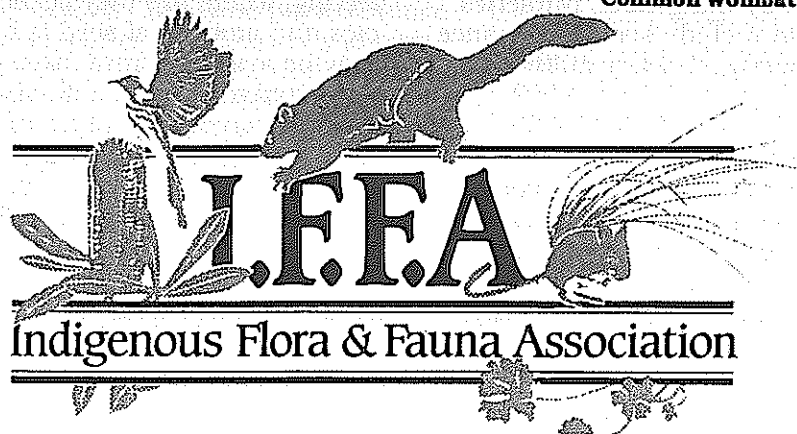


INDIGENOTES



Common Wombat, drawn by Lynlee P. Smith.



A question of principle

- Strategies, standards and future directions for indigenous nurseries.

A report on the IFFA workshops on 9/2/91 from Michele Arundell

How to keep the gene pool intact while exploiting its reserves to aid its expansion — this is the dilemma that every conscientious indigenous grower faces with every seed or cutting taken from the wild.

A broad range of IFFA members involved in seed collection and the cultivation of indigenous plants attended at workshop on Saturday 9 February at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. The lectures which preceded the workshop sessions were reported in the previous issue of *Indigenotes*. The workshops covered four major areas of concern for indigenous growers.

Commercial aspects:

The brief history of growing locally indigenous plants in quantity, the lack of any formalised co-ordination within the industry itself, along with an ever increasing demand for resources, has led to the need for greater communication between those involved in cultivating indigenous plants. It was agreed that an organization of indigenous plant growers — either inside IFFA or independently — would be an appropriate forum to facilitate improved communication, information exchange, working conditions and relationships between growers.

Nurseries with established boundaries for their local collecting and growing district need to be able to refer clients to the appropriate indigenous grower in another area if they can't themselves supply indigenous stock, and so encourage retail buyers to plant stock local to their area.

Some species have become so locally restricted in their range that seed may need to be obtained from an area outside the usual range of the nurseries growing area. A fluent working relationship between nurseries and with the authorities responsible for seed collection areas is essential to facilitate this.

It was agreed that a high level of documentation should be maintained by indigenous nurseries. Documentation should include seed provenance details, seedlot numbering, nursery cultivation records etc.

The need for clearly marked provenance details and seed lot and cultivation record numbers on plant labels was seen as essential to ensure the integrity of stock and to provide information for purchasers.

Many of the growers present expressed concern that as yet many government authorities and councils are not aware of the merits of growing locally indigenous plants. Of those authorities and agencies who are inspired to plant indigenous, many often do not plan sufficiently in advance to allow for the seasonal considerations of the growers eg. the need to assess the species requirements for seed collection and cultivation. This lack of foresight in authorities planning orders may lead to difficult decisions on the part of the grower: the best available provenance or genetic stock may have to be disregarded due to time constraints or even less suitable stock being provided by competitive growers.

It was agreed to form an industry association of indigenous growers which would provide the opportunity for a co-ordinated approach to the responsible authorities and agencies on these issues. The inaugural meeting was planned to discuss and define the principles and practices of the growers and nurseries involved. Future issues to be considered include Government recognition and accreditation along with the need for an independent panel or body to assess the participating growers' adherence to guidelines.

We must look to the future with our work today since it will be the future generations who will depend on the data we provide, for their study and understanding of species, communities and genetic diversity.

Review of seed collecting procedures:

It was agreed that labelling of seed in its various stages of collection, cleaning, storage and re-distribution is critical in terms of genetic considerations to maintain the integrity of a collection. Provenance information is also of paramount importance.

IFFA members supported the need for a central database containing information on: seed collection occurring throughout Victoria, who is collecting, where are they collecting, and what species and amount of seed is being collected (and may be available from these collectors)? The establishment of such a database would be an extremely beneficial tool for all those involved in land management. It would seem appropriate that this project be co-ordinated by DCE Flora Survey Unit and that the information be available to the public.

IFFA Horticulture Group

from Graeme Lorimer

Funding agencies:

As time was short, and other opportunities exist to find out about funding agencies, this issue was not discussed.

Biological aspects:

How local is local is an extremely complex issue. Mechanisms of dispersal, pollination etc. must be considered when making decisions about appropriate provenance and genetic integrity eg. some plants exchange genes over long distances whereas others may exchange genes over a very restricted range. Some species may need to be collected from a different area due to lack of any local populations or because the closer appropriate locations populations are already rare, reduced or bearing insufficient material for the scale of seed collection required.

Clearly we have to know where any material originally comes from to make pertinent decisions. Proper labelling and provenance data provided by the grower and maintained by the planting authority, will provide sufficient information about the original parent species/community.

The future will bring a greater demand for producing seeds on a commercial basis from original stock, whether it be for commercial sale, direct seeding ventures or to reduce the pressure on already reduced wild populations.

The use of seed orchards raised the issues of selection pressures applied on the gene pool in the orchard, and the need therefore to re-introduce new stock from the same origin over time. There was also concern raised about the size of areas from where original stock is collected. Design of areas should consider genetics and should be monitored and manageable. There is a need to follow the changing pattern of genetics by monitoring the populations. There is also a need to identify and prioritise which species have genetic problems.

The use of salt tolerant plants and clones for reclamation /revegetation works is another difficult topic which was discussed briefly. The need for adherence to ecological considerations of populations and communities in selecting the species and provenance was again stressed, since an apparently non-invasive species may be genetically invasive potentially threatening the integrity of local populations.

The workshop wound up because we had to be out of the Hall by 4.30, well before people's enthusiasm ran out.

A meeting was convened by Rob Scott to discuss 'indigenous nurseries' on Saturday, 27 April 1991; it was attended by thirteen people, with two apologies. We met on the lawns in the Botanic Gardens and discussed issues of provenance, labelling, nursery record-keeping, sale of environmental weeds, government subsidization of some nurseries, and exchange of information among horticulturists and from geneticists.

The most important outcome is the establishment of a Horticulture Group within IFFA to specialize in these sorts of issues, rather like the Study Groups of the Societies for Growing Australian Plants. The main objective, at least in the first instance, will be to exchange information about horticultural techniques, labelling standards, genetic considerations and so on.

If you want to join in, contact Rob Scott by phoning (03) 534 3154 (A.H.) or writing to him at 1/51 Spenser Street, St.Kilda 3182. Rob will be the group's convenor, and he's keen to get peoples' ideas about the group.

We aim to publish a list of the names and districts of all people who express interest in the group. There will also be some articles on labelling and record keeping in the next Indigenotes. Feel free to contribute to the articles.

The group will meet over dinner at 6:00 p.m. on 25th. June, 1991, immediately prior to the IFFA Annual Meeting. Look for venue details in the next Indigenotes.

The other main outcome of the meeting was clarification of what it means to be a good 'indigenous nursery', other than just having a good range of healthy plants. It seems to come down to guaranteed and detailed specification of the plants' origins (provenance) coupled with expert knowledge and advice about where the plants can be put and regarded as 'indigenous' in an ecological sense. We all agree that the 'expert knowledge' part needs lots more work.

A View from the Dandenongs

"Don't it always seem to go That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone"

-from Joni Mitchell's 'Big Yellow Taxi'

By Graeme Lorimer*

The March 1991 issue of *Indigenotes* included an article (pp.8,9) with some ideas about how the Victorian government should stop the terrible loss of remnant vegetation through land development, housing and all those things that people do when they want to turn their treed block into a nice house and garden.

The problem is particularly bad around the Dandenong Ranges. Many people here own wonderful bush blocks which have been zoned 'residential' or 'industrial' for ages, so they've always had an 'as of right' to go ahead and build their houses or factories.

The March *Indigenotes* article suggests that the Victorian government can stop all the destruction of such sites by simply buying them for reserves. I think this would cost over \$100,000,000 for the Dandenongs alone, but the article says funding could come from increased taxes and charges and by sale of land surplus to government requirements.

But beware! The government is already selling its 'surplus' land as fast as it can - including some good bushland. This is regarded by them as a sensible strategy for paying off government debts and providing schools, hospitals and so on. If you can find some land for them to sell, they've got other expenses in mind rather than buying more reserves which they then have to spend money on for management.

The same sort of argument applies to increased taxes and charges. If the government could get away with it, they wouldn't spend much of the proceeds on buying more land.

And there's one more, very serious, problem: A large proportion of significant natural remnants aren't even known about.

There have been two celebrated cases recently where development plans have been prepared for extremely significant grassy woodland remnants in Kilsyth South and Nunawading, just before I discovered the sites and pointed out their significance. (This is a sure way to become unpopular with land owners).

Damien Cook told the last IFFA Vic. meeting about another such case with Red Gum grassy woodland south-east of Melbourne.

The sad truth is that many remnants like these must be lost every year without anyone knowing what has gone.

Clive Gordes knows the problem well from the number of sites he finds as he travels around for his work. He

asks, "Why can't there be some way of registering the existence of these wonderful little remnants, even by someone who can only note a few of the important plants?"

Good question! It would help the best sites to be recognized before they're destroyed, and even help in the preparation of cases in support of their protection. And I like anything which helps naturalists to communicate about all the different things and places which attract their interest.

So can IFFA do it? Some municipal councils, including Springvale, are recording some sites for their own purposes, but not for general use by all comers. I think we need someone to be a 'Remnant Sites Recorder', with a register (on a computer) of Victorian sites and all sorts of things about them. Some of the information you might want to keep are as follows:

Location.

Brief description of why listed (e.g. "One remnant Red Gum" or "Patches of Kangaroo Grass with wildflowers")

Ownership status (e.g. private backyard, vacant industrial land).

Vegetation or land form type (if known).

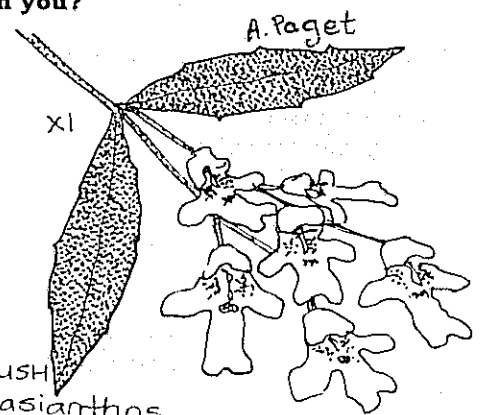
Any number of **comments**, each with author and date of entry-e.g. a species list, or "Burned by wildfire, 19/12/91", or "Sold for \$210,000 to J. Citizen, 13/9/90".

Contact names, addresses and phone numbers.

References for reports, newspaper articles etc. What **seeds** have been collected?

Each entry would record the author and date. Interested people could check from time to time for updates in their areas of interest, and draw on the information when the owner or responsible authorities need to be convinced that they need to change their plans. A perfect municipal council or government utility would even check the records before they started doing things to their land.

The difficult question is, "Who's going to keep the records?". **Can you?**



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Review:

'Wetlands: Their Ecology, Function, Restoration and Management'

— Proceedings of the Applied Ecology and Conservation Seminar Series Wildlife Reserves LaTrobe University, October - December 1989, published by Wildlife Reserves, LaTrobe University, Bundoora Vic.

Reviewed by Lincoln Kern

The title of this small but impressive book is well fulfilled by the breadth of its contents. The organisers of the Seminar series that the book documents attempted to bring together all the varied workers, academic, management, and hands-on, in the wetlands field. In doing this they have succeeded in providing a great deal of practical and useful information on wetland creation, restoration and management that would be useful to anyone working with wetlands and their conservation.

There are a wide range of topics covered. Most are within a conservation framework, concerned with preserving, creating or managing wetlands with the aim of conserving natural diversity. There is also an excellent exploration of the roles wetlands can play in treating water pollution problems. This information could be very important in these times when too many people are saying we can't afford to spend money on conservation. The information presented here demonstrates that wetlands can be a low cost and effective method of water purification and provide excellent wildlife habitat at the same time.

The DCE Wetlands Unit and the Victorian Wetlands Trust presented the first two papers. They provide a good overview of the values and the disturbing decline of wetlands in Victoria. The efforts by government and community groups in conserving wetlands are also detailed. It is encouraging to learn of the steps being taken to conserve wetlands but it is also clear that it will take a lot of work to reverse their decline.

The ecology of wetlands is also well covered in several sections. Survey methods and analytical techniques are explained first, then aquatic invertebrates and the effect of toxic agents on aquatic ecosystems are described. The structure and function of streams and wetlands are further explored. These papers collectively provide an excellent background on wetlands and their ecological processes.

The articles on the treatment of polluted wastewater within constructed and natural wetlands are quite enlightening and detail some of the important work being done in this area. There is a general discussion of the great potential of such treatments for sewerage and runoff with references to examples around Australia and the

world. A specific example that many of us are probably familiar with, the wetland system at La Trobe University, is looked at in detail. This system was found to be very effective at removing pollutants from the urban runoff that flows through its series of ponds which also support a healthy and diverse ecosystem.

Victoria has a poor diversity of freshwater fish and a dismal record when it comes to safeguarding their existence. An overview of the freshwater fish in Victoria and a detailed analysis of their ecological role in wetlands is presented by two different authors. They both emphasize the need to improve and preserve fish habitat and to prevent the spread of exotic species.

There are many articles describing the establishment and management of wetlands around the Melbourne area, from rural areas such as Coolart on Westernport Bay and the Briars at Mt. Martha to the urban experience in Malvern, Brunswick, La Trobe and the Yarra Valley. The papers are an excellent resource for anyone working with wetlands in the Melbourne area. They describe a wide spectrum of people's experiences, both their successes and frustrations in the establishment and management of wetlands. These papers are also excellent examples of the changing perception of wetlands. It's clear that their value is starting to be recognised and that people are willing to work hard and get their hands dirty and suffer wet feet to protect and properly manage wetlands for the many benefits they provide to humans and wildlife.

This book covers a lot of ground in its 123 pages but it isn't a comprehensive coverage of wetlands and their conservation. It is an excellent introduction and resource book for anyone who is working in the wetlands field and any other interested people. Another worthwhile addition to your library.



Coming Events:

MAY

- National Wilderness Month.** Part of "Every Little Bit Helps" campaign organised by ACF, Life. Be in it and ECO (Earth Communications Office).
- 23 Thurs 7.30pm. **Earthcare St Kilda** meeting. Minka Veal (03) 527 4670.
- 25 Sat 4pm. **Mt. Eliza Association for Environmental Care** project day. Anne Read (03) 787 2034.
- 26 Sun 10am - 1pm. **Nunawading Indigenous Plants Project.** Seed collecting / propagation work, as required. Nunawading Council's Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Rd, Forest Hill. Brian Crouch (03) 878 5053. (Also on 23 June).
- 26 Sun 10am. **Friends of the Wildlife Reserves - (LaTrobe University)** working bee. Campus Reserve. George Paras (03) 479 2871. (Also on 30 June, but at Gresswell Forest).
- 26 Sun 10am. **MEAFEC** see 25 May. MEAFEC also has project work on the 4th weekend of June.
- 26 Sun 10am. **FO Eltham Copper Butterfly** project day. Steve Anderson (03) 844 2659.
- 26 Sun 11am-4pm. **FO Royal Park West** project day. Finishing off lower slope - erosion control work. Bring gloves and food. Adam Muyt (03) 386 7491. (Also on 30 June)
- 26 Sun. **FO Warrandyte SP** follow up walk with Pat and Mike Coupar. Margaret Burke (03) 844 1060.
- 26 Sun 2 pm. **FO Victoria's 1st Settlement site - Sorrento.** Stuart Sherrin (059) 84 1953.
- 27 Mon 7.45pm. **Marine Research Group** meeting. Museum of Victoria. Clarie Handreck (03) 870 3647. (Also on 24 June).
- 28 Tues 10am-1pm. **Greenlink Box Hill planting & maintenance.** (Every Tuesday). Fred & Fiona Cumming (03) 898 4808 (AH).
- 28 Tues 7pm. **The First Victorian Natural History Display organizing meeting.** See back cover.
- 29 Wed 7.30pm. **Wilderness Action Group** meeting. The Wilderness Society, 59 Hardware Lane, Melb. TWS (03) 670 5229.
- 30 Thurs 10am. **Propagation day, FO Warrandyte S.P.** Meet at the Park depot. Margaret Burke (03) 844 1060. (Prop. day every Thursday). Activity day - last Sunday of month.
- 31-2 June. Fri-Sun. **All About Fungi** study weekend. Part of the Australian Museum Society program. AMS (02) 339 8225.



TWINGING FRINGE-LILY
Thysanotus patersonii

by A. Paget.

JUNE

- 1 Sat. **IFFA field trip.** See back cover for details.
- 1 Sat. **FO Gellibrand Hill Park** activity day. Jenny Gaddaye (03) 744 6093.
- 4-5 Sat-Sun. **FO French Island SP.** Working on Pittosporum in the morning, after lunch the FOFI will check on the three Sea Eagle nests in the area. Fay Gordes (03) 772 9668.
- 2 Sun 9.30am. **FO Sherbrooke Forest mapping survey.** For meeting spot contact Vivien Freshwater (03) 754 3093.
- 2 Sun 9.30am. **FO Buckley Falls** working bee. South Barwon lower car park, planting along river. Tony Woolford (052) 43 6340.
- 2 Sun 10am-3.30pm. **Darebin Creek Redevelopment Association community planting - LaTrobe** footbridge, Reservoir. Melways map 19 ref D8. BBQ lunch provided. Mary Anne Boyd-Squires (03) 490 4360.
- 2 Sun. Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, general excursion - **Fungi at Blackwood Range.** Leader: Tom May. Dorothy Mahler (03) 850 9379.
- 2 Sun. **VNPA Walk Talk & Gawk: Lederberg Gorge SP** with Jack Myers. A beautiful scenic walk through open scrub with views of Port Phillip Bay and a look at the stages of regeneration after fire. Jack (053) 67 2482.
- 2 Sun 1pm. **FO Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve** activity day. Meet at the McLelland Drive car park, Melways map 103, ref C10. Contact Ann Read (03) 787 2034.
- 4 Tues 8pm. **Fauna Survey Group** meeting. National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra. Alex Kutt (03) 419 0752.
- 5 Wed. **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY.** The Wilderness Society is organising a badge appeal. To become involved contact Anita (03) 670 5229. For more details about WED contact the Department for Conservation and Environment.
- 8-10 Sat-Mon. **Fauna Survey Group. Queens Birthday campout - Wilsons Promontory.** "We will be starting the project involved with trapping in areas before and after control burning in heathland on the Prom. The initial planning took place on the Anzac Day WE and on this camp we will be aiming to set a number of trap lines. Alex Kutt (03) 419 0752.
- 11 Sat. **F. O. Dandenong Ranges N.P.** project day. Graham Barstow (03) 758 6935.
- 12 Sun 10am. **Geelong Indigenous Nursery,** tree planting at Hovell's Creek. Mark or Trish (059) 29 8087.
- 9 Sun 10am-3pm. **FO the Yarra** activity day. Galatea Pt, Melways map 2D, ref. D7. Judy Ruthford (03) 347 2252. (Also on 26 June)
- 9 Sun 10am. **Stony Ck weeding group.** Mark

Gardner (03) 844 3799 (H), 844 2659 (W).

- 9 Sun 10am. **Restoration of bushland and wildlife habitat / working bee - Hillcrest Association.** Hillcrest Bushland, Melways map 48, ref K5. Caroline Falkinham (03) 874 1227(H), 490 4253(B).
- 9 Sun 3-5pm. **Green Link Camberwell** activity day. Dianna Burgess (03) 809 2092.
- 9 Sun. **FO Brisbane Ranges** project day. Nola Haines (052) 29 6388.
- 11 Tues 7.30pm. FOGL natural history program. **Weeds** with Cecily Falkingham. Field trip on 13 July at Coolart. Cost: \$10, Gould League: 67 High St, Prahran. Gayle Seddon (03) 510 1493.
- 12 Wed 9.30am. **FO Sherbrooke Forest** project morning. Woodfall Track - ivy and pittosporum. Meet at the Pound Ck. picnic ground. (Melways map 75, ref F6). Vivien Freshwater (03) 754 3093.
- 12 Wed 7.30pm. FOGL nat. hist. program. **Eucalypts** by David Albrecht. Field trip on 17 August at Warrandyte. See 11 June.
- 18 Sat 9.30am. **FO Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee** project day - Tree planting and seed collecting. Meet at Happy Valley car park. Judy Douglas (053) 67 2672.
- 18 Sat. **Friends of Churchill NP & Lysterfield Lake Park** project day. Neal Smith (03) 873 2635.
- 15 Sat 9-930 start. **FO Organ Pipes NP** working day. Robert Bender (03) 49 2413.
- 15 Sat 10-12. **FO Bradshaw Park weeding day.** Meet at gate (cnr Nepean Hwy & White St) Melway map 87 ref D10. Whitney Beadman (03) 584 4366.
- 15-16 Sat. **Werribee Water Rat survey.** FSG excursion (of FNCV). Julian (03) 543 86277.
- 16 Sun. 10am-12noon. **Brunswick Tree Group** activity day. Meet at Moonee Ponds Ck at end of Union St. Melways map 29, B9. Eric Ward (03) 387 9490.
- 16 Sun 10am. **Men of the Trees**, maintenance and planting at Deep Rock. Melways map 2D, ref D6. Minette Russell-Young (03) 898 1364.
- 16 Sun. VNPA Walk Talk & Gawk: **French Island SP** with Fay & Clive Gordes (03) 772 9668. An island relatively close to Melbourne but comparatively unknown and uninhabited. Heathland and saltmarsh. Koalas. Access by ferry and bus.
- 17 Mon 8pm. Society for Growing Australian Plants - Victoria, meeting. **Victorian Rainforests** - illustrated talk by David Cameron. National Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra. Enid Bowman (03) 882 5297.
- 20 Thurs 7.30. Fern Society of Victoria meeting: **Victorian Native Ferns** - with special reference to rare and endangered species, by Dr Tim Entwistle. National Herbarium, Sth Yarra. Bernadette Thomson (03) 399 1587.

- 22 Sat. Botany Group meeting of FNCV. AM - **The work of the Herbarium.** Leader: Tim Entwistle. PM - **Rainforest Trees of Northern Australia,** Mary Doery. Margaret Potter (03) 889 2779.
- 23 Sun. VNPA **Walk Talk & Gawk: Merri Creek.** After years of degradation, Merri Creek is being rehabilitated. A look at what has been done and what is proposed. Bookings: V. Trenberth (03) 592 6236 (7.30pm-9pm)
- 25 Tues 6pm. **The IFFA Horticulture Group** will meet over dinner immediately prior to the IFFA Annual General Meeting. Contact Rob Scott (03) 534 3154 (H) or 536 1491 (W) **IFFA AGM See back cover.**
- 25 Sat 10am. **FO Sherbrooke Forest** project day. Coles Ridge; ivy, pittosporum, holly etc. BYO picnic, drink, thermos etc. Vivien Freshwater (03) 754 3093.
- 29 Fri. **Notice:** Final day to contact FO Lyrebird if you would like to participate in the 1991 Lyrebird Survey. See 6&7 July.
- 30 Sun. VNPA **Walk Talk & Gawk: Dandenong Valley MP** with Blair Grace (03) 569 6275. A stroll through the wildlife reserve and a look at the impact of high recreation use in this very popular Metropolitan Park.

JULY

- 6-7 Sat-Sun. **1991 Lyrebird Survey.** Organised by FO the Lyrebird. More details in next issue of Indigenotes or contact Margaret Burke (03) 710 1725 (AH) or Lawrie Rigg (03) 434 6685 (AH).
- 14-19 Sun-Fri. **Australian Entomological Society 22nd AGM and Scientific Conference.** Prince Philip Theatre, University of Melbourne. Sessions include: The impacts of exotic insects in Australia. Posters and papers are invited on the relevant themes. For more info contact Janet Horne, (Convenor) Institute of Plant Sciences, Swan St, Burnley, 3121, (03) 810 1511.

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 VNPA (03) 650 8296.

The **Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers** coordinate plantings throughout Victoria and interstate. They take place throughout the week and on week-ends, usually a specified number of volunteers is required and most plantings are indigenous. For further information contact ATCV : National Headquarters in Ballarat: (053) 32 7490 Adelaide: (08) 365 1612. Sydney: (02) 413 5502. Tasmania: (003) 41 5429, Queensland: (07) 391 6655.

The editors will be pleased to receive information about any relevant events for listing in Indigenotes.

Snippets

The First Victorian Natural History Display

- Old Growth and Rainforest

'Far out on a spiral arm of the Milky Way, stuck in a remote corner of the universe is a small sun orbited by a scatter of planets. One of these planets has a thin blue-green layer containing almost an infinite variety of life. This planet is called Earth. Of all life on this planet it is the Eucalypt Forests on an island called Australia that stretch highest into the sky and deepest into the crust of the earth itself. These forests have appeared recently in the history of life on this planet, born in the cradle of rainforest that still lives alongside them. Indeed these forests are the most massive living structures that have ever lived.'

The First Victorian Natural History Display is a celebration of these forests. As high as an eight storey building, it is fitting that they be reconstructed in one. The floors of our building are our scaffolding. Now we can look deep underground, to the rocks and minerals that the roots of our forest giants penetrate. Here are the clues to the forest's past. The fossils of plants and animals that have preceded the forest - and ourselves. As we climb we see the heavy roots of the trees and a cross-section of life in the ponds and streams, the fish, the frogs and yabbies. Higher still we come to ground level. To the geological present time where Koori people worked as part of the environment before Europeans arrived. The ferns, the old logs, mammals scampering, birds calling. Higher up again we reach the heads of the trees of the middle canopy. The blackwoods, silver wattles and sassafrass. Among these and with us as we travel are the animals of the trees. The gliding possums, parrots, owls and bats all accommodated in the hollow limbs of this "living block of flats". High on our scaffold, above the forest the weather rains suns and blows as migratory birds track across the continent, and jet stream travelling insects descend into the forests from the frozen heights of the upper atmosphere. Higher still we swirl with the moon, the planets and the sun, the regulators of the seasons in our forests.

The display will be held over eight weeks in autumn in Melbourne during the Autumn Festival of 1992. This would include: Moomba, the Comedy Festival, Elderly Citizens Week and the school holidays.

There will be a meeting to discuss design of the display and its organization at the Yarra Bend Park Centre, on Tuesday 28 May. All interested people are welcome (see page 12 for details)

Metropolitan direct seeding field day

Go Green is interested in organizing a metropolitan direct seeding field day. The purpose would be to swap ideas and see first hand people's results. If you have anything to show and tell or know of anyone else, please ring the Go Green office on 654 1957 or 654 1800.

Friends Group Network

At the 5th Biennial Friends Conference held in Bacchus Marsh (Vic) on 9 to 11 March, it was decided that the existing Friends Network be formalized, that Friends Groups will be autonomous, that the Network be affiliated with VNPA, and that it consist of Friends Groups of conservation reserves, natural areas and indigenous flora and fauna, species or objects of historic and scientific interest. The Friends Committee shall have the power to affiliate Friends Groups, and the aims and objectives of these groups shall be consistent with the statement of purposes of VNPA.

The Network aims to produce a newsletter at least once a year which would incorporate a register of all groups, information on their activities, and items of interest and information to Friends.

Cooper St. Grasslands

Reports have just emerged that DCE is set to buy just 15 ha of the 71 ha State significant Cooper St. grassland. The price they're willing to pay is \$500,000 or \$33,333 per hectare. Friends of the Merri had the whole site appraised last year and average value per hectare was \$28,000. DCE is once again showing no commercial flare in negotiating the price, especially with the present depressed property market. They're set to pay a high price for a small piece of the grassland site. By doing this they're obtaining an area that is too small to be a viable reserve (according to their own advice), especially when the impacts of further industrial subdivision are taken into account. Future options of having the Cooper St. site incorporated into a future metropolitan park proposed for the Merri Growth Corridor by the Dept. of Planning would also be foreclosed on if the purchase goes through. So, once again minimal resources are flowing to an already deprived region and little effort is being made to preserve the significant community at Cooper St. Your local MP and Steve Crabb deserve yet another call or letter about the matter.

Source: FOM Newsletter March/April 91

Indigenous species lists

The preliminary results of a recent survey by the Municipal Association of Victoria indicate that:

- a third of councils have compiled lists of indigenous species, and 12% are planning to do so. Some councils have worked with local groups to compile these listings;
- nearly half the councils have been involved in collecting seeds of local species;
- three quarters of municipalities have provided trees to the local community; and
- 88% have been involved in revegetation projects.

This level of involvement is very positive, however, we must keep in mind that some councils have a rather 'loose' definition of indigenous. More details will be included in a forthcoming issue of *Indigenotes*.

Agapanthus lovers...

"I expected to hear more about the Shire of Flinders's recent pronouncement that agapanthus are weeds. I did — not from them, but from a tribe of people who sound as if they are prepared to die for their 'agies' or, at the very least, refuse to pay their rates.

One thing which came out of the flurry was a deep concern for both the indigenous areas of parkland and the introduced landscape on the Mornington Peninsula. I understand that the shire council, not content with abusing our agies, has thought about removing the introduced evergreens from the Red Hill area and the Sorrento foreshore. The idea does not seem to find much favor with my readers. One correspondent wrote of the peninsula as 'one of the most beautiful introduced landscapes in Victoria...the old stands and avenues of pines and cypress, rather than deciduous or native trees, form the backbone and give the landscape its own character and distinction. For me it (their removal) would be like knocking out my children's front teeth'

Take care, today's trendy is often seen by tomorrow's generation as a vandal. Once people start removing trees because they do not suit a particular school of thought, where does it stop? Next they will want to remove the West Australian Flowering Gums which do so much to make a summer drive down the Nepean Highway a pleasure..." - *The Age* 19/2/91 p24 by Sarah Guest.

What can one say? Yes previous generations who removed all that indigenous vegetation are now being seen as vandals, and we still haven't managed to stop that vandalism. Congratulations to Flinders Shire. We look forward to the exotic gardeners taking responsibility for the effects of their plantings.

LCC Wilderness Study

The Land Conservation Council has just published the Proposed Recommendations of their Wilderness Special Investigation. This is an important document because it proposes the mechanisms that will be used to designate wilderness areas, the management principles of such areas and the specific areas within Victoria to be recommended as wilderness. It is important for groups such as ours to comment on these recommendations, the indigenous perspective is very important to include. This will be the last point in the process to comment before the LCC makes its' final recommendations to the government. You can get your free copy from Information Victoria, the Dept. of Planning & Housing, Collins St., Melbourne or Regional DCE offices. Remember, every comment long or short is useful and must be submitted by 24 July, 1991.

Letter:

Bushland Management - Community involvement a must

I was surprised to read the letter Bush Management - Not new from Ted Kelly, Secretary of the Bradley Bush Regenerator's Association in Indigenotes (April 1991) criticising Greening Australia's efforts in seeking to promote community awareness and encourage participation in bushland regeneration programs in urban New South Wales.

Of course Mr. Kelly is right - bush regeneration is not new and many of us connected with GA's new Urban Bushland Management Unit have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Kelly and his colleagues for some years. What IS NEW is Greening Australia's move to embrace the principles and techniques long espoused by the bush regeneration fraternity. Greening Australia has traditionally approached the restoration of degraded landscapes through tree-planting, and it is truly gratifying to see the tree-planters trading ideas and experiences with the bush regenerators to their mutual benefit.

However, I can't accept Mr Kelly's statement that because Sydney already has a number of voluntary and professional regenerators at work, that we should take our energies and expertise elsewhere. Surely there are more than enough weeds for everybody.

- Judie Rawling, Project Manager, Urban Bushland Management Unit

Snippets

War on the Fox

The Commonwealth gov't. has "declared war on the fox". Ms. Ros Kelly, Environment Minister, has announced the provision of \$400,000 for fox control. The Western Australian Dept. of Conservation and Land Management will get funding to continue its' research on fox ecology, behavior and control and protection for endangered animal populations. The CSIRO will also be funded to study the biological control of foxes. Their aim is to genetically engineer a non-lethal fox-specific virus to sterilize them [Ed. A potentially dangerous method for a good end?]. Kelly cited the threats to many species of native wildlife, primary products such as lambs and poultry and the potential of the fox as a carrier of rabies (if it reached Australia) as the main reasons behind this effort to control the exotic species. She is also urging more co-operation between federal and state gov'ts. to combat the menace of the fox. Source: Conservator ATCV March 1991

Yarra Bend Park News

Jennings Industries has applied to use the Yarra Boulevard as access to its' development at the old Willsmere Hospital. The Yarra Bend Park Trust has lodged a formal objection to this on the grounds that it will further aggravate the problems of speeding and overuse that already make the Boulevard a hazard for park users every weekend. They have developed an alternative strategy, in consultation with VicRoads, Kew City Council and local residents, to fulfill a different image for the Boulevard, a quiet safe road through a peaceful bushland setting. The strategy includes a traffic management plan, priority drainage work, a park boundary fence and re-vegetation works along the road.

And...if you want an outing with a difference you can go row boating at night on the Yarra with Ranger Paul Stampton. The trips include spot-lighting, for a look at the nocturnal animals, and a supper afterwards. Enquiries on 482-2344. Source: Yarra Bend Park News April 1991

Catchments of Green Conference

Greening Australia is sponsoring a national conference on Vegetation and Water Management in Adelaide on 23-27 March, 1992. It will focus on the role of vegetation in water management and reversing water degradation in cities and rural areas. They are asking for people who are interested in presenting papers to register by 30 July, this year. If you're interested contact: Mr. Ted Allender, Convenor, Greening Australia, P.O. Box 232, Kensington Park, SA 5068

Resource Security: Death Sentence

Federal Cabinet has decided to support resource security legislation for major "value-adding projects". Legislation would guarantee minimum volumes of wood from a "wood supply catchment". Whilst each project would only occur after an assessment of heritage and environmental values, this assumes these values can be determined and catered for by Parks, reserves and forest prescriptions following a one-off assessment. The long-term conservation requirements of many species and values are often unknown. Following this dubious assessment, both State and Commonwealth are to enact legislation and "protective measures" within the acts are to include Codes of Forest Practice, "safeguards" and "periodic review". These largely undefined measures seem to be severely limited and contradicted by other Commonwealth commitments including:

1. Promises to make good any removal of an area from wood production for any reason by either making available new forest areas and/or forest productivity improvements such as intensive forestry management;
2. Agreement not to use Commonwealth powers to protect forest areas if they are later found to have high conservation values. Any natural disaster or the discovery of a rare species will mean either extending the forest area effected or turning areas into plantations.

Victoria already has resource security for sawlogs in the form of long-term licences and it is proposed to extend this to woodchipping/paper pulp operations. Experience shows that this is a costly mistake. For instance, clearfell logging has started in many rainforest sites of significance and protection for these areas has been refused because of licence commitments.

Resource security makes inflexible commitments which severely inhibit or prevent adjustments in an environment that is always changing and is poorly understood. It would create future problems from bushfires or even simple mistakes in miscalculating timber volumes. It is a disaster for unprotected species like the spotted tree frog, for unreserved rainforest and wilderness.

Both State and Commonwealth legislation is involved so please write to Bob Hawke, Parliament House, Canberra 2600, Joan Kirner, I Treasury Place, Melbourne 3002 and Jeff Kennett, Opposition, Parliament House, Spring St., Melbourne 3002 to oppose this conservation disaster in the making.

Source: VNPA Newsletter April 1991

Alcoa and seedbanks!

"The idea behind maintaining seed banks is to preserve native plants and trees. Seed is collected only from the healthiest of tree specimens. No seed is taken from trees which have been cross bred or which are diseased. These conditions show genetic weakness and will cause the break down of native specific strains. Species are collected from wide areas so that no genetic inbreeding can occur."

- *Insight (Alcoa's Melbourne Office Employee Newsletter) No 1, April 1991.*

What a confused statement. As they don't seem to know what they are talking about, it would seem that the purpose of Alcoa's involvement in funding the Melbourne seedbank is purely self aggrandisement. They donated around one ten thousandth of their quarterly net profit to the seedbank and are squeezing every drop of publicity out of it they can. Seedbanks surely are to help preserve native species in all their diversity. Disease is not evil - it is simply plant and animal interaction - exactly what Alcoa claim to support.

Spring Planting Festival

September 1 is being organized as an alternative to Arbor Week by a new committee - the Community Planting Events Committee, based at Greening Australia. A training day is to be held on 29 June for organizers of plantings on September 1. Enquiries to Adrienne Smith on (03) 412 4581.

Sea Eagles & aquaculture

According to *French Island Park News*, DCE Dandenong Region and the Minister have approved a commercial shellfish farm near Elizabeth Island and Stockyard Point (Vic). The approved area at Stockyard Point sites 10 ha of shellfish farm squarely in front of the Sea Eagle nest. The Department considers that a distance of 100 m is sufficient to prevent disturbance of a breeding pair of Sea Eagles. The area will be marked with buoys, lights, navigation aids and any other equipment needed. Adequate lighting of the lease area at night is also required. Boats will visit the site regularly and all cleaning of shellfish is to be conducted in the area. The last notification of this venture was in July 1990 when we were advised the proposal had been changed and we could re-object.

After the July round of objections the plan was apparently changed again without any notification to objectors and now we find it has been approved. This tends to make a mockery of community consultation according. The newsletter urges people wishing to see Sea Eagles continuing to breed on French Island to contact the Department of Conservation and Environment at Dandenong and the Minister Mr Crabb.

The Office of Corrections Environment Strategy

The Office of Corrections launched its Environment strategy on 11 December 1990. It has invited IFFA to propose joint environmental projects by contacting Mark Filan, Assistant Director of Community Based Corrections on (03) 698 6566.

"The Office of Corrections is committed to the protection, rehabilitation and enhancement of the environment and the efficient use of its resources.

The environmental objectives of the Office of Corrections are:

- Objective one: to use environmental resources wisely, including recycling of materials and conserving energy and making optimum beneficial use of non-renewable resources;
- Objective two: to develop programs that actively contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment;
- Objective three: to utilise the prisoner and offender work force to rehabilitate environmentally devastated or sensitive areas; and
- Objective four: to provide prisoners and offenders with the opportunity to develop accredited skills, to gain new perspective on environmental issues, and to participate in meaningful reparation.

To achieve these objectives, the Office of Corrections will integrate wherever possible its programs with other Government and Community programs."

The Environment Strategy goes on to list projects which the Office is already involved in: the rehabilitation of the Rowsley Valley, the Greening of Broadmeadows, the Edithvale Wetlands, the Western Creeks Project, the Yarra Valley Trail, Hazelwood Pondage, the Great South West Walk, Mobile Prisons, and Prison-based Bush Gangs.

Growback

Growback is a new annual publication which has evolved from the *Tree Decline and Revegetation Newsletter*, and which is now published by *Growback Publications* in Melbourne. It aims to keep its readers up to date with Australian research and activities related to revegetation, management of remnants and tree decline. It will contain brief summaries of projects with contact names and addresses, feature review articles on topics of interest, a directory of professional services, a feedback section for comment and suggestions, lists of useful contacts, further reading and information on funding sources for research and revegetation projects. The expected publication date for volume 1 is October 1991. Contact *Growback Publications*, PO Box 4306, University of Melbourne, Parkville Vic 3052.

No IFFA May meeting

As the Herbarium Hall is busy with the exhibition 'Our botanical heritage' until 26 May, we cannot use it. Instead we are having an excursion on June 1 (see below).

The First Victorian Natural History Display organizing meeting

Tuesday 28 May, 7 p.m. at the Yarra Bend Park Centre, Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield (Melways map 2d, F4). All welcome who are interested in helping organize or contribute ideas to the display. Contact Bob Macdonald (03) 347 7918.

Tom's mushy trip

Saturday June 1 (Tom May is a sometime mycologist at the herbarium) meet at the reserve just past Gembrook post office, Melways map 189 ref 10H at 10am for a 10-15 minute intro from Tom. All people that are going contact Michelle to car pool (03) 655 2300 (w), 867 4173 (H).

IFFA AGM

Tuesday 25 June 8pm herbarium. Please submit nominations for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson, Editor, and two committee members in writing, with nominator and seconder's signatures, and any items for the agenda to Michele by 18 June.

Front cover:

Common Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*, drawn on scraperboard by Lynlee P. Smith. The main food of the omnivorous Common Wombat is native grasses but it also includes sedges and the roots and shrubs of trees in its diet. The Common Wombat can be both nocturnal and diurnal depending on the season. In summer it seldom emerges from its burrow except at night, but in winter it may bask and graze during the day. Fossil evidence indicates that the range of the Common Wombat has contracted southwards and eastwards since the Pleistocene. European settlement has accelerated the process and its distribution is now far more discontinuous, the colonies in southwestern Victoria and southeastern South Australia now being only remnants.

- From: **The Australian Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals**, Robert Strahan ed. Angus & Robertson Melbourne 1983. pp1 18-9.

"They would make lovely pets except if you prefer them not to burrow through cupboards and walls."

Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editors — the deadline for the next issue will be 31 May.

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