

# INDIGENOTES

# New Strategy for Yarra Bend Park

By Ken Duxbury

## 1. Introduction

Preparation of a new strategy plan for Yarra Bend Park commenced in September 1997, following the February 1997 transfer of the park's management from Yarra Bend Park Trust to Parks Victoria. The new plan will provide a five year strategic framework for the Park and will build upon the existing (1990) management plan having regard to changes which have since occurred (and also, inevitably, the priorities, values and ethics of Parks Victoria).

Following community consultation in November 1997, a double-sided A3 sheet entitled Draft Strategy Framework was released early in January 1998, requesting comments by 12 February 1998. A more detailed Draft Strategy Plan is now being prepared, and may be released by late April.

## 2. Lack of Detail

The Strategic Framework recognises that the "bushland in the city" character of the Park is one of its most valued characteristics. It notes that approximately 100 hectares of the 223 hectare park is covered by indigenous vegetation of varied quality, and that 117 significant flora species are present, 68 being of local and 49 of regional importance.

Presumably the remainder of the well over 200 indigenous plant species in the park are considered 'insignificant'. However, no detail is provided as to how significance is defined. One difficulty with this approach is that very common plants such as river red gum, golden wattle and sweet bursaria can be the most significant species in defining the landscape character of the park, and its habitat value. Another problem is that an association of plants - with ground flora, understorey and canopy species still more or less intact can have a significance which greater than the sum of its constituent plant species. Yarra Bend Park also has special significance because of the way in which a wide variety of plant communities are closely juxtaposed.

It is also disappointing that the Strategic Framework does not provide any details as to the nature of the environmental values of the park, and the major management issues which must be addressed if these values are to be protected and enhanced. Some of the most significant environmental values include:

- The occurrence of Yellow Gum Woodland and open forest on the dry and rugged Silurian mudstone slopes of the park. This species has very limited distribution in the Melbourne region.
- The complex pattern of vegetation communities created by the interface between the volcanic plain and the Silurian hills, and by the Yarra River and Merri Creek and their escarpments.

- The survival of a range of different native grassland areas, including Common Tussock (*Poa labillardieri*) grassland on alluvial river flats; kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*), wallaby grass (*Danthonia* spp.), spear grass (*Stipa* spp.) and other grasses on Silurian derived soils, and several small remnants of the basaltic grassland flora on the Northcote side of the river.

Some of the major management issues relating to vegetation include:

- Greatly increased park use in recent years for reasons which include: the general rediscovery of the Yarra Valley and construction of the Main Yarra Trail; improvements to picnic areas, and the revitalisation of the Studley Park and Fairfield boat houses; the rejuvenation of surrounding residential areas and residential development of industrial sites.
- Greatly increased dog exercising. Yarra Bend Park is one of the few remaining parks where dogs can be exercised off leash, and where you do not have to follow your dog around at all times with a plastic bag and a trowel.
- The park has recently become a mountain bike riders paradise, widening existing trails, creating new tracks and turning grasslands to dust. Groups of mountain bike riders can have an impact similar to that of off-road recreational vehicles.
- The park is also subject to longer-standing processes of degradation such as weed invasion, rabbits, inappropriate fire regimes, poorly constructed pathways, and badly handled urban runoff.

## 3. Guiding Principles Require Strengthening

Parks Victoria proposes that the guiding principles for managing the natural environment of the park should be that:

"The natural environment of the park will be protected and maintained commensurate with the environmental values of individual areas.

The natural environment will be protected to maintain its important role in the Yarra Valley and Merri Creek Valley habitat corridors.

The diverse range of ecotypes and natural features throughout the Park will be protected."

I believe that these guiding principles are inadequate, and need to be tightened up and strengthened and that, in particular:

- The natural environment needs something more than simply to be protected and maintained, especially given that the park's bushland areas are subject to so many threatening processes, and so many areas are already in a severely degraded and visibly deteriorating condition.
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on the need to identify, control and where possible reverse threatening processes.

- There is a need to emphasise the restoration and enhancement of the bushland areas, rather than just accepting that they of variable quality.
- There is a need to seek out opportunities to carry out revegetation works to increase the amount of land covered by indigenous vegetation, and to reintroduce indigenous understorey and ground flora species to areas which have a canopy of eucalypts, with exotic species and weeds below.
- High priority should be given to creating enhanced habitat links and corridors, both within the park and beyond its boundaries.
- There is a need to recognise that native grassland areas require continuing active management rather than passive protection, and that areas will need to be fenced off from public access.

#### 4. Park Visitors

Parks Victoria proposes that:

"The park will accommodate a greater number of visitors from a wider area of Melbourne in an environmentally sustainable way. This will mean dispersing use to specific areas that have the capacity for increased visitation."

One deficiency of this approach is that it fails to acknowledge that some areas of the park do not have the capacity to sustain existing visitor numbers and usage in an environmentally sustainable way.

The Strategic Framework does not say why the park will, or should, accommodate more visitors from a wider area of Melbourne. It also does not differentiate between catering for some inevitable increase in park usage, the result of such trends as industrial sites being redeveloped for residential purposes, and increased usage caused by actively promoting the Park (for example by an advertising campaign) or by developing new facilities.

I believe that it will be a huge challenge just to cater for existing visitor numbers in a more environmentally sustainable way, and to cater for additional visitors from the immediate surroundings of the park. In addition, a greater emphasis needs to be given to the control of existing unsustainable uses such as mountain bike riding and uncontrolled dog exercising in bushland areas.

#### 5. Guiding Management Principles

One of the proposed guiding principles for managing Yarra Bend is that:

"- Clearly defined and sustainable priorities for resource allocation will underpin park management actions. This prioritisation will apply to the maintenance and protection of areas of recognised environmental importance, as well as the provision of visitor services."

I find this disturbingly vague and ambiguous. For example, does it mean that areas of unrecognised - or not officially recognised - environmental values will not be protected. It could also be interpreted to mean "we will protect the environmental values of the park to the extent that this is consistent with our desire to maintain and

where possible increase visitor numbers."

It also sounds a little bit like one of those Regional Forest Agreements where forests are seen primarily as resources to be allocated, and priority is given to sustaining and increasing forest yields, and only narrowly (and dubiously) defined equivalents of 'areas of recognised environmental importance' are deemed worthy of protection.

Unfortunately, there seems to have been a step backwards from the guiding principles of the 1990 management plan, which was based on the fundamental principle that:

"It is important that with growing interest in the park, excessive or inappropriate uses are avoided. It is essential to determine which areas are suited to more active or passive recreation and which are of conservation importance and require restoration or enhancement."

The new strategy appears to be less concerned with the threat of inappropriate and excessive uses, and devising strategies for these to be limited or controlled; and the conservation aim has been downgraded from restoration and enhancement to maintenance and protection of 'areas of recognised environmental importance'.

#### 6. Recent Works

Recent works undertaken by Parks Victoria appear to reflect the changed management priorities - away from protecting and enhancing the park's environmental values and towards catering for more visitors, and 'keeping the customers satisfied'.

The recent works undertaken in the Kanes Bridge area are a case in point. These works have included the construction of a new loop path through the grassy woodland area upstream from Kanes Bridge - on the Kew side. This path is 2.6 metres wide, but was built with a large 'scraper' - resulting in 4.5 - 5.0 metre swathe of destruction. Nothing has yet been done to block off pre-existing paths, and these are still being used. The new path is being used for off-leash, no-clean-up dog exercising, and by mountain bike riders and other cyclists. It has also encouraged picnic parties to carry their rugs and portable furniture further into the sensitive woodland environment.

It is also regrettable that no positive action has been taken to protect the grassland areas from trampling, such as the erection of protective fencing or other barriers, or even the erection of signs explaining the significance of the grasslands and their vulnerability to trampling. (Probably only about 10% of the people using the new loop path are even aware that the native grassland areas exist). It is also notable that recent plantings in the area have aimed at immediate impact rather than long term sustainability: the recent 'feature planting' of 3 metre high river red gums and other ornamental indigenous (to the general area) plants on the Kew side of Kanes Bridge.

However, some other recent plantings will greatly improve the environment of the park. For example, extensive plantings of tube stock-sized river red gums, drooping sheokes and blackwoods between and around the sporting ovals on the western side of Yarra Bend Road.

Another disappointing feature of recent management is that previous interpretive signs, explaining the significance of the basaltic grassland flora, have been allowed to fall into disrepair, or have not been replaced after being vandalised. Signage priority seems to have been given to proclaiming that Yarra Bend Park is now a Parks Victoria park, and drawing attention to the new capital works, emphasising their expense and concluding with the salutation: VICTORIA - ON THE MOVE. (One sign proclaims somewhat inaccurately that the works are "celebrating Victoria's National Parks").

## 7. Discussion

I believe that the problem does not lie with the on-site staff, or with the staff and consultants who are preparing the management plan - who I know to be highly competent and conscientious - but with the senior management and corporate philosophy of Parks Victoria.

In particular, I believe that the 'benchmarking' approach used to assess and compare park performance can adversely affect the proper long term planning and environmental protection of parks such as Yarra Bend Park. (In essence the approach seeks to increase visitor numbers from year to year, minimise park expenditure per visitor, and maximise visitor satisfaction ratings. This means that, say, fencing off a native grassland area or stringently controlling mountain bike riding could lead to an unsatisfactory annual 'balance sheet'.)

It is also disturbing that Parks Victoria has advertised for a new Chief Executive Officer, who can manage parks with 'entrepreneurial flare' and a 'customer focus'. The selection criteria do not require any special expertise in areas such as environmental management, planning and design, or natural science.

I was fascinated to read Ron Pearson's article on Braeside Park in the March 1998 *Indigenotes*. This seems to confirm that there is a general pattern of maximising visitor numbers, minimising expenditure and de-emphasising the protection and enhancement of environmental values, and their interpretation and use as an educational resource.

I would be interested to hear reports from members on other Parks Victoria parks.

# The South-east Queensland Rainforest Recovery Project

By Bruce Boyes, Rainforest Recovery Officer, WWF/Queensland Dept. of Environment

Recovery plans operating under the Commonwealth Endangered Species Act 1992 offer a very effective way of bringing threatened flora and fauna back from the brink of extinction. All too often conservation actions fail because they are ad hoc, random activities carried out with no thought given to what really needs to be done. A recovery plan, by targeting research and management actions at a specific conservation objective, minimises this problem.

So far recovery plans have focused on single species. However, due to both the need to rationalise costs as well as an increased understanding of ecosystem dynamics, there has started to be a shift in the approach to recovery planning towards a habitat or ecosystem approach. In Queensland, where the single species approach has been dominant, financial and human resources are already stretched and we have only implemented recovery for around 20% of our threatened fauna and a disturbing 1% of our threatened flora.

In a paper delivered at the 1995 **Back from the Brink** workshop, Bruce Male (Assistant Director, Threatened Species and Communities Section, Environment Australia) advised that "That the recovery planning process has been, and should continue to be, a practice-based learning experience that draws on the collective wisdom and knowledge of all its participants...there exists considerable scope for the program practitioners and managers to expand on and define mechanisms to enhance...efficiency and effectiveness" (*Recovery of Australian threatened species - a national perspective*).

Also at **Back from the Brink**, David Papps, in his paper *Commonwealth and State Government frameworks for recovery planning for threatened species and communities*, identified that "...more effort should go into threatened species conservation across bioregions and into threat abatement itself. Exclusive focus on single species is not cost-effective".

A bioregional ecosystem recovery project is being taken with the South-east Queensland Rainforest Recovery Project. The Project will recover threatened rainforest species and ecosystems right across the South-east Queensland bioregion. The rainforests of the region have

a high concentration of threatened rainforest species, particularly plants. Indeed, more than one-third of all of Queensland's endangered plants are found in the South-east Queensland rainforests.

A focus on an easily recognisable group of ecosystems, eg. rainforests, means that the community will be able to more easily identify with and support the objectives of the project than they would if it was to look broadly at "remnant vegetation". Other similar ecosystem examples are planned, for example, South-east Queensland wallum and Brigalow Belt South Grasslands.

### **Ipswich City Leads the Way**

To ensure that the process is locally owned, recovery plans will be prepared for smaller, geographically and socially cohesive subregions within the bioregion. An overall project management committee will coordinate across the subregions.

The first subregion is Ipswich City, west of Brisbane, thanks to the admirable cooperation of Ipswich City Council. A recovery team involving community groups, the Council, the local TAFE college and the Department of Environment is currently overseeing the preparation of the Ipswich Rainforest Recovery Plan. The Plan is being written by Siobhan Bland, a University of Queensland student on industrial placement with the Department of Environment. This recovery plan will be used as a model for the rest of the region.

### **The WWF South-east Queensland Vineforests Project: A Firm Foundation**

In 1991, WWF funded a Queensland Herbarium Study of South-east Queensland vineforests. In all, 232 sites were studied, 63 of which were found to have high conservation value.

In 1996, WWF implemented a follow-up project, using the findings of the 1991 study to promote the conservation and management of the high conservation value sites identified in the study and subsequent surveys. The project was very successful, generating a high level of landholder, community, and government support for the conservation of significant dry rainforests. Proposals for a series of high conservation value vine forest sites are currently being implemented in conjunction with landholders and industry, and Landcare, conservation and community groups.

Because of the success of the 1996 project, the Queensland Department of Environment (QDoE) initiated a partnership arrangement with WWF to initiate threatened plant and ecosystem recovery for the new QDoE Threatened Species and Ecosystems Unit. Under this 1997 project Queensland's first major endangered ecosystem recovery plan, the South-east Queensland Rainforest Recovery Project, has been successfully initiated. The partnership that has been developed between WWF and QDoE is a key factor in the success of the project. WWF thanks the Department for its excellent ongoing

support and cooperation.

The 1998 Rainforest Recovery Conference  
During 1998, rainforest recovery will be initiated for further subregions within the bioregion, using the Ipswich Rainforest Recovery Project as a model.

Information sharing and education on best-practice rainforest conservation will be necessary for the success of the project. A major conference in mid-1998 will bring together everyone involved in rainforest conservation throughout the region. Expressions of interest for paper presentations are welcome now.

**Contact:** Bruce Boyes,  
**Phone** (07) 3222 2529;  
**Fax** (07) 3227 6386;  
**Email:** Bruce.Boyes@env.qld.gov.au

A bi-monthly newsletter, South-east Queensland Rainforest Recovery News, is widely circulated. Contact as above to be placed on the mailing list.

#### References:

- Male, B. Recovery of Australian threatened species - a national perspective. In Back from the Brink: Refining the Threatened Species Recovery Process. (1996) Surrey Beatty and Sons, Pty. Ltd. in association with Australian Nature Conservation Agency, ACT.
- Papps, D. Commonwealth and State Government frameworks for recovery planning for threatened species and communities. In Back from the Brink: Refining the Threatened Species Recovery Process. (1996) Surrey Beatty and Sons, Pty. Ltd. in association with Australian Nature Conservation Agency, ACT.

**Source:** *Danthonia*, Newsletter of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation (Vol. 6, No. 3, Dec. 1997), jointly published by the network and the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Contact: GPO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601, Phone (02) 6250 9509, Fax (02) 6250 9599, Email: [anpc@anbg.gov.au](mailto:anpc@anbg.gov.au), Website: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/anpc>

*Austromyrtus gonoclada*, with a ROTAP conservation status of 2E, grows in the area described and is the subject of a Recovery Plan. Drawing by Terri Woollcott.

# Caretaking *Caladenia concolor*

By Paul Scannell, Albury Botanic Gardens, Co-ordinator, NSW South West Slopes Regional Group

A local enthusiast and his partner, involved in monitoring populations of rare orchid species in NSW and Victoria, were strolling through the Nail Can Hill area and came across what they knew to be a single plant of *Caladenia concolor*, the endangered Crimson Spider Orchid. [ROTAP code 3VCI. Ed.] This prompted them to seek help in securing the area, as it had been subject to many years of abuse and neglect. Coming across a member of the ANPC at the Albury Botanic Gardens who could assist them, they set about making inquiries with the appropriate authorities as to how they could protect what they knew to be one the most diverse areas of flora and fauna in the South West Slopes.

Contacts were established with the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC), the ANPC and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The Administrator of Crown Lands, Wagga DLWC, was called in to inspect the site and confirm that it could be protected for the short term by locking it up. A strategy of involving local landowners, Council By-laws Officers, Rural Fire Brigades, police and enthusiasts in along term approach was adopted to ensure all players were involved in any decision making. Hopefully, a long term positive outcome of in situ conservation could be achieved.

With over 35 orchid species, the 160 hectares also contains 80-90 old regrowth woodlands, large areas of prolific understorey cover and a great array of fauna. Barking Owls, Turquoise Parrots, wombats, kangaroos, bats and a vast array of insects and reptiles all add to the conservation value of the area.

## Issues

Many problems were identified, discussed and addressed with the appropriate authorities and suitable short term measures were instigated.

### 1. Vehicle Access

Many vehicles were not using the trails and many new tracks were developing, including one less than a metre away from the single plant of *Caladenia concolor*. Gates were locked and Crown lands signage, provided by DLWC, was erected. Fences were temporarily repaired and local landowners were asked to report to the Botanic Gardens or the police any vehicles with trailers, trail bikes and four wheel drives entering the area. After several rammings and incidents with boltcutters, case hardened chains and padlocks have been successful in reducing the impact of unauthorised vehicles. The police have been fantastic in patrolling the area and several times have been seen chatting with drivers and trail bike riders who have been attempting entry.

*Caladenia concolor*, drawn by David Jones and taken from his book, *Native Orchids of Australia* (1988. Reed Books Pty. Ltd. French's Forest, NSW 2086

### 2. Clearing of rubbish

There is a long history of rubbish dumping in the area: garden refuse, builders' rubbish, concrete and car bodies. Albury City Council cleaned up all the areas required.

### 3. Firewood collection and rock removal

There was an urgent problem with vehicles continuously loading wood and rocks from the site. Once the landowners, bushwalkers and regular users were given contact numbers for the police and the Albury City Council's By-laws Officer, these incidents were almost eliminated.

### 4. Noxious weeds and rabbits

The Albury City Council's Noxious Weeds Officer was notified of the location of blackberry and St. John's Wort populations and these have been put on the record for regular attention. The Rural Lands Protection Board was contacted about the rabbit populations. These have been recorded and the Calicivirus has been introduced.

### 5. High fire risk area with surrounding homes

The two Rural Fire Brigades were asked for the best options in the area and were issued with keys to the gates prior to the area being locked up. The options of trialling mosaic burn-offs, controlled grazing and having the high voltage transmission line easement as a fire-

break were looked at, resulting in a strategy using all three in a long term approach.

## 6. Fencing the firebreak

The Greening Australia Fencing Initiative was open and we decided to put in a submission to fence off the transmission line easement and to control graze in order to slow down invasive weeds and create a firebreak that would reduce the need for extra activity in the woodlands. After a successful submission, we set about the task of organising volunteers to erect the fence. Within the easement, there was a high quality vegetation area that also needed isolating when the cattle were introduced.

The Albury City Council Landcare Program funded the balance of the cost of the fence and volunteers put in three weeks of hard yakka to build the fence and install gates with the fire brigade involvement in the location. It was decided to trial control grazing with low stock numbers for a maximum of three times a year, outside native plant seed set times, to control the fuel load.

## Outcomes

After almost two years of community based in situ conservation activities, the area has shown signs of rapid recovery in the worst areas. Erosion prone areas have begun to revegetate.

The single plant of *Caladenia concolor* has flowered for the third year in a row and two new plants have been located. Two new leaves are awaiting flowering for verification. This is excellent result considering the limited resources for studying the area.

Turquoise Parrots have been using the nesting site that was located, but unfortunately no eggs were laid this year. DLWC have been using the area for staff training in local flora and fauna and at present there is a Charles Sturt University project studying the bat populations in the woodlands.

A pedestrian stile is being installed over the fence. Signage to explain the project is being discussed, but similar signs have been heavily vandalised throughout the area. So if anybody knows of a bulletproof, four wheel drive proof and texta proof sign producer, please let us know.

Source: Danthonia, Newsletter of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation (Vol. 6, No. 3, Dec. 1997).

# Hindmarsh - City Link

## Help Replant a Corridor Between the Big and Little Deserts in Northwest Victoria

### 14th-16th August 1998

The Mayor of Hindmarsh Shire Council is inviting people to help with the Hindmarsh - City Link Project. The project involves the restoration through the regional Landcare network, of a major grid of wildlife corridors, some 2000 kilometres in length, on road reserves and farmland between the Little Desert and the Big Desert. A project truly of National Significance.

The keystone of this concept of restoring vegetation links is careful planning, employing maps of the original ecosystems produced by botanist Rob Scalzo, and the use of indigenous species and local seed sources, to be re-established by planting and direct seeding. They will also re-establish rare and endangered species.

They are holding a community planting weekend at Nhill from Friday 14th - Sunday 16th August for Melbourne volunteers, and they look forward to meeting many of you and showing how the farming community is making vision reality. People are warmly invited to take part in this work and to exchange experiences and ideas with your country cousins. A stimulating, sociable and physical weekend is promised.

Metropolitan planters can travel to Nhill by bus and camp and be fed and entertained at one of the excellent local reserves. Get your hands dirty while doing something very positive for the regional landscape, Landcare and indigenous flora and fauna.

If you are interested in going please reply to Mayor Daryl Argall ASAP.

Please send your name, the amount of people that will come with you, your address and your phone/fax number/s to:

Hindmarsh Shire Council  
P. O. Box 250 or 92 Nelson St.  
Nhill, VIC 3418  
Ph. (03) 5391 1811  
Fax (03) 5391 1376  
Email: info@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au

# Coming Events:

## Conferences/Workshops/Talks

Wednesday. On the third Wednesday of every month Greenlink Oakleigh hold meetings at varying venues. For more information contact Doug Evans on 9556 4433.

April 23, Thursday. Knox City Council and Knox Environment Society have extended an invitation to attend a talk by **Dr David Beardsall on "Indigenous Revegetation"**. Dr Beardsall is the Industry Manager, Ornamentals at the Institute for Horticultural Development and 1994 Royal Society of Victoria Research Medal winner for his work in reproductive biology of Australian plants. For attendance RSVP to Glenda Signorini on 9298 8103.

April 25-26, Saturday-Sunday. **The annual Greenlink Oakleigh trek to Baringhup** is on. Come and learn about the many pursuits of one of the worlds most environmentally active families. If you plan to make the trek or you need more information call Roy or Caroline on 0417 348 389.

May 1, Friday. **VAEE/VOEA Professional Development Day. Healesville Sanctuary.** Workshops and demonstrations that will help Primary and Secondary teachers feel more confident of their knowledge when taking students on field trips .Cost: \$80 members VAEE/VOEA, \$100 non members. For more information phone: (03) 9428 9812.

May 1st-3rd, Friday - Sunday. "*Global Biodiversity Forum.*" Bratislava, Slovakia. For more information contact Caroline Martinet, IUCN, The World Conservation Union, 28 Rue Mauverney, CH-1196 Gland Switzerland. Phone: +41 22 999 0001; Fax: +41 22 999 0025. Email: ccm@hq.iucn.org

May, 4th - 15th. "*Fourth conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity*". Bratislava, Slovakia. For more information contact CBD Secretariat, World Trade Centre, 393 St. Jacques Street, Suite 300, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2Y 1N9. Ph: +1 514 288 2220; Fax: +1 514 288 6588; Email: biodiv@mtl.net

May 3, Sunday. **Public Rights and Remedies & Environmental Law in Victoria.** As part of the Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series a lecture followed by discussions of local issues will take place at the Currawong Bush Park Conference Room (Melway 34 H7) from between 12 noon and 4.00pm. Cost is \$20. Tea and coffee supplied. For further information contact Donna Stoddart, City of Manningham or Flora Anderson on 9722 1776.

May 7, Thursday. **Greening Australia Victoria Training Session: Developing your propagation skills.** Develop skills in plant propagation and look at more advanced skills including: applying a range of seed treatments, design a plant production program for revegetation, apply propagation techniques for aquatics, ferns and orchids. Contact Training Coordinator at GAV on (03) 9457 3024 to register.

May 7, Thursday. **Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series.** This month's seminar will be **Gerry Marantelli on Frogs**, 7.30pm, at the Warrandyte Community Centre (Melway 23 F11). Entry is free and supper provided. For more information contact Mike Coupar on 9903 9567.

May 11, Monday. **Sea Horses and Sea Dragons of Australian Waters.** Kevin Purcell, member of Aquanats and volunteer at the Marine Discovery Centre, Queenscliff will speak on this topic at the Field Naturalist's Hall at 1 Gardenia St., Blackburn. Contact Michael Lyons for more info on (03) 9822 8007.

May 21, Thursday. **Managing Disturbance**, presented by Dr. Colin Hocking at VUT campus in St. Albans. This workshop will use practical on-site examples to examine some of the processes that underlie disturbance and how these understandings can be incorporated into management strategies. Part of the 1998 Environmental Industry Training Program developed and coordinated by Greening Australia VIC in conjunction with Burnley, Victoria University of Technology and Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee. Contact Mary Trigger at GAV on (03) 9457 3024 or fax (03) 9457 3687.

May 23, Saturday. **Greening Australia Victoria Training Session: Assessing and monitoring the return of fauna through revegetation.** Come develop skills in monitoring and assessing a revegetation site through the use of fauna and other indicators. Contact Training Coordinator at GAV on (03) 9457 3024 to register.

May 25, Saturday. **Greening Australia Victoria Bus Tour: Indigenous community nurseries - a growing idea.** Come visit community nurseries where participants will be able to discuss issues affecting their establishment and management. Contact Training Coordinator at GAV on (03) 9457 3024 to register.

June 14, Sunday, 10am to 4pm in Maryborough area. **Box-Ironbark Appreciation**, presented by Creswick Landcare Centre and Trust for Nature. Visit the most threatened forest type in Victoria. Dr. Barry Trill, Conservation Manager, Trust for Nature and Ron Hatley, Lecturer, Melbourne University School of Forestry, Creswick will conduct this interactive workshop including flora and fauna identification, habitat protection and land rehabilitation. Cost \$20/\$10 concession. Contact the Centre on (03) 5345 2200 to register.

October 18-23 1998. "**18th International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration World Congress and Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation National Conference.**" Includes workshops, technical tours, paper presentations, national and international speakers. Theme: Changing societies- the Challenge for Parks and Recreation. Melbourne Convention Centre, Melbourne, Victoria. For further information Ph: +61 (0)3 9819 3700. Fax: +61 (0)3 9819 5978.

## Fieldtrips and Excursions

April 23-24, Thursday - Friday. "**Forest Matters: A Rumble in the Jungle**", NRE. This is a Field based conference being held at the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre. Participants will learn about many aspects of the forest: plants, animals, management, uses, values and specific ecosystems. This is run by the Forests Education Project. Cost: \$155. For more information contact Jan Cramp on (03) 9637 8413.

May 3, Sunday. "**Koori Heritage Tour**", 9.30am - 3.30pm.. Meet at the Creswick Landcare Centre. Cost: \$20, \$10 concession. For more information phone the Centre on: (03) 5345 2200.

April 30, Thursday. As part of **Friends of Warrandyte State Park Program there will be a visit to the Candlebark Nursery in Crocydon** giving a great chance to have a

guided tour around this excellent indigenous nursery. Meet at Candlebark nursery, Village School, 9 - 13 Holloway Rd, Croydon Nth at 10.00am (Melways 37 B6). For information contact Jan Tindale on (03) 9844 3719.

May 7, Thursday. After morning nursery work Friends of Warrandyte State Park continue their excursion program with an **afternoon at Wittons Reserve**, situated between Yarra Brae and Mount Lofty and owned by Manningham Council. Look over work already carried out and come on a gully walk with a surprising variety of ferns. Meet at the depot (Melways 23 K8-D10) or at Wittons Reserve, Reserve Rd. at 1.30pm (Melways 24 K6). For information contact Jan Tindale on (03) 9844 3719.

May, Saturday 16. **Victorian National Parks Association will be taking an excursion to the Nagambie and Goulburn Weirs**. Travel will be via coach from Batman Av. Cost is \$20. Enquiries to Nancye Blades on (03) 596 2189 or Murry Bird on (03) 9803 9158.

May 16-17, Saturday - Sunday. Fauna Survey Group of the Field Naturalists Club will conduct a Fauna Survey at Rushworth, with particular emphasis on looking for Brush-tailed Phascogales. Contact Stuart Dashper on (03) 9819 2539 for more info...

## Restoration Activities.

Sunday. **Every Sunday Greenlink Oakleigh holds working bees between 11.00am and 2.00pm at the nursery.**

Also, Louise Dorr will be at the nursery Thursday mornings between 9.00am and 12.00 noon. The Nursery is located at the Southern end of the South Oakleigh Secondary College, Bakers Rd. Contact Secretary Doug Evans on 9556 4433.

April 26, Sunday. **Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers Project. Melton South.** Volunteers are needed to assist with the removal of a variety of environmental weeds found on the **Eynesbury** property south of Melton. Contact the Office on (03) 9686 5554 at 534 City Rd, South Melbourne.

May 2-3, Saturday - Sunday. **A.T.C.V. Project. Yarra Ranges.** The project will involve revegetation works at Dom Dom Saddle on top of the Black Spur. Note that the project will also involve tent camping. For details contact the Office on (03) 9686 5554 or come in and see us at 534 City Rd, South Melbourne.

May 2, Saturday. **The Friends of Koolunga Reserve, Knox** will be having one of their Saturday working bees. For more information on the task contact Gordon Carter on (03) 762 2117

May 4-8, Monday - Friday. **A.T.C.V. Coast Care Remote Location Project. Wye River Endangered Species.** This project will involve revegetation, jute matting and spreading of mulch on the Great Ocean Rd, Wye River area. Contact the Office on (03) 9686 5554 at 534 City Rd, South Melbourne

May 9, Saturday 9:30 am. **FO Kinglake NP Project Day:** Trackwork/Weeding Charmers Ridge Track. Meet at Jehosaphat Gully Carpark. Contact Roger Cook (03) 5786 5543.

May, Sunday 10, 9:30am. **FO Sherbrooke Forest Mapping Survey.** Meet at the corner of Dandenong Tourist Road and Sherbrooke Rd. (Melways 75 K10) Bring compass, pencil and clipboard. Contact Vivien Freshwater for more info on (03) 9754 3093.

May 10, Sunday. **A.T.C.V. Project. Yellingbo.** Project will involve assisting the Friends of the *Helmeted Honeyeater*. Activities will involve a variety of works aimed at protecting and restoring the habitat of this endangered bird. For details contact the Office on (03) 9686 5554 or come in and see us at 534 City Rd, South Melbourne.

May 13, Wednesday, 9:30 am. **FO Sherbrooke Forest Project Morning.** Welch Plateau No. 2 and Welch Track site. Meet at Nation Rd. entrance (Melways 75 K10). Removing ground ivy, pulling cestrum seedlings and digging large cestrum plants (bring mattocks). Contact Vivien Freshwater on (03) 9754 3093 for more info.

May 16, Saturday, 9:30 am. **FO Werribee Gorge and Long Forest Mallee Project Day.** Meet at the bottom picnic ground (entry from Pentlands Rd. via Western Freeway). The first tree planting for the year. Contact Janet Laversha (03) 5367 4229.

May 24, Sunday. **A.T.C.V. Project. Kinglake National Park. A one day project involving the realignment of the Wombelano Track.** The site is only a 15 minute walk from the Wombelano Falls and it can be quite chilly, so rug up! Contact the Office on (03) 9686 5554 at 534 City Rd, South Melbourne.

For Parks Victoria Activities contact the Hotline on 13 1963

For those interested in a range of volunteer activities run by Birds Australia please contact (03) 9882 2622

A large range of activities such as bushwalks and "Friends" activities are published by the Victorian National Parks Association in their newsletter. Contact VNPA on (03) 9650 8296.

Visitors/participants are welcome to all events listed in Indigenotes.

Thank you to all the people who contact us regarding on-coming events their groups are organising. If you wish to have your events covered, or you can see corrections that need attention, please contact Lincoln Kern at IFFA's mailing address.

## Fifth International Botanic Gardens Conservation Congress

**Kirstenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa  
14-18 September 1998**

**Plants, People and Planet Earth - the role of botanic gardens in sustainable living**

Hosts for this congress are the National Botanical Institute of South Africa, with sessions at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. It will include keynote papers and broadbased integrative sessions mixed with more focussed sessions. Themes will include: building the botanic gardens conservation network, challenges posed by the Convention on Biological Diversity, science and botanic gardens and environmental education. Workshops will include topics such as practical horticulture, fundraising, conservation genetics, role of herbaria, reintroduction, genebanks and database management. Tours to the local national parks and urban areas are also included.

Contact: National Botanical Institute, Private Bag X7, Claremont 7735, Cape Town, South Africa. Ph. +2721-762 1166; Fax +2721-761 4687

Email: bgci98@nbict.nbi.ac.za.









# Gardens: Going Native

## [in Great Britain]

**By Ursula Buchan**

Like most other people, I marched in London on March 1 to lend my support to field sports. Why? Because they play an important role in the conservation and well-being of wildlife and the countryside (not to mention country people). I could do no less, since gardening, likewise has played its part.

The steep decline in numbers of many birds, small mammals, amphibians, butterflies, moths and insects (reported in scientific papers but reinforced by the evidence of our own eyes) fills us all with real dismay. In the case of most birds, butterflies and insects this is directly related to the scarcity of the wild flora which sustains them; and many have specific tastes. (The brimstone butterfly, for example, lays its eggs only on buckthorn, *Rhamnus catharticus*, a shrub of hedgerow, fen and woodland.)

So I consider myself fortunate that, with no wages to pay nor markets to satisfy, I have nothing to lose by providing shelter, safe breeding sites, and suitable food plants for wildlife in my garden, and everything to gain in enriching experience, not to mention a delicious smugness. As if that were not enough, I can do it without compromising unduly the conventional notion of what an attractive garden should be.

In fact, anyone can, without giving up their attachment to exotic plants. Those with large gardens should be able to find space for a large patch of nettles where red admirals can breed, long grass for insects and small mammals, a spot of poor soil for wildflowers, a pond, a mixed hedge of native species and even perhaps a few deciduous trees (a mature oak supports 240 species). Even in a tiny garden, something may be achieved by growing single, rather than double, nectar-rich flowers, planting wildflowers and a berrying shrub, and allowing cultivated plants (and wild ones in selected places) to set seed. And, unlike field sports, all this can be purchased in towns and cities, too.

The premise that native plants are the key to attracting and keeping a diverse fauna informs the work of a recently formed conservation charity called Flora-for-Fauna. Based at the Linnaean Society in Burlington House, Piccadilly, it aims to encourage people to grow a range of locally indigenous plants, which are part of the complex web of dependency, connecting insects, butterflies and moths, small mammals and birds.

Flora-for-Fauna is the brainchild of Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, an Australian writer, long settled in Britain, whom I first met when she was putting together an innovative show-garden of Australian plants at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1994.

(Her name is a legacy from a past marriage to Scotland's premier duke.) She is smart in every sense, combining energy and brains with a glamour which is far from commonplace in the botanical world. These virtues have earned her some influential friends: among them John Simmons, past curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Professor John Parker, director of Cambridge Botanic Gardens; and Miriam Rothschild, who has pioneered the creation of wildflower 'meadows', in gardens, on road verges and in parkland, using home-grown seed.

Jill Hamilton has succeeded in persuading a number of businesses (Rio-Tinto, Kleinwort Benson, Osborne and Little, Royal Mail) to part with money. There are several educational projects presently under way, including research in Cambridge on nectar plants, but the one which has attracted most attention is the Postcode Plants Database (whose website may be found at <http://fff.nhm.ac.uk/fff/>); it was ingeniously, and labouriously, assembled from local flora and fauna distribution maps, with funding by Royal Mail. Anyone on-line may tap in their postcode and a list of the local wildflowers, butterflies and birds will appear on the screen. I was suitably humbled by the number of excellent garden plants which I don't grow.

One virtue of cultivating locally indigenous plants, according to Flora-for-Fauna, is that they have evolved to take advantage of regional soils and climate, so they should require little maintenance. But then neither does buddleia, a Chinese plant much loved by butterflies. However, as Jill Hamilton points out, buddleia, though important for its nectar, is not a food plant for caterpillars. Moreover, she is not only suggesting we grow just native plants, only that they should form an important element, perhaps a third, of all the plants in every garden.

Perhaps to counter the charge that wildflower gardens can be scruffy, a 'formal garden' is planned for Chelsea Flower Show this year. Its centrepiece is an elegant 24-foot-high, octagonal, three-tiered tower, made mostly of wooden trellis, with special niches for bats and different birds. 'The Birds' Buffet' tower will be surrounded by indigenous plants and hedging, and a pond. It has been created by the ultra-fashionable garden designer, George Carter, and will be sponsored by Christie's. Going native looks like being the smart thing to do this year.

Source: *The Spectator* 21 March 1998

## Books:

### ***Conservation Biology for the Coming Decade (2nd ed.)***

(1997) By P. L. Fiedler and Kareiva Va Depa. Chapman and Hall. A text for conservation biology courses. Part IV contains information on integrated plant conservation from Australia. Hardback \$82 and softback \$61.50. Order through D.A. Information Services P/L, 648 Whitehorse Rd., Mitchum VIC 3132, Ph. (03) 9210 7788, Fax (03) 9210 7788, Email: [service@dadirect.com.au](mailto:service@dadirect.com.au) Home Page: <http://www.dadirect.com.au>

### ***Willows Along Victorian Waterways - Towards a Willow Management Strategy***

By Ladson, A., Gerrish, G., Carr, G. and Thexton, E. (1997) Dept. of Natural Resources and Environment, Melbourne

Willows have the potential to spread rapidly along Victorian Waterways and are already affecting most streams. There are suitable alternatives to willows for erosion control. Willows can be managed but guidelines should be followed to limit detrimental effects.

The report covers the influence of willows on streams and landscape values; *Salix* taxa, biology and ecology; future willow management; alternatives to willows; willow invasion case studies; references; identification information; biocontrol agents; contacts in willow management and research; guides to planting indigenous vegetation along Victoria's rivers, etc.

Copies are available from Carol Roberts, Ph. (03) 9412 4083, Fax (03) 9412 4049  
Source: Under Control, No. 5 March 1998

### ***Recent Incursions of Weeds to Australia 1971-1995***

Convened by R. H. Groves, Appendix by J. R. Hosking (ISBN 0-9587010-2-4)

*Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management Systems, Technical Series No. 3 (1997), 68 pages.*

This report looks at the more recent plants introduced to Australia that have become invasive. It assigns dates to weed incursions and naturalisations wherever known and includes a listing of the plants and details of the known introduction.

295 taxa were recorded as becoming naturalised in Australia over the last 25 years (between 1971-1995). The means of introduction of 20% of these taxa is unknown but the majority have been introduced deliberately, mostly for horticultural use. 65% were introduced for ornamental purposes, 7% for agriculture, 2% as

contaminants and 6% in other ways. The rate of naturalisation has increased for the period 1981-1995.

Most of these new weeds remain only locally distributed. The direct costs of the incursions are known only in very few instances and the environmental costs are unknown and little studied.

This is a very interesting read and provides details on numerous plants with potential to expand their distribution.

Available from Sharon Corey, CRC for Weed Management Systems, CSIRO Entomology, Canberra, PH. (02) 6246 4001 or email: [sharon.corey@ento.csiro.au](mailto:sharon.corey@ento.csiro.au)  
Source: Under Control, No. 5 March 1998

### ***Crop Weeds and More Crop Weeds***

The popular *Crop Weeds* by J. L. Wilding, A. G. Barnett and R. L. Amor, published originally in 1986 is back in print after a long absence. And to extend its range a companion volume, *More Crop Weeds* by Michael Moerkerk and Allan Barnett, has also been published.

Weed identification has never been easy, and identification of weeds at the seedling stage is even more difficult. These two books address this problem and together cover over 200 plants that can be weeds in crops [and elsewhere] in temperate Australia. Each weed is briefly described and colour photos illustrate key ID features including seedling stage, the mature form of the plant and the flowers. Excellent line drawings compliment the photos. Seeds are also illustrated with photos and actual size drawings. Keys to the identification of these plants have been upgraded and expanded in *More Crop Weeds*, and include species illustrated in *Crop Weeds*.

#### *Crop Weeds*

154 pages, section sewn, soft cover, over 340 colour photos, 100 b & w photos and numerous line drawings. \$65.00 plus \$10.00 postage in Australia. ISBN 0-9587439-1-6.

#### *More Crop Weeds*

124 pages, section sewn, soft cover, over 300 colour photos, 90 b & w photos and numerous line drawings. \$55.00 plus \$10.00 postage in Australia. ISBN 0-9587439-2-4.

Available from R. G. and F. J. Richardson, P. O. Box 42, Meredith, Victoria 3333, Ph./Fax 5386-1533  
Email: [robfiona@iaccess.com.au](mailto:robfiona@iaccess.com.au)

*Note: Postage free if both books purchased.*

Source: Weedscape, Newsletter of the Weed Science Society of Victoria, Inc. April 1998

WSSV HOME PAGE: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~weedsoc/>

## IFFA activities:

**IFFA (Vic) Meeting:  
No General Meeting in April  
We are still having trouble  
finalising a venue during  
the renovations of the  
Astronomers Residence.**

## **SPIFFA**

Public meetings are on the first Monday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Waterfall Gully Community Centre, corner of Bayview Rd. and Nixon St., Rosebud.  
Contact: Jon Greening (03) 5985 5561.

## **Regular Restoration Events**

You may notice we haven't produced this supplement this month.

We need more regular Friends events to include with the following information:

**Name of group**

**Day of the Month**

**Usual Place of activity or Reserve**

**Contact Name and Number**

Thanks, Lincoln Kern

## **Membership**

IFFA membership costs  
\$40 for non-profit organizations,  
\$50 for corporations,  
\$25 for individuals and families,  
or \$20 concession.

**Membership includes  
11 issues of Indigenotes per year.**

*Members should check the mailing label to ascertain the status of their membership. If people require and invoice, please send a purchase order and we will oblige accordingly.*

*Otherwise we do not issue reminders to members.*

*Cheques can be remitted to the Membership Secretary's P.O. Box as listed. A receipt will be attached to the front page of the following issue.*

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Coming Events:

Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editor — the deadline for the next issue is April 12th. Contributions can be typed or hand written but computer disk copies on PC-compatible format is preferred.

*The views expressed in Indigenotes are not necessarily those of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.*