

10/89 ✓



Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association

INDIGENOTES

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5, MAY 1989.

May Meeting and AGM

Tuesday 30 May at 8 p.m. on the 3rd 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 third floor. Members please put this date in your diary and attend if possible. Important matters regarding amendments to our articles of incorporation are to be discussed, and elections held for office bearers.

June Meeting

Tuesday 27 June, at 8 p.m. on the 3rd floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets).

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 June issue is 3rd June. See inside for instructions to authors.

President: Geoff Carr, 29 Fenwick St, Clifton Hill 3068. (03) 4894191 (work), (03) 205784 (home).

Secretary: Michele Arundell, 2/81 Alexandra Ave, South Yarra 3141. Tel (03) 2674173 (home), (03) 6509424 (work).

Treasurer: Dale Tonkinson, C/o Botany Department, La Trobe University, Bundoora Vic 3083. Tel (03) 439 9892 (home).

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From Sydenham to the Organ Pipes

By Tym Barlow*

"Friday, 10 January 1840

The country through which we travelled today consisted of green hills and valleys with a verdure of transparent green. The sun was hot and the bright green of the grass, contrasted with the sombre foliage of the trees, had a delightful appearance. The roads and soil was good and the country on either side of the road as far as the eye could scan was truly luxuriant. Covered with rich and thick herbage (Kangaroo grass) and the trees sheoak and cherry tree and stunted gum. The whole of the acacias are scented peppermint. Crossed the deep gully and halted at Mr Parker's station on the Salt Water River. A fine series of water holes and deep from which they supply themselves with fish - black and eels, the latter 2 feet long and fish large, weighing many pounds. Eagles are abundant - saw 8 hovering over the station at one time".

Thus is the entry in George Augustus Robinson's trip, between Sydenham Park and the Organ Pipes National Park just north of Keilor, following the escarpment of the Maribyrnong River (which was then known as the Salt Water River). My objective was to ascertain the status of a native conifer, the White Cypress-pine, known to occur in the area.

Yes, we do have native conifers, but our horticultural cringe predetermines that we plant northern hemisphere conifers in gardens and shelter-belts while exploiting and vastly depleting the natural resource.

The White Cypress-pine is also known as the Turpentine Pine, as it contains oils which give it unsurpassed resistance to termites. Thousands of miles of fences and many sheds were constructed from this timber in north-west Victoria and western NSW. Many still stand today, termite free.

Gone are the Sheoaks and Cherry-trees (Cherry Ballart or Wild Cherry), cut for firewood. The luxuriant growth of Kangaroo Grass has been degraded to impenetrable thickets of Artichoke Thistle, Serrated Tussock and Boxthorn. What price for a paddock of green, rich and thick 'herbage', and in the middle of January!

I avoided the (sometimes inevitable) depressed mood as soon as I realised that I was standing amongst the biggest patch of Silky Blue-grass I

had ever seen, and proceeded with renewed enthusiasm. It pleases me more to discover a few natives amongst the weeds, than to discover weeds invading native vegetation.

Skinks and lizards darted to and fro amongst the basalt, their engines 'hotted up' in the heat of the sun. The rocks changed occasionally to shale and sandstone as I walked along the contour, revealing the events of a million years ago when the molten lava flowed and filled the depressions of that hillier terrain.

The punk-like Purple Swamp-hens and Dusky Moor-hens scrambled raucously amongst the reed-beds lining the River, whose hydraulic forces over time have cut through the bedrock, opening the pages of geologic history. Black ducks moved silently through the red film of Azolla fern, intermittently dipping their heads in for a feed of the fern and insects which live on the foliage. A pair of Goshawks wheeled acrobatically up and down the valley. One of them dropped dramatically to the ground to rise a minute later with a small rabbit gripped in its talons.

A typical Wednesday morning along the Maribyrnong River - if you're prepared to look. Along the banks of the River grew Bottlebrushes (*Callistemon paludosus*), Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum laciniatum*), Woolly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum lantigerum*), Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and the ubiquitous Red Gums, all in flower. I couldn't get close enough to investigate the birdlife of this vegetation.

I proceeded up a small tributary which revealed its own mini-version of the famous Organ Pipes nearby. This rock formation resulted from stress fractures set up in the laval rock as it cooled - the hexagonal cross-section of the columns being the points of least resistance as the rock contracted during the cooling process.

The lush green growth surrounding a small rock pool contrasted with the surrounding harshness of the escarpment. I startled a Green and Golden Bell-frog from its basking-spot and eye-balled a Water Skink which wasn't too sure whether to run or freeze, choosing the latter option until I moved

Continued on page 11

Community Conservation Workers Network

By Tym Barlow*

It is within the context of growing environmental activity at the local level that the (tentatively titled) **Municipal Conservation Group** was formed in late 1988. Its primary aim is to facilitate effective involvement of municipalities and the local community in environmental management.

The importance of effective action at this level is highlighted by the State Conservation Strategy (1986 p98) which states that 'One of the most important ways of incorporating conservation into development in Victoria is through local conservation strategies. The State Government will help Local Government and other organisations to investigate and prepare strategies and plans.'

A number of Acts of Parliament either encourage or require the involvement of municipalities in the conservation of natural resources (i.e. land, flora and fauna). The Crown Land Reserves Act (1978) and the Planning and Environment Act (1987) are two which obviously seek active involvement by municipalities, while there are many more Acts, Statutory Authorities and Committees which involve or impact upon municipal activity.

I put to an officer from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands the following question: 'Does the Department have a policy of involving municipalities in issues of conservation and environmental management?'. On the understanding that he remain anonymous he answered: 'Yes, like it or not, municipalities will play an increasing role in this area, and we're here to help. The involvement of local authorities and communities is considered integral to the implementation of our own, as well as the general community's, responsibilities towards conservation of natural resources across the State.'

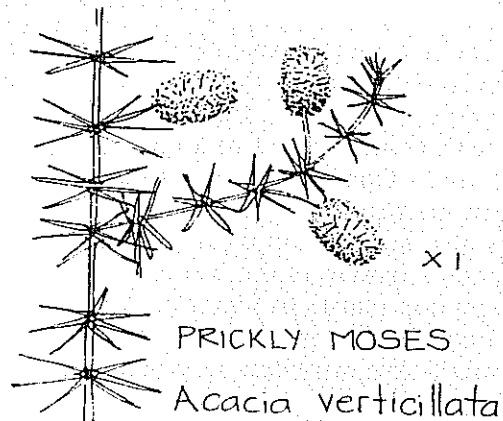
He cited 'Salt Action', as well as the many Land Protection Advisory Groups as examples of community and municipal action. As well as providing access to information and expertise, the Department is obliged under some Acts to make financial resources available to assist in the development and implementation of co-operative management agreements, an example of which is the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

The Ministry for Planning and Environment is also making finance available for the development of Local Conservation Strategies and Local Conservation Officers.

Obviously since municipalities are expected to play an increasing role in this field, it is within their interest to take advantage of the State Government's resources to employ personnel, and to help disseminate resources to the local community. Such personnel should also act as a conduit of information between the community, Local Government and State Government.

It was recognised very early that for the Municipal Conservation Group to be truly representative, membership must be accessible to any person involved in conservation at the community-municipality interface. Current membership is drawn from a wide range of backgrounds both within and outside municipal employment. Perhaps a more appropriate name for the Group might be **Community Conservation Workers Network**.

It is hoped that IFFA members operating at the local community level will find time to participate in this network/group. For further information contact Ian Stephenson on (059) 76 0258, Max Pflitzner on (03) 598 8111, or me on (03) 317 9066.



* Western Region Commission

Review:

The Complete Gardener's Buying Guide Victorian edition, ed by Maggie Knight, Universal Magazines, Victoria, 1989. 162pp, \$5.95.

By Tony Faithfull

The contents page of this softcover book at first glance shows no great promise for the indigenous plant lover or restorationist. Entries include Garden detail, smaller general nurseries and landscape designers, Cottage plants and herbs, Plants for patios, courtyards and interiors, Garden flowers, Native Flowers, shrubs and trees, Flowering shrubs and trees, Gardens to eat, Cacti, bonsai and water plants, One stop shopping, Regional centres for gardeners, Plant societies, Products and Index.

The entry "Cottage plants and herbs" grew butterflies in my stomach. These multiplied when I read in the introduction the encouragement for readers to use mail order services. American and English suppliers are listed in the body of the guide, as well as many interstate suppliers. Most of our environmental weeds were originally introduced to Australia for horticultural use, but having escaped horticulture now threaten to swamp our indigenous vegetation remnants, and pose a huge cost for society to undertake control measures. Suppliers of non-local native plants, and local suppliers of exotics can also contribute to the environmental weed problem. No caution is given in the guide however regarding environmental weeds, and no suggestions given for minimizing garden escapes (such as by avoiding planting species prone to becoming environmental weeds, and avoiding dumping garden clippings over the fence or in the park across the road).

The guide lacks a section specifically on suppliers of indigenous vegetation, although in the section "Native flowers, shrubs and trees", we find 3 suppliers with commitment to indigenous plants from local seed - Operation Revegetation, Victorian Indigenous Nurseries, and Farmtrees. The latter does also supply non indigenous natives. This is a poor selection of the hundreds of suppliers of indigenous plants in Victoria. Many of these are back yard propagators, but the guide does list small-time suppliers in other sections.

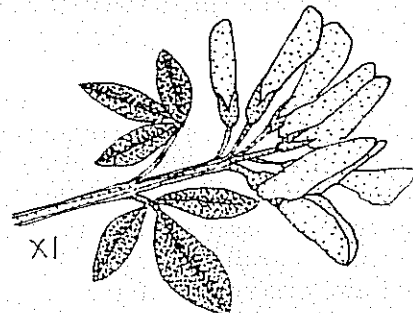
Tucked away behind the African Violet, Brome-

liad, Cactus, Daffodil, Fuschia and so on societies in the section devoted to plant societies, we find IFFA, ACF, Friends of the Yarra, Men of the Trees, Horticultural Therapy Association, The Wilderness Society, and the Victorian National Parks Association. This is another rather small selection of the existing groups, and potentially could be expanded to cover the multiplicity of groups doing revegetation works around the state.

The Products section of the guide has some good ideas - such as kneel pads - but is awkwardly structured, with one supplier per product, even for wood shavings, which are widely available. I presume this is a result of only some suppliers paying to be listed, but it makes the section a bit of a farce. If a wide range of garden suppliers were listed, and a simple cross referencing system used to show what materials they stock, the guide could become invaluable.

A small point, but annoying, is that throughout the book, rules for scientific names are not followed.

As it stands, in its first Victorian edition, the Gardeners Buying Guide would be useful to the exotic or native gardener, but not worth \$5.95 for indigeophiles.



XI

MONTPELLIER BROOM

profile:

Friends of Organ Pipes

The Friends of Organ Pipes National Park group was formed in 1971/72, when Organ Pipes National Park was proclaimed.

A hundred and thirty years of agricultural use and misuse had virtually wiped out the natural vegetation from around the Organ Pipes, and early in the park's life it was decided to attempt to put back the original species. The early members of FOOP realized that such a project would be a long term one and would need volunteer support. This support, continuous since 1972, has helped to restore what was an ecological disaster area.

Restoration

The progressive change from an eroding, weed-choked, rabbit-infested area to an open grassland with indigenous trees and shrubs and dense riverside vegetation is now apparent, and the eventual success of the project is no longer questioned.

The March 1974 edition of *Victoria's Resources* has an article explaining the restoration policy. In brief, all propagating material must come from within the park, or from local sources, and seedlings must be planted in the correct soil type and aspect.

While the National Parks Service began weed and rabbit control, the FOOPs began searching early records to determine the original ecology. Articles in the *Victorian Naturalist* and *The Emu* describe the flora and fauna of the district. Descriptions and plant lists for the Keilor basalt plains by Dr. Sutton and Dr. J. H. Willis were particularly useful.

Native remnants

Simultaneously, FOOP members began searching the district for remnants of the original flora, and were pleasantly surprised at the number of species still surviving in an area which seemed almost totally invaded by exotic species. As far as possible, identification is done by the group, and one by one the species on Dr. Willis' list are ticked off.

Remaining pockets of vegetation have become seed collection sources and have been valuable in relating each species to the soil types and aspects of the valleys: for instance, is found only on sandstone slopes with a northerly exposure. A

map was drawn dividing the park into basic soil, slope and aspect zones as a guide to planting.

Efforts are being made to increase the indigenous grass cover in the park, and seedlings, trees and shrubs are being planted to produce a balanced flora. Fenced plots are used for experiments in establishing composites and other small plants. Schools, scouts, bushwalking clubs etc. are enlisted to help in weed control, planting and other tasks.

Propagation

In the early days of the group, plants were propagated by the Friends using veneer tubes and sterilized soil supplied by the National Parks Service. Later, the task was shared, with the bulk of the propagation done by the Forests Commission of Victoria (Macedon Nursery) and FOOP members Barry Kemp, Carl Rayner and others raising the more difficult species.

Recognition

1978 saw the first official recognition of the time and effort bestowed on the park. The Friends of the Organ Pipes group was awarded the Royal Institute of Architects Robin Boyd Environmental Award Bronze Medal for 1978. The Bronze Medal is the top award, and there were twenty-five submissions in the Environmental category.

In 1982 the Friends received further recognition when they shared the Garden State Committee's Premier Innovative Award. The restoration of Organ Pipes National Park was described as "a project enhancing Victoria".

Today and Tomorrow

Due partly to FOOP success at Organ Pipes National Park, Friends groups have been created to meet needs in other national parks. The FOOPs are pleased to have been part of this movement, which now numbers 38 groups.

At the park, a great sense of success can be felt with the growth and maturing of vegetation, and the build-up of bird numbers. The FOOPs hope that this progress will be matched by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands in the future with park boundary consolidation, further improvement of facilities and an increase in per-

Continued on page 11.

Coming Events

MAY

- 27 Saturday. **Mornington Peninsula.** Botany Group excursion of the Victorian Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Leader: Tom Sault. Contact Margaret Potter (03)29 2779.
- 27 Saturday, 1.30 p.m. **Moorooduc Quarry Reserve** project day. Organized by the Mt Eliza Association for Environmental Care. Meet at the picnic ground, Two Bays Road, Melways map 106 ref A7. Contact Anne Read (03) 787 2034.
- 28 Sunday, 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. **Planting** commemorating the centenary of the birth of Richard St. Barbe Baker. This will be part of an Australia wide Planting Day. Organized by Men of the Trees. Deep Rock, Melways 2D D6.
- 28 Sunday, 10 a.m. La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves **Gresswell Forest Project Day:** weed pull. Contact Wildlife Reserve (03) 479 2871.
- 28 Sunday. **Tree Project Planting at Darebin Parklands** For Details contact The Tree Project (03) 663 3281 (b.h.)
- 28 Sunday, 10 a.m. **Mt Eliza Association for Environmental Care activity.** Checking out site planted about ten years ago and removal of weeds. End of Kunyung Rd., Melways map 105, ref C1. Contact Anne Read (03)787 2034.
- 30 Tuesday, 8 p.m. **IFFA Annual General Meeting.** Members please attend if possible. Important matters regarding amendments to our articles of incorporation are to be discussed and elections held for office bearers.

JUNE

- 1 Thursday. **Stag watching** in Healesville Sanctuary and the Coranderrk Reserve. This involves watching old trees with hollows (stags) for arboreal mammal activity. Meet at the sanctuary at 5 p.m. If interested please contact Karen Roach or Brian Phillips (059) 62 4022 (work).
- 3 Saturday, 9 a.m. onwards. **Display for World Environment Day** by the Mt Eliza Association for Environmental Care. Mt Eliza Way shopping centre. Contact Anne Read (03)787 2034.
- 4 Sunday. **Fungi** - General excursion of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Contact Marie Allender (03) 527 2749.
- 4 Sunday, 1.00 p.m. **Friends of Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve activity day.** Track improvement (viaduct trail), followed by wildflower walk to view the early orchids and fascinating fungi. Meet at the McLeland Drive car park, Melways map 103 ref C10. Contact Anne Read (03) 787 2034.
- 4 Sunday, 9.30 a.m. **Planting at Chelsworth Park.** Organized by the Riverlands Conservation Society with the assistance of Men of the Trees. Bring a barrow, rake or spade. Melways map 31 ref G10. Contact John Merory (03) 499 6737.
- 4 Sunday, 9 a.m. **Bird observing at Koomba Park.** Organized by Knox Environment Society Inc. Contact Andrew Paget (03)758 5416.
- 4 Sunday, 12 noon - 4 p.m. **Guided tours of Mont Park** hospital grounds to view the vegetation remnants, open space and habitat link between the La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves. Tours leaving hourly from the Harry Pottage Reserve, Wungan Parade Meleod. Organized by the Protection of Public Lands Coalition. Contact Val Badalassi (03) 458 1343.
- 4 Sunday 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 5 Monday, 8 p.m. **V.F.T. - Environmental Effects.** General meeting of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Speaker: Eric Quinlan. Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave., Sth Yarra. Contact Marie Allender (03) 527 2749.

- 5 Monday, 7.30 p.m. **Paper Forum - World Environment Day.** A public meeting on paper recycling being held by the East Gippsland Coalition and Friends of the Earth. FOE 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.
- 8 Thursday, 8 p.m. **Trees, Toadstools Puffballs & Potoroos.** Botany group meeting of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Speaker: Tom May. Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave., Sth Yarra. Contact Margaret Potter (03) 29 2779.
- 10 Saturday, 10 a.m. - 12 noon. **Maintenance and planting at Deep Rock.** Organized by Men of the Trees. Bring planting gear. Melways map 2D ref D6. Contact MOTT (03) 898 1364.
- 10 Saturday, 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 10-12 Saturday - Monday. **Fauna Survey** Excursion of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Campout - Denillquin, NSW, **Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat survey.** Contact Julian Grusovin (03) 543 8627.
- 11 Sunday, 10 a.m. **Friends of the Yarra working bee at Galatea Point,** Yarra Bend Park, Melways map 2D reference D7. Contact Max Dean (03) 489 2154.
- 14 Weds, 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 18 Sunday, 9.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. **Banyule Outing.** Organized by Men of the Trees. Contact Beryl Jarman (03) 45 1845.
- 18 Sunday 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 22 Thursday 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 24 Saturday. **Fungi - Beenak area.** Botany excursion of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Leader: Tom May. Contact Margaret Potter (03) 29 2779.
- 24 Saturday 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.
- 25 Sunday, 10 a.m. La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves Support Group. **Gresswell Forest project day.** Contact Laurie Whelan (03) 479 2871.
- 25 Sunday, 10 a.m. - 12 noon. **Maintenance and planting at Deep Rock.** Organized by Men of the Trees. Bring planting gear. Melways 2D D6. Contact MOTT (03) 898 1364.
- 27 Tuesday **IFFA meeting, 8 p.m., third floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets).** To get in, be on time or yell loudly as the doorbell doesn't reach the third floor.
- 28 Wednesday, 10 a.m. **Friends of the Yarra working bee at Galatea Point,** Yarra Bend Park, Melways map 2D reference D7. Contact Max Dean (03) 489 2154.
- 29 Thursday 5 p.m. **Stag watching** see June 1st.

JULY

- 9 Sunday, 9.30 - 1 p.m. **Planting** organized by the Riverland Conservation Society. Site to be decided by next newsletter. Contact John Merory (03) 499 6737.
- 30 Sunday, 10 a.m. La Trobe University Wildlife Reserves Support Group. **Campus Reserve:** construction of bush information shelter and barbeque. Also La Trobe University Open Day: tours will be conducted by Reserves Group. Contact George Paras (03) 479 2871.
- 25 Tuesday **IFFA meeting, 8 p.m., third floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets).** To get in, be on time or yell loudly as the doorbell doesn't reach the third floor.

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.

INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA ASSOCIATION INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY MAY 30th. 8.00. P.M.

ENVIRONMENT CENTRE, ROSS HOUSE,

247 FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE. 3000.

Business of the meeting will be:-

- (1). To receive reports of the previous years activities from Office Bearers, sub-committees and members.
- (2). To elect Office Bearers for the forthcoming year.
- (3). Other Matters.

Not all the Office Bearers will be renominating, so any members wishing to nominate are encouraged to do so at the meeting.

Members able to offer the contribution of their time and skills in other areas would also be appreciated.

A light supper will be followed by "show and tell" so please bring anything edible and/or interesting

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INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA ASSOCIATION INC.
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
1 APRIL 1988 - 30 APRIL 1989.

INCOME.

Memberships / Subscriptions	1370.00
Donations	2235.00
TOTAL INCOME	3605.00

EXPENDITURE.

Postal Registration	15.00
Postage	525.58
Computer Time	682.00
Photocopying / Printing	922.87
Book Production	1000.00
Donation to Flora and Fauna	
Guarantee (Campaign Advertisement)	25.00
Debtors (Book Production, Postage)	153.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3323.45
+ SURPLUS FOR PERIOD	281.55
	3605.00

ORIGINAL BALANCE	2201.00
+ INCOME	3605.00
- EXPENDITURE	3323.45
= ACCUMULATED FUNDS	2482.55

COMPRISING: BANK BALANCE	2484.26
CASH IN HAND	151.29
DEBTORS	153.00

From the above statement it will be seen that the Association achieved a small operating surplus for the period, however this was only due to two large donations specifically assigned to book production by the donors. Hence it is clear that the day to day operations of the Association have run at a considerable loss. The move at a recent meeting to increase membership fees to \$20 for individuals and \$40 for groups was therefore essential.

Snippets

Diamond Valley Natural Environment Protection Panel

This panel has just been set up by the Diamond Valley Shire Council at the urging of interested local residents to advise councillors on environmental issues. Members of the panel include Gerard Closs, Pat Vaughan, Linda Rogan and Jocelyn Trevor. Its eight members are keen to see Diamond Valley Council follow Heidelberg Council's initiative in devising a conservation strategy to be used as a blueprint for development in the Shire.

Members of the committee are opposed to the Cain Government's proposed sell-off of the Mont Park land which borders the municipalities of Diamond Valley, Heidelberg and Preston. The panel plans to have a say in all conservation matters including the Plenty Valley development, the St. Helena native orchid, energy conservation, ozone layer depletion, and the greenhouse effect.

The panel would appreciate help from IFFA members who can contribute expertise regarding the flora and fauna of the Diamond Valley Shire area. Meetings are open to all interested individuals. For further information contact Mr Laurie Rigg 434 6685.

-Linda Rogan

Alpine National Park Bill

Legislation to create an Alpine National Park passed the lower house of the Victorian Parliament with a majority of 73 to 7 early this month. The Liberal party supported the legislation after amending it. The Victorian National Parks Association welcomed the amendment for responsible management of land, which will apply to all parks as well as the Alpine park. They also supported the Liberals stand on proper fire management and adequate resourcing of Parks including the Alpine Park.

The VNPA hopes the pending coalition with the National Party will not mean that the Liberals undo this good work by agreeing to amendments in the upper house proposed by the Nationals. It is particularly concerned about the issue of grazing and suggestions of changes to "once-only logging" areas, and optimistic that the Liberals will not adopt the controversial "multiple use" policies of the Nationals and compromise the whole concept of a National Park.

-David Risstrom (03) 654-6843

Management of East Gippsland Parks

The East Gippsland Coalition has formed an action group to make sure that conservation is the primary aim in managing the new national parks in East Gippsland. The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is developing a Management Plan for the Errinundra National Park and expects to release a draft in June. Work on Plans for the Rodger Wilderness and Coopracambra-Mt Kaye is still at an early stage.

EGC wants to ensure that all road works, fire management, weed control, camping facilities and walking tracks don't compromise the values of the parks, and that the impact of increased visitor levels on highly sensitive areas is minimized. They need people who are willing to learn about the parks, help prepare submissions, letters and articles, and liaise with CFL staff in Melbourne and East Gippsland. They would also like to hear from botanists, zoologists, ecologists, land managers, and others who can advise them on Park management issues. Please contact them (John Stone, David Morton, Anne Hunter, Rod Gifford, Paul Peake or Linda Parlane), or leave a message at the Environment Centre on 654 4833.

Nunawading Weeds Workshop a success.

Approximately 100 people from within the Nunawading community and further afield demonstrated their interest and concern for their local remnant bushlands by attending the Weeds workshop at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre on March 18th. The presentations given by the speakers (Geoff Carr, Vivien Freshwater, and David Cameron) were superb, and the day ended with an informal walk through the bushland led by environmental educators Cecily Falkingham and Alan Reid.

Many people have since commented on the value of this very practical demonstration which inspired many people to become more involved in local bushland conservation/restoration issues.

-Caroline Falkingham, 27 Chippewa Ave, Mitcham 3132.

Snippets

From page 7

Revegetation, Reunions and Reward

When the Tree Project organizers asked for 250 volunteers "rain or shine", rain and shine it did. The area poured with over 600 participants and Deep Rock sparkled with the bustle of their colourful bodies digging, planting, carting mulch or just gazing in awe.

A great sense of teamwork and cooperation was evident from the large scale organization to the individual volunteer groups. Even though publicity was kept limited for this first main planting, the response was tremendous with people coming from all over Melbourne. The planting was a buzz for everyone in many different ways. Long lost contacts were renewed, small children could not be drawn away from "planting just this last one" and of course, the organizers' beliefs that the public does want to contribute to the improvement of their environment was certainly confirmed.

The sense of returning to a more balanced ecosystem was celebrated with dances performed by the local Aborigines "to help the trees and the land grow together". Senator Richardson also used the occasion to announce the governments commitment to planting a billion trees by the year 2000. With over 600 witnesses, there will be many people holding him to it!

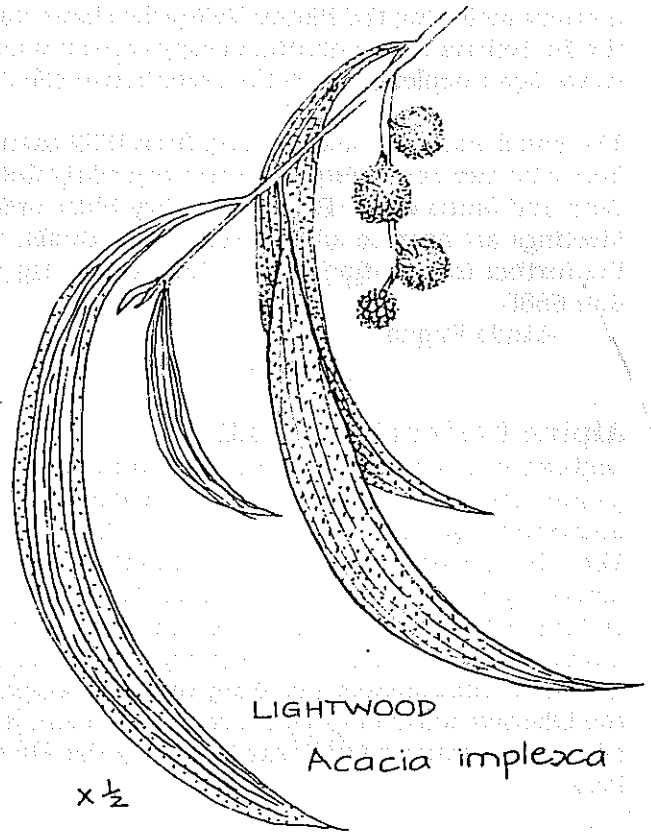
Wattle Park future being discussed

Wattle Park for those of you who do not know it, is situated in Box Hill south between Riversdale, Warrigal and Elgar Roads. It is MET land and has been "managed" by them up till now. Just prior to the east election John Cain announced a grant to be spent upgrading it of \$250,000 which has now been doubled. The question now is, what does development mean. The park has many trees of mixed origin (not only wattles), some of which are quite large and significant. More importantly it contains probably the largest area of indigenous grassland remnant anywhere in the region. Quite a large reserve of the grassland has been left unnown and is now a very rich resource of genetic material containing a long list of herbs as well as grasses, and including at least three orchid species.

The MET is asking for public input into the planning and an information officer will be available in an on site van in the car park to receive submis-

sions from the begining of May. The park is well worth some thought and a visit from those who have not seen it. It is imperative that the grasslands be preserved and if possible enhanced and extended. Aspects of history, the built environment and trees will probably be addressed but we should ensure that a complete indigenous habitat is preserved by putting submissions now.

- Minette Russell-Young



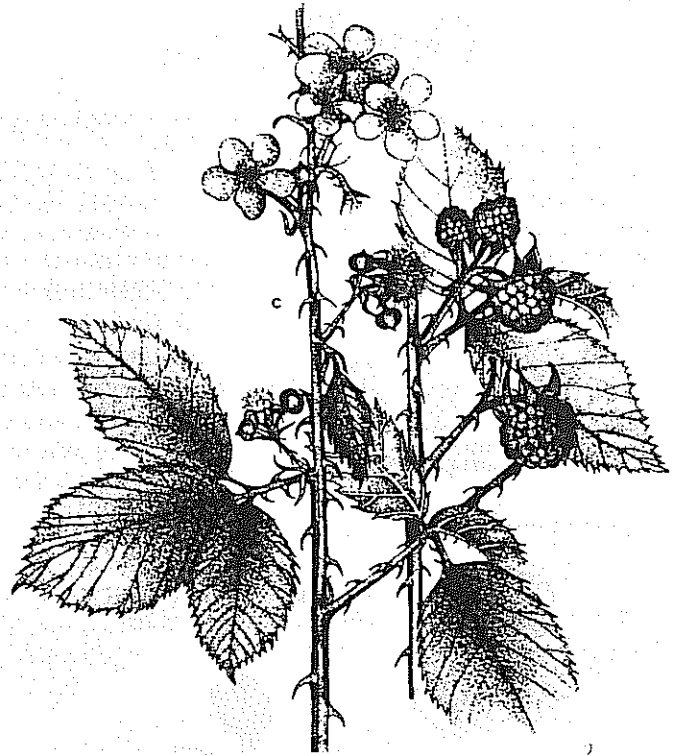
Montrose Initiative for Indigenous Vegetation

By Graeme Lorimer

The articles below are the first two in a monthly series appearing in a local paper distributed by mail to every letterbox in Montrose. Each article will cover indigenous plants which are conspicuous during that month, as well as weeds which have some ecological link with them. Montrose Environmental Group pays the cost of publication.

Other groups are welcome to use the articles with local adaptation. Contact me to get each month's item as soon as it's done (complete with pictures - there are *Pittosporum undulatum* and local gumnuts pictures to go with the articles shown). A donation in return to help our publication costs would be appreciated.

42 Gratten Road, Montrose, Victoria 3765.



Our Plants

by Annette Muir, Graeme Lorimer and Rodger Elliot

Many residents of Montrose are lucky enough to have a bit of bush on their own property or even live near the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Having local native plants in your backyard or street is part of the charm of living in this area.

Unfortunately, the long-term survival of native bush is threatened by aggressive invaders such as *Pittosporum* and Broom. These "environmental weeds" are often mistaken for local, native plants.

The dumping of garden rubbish on roadside verges and other public land plus the planting of invasive plants in private gardens, creates a weed problem in local bushland.

These plants may have attractive characteristics, but there are many noninvasive one which can be planted as alternatives.

This is the first of a series of articles about local native plants and bushland weeds. Each article will feature plants in flower or fruit during that month. This month, we focus on plants currently with berries.

Berries are produced by plants so that their seeds will be eaten and spread by birds or animals. Rosellas are the main natural diner of local native fruits, but blackbirds, pigeons and foxes now spread many weed plants instead including cotoneasters, blackberries and pittosporums. Parts of the national park in Montrose are being overrun by these weeds introduced from gardens near and far.

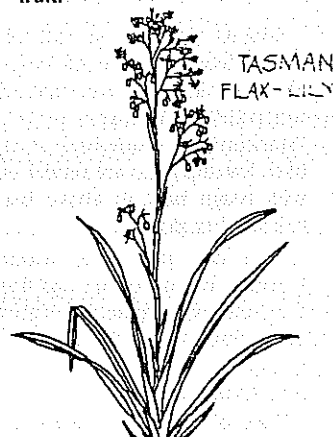
Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) is the most common large bushland weed around Montrose. It has glossy green leaves and orange berries. When it becomes established, it harbours the birds which bring in blackberries and other weeds. A vicious cycle!

Cotoneasters have the same effect as pittosporums. They can be identified by their bright red, round berries, about 5mm across.

It is very important not to plant either of these species. Small plants can be pulled or

dug out; larger ones need to be cut or ringbarked and then poisoned.

Also in berry at this time of the year are several local natives. Currant-bushes and wild cherries produce delicious, small red fruit.



Flax lilies (e.g. *Dianella tasmanica*) have tufts of strap-like leaves and blue to deep purple berries following blue, starry flowers. They can be seen around the Montrose Pharmacy and the Town Centre and grow very easily in gardens.

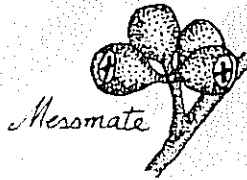
Sweet Pittosporum is often used for screening, but local natives such as Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) can be used as an alternative without the threat of weed invasion.

Our Plants

To the casual observer, eucalypts are the most important members of the natural vegetation in Montrose. Unfortunately, their numbers are declining rapidly on private land and roadsides due to clearing and dieback. In addition, natural

regeneration is being hindered by weed invasion.

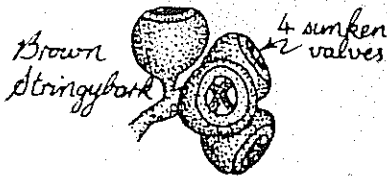
There are about nine species of eucalypt in Montrose, the most abundant being stringybarks. You can tell them apart by their gumnuts as shown in the drawings.



Messmate

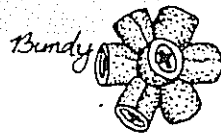


Peppermint

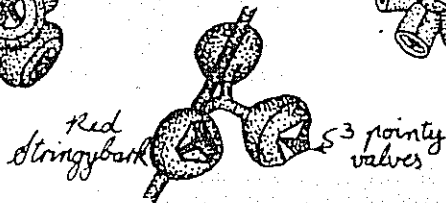


Brown Stringybark

4 sunken valves



Bundy



Red Stringybark

3 pointy valves

Local gumnuts

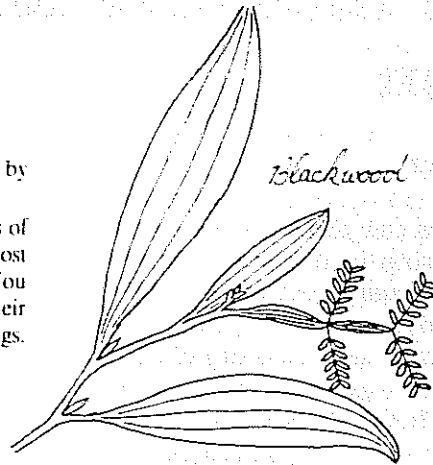
Silver-leaved Stringybark is a small to medium tree of lower slopes and flats, with silvery new growth and flower buds. A good stand grows along Swansea Rd outside the Keith Hume Fraser Reserve.

Messmate also has stringybark, but is distinguished by its wine-goblet gumnuts and very asymmetric leaves. It is the dominant tree along the Tourist Rd up to Kalorama. It co-habits with Red and Brown Stringybarks, which are very similar until you see the gumnuts.

Manna gums grow tall and proud along creeks, as at Chateau Wyuna. They have smooth, whitish bark often with a "stocking" of rough bark at the base. Swamp gums are similar but with rough bark to above head height when mature.

You can put fresh, mature gumnuts in a paper bag and their tiny seeds soon pop out. They grow easily and fast without special treatment. Always grow plants from local stock!

Two of the local wattles also form trees.



Blackwood

Blackwood begins life with fine, feathery leaves, but grows up with broader, leathery "leaves" which are actually modified, flattened stems! Silver wattles only ever have feathery foliage, making an open, silvery crown. Both these wattles form attractive, small trees suitable for any garden. Like the eucalypts, they never need watering.

Wattle seeds can be collected in

early summer, soaked in boiling water and sown into pots.

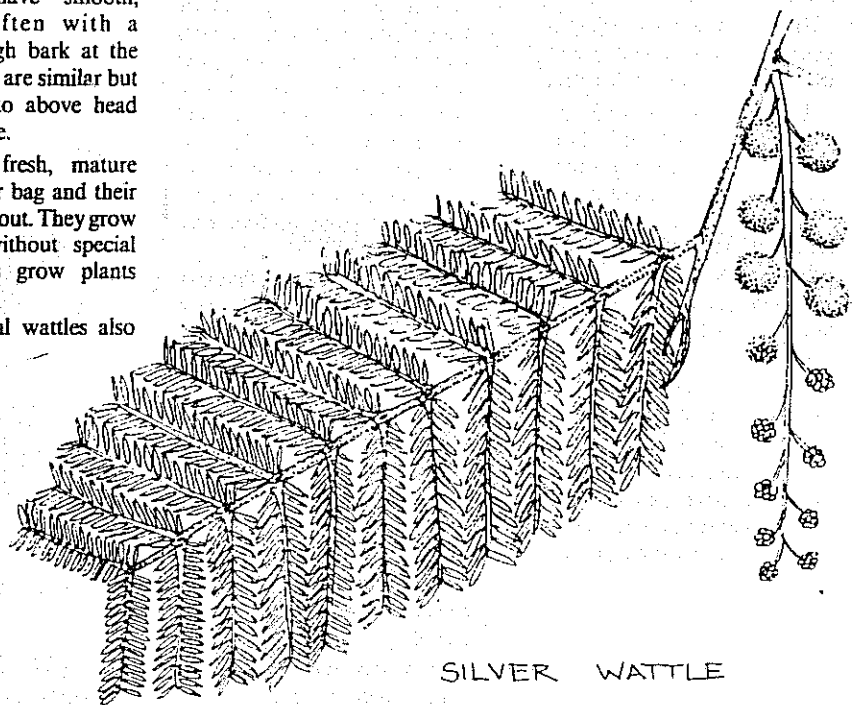
There are several introduced trees which are displacing the natural one.

Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) is widely planted in Victoria but is notorious for spreading into bushland. Its dense canopy and the acidic needles which it drops create a hostile environment for native plants.

The introduced Cedar Wattle (*Acacia elata*) is not much better. Its leaves are coarser and darker than the silver wattle, and it flowers in summer (unlike any local wattles).

Pines and Cedar wattles are spreading from private gardens into the National Park and other bushland. They are on the council's "hit list" of plants which can be removed without a permit.

For more information on the local environment, contact MEG at P.O. Box 7, Montrose.



SILVER WATTLE

Acacia dealbata

From Sydenham to the Organ Pipes

From page 2

again. The prevalence of native bramble was a welcome observation, but to the untrained eye would probably be mistaken as a delicate form of the loathesome Blackberry. So far I had listed 24 species of indigenous plants all of which (with the possible exception of Red Gum and Silver Wattle) are holding on to survival by tenterhooks in the Melbourne area.

I headed straight up the side of the tributary's gully to the top of the escarpment, to be met at the top by a rather formidable wall of basalt some 4 metres high. I anticipated some interesting finds, as these are the places the rabbits, sheep and ploughs never got to. I almost fell flat on my back (which is a long way on this slope!) as a buck goat bulletted out from the shelter of the rocks and down the escarpment. I hadn't counted on bloody goats!

As I walked around the base of the rocks I could see (even beyond the reach of goats!) two prized components of the Basalt Plains flora - Blanket Fern (*Pleurosorus rutifolius*) and Rock Fern (*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*). These plants are as tough as cactus; grown men have cried at the sight of such delicate looking life-forms in the blistering heat and debilitating winds. Boots have melted on the same rocks.

One thing these species can't handle is being eaten repeatedly!

A White Cypress-pine stood a few hundred metres away, with the restored landscape of the Organ Pipes National Park beyond. As I approached, another emerged over the rise; three more were above me - a grand total of five fully grown specimens. Not a seedling to be seen - probably not since the 1880's, when rabbits assumed their dominance. It is known that this vermin finds the White Cypress-pine seedlings extremely palatable. Few cones were present, but this is not a good indicator of the trees viability, as the cones generally drop once seed has been set; in this case they probably roll to the river.

Three other small populations are known from Melton and Bacchus Marsh. Seed from these plants is being collected and grown to increase the viability of these populations. Youth Attendees have placed tree guards around 120 seedlings so far, with more to be done. With all the (valid) concern about the use of chemicals for termite-

proofing houses, it would be plain stupid to lose a termite-proof natural resource such as the White Cypress-pine.

For reasons of environmental protection, economics, social welfare and aesthetics, there are solid grounds to link Organ Pipes National Park, Sydenham Park and Brimbank Park using the valley of the Maribyrnong (not just the river) and back up Taylors Creek. The eastern suburbs have parks of such size (e.g. Yarra Valley), why not one for the West?

Friends of Organ Pipes

From page 5.

manent staff.

In re-vegetation, it is hoped that the '90s will see an increase in species diversity in the park, and a start towards connection of this park with a natural corridor along Jacksons Creek to Sydenham Park and thence to Brimbank Park at Keilor.

If you are interested in finding out more details about revegetation of the park or wish to participate in FOOP working bees, members would look forward to hearing from you. Please ring Robert Bender on (03)49 2413 or the Ranger Jack Lyale on (03)390 1082 for further information.

Instructions to Authors

Indigenotes articles are not refereed, although the editor reserves the right to amend articles submitted.

The format for material to be submitted is flexible. Although I would prefer material to be typed, this is not necessary. Ideally material typed on a word processor should be supplied to me in hard copy and on floppy disk to minimize my work and to minimize the chance of typographical errors. 5 1/4 inch IBM DSDD format, or 3 1/2 inch Macintosh format disks are all I can handle.

Please respect the deadline for material printed on the front page, it streamlines a difficult task.

How you can help:

Your help is needed. Write to John Cain and Jeff Kennett to say that \$40 million a year is needed to save our native species, and that as a first step the budget should be doubled next year. **ASK THEM WHETHER THEIR PARTY WILL SUPPORT THIS BUDGET BOOST.**

Also, fill in the form below and post it in to Wendy Murphy, Conservation Council of Victoria Project Officer, 28 Crown Street, Flemington, 3031. (Tel: 376 5625).

I want to help the campaign

Send me: petition & draft letters for Cain/Kennett

A donation is enclosed

(name)

(address)

(postcode)

Tel: (w) (h)

Written and authorised by:
Wendy Murphy, 28 Crown Street, Flemington, 3031.

700 species in Victoria

face extinction.



Our campaign will continue to:

- ensure the promise is kept
- influence how the money is kept
- build support for an eventual commitment of \$40 m/year on flora and fauna conservation

But the State Conservation Department spends only 5% of its \$200 million annual budget on nature conservation.

At risk:

Valuable work has been done to secure the Eltham Copper. But there are many more species at risk of extinction right now.

Here is a random selection:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Hamilton Bandicoot | Water-fern |
| Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby | Metallic Sun-orchid |
| Orange-bellied Parrot | Black Gum |
| Helmsted Honeyeater | Jumping-jack Wattle |
| Mountain Pygmy Possum | Swamp She-oak |
| Leadbeater's Possum | Orange-blossom Orchid |
| Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo | Red Swainson-pea |
| Baw Baw Frog | Grammiplains Pincushion-lily |
| Murray Cod | |

Action Needed:

Action is urgently needed to rescue the 700 species that are on the brink of extinction and to prevent the other native species from becoming threatened.

The passage of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act in 1988 is a major step forward. But if our native species are to flourish we must put much more effort into the control of environmental weeds, the retention of bushland, the restoration of habitat, land purchase, incentives for private landholders, education, research and management planning, captive breeding and release.

Big Budget Boost Required:

Currently the Government spends \$10 million a year on flora and fauna protection. The Conservation Council of Victoria calculates that \$40 million is needed a year to secure our native species. As a first step, next year's budget for flora and fauna protection should be doubled.

Community Campaign:

To achieve this budget boost the Conservation Council of Victoria, a community conservation group, is running a campaign to convince the government and the opposition. A full page advertisement will appear in the Age before the State budget is announced in August or September; hundreds of letters will be sent to John Cain and Jeff Kennett; a petition will be presented to Parliament. A detailed proposed budget for nature conservation will be prepared to show what money is needed and where it should be spent.

(See over page for how you can help the budget campaign.)



What is IFFA?

The Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association (IFFA) is an incorporated association of professional and amateur biologists actively involved in the conservation of flora and fauna. IFFA provides well considered and qualified comment on issues affecting or involving indigenous biota, its ecology, and the environment.

The Association is committed to the conservation of all indigenous flora and fauna, and the preservation of all remnant and roadside vegetation (not just that contained in National and State Parks, and areas classified for specific significance). Preservation through management and restoration is essential to the well-being of these areas, and the resources of IFFA are available to both public and private sectors of the community to help establish appropriate management and conservation strategies. It is a primary objective of the association to research, collect and disseminate information to relevant groups and individuals.

The Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association meets at 8 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month except December 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 does not reach the third floor. New members are welcome.

Details of research, education programs, excursions, restoration projects and other activities are in the association's newsletter *Indigenotes*, or contact IFFA at 10 Alsace Street, East Brunswick, Victoria 3057.

Memberships

IFFA membership costs \$40 for groups, or \$20 for individuals per year.

It includes subscription to *Indigenotes*.

Memberships should be sent to
The Secretary,
Indigenous Flora and
Fauna Association,
Ms Michele Arundell,
2/81 Alexandra Avenue,
South Yarra,
Victoria 3141.

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2/81 Alexandra Ave,
South Yarra 3141.



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