



INDIGENOTES

VOLUME 2 NO 11, NOVEMBER 1989.

November Meeting:

Tuesday 28 November. Anne McGregor on the Planning Act and the preservation of remnant vegetation. 8 p.m. on the third floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets). To get in, be on time, or yell loudly, as the doorbell doesn't ring on the 3rd floor.

December Committee Meeting:

Tuesday 12 December. 6.30 p.m.

December End of Year celebration:

Sunday 10 December 11 am at Buckley Falls. BYO food and drinks. Meet in the picnic area on Queens Park Road (Melways Map 227 ref A3). Guided walks. Contact Peter Tucker for more details (03) 2674173.

Articles: Contributions to Indigenotes should be sent to the editor, Tony Faithfull, 10 Alsace Street, Brunswick East, 3057 Tel (03) 3860264. The deadline for the January issue is Friday 5 January. There will be no December issue. See inside for instructions to authors.

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Weed of the month:

Spanish Heath, *Erica lusitanica*

By Darcy Duggan*

Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) is native to southern France, northern Spain and Portugal, and was originally introduced into Australia as an ornamental plant. It has escaped from cultivation and is now widespread along road and rail reserves throughout southern Victoria. It has readily invaded Heathland and Grassy Woodland communities and has demonstrated the capacity to displace a large number of native species, especially small herbaceous and ground cover plants.

Spanish Heath, as its common name suggests, is a member of the heath family (Ericaceae), which is closely allied to the Australian heath family (Epacridaceae) which includes species such as *Epacris impressa* - Common Heath. *Erica lusitanica* is a small to medium-sized shrub, much branched with stems erect or half spreading. Height can vary from 0.5m up to 3m under fertile, high rainfall conditions as in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria.

Leaves are fine, crowded and dark green in colour, and may be alternate or in pseudo-whorls of 3 to 4 leaves.

Flowers are small, white (sometimes tinged with pink), bell shaped, very numerous, and borne in the axils of the the leaves at the ends of the branches. Flowering occurs from July to September.

Relatively little is known of the ecology of Spanish Heath, especially the viability and longevity of the seed. Field observations suggest that fire contributes to its spread. Slashing also encourages dense top growth and suckering, which further exacerbates problems of smothering and displacement of native flora. Suckering would appear to be a major means of spreading in some areas.

Control Strategies:

Small plants can be easily hand-pulled during winter/spring when the soil is moist. Medium-sized plants may be loosened using a garden fork prior to hand removal. Care should be taken to minimise soil disturbance.

Large plants can be treated by cutting and painting the stumps using 5:1 Roundup. The stem should be cut to within 10cm from the ground, and the bark peeled back using a wood chisel to expose the cambium of the wood. The herbicide should be applied within the first 2-3 minutes

* Planner, Yarra Bend Park Trust, P.O. Box 103, Fairfield Vic 3078.

after cutting, to prevent callousing, and to ensure maximum effective control.

In areas where hand removal is impractical due to the density of infestation, a foliar spray could be considered. Use of Roundup [100:1] should be trialed in areas where there are few non-target native species which could be affected. In situations where Spanish Heath is growing amongst native grassland vegetation, it is preferable to use a broad-leaf selective herbicide such as Garlon. Use of a spray hood is highly recommended as this will substantially minimize the risk of spray drift onto non target native vegetation.

A number of other *Erica* species are currently popular as garden plants and are readily available through the nursery trade. Many of these species are potential environmental weeds also, and will need to be closely monitored. We must ensure they do not spread to the same degree as *E. lusitanica* has.



"Are you part of nature's delicate harmonious balance or just another bloody weed?"

Reprinted with permission from *The Age*.

Montpellier Broom, *Genista monspessulana*

With spring now upon us, the bush is beginning to burst into life with an extraordinary variety of colour, texture and fragrance. A prominent feature of many roadsides and bushland areas throughout Victoria at present, are the yellow blossoms of a large shrub known as Montpellier Broom.

This large spreading shrub can be found up to 3m in height, and is becoming increasingly widespread along road and stream reserves, as well as in a variety of vegetation communities.

Branches are generally covered with soft hairs or down (i.e. they are pubescent). Leaves are dull green, pubescent and clover-like in appearance (that is they occur in threes). Yellow pea flowers occur in short compact racemes along the branches, and are up to 7mm long and 5-6mm broad. Flowering occurs from September to November. Seeds are borne within slender pubescent pods from 15-25mm in length, and are forcibly ejected as the pods dry and split in early summer. Seeds may be dispersed up to 2-3m from the parent plant.

Montpellier Broom is commonly mistaken as a native plant, and is often confused with Golden-tip (*Goodia lotifolia*), which is similar in growth habit and appearance. *Goodia* can be distinguished by its yellow flowers which have a red centre, and shiny green leaves. Its seed pods are also broad and short compared with *Genista* species.

Montpellier Broom is a member of the Pea family, and is in fact a native to the Canary Islands from where it was been introduced into Australia as an ornamental species.

It should be noted that a number of cultivar forms of this and related *Genista* species have been released on the nursery market in recent years, and are now widely promoted for home gardens. *Genista* 'racemosa' was plant of the year some 4 years ago. The sporadic occurrence of a cultivar form growing along sections of roadside in Riddells Creek and Creswick as well as a recently discovered occurrence in Studley Park (pers obs), would suggest that many of these species have either escaped from cultivation already, or have a very high potential to do so. Clearly the potential for further invasion of these species is of growing concern, given the capacity of *G. monspessulana* to readily invade and displace native vegetation. There is therefore an urgent need to prohibit the sale of these plants through nurseries.

Our overall knowledge and understanding of the ecology of this species is limited. Field observations suggest that there are a number of ecological similarities with various native pea and *Acacia* species - seed is long lived within the soil, and germination is stimulated by fire. The capacity of this species to build up a large deposit of soil stored seed is clearly an important survival strategy on its part, and is also critical to developing any long term revegetation strategy for areas currently heavily infested. Ideally, an attempt should be made to exhaust this seed bank prior to any revegetation works. This will substantially reduce the need for ongoing control and minimize re-invasion of broom into treated areas.

Control Strategies

Control techniques for this species are similar to those for *Erica lusitanica* that is hand weeding, and cut and paint method. Control work undertaken along the Merri creek and within Yarra Bend Park, has shown that the removal of plants and associated disturbance combined with an increase in light exposure will stimulate substantial seedling regeneration in the autumn period. This germination can be further encouraged by burning off woody material on site, in an attempt to stimulate germination and exhaust any soil stored seed. The resultant seedling germination can then be treated using either chemical or mechanical methods. Slashing seedling regeneration when it is between 5-10cm in height has proved effective in killing most seedling growth, as has the selective use of a gas weed burner. Laying a thick layer of mulch onto the site to smother small seedlings [1-5cm] has also proven effective.

Where these methods are not possible due to the environmental sensitivity of adjacent native vegetation [especially grassland species], some success has been achieved using selective broad leaf herbicides such as MCPA and Garlon at recommended dilutions.

For 12 months or so following treatment active monitoring of the site is critical. Any regeneration should be removed by hand weeding to prevent recolonisation.

A similar weed control strategy has proven effective for English Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) a problem environmental weed species, which is a particularly aggressive coloniser of road reserves and Grassy Woodland and Subalpine Woodland communities, and Flax-leaved Broom, (*Genista linifolia*).

Coming Events

NOVEMBER

- 22 10 am. Friends of the Yarra working bee at **Galatea Point**. Contact Judy Rutherford (03) 347 2252.
- 22 7 pm. **Provision of Habitat for Waterbirds**, by Sid Cowling, Wildlife Researcher. 8.30, **Management of Coolart's Wetlands**, by Steve York, Coolart Warden. Registration 6.30. (See 29 November).
- 22 7.45 pm. VNPA's quarterly general meeting. Geoff Carr will discuss the **extent of Victoria's weed invasion** and what actions can be taken to at least help control its spread. Room K, ground floor of the Main Building, Ormond College, College Crescent, University of Melbourne. Contact VNPA (03) 654 6843.
- 24 Friday, 7.30 pm. **Frogs**. Hawthorn Junior Field Naturalists Club meeting. Balwyn Primary School Hall, corner Balwyn and Whitehorse Roads, Balwyn. Contact Jonathon Stevenson 830 5886 or Rohan Clarke 725 8923.
- 25 Saturday. **ACT AGAINST GREENHOUSE**, a march and festival organized by Environment Action Network. The aim of the day is to highlight the threat of environmental destruction. If you would like more information, would like to set up a stall or offer help, contact Andrew Bath 386 2437 or 329 1320.
- 25-26 Sat-Sun. **Mt. Eliza Association for Environmental Care** activity days. Contact Anne Read (03) 787 2034.
- 25 Saturday. **Friends of Sherbrooke Forest**, bush maintenance. Contact Vivien Freshwater (03) 754 3093.
- 26 Sunday. **Friends of Warrandyte State Park** activity day. Contact Ian or Margaret Burke (03) 844 1060.
- 26 Sunday, 10am-1pm. **Pricking out and re-potting** at Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-operative. 8 Lee St. Brunswick. Contact VINC (03) 387 4403.
- 26 Sunday, 10 am. La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves Support Group **project day - Campus Reserve**. Activities will probably include planting, weeding and final preparations for work on the bush shelter. Contact George Paras 479 2871.
- 27-1 Dec. Mon-Fri. **Seed collection around Melbourne**. This will be taking place each week, ending 5 January. Melbourne residents can participate on a daily basis, country residents can be accommodated at Cheltenham House. Contact ATCV (03) 583 3388.
- 27-1 Dec. Mon-Fri. **Tree planting at Kangaroo Flat**. Accommodation: camping. Contact ATCV (054) 416 666.

28 Tuesday 8 p.m. IFFA meeting. For details see front cover.

29 Wednesday, 7 pm. **Food Plain Ecosystems and their Protection**, by Jane Roberts, Division of

Water Research CSIRO Griffith. 8.30 pm. **Practical Aspects of Aquatic Plant Establishment - Experiences at Bundoora and Brunswick**, by Greg Barber, Restorationist, La Trobe University. Registration, 6.30 pm. Undercroft lecture theatre, use carpark 2. Two lectures of Applied Ecology and Conservation seminar series; **Wetlands - Their Ecology, Function, Restoration and Management**, by La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves. Contact Shirley Diez or George Paras 479 2871.

DECEMBER

- 3 Sunday, 10 am. **Moonee Ponds tree planting and maintenance**. Brunswick Tree Group. Contact Eric Ward (03) 387 4940.
- 3 Sunday, 11 am. **Friends of the Merri** - End of year get-together, AGM, election of office-bearers and a small amount of work (weedmat). BBQ, BYO eats and drinks. Rushall, between the station and the bridge. Contact Dave Taylor (03) 489 0507.
- 4-8 Mon-Fri. **Seed collection around Melbourne**. (See 27 Nov.) Contact ATCV (03) 583 3388.
- 6 Wednesday, 7 pm. **Victorian Native Fish** - Distribution and Conservation with particular reference to Non-Riverine Habitats, by Alex Caughy, Australia New Guinea Fishes Association. 8.30 pm. **Ecology of Naive Fish and Their Role in Wetlands**, by Gerry Closs, Limnologist, Monash University. Registration, 6.30 pm. (See 29 November).
- 7 Thursday, 9 am till finished (including party time). Work to **complete Yurt Bush shelter**. La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves Support Group. 479 2871.
- 8-9 A Christmas present for the environment - **The Wilderness Society Badge Day Appeal**. A street appeal to raise awareness on environmental issues and raise funds for the organization. If you can volunteer an hour or more to help with selling badges, contact Michael or Duart at TWS (03) 670 5229.
- 10 Sunday 11 am. **IFFA end of year celebration**. Buckley Falls picnic area on Queens Park Road. Melways map 227 ref A3. BYO BBQ/picnic & drinks. Contact Peter Tucker 267 4173.
- 10 Sunday 10 am. Friends of the Yarra, working bee at **Galatea Point**. Contact Judy Rutherford 347 2252.
- 10-15 Sun-Fri. **Phillip Island penguin reserve maintenance** - weeding, planting. Accommodation: cabins. Contact ATCV (03) 583 3388.
- 10-15 Sun-Fri. **Seed collecting around Melbourne**. (See 27 Nov.) Contact ATCV (03) 583 3388.
- 10-15 Sun-Fri. **Protecting endangered birds at Lakes Entrance**. Accommodation: camping. Contact ATCV (053) 327 490.
- 10-15 Sun-Fri. **Environment reconstruction at**

Snippets

Sovereign Hill, Ballarat. Accommodation: house. Contact ATCV (053) 327 490.

13 Wednesday, 7 pm. **The Yallourn Eastfield Project**, by Alan Noy, Environmental Scientist, Environmental Management Division, State Electricity Commission of Victoria. 8.30 pm. **The Briars - Mornington**, by David Gray, Senior Parks Officer, Shire of Mornington. Registration 6.30 pm. (See 29 November).

18-22 Mon-Fri. **Protecting endangered birds at Lakes Entrance.** ATCV (053) 327 490.

20 Wednesday, 7 pm. **Wetland Construction in Malvern** - a Municipal Experience, by Ken Duxbury, City of Malvern. 8.30 pm. **The Wetlands of Yarra Valley Metropolitan Park**, by Pat Fricker, Parks Superintendent, Yarra Valley and Plenty Gorge Park Region. Registration 6.30. (See 29 November).

25-29 Mon-Fri. **Protecting endangered birds at Lakes Entrance.** ATCV (053) 327 490.

JANUARY 1990

1-5 Mon-Fri. **Protecting endangered birds at Lakes Entrance.** ATCV (053) 327 490.

1-5 Mon-Fri. **Weed eradication at Organ Pipes N.P.** Contact ATCV (03) 583 3388.

7 Sunday, 10 am. **Moonee Ponds tree planting and maintenance.** Brunswick Tree Group. Contact Eric Ward 387 4940.

15-19 Mon-Fri. **Walking track construction at Mt. Baw Baw.** ATCV (03) 583 3388.

The Ecology of Tasmanian Mountain Vegetation. Three separate courses run by the Tasmanian Environment Centre. The courses will acquaint participants with families, the structure of plant communities and the interactions and impacts on them of ecological factors including fire, soil and climate. Leaders are Professor W.D. Jackson & John Davies B. Sc. Hons. Courses at: Mount Field N. P. (closing date for enrolments 24 Nov), Tasmania's Central Highlands and Ben Lomond N.P. For further information contact the Tasmanian Environment Centre Inc, 102 Bathurst St., Hobart 7000. Ph 002 345 566.

AUGUST 1990

9th **AUSTRALIAN WEEDS CONFERENCE.** To express your interest or submit papers/posters contact D. W. Stephenson, S.A. Dept. Agriculture, Northfield Laboratories, Box 1671, GPO Adelaide 5001, ASAP. Topics include "Weeds in National Parks, Conservation, Protected and Amenity Areas".

A large range of activities such as bushwalks and "Friends" activities are published by the Victorian National Parks Association in their newsletter. For details contact V.N.P.A. (03)654 6843.

One tree's worth

A tree is worth at least US\$193,250 says a University of Calcutta professor quoted in the Spring 1989 issue of Park Science: "living for 50 years, a tree generates \$31,250 worth of oxygen, recycles \$37,500 worth of water, provides \$31,250 worth of soil erosion control and fertility, provides \$62,000 worth of air pollution control, and provides \$31,250 worth of shelter for animals. Side effects are fruit, lumber and beauty."

A few trees worth

Of the 3 million dollars allocated to the Tree Victoria initiative, \$430,000 is allocated to increasing seedling production in CFL nurseries. Only \$30,000 was allocated to distribution to community groups for planting. Approximately 70 applications were received for the funds, making the likely grants to the successful groups ridiculously small.

Mont Park Land: Conflict or compromise?

On the strength of the 425 submissions outlining the inadequacies of the Loder and Bayly report, it appears that the Urban Land Authority is coming to their senses over the proposed subdivision and sale of public land at Mont Park.

The Protection of Public Lands Coalition has entered discussions with the ULA over inadequacies. The ULA is bound by a strict charter to develop the land. If no compromise is reached, the issue will go to a panel hearing in February or March where Mr Roper will be making the final decision. If a compromise is reached some development will take place, leaving some land as a buffer zone.

The campaigning and pressure from the PPLC, the LaTrobe University Wildlife Reserves Support Group, local groups and individuals has forced the ULA to employ consultants to fill the gaps in their earlier study. Issues that will be looked at are: flora and fauna, traffic, social impact and drainage. The campaigners are very pleased that the key issues are now to be looked at.

It is evident that there is much pressure on the ULA from Cabinet to make a return to the land. The level of return depends on the style of development and the area developed. If less land is to be developed, the ULA is expected to try to intensify development on the remaining land to make up.

The campaign has reached a crucial point, and if the cards are played right and all goes well it will be shown that the PPLC, Wildlife Reserves Support Group and others have been right all along.

The PPLC would be happy to retain the nearby golf course as a buffer zone with appropriate management. There will be a workshop on 28 November where people will be able to have their say again - all are invited. It will take place in the Earnest Jones Hall, time to be arranged. Contact Val Badalassi 4581343.

Good news at Yarra Bend

\$80,000 for revegetation work on the Warundjeri Spur (or Pipe Bridge Spur) has been granted to the Yarra Bend Park Trust. Two staff will be employed in autumn 1989 for 6 months to continue weed control and planting work already begun by the land management crew. 12,000 tubes are to be planted - 2000 of these being *Themeda triandra*.

Grants for revegetation projects

Go Green is the Victorian branch of Greening Australia. It has invited groups wishing to participate in Revegetation programs in the Melbourne region to apply for funding.

Preference will be given to projects which protect and extend areas of natural regeneration, utilize vegetation indigenous to the region, form part of a vegetation corridor, protect and extend endangered flora and fauna habitats, involve local community and schools, provide demonstration sites, utilize new techniques and innovations, form part of a continuing program, demonstrate adequate site preparation, and guarantee an ongoing maintenance program. In addition to planting, funding will be considered for seed collection, propagation, project design and education programs.

After much hard work behind the scenes, participants of the Go Green workshop in October feel confident that the programme is on the right track.

Two years ago would you have believed that this was happening at all? It's something to celebrate over Christmas!

Contact 650 9424 for a copy of the application form.

Poa tussocks for road batters

Trevor Ritchie and family, write from Portland:

"Vegetative propagation of native tussock grass species has not had good PR because of the risk of introducing weed species with the soil. For example Keith McDougall tried it at Organ Pipes and introduced Onion Grass. The following method involving a nursery cycle virtually eliminates the movement of weeds from one site to another provided the nursery is clean. I have tried subdivision of Themeda and Stipa (mine were broken down as Ken Arthur's giving more than 100 pieces for a 20cm Themeda tussock and about 50 pieces for Stipa) but failed when direct planted into the wild. It should have worked but it didn't. Hence my jubilation when a friend introduced me to Ken Arthur"

Ken Arthur (RMB 5450, Koroit, Victoria) is the road side maintenance worker for Vic Roads at Warrnambool. He has recently perfected a nursery technique for the vegetative propagation of native tussock grass (*Poa* sp.). Ken has aimed at finding alternatives to Pigface for road batters and an instant result to suit landscaping requirements.

Source: Tussocks about 10cm to 30 cm in diameter, lifted carefully.

Treatment: Cut tops well back with a hacksaw; divide by pulling apart down to individual pieces with a root and a green shoot. At least 10 to 50 pieces can be obtained per tussock.

Potting: 5cm diameter tubes plus a potting mix of whatever can be obtained. Ken uses a local heavy soil plus slow release fertilizer, but he thinks a more porous mix would be better. A potting rate of 800 per day was obtained using home gardener equipment.

Care: Tubed stock are kept well watered. Use of a nursery hot bed increased initial growth but regardless a 95% strike rate was achieved.

Timing: Potting in February, April and July were equally successful. Within 6 months the 5 cm tubes are bursting.

Ongoing: The tubed plants are ready to be planted out into the wild in 3 to 4 months. Save some for stock plants which can be split into 5 to 10 pieces.

Other tussock species should be able to be propagated in a similar manner. However the minimum size of a propagatable piece may be species dependent. Ken will be experimenting with other species and methods in the coming year.

Profile:

Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Dimitra Bouzalas presents this profile of the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, based on material provided by them.*

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers is a national, non profit-making community based organization, founded in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1982.

The Trust concerns itself mainly with environmental problems which are the results of poor land management and inadequate tree cover, such as salinity, soil erosion and loss of native flora and fauna habitat. It aims to promote practical projects throughout Australia involving people on a voluntary basis, in the management and care of their environment. During 1988, ATCV volunteers completed 7,300 days work on conservation projects in Victoria. The Trust worked with many landholders and groups on a wide range of projects including walking track construction, restoration of historic gardens, weed eradication, fauna survey, dune rehabilitation, fence construction and seed collection. Their one millionth tree was planted in 1989.

ATCV has developed an extensive range of camps which aim to provide students with a "hands on experience" with curriculum subjects related to conservation activities as covered in the State Government's Conservation Strategy. The Bendigo Whipstick Forest camp for example, is based on past and present uses and management of the forest. Student activities include a role-playing situation, e.g. farmer, Eucalyptus oil distiller, tourist, conservationist, gold miner. The participants tour the forest on foot, by bus and cycle to inspect its past and present uses. They conduct basic salinity experiments, distill Eucalyptus oil or can be involved in revegetation projects to help them understand their role. At the conclusion of the camp, a workshop is held and the various interested groups have to debate their case and strategy for the use of the forest and the surrounding area.

Locations for other camps are Benalla, Port Fairy, Barmah, Mathoura and Bacchus Marsh, with topics appropriate for each area.

Most of ATCV's efforts are directed towards tackling the various forms of land degradation such as salinity, erosion and loss of vegetation. ATCV only plant native trees and where possible indigenous species.

Indigenotes asked ATCV for written documentation of a species planting policy; they wrote back that they "only plant native trees and where possible indigenous species". The importance of using indigenous species from local stock does not come through in their publications.

Photos in their annual review of trees planted in long straight lines would make most IFFA members cringe, along with the caption to another "The working conservationists".

ATCV reports that it is increasing its efforts towards wildlife projects such as the preservation of endangered species. In Lakes Entrance and Mallacoota the Little Tern breeding colonies are managed and protected. On Phillip Island, volunteers have assisted with penguin reserve maintenance, planting native shrubs for ground cover, removing harmful litter from the beaches, and building nest-boxes for birds.

According to the Trust it "receives very little funding from the State and Federal Governments, despite our continued success in involving the community in tree planting and other conservation projects. Although the State Government recently announced the Tree Victoria program, ATCV has yet to receive any of the funds available, therefore ATCV is forced to ask the landholders and the volunteers who are involved with ATCV to make a contribution towards each project".

Projects are sponsored by companies, groups, organizations or individuals either financially or in kind. The Little Tern project for example is sponsored by the ANZ Banking Group, and the design and production of their Annual Review is part of a donation of time and materials by Alcoa of Australia Limited.

Other sources of funding to ATCV include Coles Myer Ltd, Comalco, CRA Limited, Earth Garden Magazine, Metal Manufacturers Ltd, Pacific Dunlop Ltd, various country shires, Shell Co. of Australia Ltd, and Western Mining Corporation Ltd.

The impression gained from ATCV's publicity material is of an organization proud of their input to conservation projects, but cautious about speaking out about the causes of the on-going process of land degradation. They emphasise their non party political, and even non political nature. It's hard not to ponder about a possible connection between this caution and funding from Australia's largest companies.

ATCV can be contacted at their National Headquarters at P.O. Box 423, Ballarat, Victoria 3350, phone (053) 32 7490, Melbourne Region at P.O. Box 507, Cheltenham, Vic 3192, phone (03) 583 3388, Western District Region at P.O. Box 35, Port Fairy, Victoria 3284, phone (055) 682468, and at their Bendigo Region at P.O. Box 879, Bendigo Victoria 3550, phone (054) 416666.

*10 Alsace Street, East Brunswick Vic 3057.

Tereddan Drive needs donors

from Dr Graham Lorimer

One of the most remarkable remnant vegetation sites in the Upper Yarra and Dandenong Ranges area is available for purchase for a conservation reserve, but will be subdivided for housing if the money cannot be found...

At the end of Tereddán Drive in Kilsyth South is a five acre lot with enormous environmental importance. Its vegetation is grassy, wet, open woodland. According to the Montrose Environment Group, Botanists have assessed the site to be of State significance, reporting that the vegetation type represented there is "**virtually extinct**". Over 130 species of indigenous plants are found there - only a few per cent of botanical sites state-wide are this rich in species. At least 15 of the plant species are extremely rare in central southern Victoria, including the remarkable carnivorous plant, Fairies Aprons, which traps and feeds on aquatic organisms. At least one additional plant does not even match any recognised species. There are many other uncommon plants.

In one visit to the site, bird expert Scott Baker found a high density of birds such as honeyeaters, thornbills, shrike-tits, wrens and pardalotes, as well as many hollows for nesting (including some with residents). He says the habitat is excellent for nocturnal birds and animals, and a recent sighting of an enormous Powerful Owl on the block supports this view. Owls, nightjars and many marsupials need hollows for breeding.

A recent zoological report on the region has determined that this bushland is "**of high nature conservation and educational value**", requiring that "**no further clearing should take place**". It reports a number of native mammals, including the native Bush Rat and the Lesser Long-eared Bat. There are also large numbers of White-Striped Mastiff-Bats and Ring-tail Possums.

Butterflies are also very plentiful because of the dense grassy undergrowth.

Adjacent public land contains other vegetation communities and a lake supporting many water-birds (ducks, egrets, dotterels), but their long-term survival is doubtful on their own. \$60,000 is needed to secure the existing wildlife corridor and

make the area of public land large enough to be ecologically viable for the future.

The lake and the diverse bushland nearby then provide a wonderful opportunity for people to enjoy nature (once duckboards are installed). Contrast this with the surroundings: residential development and factories are encroaching all around.

Lillydale Shire, the State Government and private donors have pledged most of the purchase price, but we are short by about \$60,000.

Help preserve this very special bushland, for now and forever - make a pledge to MEG for a tax-deductible donation now!

* C/o Montrose Environment Group, P.O. Box 7, Montrose 3765. Phone 728 5841.

INDIGENOTES ADVERTISING RATES:

Full page: \$200
Half page: \$120
Quarter page: \$70

20% discount for members

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Enquiries (03) 3860264 (home)