

## INDIGENOTES

ISSUE NUMBER 12, APRIL 1988.

### **April Meeting**

Tuesday April 26th at 8 p.m. at the Environment Centre, first floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets). To get in, press the doorbell on the right hand side of the door. Don't forget to bring something for show and tell.

### **May Meeting**

Tuesday May 31st, at 8 p.m. at the Environment Centre.

### **Articles**

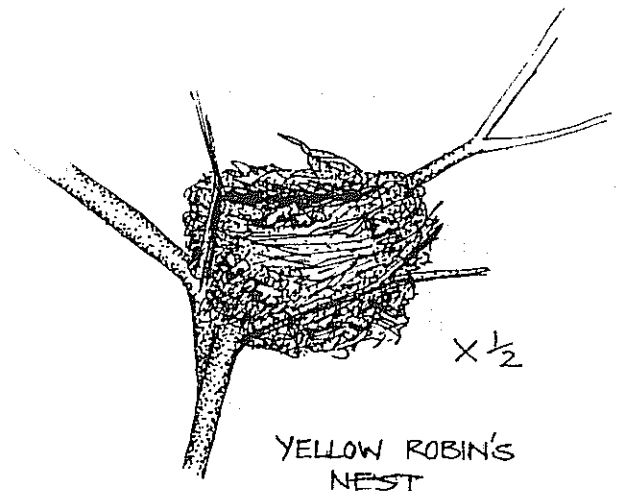
Contributions to Indigenotes are most welcome. Send them to the newsletter coordinator, Tony Faithfull, 10 Alsace Street, Brunswick East 3057.

### **Memberships**

IFFA membership costs \$20 for families and groups, or \$10 for individuals. Memberships should be sent to the Treasurer, Dale Tonkinson, C/o Botany Department, La Trobe University, Bundoora 3083.

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# Greens Bush

The difficulty in understanding Green's Bush (the issue) is now almost as legendary as the place itself. Mention it to a fellow naturalist and you can get the whole gambit of reactions from being shunned to amazement. The last IFFA newsletter contained a not-so-accurate summary of what I said. It's not hard to do. Just changing the sense of what was said threatened accuracy. The solution, like any complicated ecological problem, is one step at a time. First step. What is meant when it is said that Conservation, Forests and Lands bought the wrong land?

When land is to be purchased for additions to national parks there is usually only one parameter, availability.

In the case of Green's Bush CF&L have only ever sought a *partial aquisition*. Then we have a matter of choice.

The first areas of "Greens Bush" were bought in the early 70's. A remaining 1100 acres remained to be bought.

After protracted negotiations enough money was raised to buy half at the then negotiated price (however large!).

The aim of this partial aquisition should be to:

- (a) protect existing catchments represented within the park
- (b) Purchase the most biologically unique and diverse areas
- (c) Purchase lower valued areas to get more bush for the dollar
- (d) Secure and connect the disparate areas of park as far as possible,
- (e) Ensure that the final boundaries are manageable,
- (f) Make sure the area chosen best meets the

needs of the State Conservation Strategy,  
(g) Ensure that the area **not** to be bought is protected as far as possible, and that the area most threatened by proposed development is aquired.

The most important area of the property was the headwaters of Lightwood and Drum Drum Allac Creek.

This area has been subdivided, and given only limited protection (i.e. none from drainage). It should have been bought because:

- (a) It forms the upper catchment of Lightwood and Drum Drum Allac Creeks,
- (b) It is the most biologically diverse area of land for sale,
- (c) It being a wetland is least suitable for subdivision and therefore should be the cheapest land,
- (d) Its aquisition would leave any development out of the catchment of the most pristine area of Lightwood Creek,
- (e) The boundaries would be far easier managed,
- (f) Being a wetland it is supposedly protected by state conservation strategies and flora and fauna guarantees, Wetland Policy, and a bilateral treaty between Australia and Japan - in this case on Japanese Snipe, and
- (g) The area remaining in park contains substantial areas of steep country that even hostile owners have not ben able to clear. This area is perfectly suited to protection by environmental living zone covenants.

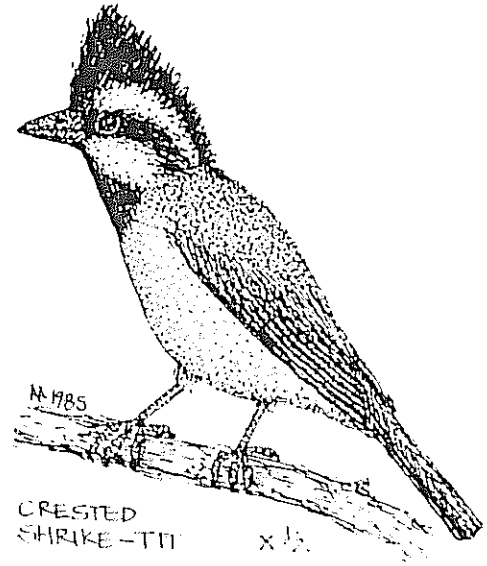
CF&L bought the wrong land.

If you have any doubt, do what any responsible biologist does - look for yourself. Contact T. Bradley (059) 896249 - he can provide accomadation and act as a guide.

CF&L must buy the wetland - but if they don't it is absolutely essential that a complete fauna and flora survey be done so we know what we are losing.

Your support could be the difference between this land becoming park or not.

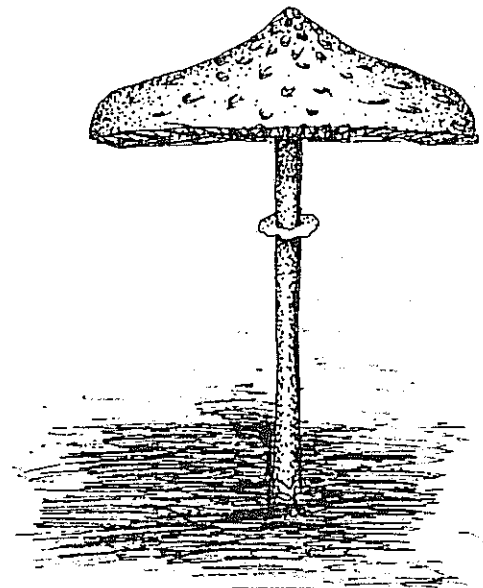
- Bob Macdonald.



## A retraction and apology

A note appearing in the last edition of Indigenotes (issue 11 page 3) reported the acquisition of part of the Green's Bush Property (on the Mornington Peninsula) by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. The note was intended to report the views of Bob Macdonald as expressed at the IFFA meeting, it misquoted him however, and for this I apologise. The views (mis)reported in the note do not represent the views of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association. We apologise for any inconvenience this misreporting may have caused. A letter has been sent to the Minister for the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands explaining this error.

- Tony Faithfull, Editor.



*Lepiota gracilentata*

# Coming Events

## Eucalypts (Saturday 23rd April)

FNCV Botany Group excursion. Contact: Margaret Potter (03) 292779.

## Explore East Gippsland Tour (23rd April - 1st May)

East Gippsland Coalition guided discovery tour in Victoria's last wild forests. Cost \$650, which includes all transport, food, tent accommodation and guides. Contact: John Stone (03) 6544833.

## Arbour Day/Open Day at the Victorian Schools

Nursery (April 26th), 585 Waverley Road, Glen Waverley 3150. Contact (03) 235 3400.

## IFFA meeting (April 26th)

## Applied Ecology and Conservation Seminar Series (Wednesday April 27th 7-10 pm)

"Fauna and habitat management" by Richard Loyn, Zoologist, Arthur Rylah Institute, and "Fire and vegetation management 1" by Andrew McMahon, Consultant Botanist, Ecological Horticulture. Contact George Paras, Wildlife Reserves, La Trobe University, (03) 4792871

## Soil Salinity, Agricultural Development and Drought - Recent Evidence in Central Sudan (Friday April 29th, 2 pm)

Talk by Prof. Martin Williams (Monash University Geography Dept) at La Trobe University Agriculture Dept.

## Yarra Bend Park Festive Picnic Day (May 1st) 12 midday to 5 p.m. at the Corben oval in Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield (opposite Kane's Bridge)

This day has an environmental theme and aims to highlight the value of its landscape, recreation and conservation values and potential. Many local groups will be involved with plant displays and stalls, tree planting and nature walks. Contact Robynn Bennison, (03) 4193048

## Knox Regeneration Project (Sunday May 1st)

FNCV excursion led by Andrew Paget. Contact Miss Marie Allender (03) 5272749.

## Vegetation Surveys, Diet Analysis and Habitat Delimitation (Tuesday May 3rd)

FNCV Mammal Survey Group Meeting. Talk by David Cheal. 8 pm at the Astronomers Residence, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra. Contact Julian Grusovin (03) 211 4997.

## Applied Ecology and Conservation Seminar Series (Wednesday May 4th, 7-10 pm)

"Fire and vegetation management 2" by Andrew McMahon, and "Weeds, their ecology and management 1" by Geoff Carr, Consultant Botanist, Ecological Horticulture. Contact George Paras (03) 4792871.

## Pollen and People (Weds May 11th, noon)

Talk by Dr Sophie Ducker (University of Melbourne Botany Dept) at La Trobe University Botany Department.

## Applied Ecology and Conservation Seminar Series (Wednesday May 11th, 7-10 pm)

"Weeds, their Ecology and management 2" by Geoff Carr, and "Weeds - the Sherbrooke story" by Vivian Freshwater, Friends of Sherbrooke Forest. Contact George Paras (03) 4792871

## Fungi (Thursday 12th May, 8 pm)

FNCV Botany Group meeting. Talk by Tom May at the Astronomers Residence, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra. Contact Miss Margaret Potter (03)292779.

## ANZAAS Centenary Congress (May 16th - 20th).

Some interesting sessions are 'The educational role of botanic gardens', and 'Science, technology and wetland management in Australia'. Sydney University. Contact: Mr B. O'Rourke, Organizing Secretary, ANZAAS Centenary Congress, 118 Darlington Rd, University of Sydney, NSW 2006.

## Genetics Society of Australia Annual Conference (16th - 18th May)

La Trobe University. Some sessions of possible interest to genetically minded IFFA members. Contact Dale Tonkinson (03) 4792498 w, or Yvonne Fripp, La Trobe University Genetics Department. Pamphlets will be available at the next IFFA meeting.

## Applied Ecology and Conservation Seminar series (Wednesday May 18th 7-10 p.m.)

"Designing Revegetation Works" by Darcy Duggan, Environmental Planner, Yarra Bend Park Trust, and "Propagation and plant production" by Andrew Paget, Manager, Operation Revegetation Nursery. Contact George Paras (03) 47992871.

**Aquatic Toxicology in Australia - Australian Institute of Biology Inc Symposium (Sydney University, Thursday 19th May)**, Sessions include "The impact of mining on tropical freshwaters", "The impact of agriculture on inland temperate waters" and "The impact of urban development on coastal and estuarine waters". Convenor: Dr Frank Cattell (02) 8057993.

**Weeds on Public Land - An Action Plan for Today (May 19th and 20th)**, A symposium presented by the Weed Science Society of Victoria Inc. and the School of Environmental Science, Monash University. Contact: Madelon Lane C/o Keith Turnbull Research Institute, P.O. Box 48, Frankston 3199. Phone (03) 7850111. IFFA members who would like to attend should contact John Reid.

**Botanical History Symposium: The development of Systematic Botany in Australasia (May 25th to 27th)** Ormond College, Melbourne University. Organized by the Australian Systematic Botany Society. Contact Ms Buzz McCarthy, Bloomsbury Conference Services, (03) 4281983.

**Fungi Excursion (Saturday May 28th)** FNCV Botany Group excursion. Contact Miss Margaret Potter (03) 292779.

**Ecological Society of Australia Symposium: Australian Ecosystems: 200 Years of Utilization, Degradation and Reconstruction (28th August to 2nd September)** Geraldton Western Australia. Contact Dr R.A. How, Symposium Secretary, Ecological Society of Australia, Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth W.A. 6000.

**Ecology and Management of Asian-Australian Savannas (October 10th to 14th) Darwin.** An international workshop of the Response of Savanna To Stress and Disturbance Programme, sponsored by Unesco Man and the Biosphere and the International Union of Biological Sciences. Includes October 10th -11th: Workshop in Darwin focussing on Asian-Australian savannas, emphasising intra-regional and inter-regional comparisons of functions and dynamics, October 12th: Field Day at Kakadu National Park, October 13th: Technical workshops.

*It is planned to organize two workshop/seminars in conjunction with the Marine Sciences Centre, Queenscliff and the Victorian Wader Study Group. The topics are to be Coastal Vegetation (with an emphasis on mangrove and saltbush communities) and Zoobenthic Fauna of Temperate Mudflats. It is intended that these occur in the latter half of 1988. Any expressions of interest (to Dale Tonkinson) would assist in the planning at this stage.*

*Dale Tonkinson is the coordinator for articles concerning any forthcoming events - please send any notices of events to: Dale Tonkinson, C/o Botany Department, La Trobe University, Bundoora 3083.*

**Propagation Query:**

Spyridium parvifolium: stores seed in soil en mass and after fire there is mass germination. Thus for propagation try fire or hot water soaking.

**I.F.F.A. GENERAL MEETING :**

23/2/88

Apologies: Reg Letcher,  
Adam Muir

Acceptance of previous meetings  
minutes: Tym Barlow , Peter  
Tucker.

Welcome to new members and  
visiting guests.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

IFFA Newsletter leaflets are  
available from Dale or Geoff  
upon request.

INDIGENOTES: back copies are  
available from Dale.

IFFA now has Postal Registration  
at Clifton Hill Post Office at a  
cost of \$40.00 and Dale has  
taken over posting.

IFFA Booklet: Tym and George  
reported that all is going well  
and that they are applying to  
C.F. & L. for funding however  
alternative funding ideas should  
be considered.

IFFA Incorporated: Tym Barlow  
reported that is now legally  
incorporated for a cost of  
\$72.00 and that the IFFA  
Constitution is currently being  
worked on.

IFFA Registration of a business  
name is in the processes.

IFFA finance is now banking  
through a new account via Dale.

**C.F. & L. Flora Survey Group Data  
Base:**

Rob Scott reported that the  
National Trust will be assisting  
the Flora Survey Group in  
documenting local vegetation.  
There is a possibility of a  
statewide project, however final  
selection of sites for a test  
trial have not yet been decided  
upon.

The F.S.G. is hoping to register  
vegetation using proforma into  
lists of species for a given  
site or quadrat and incorporate  
all available information on  
remnant vegetation into a single  
document.

**Report from the Conservation  
Council of Victoria:**

Tym Barlow, as the IFFA delegate  
to C.C.V., reported on: the  
Endangered Species Program; on  
the statement prepared by C.C.V.  
regarding the Greens Bush  
subdivision (which suggested  
that the situation should be  
reconsidered awaiting a full  
Flora and Fauna Survey) and on  
C.C.V. involvement in issues :  
Fire Management Strategy.

**Hawthorn City Council and  
Indigenous Gardens**

-the Saga continues

A biologically significant small  
patch of kangaroo grass, planted  
out 3 years ago and looking good  
in Geoff's front garden, is  
under threat! Geoff continues  
his fight for it's survival.

**Green's Bush**

Geoff reported that Gary  
Backhouse from the Dandenong  
Region of C.F. & L. , a fish  
fauna expert , has recorded up  
to 12 species of native fish.  
This is a very significant  
number of native species for any  
area in Victoria, particularly  
in the absence of any introduced  
species :trout!!

Irrespective of the specific  
circumstances of Green's Bush it  
is obvious it is essential for  
full flora and fauna surveys  
prior to any land purchase by  
government bodies.

**Willesmere Hospital Complex:**

Darcy reported that the  
Willesmere complex on the  
eastern hill over Yarra Bend  
Park is currently accepting  
public submissions, as it is to  
go up for sale. The buildings  
are classified by the National  
Trust. Darcy commented on a  
discussion paper which suggests  
that the complex be converted to  
a Wildlife Survey and Study  
Centre appropriately located  
within Yarra Bend Park. It could  
be used as an information /  
database resource and living  
study area, servicing all of  
Melbourne.

### Willesmere Hospital Complex:

cont...

Suggestions include a study centre for Natural History displays with dominance by a Science Museum and Pharlap, an Education complex, wildlife sanctuary and indigenous nursery - a potentially integrated complex.

Any proposals must be self-viable and self-funding. Submissions and comment are invited.

A submission from IFFA is to be prepared by a sub-committee; Mark, Tony, Tym and Darcy.

### Basalt Plains Vegetation in Sunbury:

A significant site in the heart of Sunbury, supporting over 100 species of plants, previously owned by V-Line has been sold to the Shire of Bulla. It is understood that this site may be subject to further sale and development as a supermarket and car park.

Darcy is to prepare a statement on behalf of IFFA and requests any further available information to be provided.

### Railway Remnants:

Some remnant sites have been saved in Macleod thanks to local community involvement. However it is apparent that the guidelines on management regimes are not clear, particularly of undesignated sites, which are of importance to the Met and their customers. Geoff and Sarah to obtain more information prepare a letter on behalf of IFFA.

### Ironbarks at Aireys:

Mark has compiled a list of plant species including 8 orchids and 18 birds which have been found on the site. However with mounting public pressure within the community to utilise the land for an oval and the concern of residents of the fire risk, Mark and Trish are open to any offers of assistance in their bid to preserve this stand of Ironbark community which

### SHOW AND TELL:

John Reid is currently the nature writer for the Herald and a recent article featured the headlines "Weed Invasion"

Have you heard of U.F.F.A.?????

A book to watch out for: "Name That Flower - The Identification of Flowering Plants." by Ian Clarke and Helen Lee, published by Melbourne University Press. Watch for a review by John Reid in the next edition.

"Saving the Worlds Rainforests" Dale reported on a meeting held at the Y.M.C.A. on Wednesday with the aim of establishing a Rainforest action group in Melbourne.

Geoff provided some unique and interesting specimens of *Pterostylis revoluta* and *Pterostylis coccineae* which is easy to cultivate and a rare species from West of Hamilton, the family being widespread in northern Victoria.

Robyn provided a collection of invertebrate specimens from Green's Bush. And for all you insect lovers don't forget the Annual Entomological Conference in Brisbane in May.

Tell with George: The LaTrobe University Wildlife Reserve is currently re-introducing a native species of skipper and *Lomandra longifolia* as a food supply, back into the reserve.

John Reid reported on the Imperial Blue butterfly being attended to by ants on black wattle. The butterfly certainly has a preference for smaller plants up to 3m and the ants may be stimulating the glands of the caterpillar to secrete sugary substances. The White Jewel butterfly life cycle may also have some dependence on the older black wattles.

# *Danthonia carphoides* - Short Wallaby-grass

This small Wallaby-grass has significant potential as an indigenous lawn grass - a stumbling block in popularising an holistic approach to indigenous horticulture.

*Danthonia carphoides* is a very fine-leaved, small, compact grass forming a tussock of one to six centimetres height. Tussocks have been observed up to twenty centimetres in diameter. In flower, the relatively few scapes (compared with other *Danthonia* spp.) conform to the compact nature of the tussock, reaching a maximum of 25 cm, but often only 5 to 10 cm and almost horizontal. These features of size and compactness indicate horticultural potential.

The racemose inflorescence is small, comprising 5 - 12 spikelets containing one or two fertile florets each, such that a large tussock probably has a maximum seed production of 100 seeds per year - very low even for a perennial tussock. Individual florets are small (4-5 mm long) with very short awns and setae that only rarely exceed the glumes, thus not easily dislodging (e.g. into socks). This characteristic along with the very short scapes may be advantageous for lawn cultivation but less so for propagation as it is difficult and time consuming to collect and handle the few seeds produced.

In cultivation the plant has so far proved to be slow growing but hardy, reaching the 3-leaf stage in six months and first evidence of tussock formation in ten months from germination. Germination has been good (70 -80%) in two trials, seven and fifteen months after seed collection.

This species of *Danthonia* is relatively rare in the wild, at least in Victoria with only scattered records from Central and Western Victoria, the Northern Plains and one record from far East Gippsland.

In the Melbourne area it is known from only 9 records: 3 specimens in the National Herbarium, Melbourne viz **Toolern Vale** (1978), **Gisborne** (1933) and **Preston**(1921), and 6 recent records - **Royal Park** (N.H. Scarlett, pers. comm.), **Derrimut Grasslands** (I. Lunt 1987 pers. comm.), **Cooper Street, Epping** (D.G. Cameron - 1988, pers. comm.), **Laverton North Grassland Reserve** (J. Stuwe, unpub. list), **Williamstown Rifle Range** (G.W. Carr, ?1985) and a population in **Eltham** found by the author in 1986.

The Eltham population consisted of 24 tussocks along a foot track through a grassy understorey to a woodland of Box-Candlebark-Red Stringybark. The woodland occurs on a gentle slope of north-westerly aspect. *Danthonia carphoides* was associated with *D. racemosa*, *D. setacea*, *Vulpia* sp and *Cynosaurus echinatus*. The grassy understorey generally consisted of *Themeda triandra*, *Stipa ?rudis*, *Poa labillardieri*, *Agropyron scabrum*, *Microlaena stipoides* and *Glycine latrobeana*, the latter two also being potential lawn species. The average height combined with the density and litter of a woodland understorey not known to have been burnt in over 50 years (Montmorency Junior Field Naturalist Club, pers. comm.) are probably responsible for the restricted occurrence along a foot track. This restricted occurrence is apparently duplicated at Epping for similar reasons (D.G. Cameron, pers. comm.) and the population at Derrimut is restricted to a rabbit-maintained lawn (I. Lunt, pers. comm.). In such situations *D. carphoides* is tolerant of moderate wear from foot traffic and significant grazing pressure.

If the horticultural potential of this grass is to be realised it needs to be brought into cultivation quickly while a scattering of genetic sources exist in the Melbourne area. Many of the above mentioned sites are under threat of either wholesale destruction or changes in management that may not allow the specific habitat of *D. carphoides* to remain.

- Dale Tonkinson.