planted 100 *Bursaria spinosa* in rocky ground, with enthusiastic efforts by the group with mattocks and crowbars. We are very encouraged by Cam's report that the Eltham Copper Butterfly surveys last Spring found over 1000 grubs, a record for the reserve, with some found on bursaria we planted only two years ago.

A very rewarding result and testament to Cam's vision for the reserve.

Don



FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 9.30 am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. Propagation takes place from 9.30 am to 12.30 midday.

No prior experience necessary -
There is always someone available to show you the ropes.

NURSERY OPENING HOURS

The nursery is open for plant sales every Thursday.

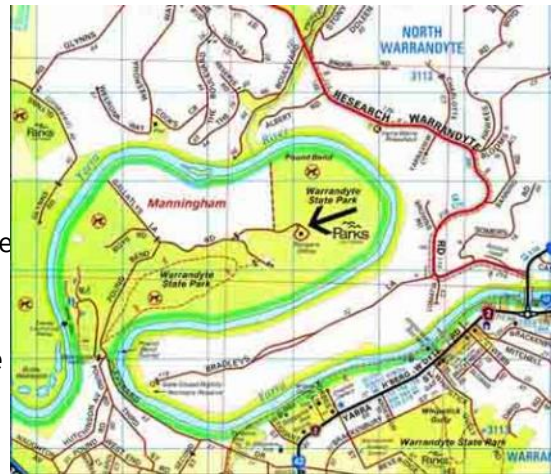
9.30 am to 12.30 pm and

the first Saturday of every month, 9am to 1pm (to coincide with the Warrandyte Market) April to November only.

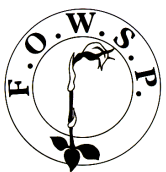
Closed Christmas and New Years days.

Also closed to customers and volunteers on days of severe weather and on Total Fire Ban Days

Prices: Members \$2.50 Non-members \$3.00 (tube stock)



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FOWSP MARKET TRAILER

Thanks to those who volunteered at the Festival and at the Easter Saturday market.



The Warrandyte market is held on the first Saturday morning of the month from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm at Stiggants Reserve. Volunteers are rostered in pairs to man/woman the FOWSP information trailer for just one hour.

If you are interested in being on the market roster
please contact Jan Falconer on 0419 872 096 or email trailer@fowsp.org.au
First timers are always paired with someone more experienced.

Next market dates are:
Saturday, May 2nd 2026
Saturday, June 6th 2026

FOWSP COMMITTEE 2026		OTHER FOWSP CONTACTS	
Artur Muchow	0415 383328	Secretary	<u>Nursery Manager</u> Josh Revell Nursery Phone 0408 317 327 nursery@fowsp.org.au
Tony Oliver		Treasurer and Membership	<u>Park Office</u> 03 8427 2132
treasurer@fowsp.org.au			
John Young	0412327798	Newsletter editor (non committee position)	<u>Ranger contact</u> Phil Rance philip.rance@parks.vic.gov.au
editor@fowsp.org.au			<u>Newsletter assist and Librarian</u> Lyn Moore
Joy Hick	0418 573916		
Gray Ardern	0418 190261		
Lyn Moore	0409 683 041		<u>Market Trailer</u> Jan Falconer 0419 872 096 trailer@fowsp.org.au
lynm333g@gmail.com			
Jono Del-Re			<u>Manningham Council Rep</u> Cathy Willis 0427 660 651
Jeff Cranston	0418 396 647		<u>Webmaster</u> Jason Patton 0402 121838 webmaster@fowsp.org.au
legality@bigpond.com			
Staff Representative			<u>Facebook coordinator</u> Carolyn Noel 0409 901441
Lynda Chambers	0466 274421		
phe-nologist@gmail.com			

Next Committee Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday June 9, 2026
Venue:	Education Centre Pound Bend
Time:	17:00

Are your subs due??

Please check the message on the email you receive with the newsletter link by scrolling down beyond the link . If subs are due soon a message such as below will be seen in the email.:

FOWSP Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

.....

Telephone no.

Email

Membership (family) \$30
Concession \$15

Newsletter by email (tick box)

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or renew on the website www.fowsp.org.au with the option of direct deposit payment.