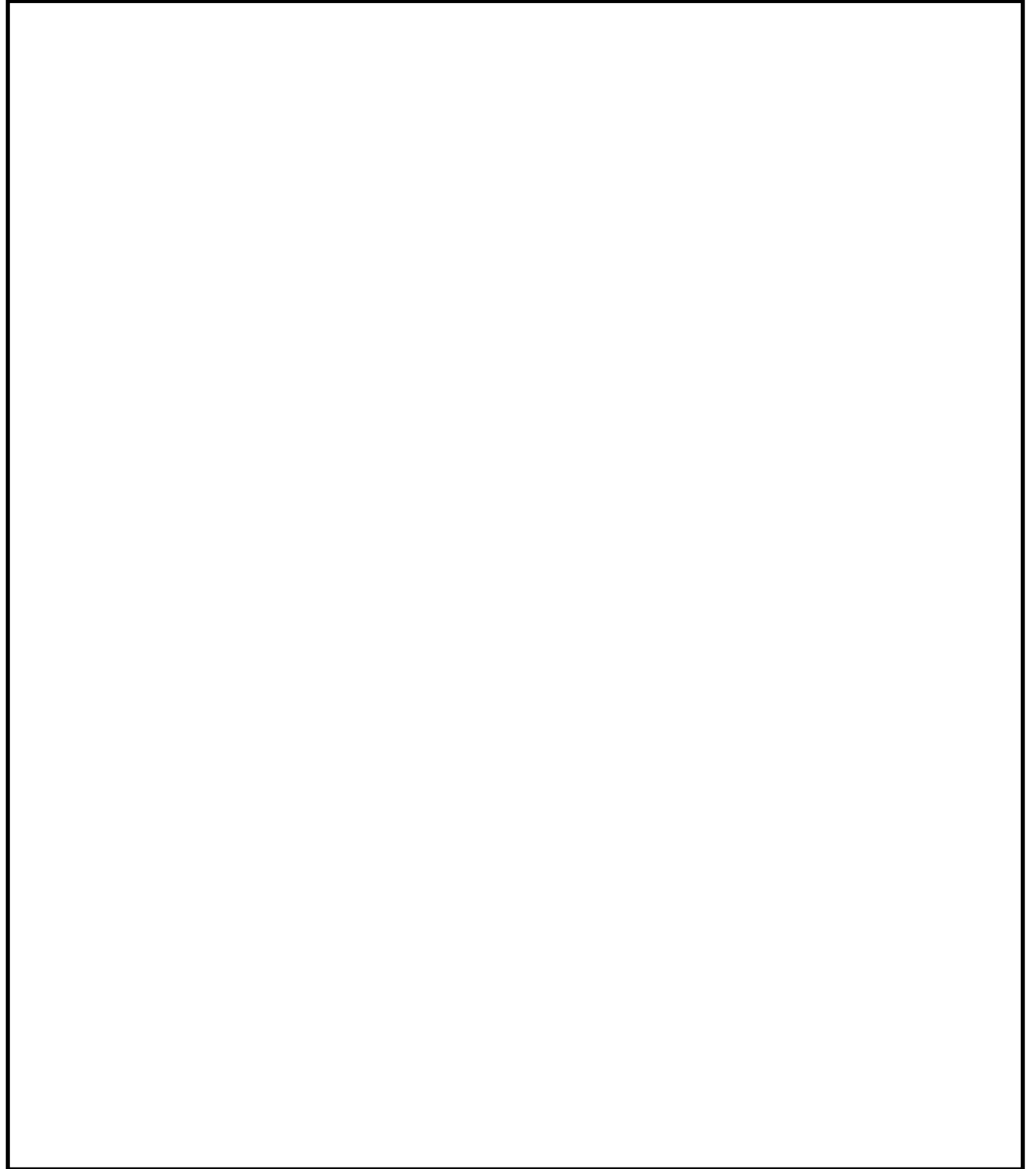


INDIGENOTES



Editorial

Notes from the new editor or hopefully co-ordinator of the editorial team.

Well, Tony finally has relief from the perpetual task of editing this well read publication. I have been working on Indigenotes now for 18 months. My efforts have ebbed and flowed, doing more some months than others, but always filling a page or two. With this effort behind me I probably know more about how the newsletter gets put together than anybody else.

Tony has done well, he has made the task bigger but has elevated the product to a high quality and at the same time made the process quite smooth, really. He's got an excellent flow of information going, from contributors and other organisations, and established an efficient system of putting it together (with the help of appropriate computer technology). My task as editor will be long some months still but it has been made immensely easier because of all the groundwork Tony has done.

I must ask everyone to give me time to get used to the task but I'm hoping for a smooth transition. You may see some changes of style or layout, write to me if you have any concerns. Please keep all the information flowing, this newsletter is by the members and for the members, I just put it together.

Others have already committed themselves to helping in the editing, too. They include Jane Robinson, David Lockwood and Val Himmelreich. Indigenotes must also be a collaborative effort in its production. We need more people to be involved. Does anybody out there want to do regular book reviews? Does anyone have a computer to help type? There are many interesting roles that people can do. Contact me if you're interested.

And finally the new contact address will be:
Lincoln Kern
Indigenotes Editor
P.O. Box 228
Preston 3072
Ph. (03) 481-4682

Using the Melbourne Indigenous Seedbank

by Jane Robinson, Project Officer -
Greening Australia Victoria

The Melbourne Indigenous Seedbank (MIS) has undergone significant development over the past year. Much consideration has been given to various aspects of the seed bank in order to provide an ethical and worthwhile facility. The MIS has available seed collected from the Melbourne area to be used in appropriate projects. As of May 1993 the MIS has stored 500 different seed lots collected from 240 sites around Melbourne. This seed has all been collected ethically and is accompanied by detailed information which is stored on a central database. (There will be an article on 'collecting requirements of the MIS' in a forthcoming issue of Indigenotes.)

Obtaining seed from the MIS

* Provide the MIS with information about the area where you intend to use the seed. This may be a Melways reference, suburb name(s) or postcodes. Using the database a search will be conducted to provide a list of any seed that we have in stock suitable for your area (Fig. 1).

* You may request quantities of the seed lots available for your area by marking the seed lots you desire, and writing in the quantity of seed you need in grams next to the total weight of the seed lot. An application form will have been sent to you along with the stock print out. This must be completed to enable seed bank staff to assess the intended use of the seed.

* All seed requested is not provided automatically. If the intended seed use is considered inappropriate, the MIS reserves the right to withhold seed. Certain seed lots are coded as restricted; these are available only where their use is closely monitored and the project is of special significance.

* Persons intending to propagate and sell MIS material must indicate this when first requesting a stocklist. A separate application form is provided in order to obtain information necessary to assess this type of application.

* A handling fee applies to each seed lot distributed. The handling fee is derived from the handling time, packaging and posting (unless seed is picked up) and the seed value. Seed value is based on ease of collection and cleaning and the rare/endangered status of the species. For example, *Acacia mearnsii* has a value of \$80.00/kg, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* \$140.00/kg and *Rutidosis*

leptorrhynchoides \$600.00/kg. One gram of *E. camaldulensis* will have a handling fee of \$7.40 (+p&p).

Storing seed in the MIS

Seed lots can be stored at the MIS for a storage fee, or by donation of 10% of each seedlot/year at the discretion of the MIS. Seed lots remain the property of the depositor. Seed is stored in heat sealed foil bags and kept at 4 C.

* Seed to be stored must be cleaned by the depositor. The seed cleaning facilities at the MIS may be used by prior arrangement.

* A set handling fee is charged dependent on number of seed lots, plus a yearly storage fee dependent on size of seed lots. Community rates are set at 60% of the flat rate storage fee.

Germination Testing

A function of the MIS is to provide a seed testing service for indigenous species. Much of this work is of a research nature looking at seed dormancy and responses to storage. Germination testing can

provide useful information regarding percentage viability of a seed lot, and germination under set conditions. A charge of \$20.00 per trial is applicable.

Credit Point System

Groups or individuals can accrue credit points by volunteering for the MIS or by donating suitable seed. These credit points are then exchangeable for seed. Normal application procedures still apply regardless of whether seed is exchanged for a handling fee or credit points. The MIS is a non-profit project. The fees are calculated at cost recovery and enable the seed bank to continue providing seed of known origin.

The MIS is open for business now. If you wish to apply for seed, store seed or know more about the MIS please contact:

Dale Tonkinson or Jane Robinson
Greening Australia Victoria
P.O. Box 9668, Birdwood Ave., South Yarra, 3141.

Figure 1

Looking Forward: The Next Step

'Looking Forward: The Next Step: A Guide to Preparing a Local Conservation Strategy' (1992) is a guide to formulating environmental policies and strategies at the local level. It is not solely a document written in future terms but also contains information on the progress of Local Conservation Strategies in Victoria since the first one was completed in 1987. From 1987 to 1992 twenty three strategies covering thirty municipalities in Victoria were complete or underway and contribu-

tions to the book come from many of the people who worked on those Strategies. Despite wide variation in location and circumstance, many issues are common to all strategies. This book covers the whole range of issues and is an invaluable tool for council officers working on strategies. It is available from the Municipal Conservation Association for \$10 plus postage. Contact Alistair Phillips at (03) 654 1322.

THE PLAINS WANDERER

**A regular series by botanist Ian Lunt on endangered*
native grasslands and grassy woodlands**

Little boxes, little boxes

My favourite science writer, the masterly Stephen Jay Gould, often begins his essays with strange comparisons. Two wonderful essays in *Bully for Brontosaurus* begin; "I know the connection between Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln", and "What do Catherine the Great, Attila the Hun, and Bozo the Clown have in common?"¹ Before you know it, you've been seduced into reading fascinating - and serious - deliberations on evolution.

In simplistic homage I begin this essay with a none-too-ingenuous question: "What three things do grasslands and grassy woodlands have in common with box-ironbark ecosystems?"

To begin with, both ecosystems have been grossly fragmented and are greatly perilled with extinction. A recent quiz in the Victorian National Parks Association's (VNPA) magazine, *Parkwatch*, stated that lowland grasslands were Victoria's most threatened ecosystem, and box-ironbark woodlands the second most threatened. Despite some qualms about the accuracy of the claims - many wetland communities are undoubtedly more threatened than box-ironbark woodlands - the comparison demonstrates that the most threatened ecosystems in south-eastern Australia are not in intact forested regions (e.g. rainforests), but are isolated, fragmented remnants in agricultural areas.

Answer No. 2: Both ecosystems were the subject of successful conservation conferences last year; the Box-Ironbark conference hosted by the VNPA, and the grassland and grassy woodland conference co-hosted by VNPA and IFFA. The proceedings of the Box-Ironbark conference have been released as a special issue of the *Victorian Naturalist*², and provide invaluable reading for anyone interested in nature conservation in rural areas, whether it be grasslands, wetlands, woodlands or ironbark forests. (Proceedings of the grassland conference are still to be released).

It is instructive to compare the content of the two conferences. Ever since Charles Sutton's landmark paper on the Keilor plains flora in 1916³,

grassland conservation has remained the domain of botanists (or boffins, depending upon your point of view). Only recently has this professional concern filtered to the wider public. Since politicians and conservation departments respond firstly to public pressure, not expert advice or ecological priorities, grassland conservation has been routinely ignored for decades. This historical emphasis on plant conservation remained evident at the grassland conference, in which over half of the talks were botanically orientated. Luckily, a small but receptive audience is at last available for such issues.

By contrast, the Box-Ironbark conference dealt with a wider range of issues, including flora and fauna conservation and the broader issues of land management and responsibility; "just *who* do we hope will do all of this?", wailed many speakers. The grassland conference addressed the question, "how can we save these ecosystems?" by preparing a formal declaration of "strategies for grassland conservation", aimed largely at politicians and bureaucrats. But the box-ironbark conference approached the issue from a wider variety of viewpoints, with a greater grass-roots emphasis.

Margaret Blakers' article in the Box-Ironbark proceedings provides a superb perspective on the scale of the problems faced. Most conservation activities are labour intensive, but the future for many rural areas is one of fewer and larger farms, a declining workforce, and large farm debt. There simply are not going to be as many people around to fix the ever growing environmental problems.

A frustrating contrast between rural and urban conservation is the paucity of people and funds in country regions. Low population densities mean fewer people for political lobbying and revegetation. Fewer people means less money (ooh, if only a fifth of Melbourne Water's urban conservation budget was available to the rest of the state...). Unfortunately, fewer people doesn't mean fewer threats. Country bulldozer drivers go just as fast as urban ones ... perhaps faster, since they've got further to go.

A recurring theme in the Box-Ironbark conference was the need to approach problems co-operatively, between individuals and institutions, rather than simply allocating funds for organisations to spend within their own hierarchies. All too often, “co-operative management” degrades to a humiliating exercise in bureaucratic infighting as each organisation tries to extract the cash from someone else. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go before selfless co-operation for clear conservation goals becomes common practice in all our bureaucracies. Usually just the rhetoric prevails. As Doug Robinson notes in the box-ironbark proceedings, “there are many farmers keen and willing to donate land, labour and time to conservation projects, but they want some real support, not just brochures...”.

At times it is hard to resist the notion that the priorities of conservation departments lie in departmental job creation rather than on-ground results. A lot of remnants can be fenced (and regularly burnt if necessary) for one year of planners wages. A grassland analogue to the box-ironbark issues is rail-line and roadside burning: in some instances the most cost-effective measure is simply to subsidise local CFA brigades to burn remnants, not to employ more planners, create more databases or write more strategies. Regrettably, the common response is to write policy after strategy re-iterating ideological “support for CFA burning programmes”, while *financial* support is consistently denied. To quote Doug Robinson again:

“In the past, conservation actions in rural lands have been ineffective because we have tended to develop strategies in terms of land ownership - one strategy for public lands, one strategy for private land. If we want an adequate conservation system in Box-Ironbark, we need to progress beyond this point and develop coherent strategies that focus firstly on nature conservation, and only secondly on who owns the land...”

The Box-Ironbark conference provides a fascinating glimpse of an early stage in developing approaches to saving remnant vegetation in farming landscapes. The conference proceedings will undoubtedly interest all IFFA members. The proceedings also represent a “publishing coup” for the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV), which publishes the *Victorian Naturalist*. The FNCV charter includes conservation and natural history, but the conservation activities of the Club have faded in recent decades, with the rise of politically motivated conservation groups such as the ACF, CCV and VNPA. Fortunately, the Club’s journal, the *Victorian Naturalist*, is publishing more and more important articles on conservation biology. Recent issues have been devoted to fish conservation, linear reserve management and box-

ironbark conservation, and numerous other articles have appeared on important conservation issues. For what it’s worth, my desert island reading list for conservation management and restoration in Victoria includes *Indigenotes* (of course), *The Victorian Naturalist* and DCNR’s superb *Land for Wildlife News*. (If the long-promised, future issues of *Growback* are as good as the first, then this journal too will be prerequisite reading).

So, what else do grasslands and grassy woodlands have in common with box-ironbark ecosystems? Surprisingly, given their different names, many of the ‘box woodlands’ studied in the box-ironbark conference are the *same* ‘grassy woodlands’ that were discussed at the grassland and grassy woodland conference. A rose is a rose, whatever the name. Box-ironbark ecosystems include both the ironbark-dominated forests on infertile soils, and the remnant box and gum woodlands on the fertile plains. Whether one wishes to call the plains vegetation ‘box woodland’ or ‘grassy woodland’ is largely a matter of regional perspective and personal choice, the threats remain the same. Perhaps this might give us two bites at the cherry. DCNR’s grassland and grassy woodland conservation strategy is rapidly vanishing into unfunded obscurity. Perhaps some grassy woodlands might fare a little better under a box-ironbark strategy. We live in hope.

“We hear so much talk about an environmental ethic”, wrote the master science writer, Stephen Jay Gould, “Yet I think we need something far more grubby and practical.”⁴ The Box-Ironbark proceedings represent a first grubby attempt to clean up some of south-eastern Australia’s most devastated ecosystems. So, “do yourself a favour” - read them.

Footnotes

1. From ‘George Canning’s Left Buttock and the Origin of Species’ and ‘Bully for Brontosaurus’ in Stephen Jay Gould’s wonderful collection, *Bully for Brontosaurus* (1991, Penguin Books).
2. The Box-Ironbark proceedings in the *Victorian Naturalist* are available from the VNPA for \$7.00 plus \$1.00 postage (\$5.00 for VNPA members). Write to: The Victorian National Parks Association, 10 Parliament Place East Melbourne, 3002.
3. Sutton, C.S. (1916-1917). A sketch of the Keilor Plains flora. *Victorian Naturalist* **33**, 112-123, 128-143.
4. From ‘Prologue’ in *Bully for Brontosaurus* (1991, Penguin Books)

* **Botany Department, LaTrobe University, Bundoora, 3083.**

Coming events:

For IFFA events

see back cover

August 14 & 15. **MELBOURNE WILDFLOWER SHOW 1993.** Ringwood Convention Centre.

September 18 & 19. **ANGAIR WILDFLOWER SHOW.** Organised by the Anglesea and Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna. Anglesea. More details to come.

Conferences/Workshops/Talks

- 28 July, Wed 8pm. **Geological History of the Yarra Valley & related streams** - by Dr N. W. Schlegler. Geology Group meeting of FNCV. Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra. Karina Bader (03)690 4653.
- 2 August, Mon 7.30-10pm. **Soils ain't soils** - talk by Simon Leake. Presented by IFFA(NSW). See back cover.
- 2 August, 6pm. **Twelve months at Kew (England)**, by Philip Short, National Herbarium of Victoria. Organised by the Australian Systematic Botany Society. National Herbarium of Victoria, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra. Contact Tim Entwisle (03) 655 2313.
- 3 August, Tues 8pm. **Effects of fragmentation on woodland birds** by Doug Robinson. Part of meeting of Fauna Survey Group. Herbarium Hall. Felicity Garde (03) 808 2625.
- 8 August. **Nocturnal fauna** an illustrated talk by Ed McNab. Part of FO Sherbrooke Forest Annual General Meeting. Kallista Mechanics Hall, Tom Roberts Rd., (Melways map 75, ref K3). Enquiries: (03) 754 3093.
- 12 August, Thurs, 8pm. **Psilosiphon, a peculiar aquatic plant** by Tim Entwisle. Part of meeting of Botany Group of FNCV. Herbarium Hall. Win Bennet (03) 435 1921.
- 16 August, Mon 8pm. **Ferns of Australia** - an illustrated talk by Barry White. Organised by the Society for Growing Australian Plants - Victoria. National Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra. Enid Bowman (03) 882 5297.
- 21 August **Sites of Natural Significance Workshops Lillydale Shire.** Lillydale Shire. First of a series of workshops. Speakers will include: Andrew McMahon, Rodger Elliot, Peter Menkhorst, Steve Craig Workshop Groups will visit sites in Wonga Park, Montrose, Mt. Evelyn, Lilydale. For more details see page 10.
- 16-18 September. **Ecological Horticulture: Gardens of the future.** The third Ron Smith Memorial lecture seminar and field trip. University of Tasmania. With Geoff Carr, Principal, Ecological Horticulture Pty Ltd; Botanical Horticultural Consultants. Sponsored by The Society for Growing Australian Plants (Tasmania region) Inc &

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania. Opening lecture on Thursday is followed by a seminar on Friday which aims to provide gardeners, horticulturalists, landscape contractors, landscape architects and local government and industry practitioners with a practical understanding of ecological horticulture and its impact on the future of gardening. Field trip on Saturday will commence with the CSIRO Centre of Forestry Research, University of Tasmania Campus Landscaping and will include a variety of sites throughout the City of Clarence. For further information or registrations contact: Ron Smith Symposium, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart, Tas, 7001..

23&24 September. **Partnerships for Change - environmental practice in the 1990's. 1993 National Conference.** Environment Institute of Australia. Looking towards environmental management and partnerships which achieve sustainable development. Sydney Convention Centre. Direct enquiries to (02) 357 2600.

24&25 September. Fri & Sat. **Management of relict lowland grasslands.** Conference and workshop. The conference includes a field trip, a public seminar on Saturday afternoon and the themes of the workshops are: "Aims of conservation" and "Management case studies". Further details from Sarah Sharp, Wildlife Research Unit, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, PO Box 1119 Tuggeranong ACT 2901. Phone (06) 207 2125.

6-9 December. **Australian network for plant conservation 1993 conference.** Papers and workshops covering endangered species, germplasm storage, databasing, funding and education. Contact Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Australian National Botanic Gardens, PO Box 1777, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

Excursions and field trips

- 24 July. **Long Forest - Bacchus Marsh.** Botany Group excursion of FNCV. Leader: Janet Leversha, a Friend of Long Forest. Meet at 10.30am at southern end of Long Forest Rd, just off Western Hwy, east end of Bacchus Marsh. Win Bennet (03) 435 1921.
- 24-25 July, Sat-Sun. **Fauna Survey Group campout - North Central area.** Like many conservation groups, the FSG has been concerned over the effects of forestry in Eastern Australia. It is Victoria's drier communities however, that have been most intensively and extensively modified and degraded. Many of these communities are in a far poorer state of conservation than the wetter forests. It has therefore been decided that the next large area of study for the club should be the Box and Iron-bark forests of Central Victoria. Activities of campout will include bird watching, stag watching and spotlighting. Contact Dan Harley (03) 592 8952 or Ray Gibson (03) 874 4408.
- 25 July 1.00pm. **FO Warrandyte SP meet FO Healesville Sanctuary and FO Helmetted Honeyeater.** Meet outside the main entrance of

the Healesville Sanctuary. Enquiries: Pat Madeley (03) 727 2359.

31 July. **Walk, Talk & Gawk: Long Forest Mallee.** A remarkable outlier of genuine mallee scrub between Melton and Bacchus Marsh that has to be seen to be believed. Something different in a day walk. BYO lunch, 50km W Melb. Leader: Jack Myers (053) 67 2482.

1 August, Sun, 10.30. **FO the Grey-Crowned Babbler.** Field trip to known Babbler site: Mount Martha. Other trip on September 5 is an attempt to discover a new site at Balnarring. For further details contact David Lockwood (03) 558 1163.

Restoration Activities

July

24 Sat 1pm. **FO Sherbrooke Forest.** Project afternoon. Tree planting, behind the fence on the western side of Monbulk Rd., at Grants Picnic Ground (Melways map 75, ref K4). BYO lunch at noon, spades and crowbars - tough going! Vivien Freshwater (03) 754 3093. Other FOSF activities on 11 & 28 August & 9 September.

24 Sat 10am-12noon. **Sandringham Community Nursery** - volunteers propagation activities. Sandringham Council Depot, enter Reserve Rd or Talinga Rd. This is on every Thursday and Saturday.

24&25 Sat&Sun. **Mount Eliza Association for Environmental Care** Reserves project days. Call Anne on (03)787 2034 on the evening prior to the project day for details of proposed activity, venue and equipment required.

25 Sun 10am-1pm. **FO Braeside Park** working bee. Ron Pearson 584 7443.

25 Sun 11am-4pm. **FO Royal Park West.** Activity day. Adam Muyt (03) 481 4682.

28 Wed, 10am-3pm. **FO the Yarra** Galatea Pt, Mel 2D, D7. Judy (03) 347 2252. Also on Sun 8 August.

29 Thurs. **FO Warrandyte SP.** Nursery activity day. This Thursday will include an informal propagation workshop led by Cathy Willis: seed sowing and pricking out both seedlings and cutting grown plants. Margaret Burke (03) 844 1060. In addition to nursery days, there are about ten FOWSP sub-groups that hold regular activities around the park. For details, contact Margaret.

August

1 Sun 9am. **FO Buckley Falls.** Activity day. Tony Woolford (052) 43 6340.

1 Sun. **Earthcare St Kilda** activity day. St Kilda West Beach. Neil Blake (03) 534 2014.

5 Thurs 10am. **FO Helmeted Honeyeater** activity day. Yellingbo Ranger's Office. Yellingbo State Nature Reserve, Macclesfield - Woori Yallock Rd, Melways map 119B, ref F11. Gaye (059) 64 8350. Other FOHH activities include nursery activities (ring Pat Madeley (03) 727 2359), and work group activities.

7 Sat. **FO French Island** activity day. Fay or Clive Gordes (03) 772 9668.

7 Sat, 10am. **Green Link Box Hill** activity day. These events are also held every Monday and Tuesday morning, with Monday being Nursery work. Council Nursery in Nelson Street, Box Hill, further details, contact Minette (03) 898 1364.

8 Sun 3-5pm. **Green Link Camberwell.** Weeding and planting in the Welfare Pde. Meet at the corner of Dion St & Welfare Pde; Melways map 60, ref E7. Dianna Burgess (03) 809 2092

8 Sun. **FO Braeside Park** activity day. Ron Pearson (03) 584 7443.

8 Sun. **FO Brisbane Ranges NP & Steiglitz Park** activity day. Nola Haines (052) 29 6388.

15 Sun 10am. **Men of the Trees.** Deep Rock, Yarra Bend Park; Melways map 2D, ref D6. Minette Russell Young 898 1364.

15 Sun 10am. **URAGE** (Upwey Revegetation Action Group) weeding and planting to restore indigenous vegetation along Ferny Creek. Meet at the corner of Deans and Morris Rds, Upwey. Robert Stephen (03) 754 3792.

15* Sun 1.30pm. **Darling Mills Bush Regenerators (NSW).** Meet at the corner of Westmore Drive & Range Rd, West Pennant Hills. No previous experience necessary, just enthusiasm! Robyn Becket (02)872 4510. *Please confirm.

16 Sun. 10am-12noon. **Brunswick Tree Group** Moonee Ponds Ck. Eric Ward (03) 388 2123.

21 Sat 9.30am. **FO Werribee Gorge & the Long Forest Mallee.** Project day. Janet Leversha (053) 67 4229. Next Project day: September 18.

21 Sat. **Doncaster and Templestowe Conservation Society** activity day at Candlebark grasslands - 20 hectares of undulating hill adjacent to southern bank of the Yarra, east of Fitzsimmons Lane. Judy Zimmerman (03) 850 4116 or Judy Jones (03) 850 2554.

The **Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers** activities, contact ATCV: (053) 33 1483.

For other **Victorian National Parks Association** activities, call (03) 650 8296.

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 on (03) 650 8296.

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

Thank you to all the people who contact us regarding on-coming events their groups are organising. If you wish to have your events covered, or you can see corrections that need attention, please get in touch with Lincoln Kern (see back cover)

Report from the Indigenous Nurseries Network (INN) Annual General Meeting - 26.6.93

by Sue Mills (Secretary again!)

The AGM was attended by 15 network members. Over the past year INN has expended \$160.00, mainly on postage, photocopying and printing of pamphlets.

Business discussed and decided at the meeting was:

1. Involvement of INN members in specific issues as follows:

a) Judy Allan from Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-operative (VINC) is to co-ordinate a 'technical' project on gathering information regarding difficult to propagate species. One means of gathering this information will be via a mailed out spread sheet to appropriate people. Information returned will eventually be compiled into a propagation booklet. Anyone who is not an INN member but who would like to be involved in this project can contact Judy on 387 4403(w).

b) IFFA and INN have been approached by the Melbourne Zoo to take part in an indigenous display garden project. This is in very early stages and as of yet no further details are known. Mark Trengove from Geelong Indigenous Nurseries will be the contact person for this project.

c) As has been reported previously in Indigenotes, the INN is investigating the 2.5% government levy placed on all pots bought by nurseries. This levy is distributed to groups applying for research and development funds. The guidelines and priority areas for this research and development do not appear to be related to the sorts of things indigenous nurseries do. We have decided to submit a 'test case' proposal as well as lobbying for appropriate change to the priority areas. Ian Taylor from "Western Plains Flora" is looking into this matter.

d) Overcollection of seed from remnant vegetation (see article this issue).

2. Membership fees

INN currently has 26 member nurseries - almost 1/3rd of known indigenous nurseries in Victoria. While IFFA has been prepared to fund the Network for the last two years, it is understandably reluctant to continue subsidising income generating organisations. For many months INN has been discussing a structure of membership fees. The proposal that was accepted at the AGM was:

- a) Non-commercial, community nurseries - \$50.00
- b) Restricted commercial nurseries - \$100.00
- c) Commercial nurseries - \$150.00

Appropriate concessions or waiving of subscriptions will be considered for those whose circumstances are less than financially desirable.

Subscriptions will be separately banked and accounted for. They will be used to cover both organizational expenses (such as postage and photocopying) and out of pocket expenses for those undertaking voluntary work for the network. We will not be in a position to pay individuals for work, but believe that petrol etc., should be provided for. Member and non-member nurseries will be contacted via a mail out re. subscriptions within the next few weeks.

3. INN pamphlets

The network has developed pamphlets for use by nursery customers, which outline basics about reasons to use indigenous plants and list all known indigenous nurseries. There are two versions of the pamphlet, one with urban and one with rural nursery listings. Pamphlets can be ordered at \$12.00/hundred plus \$3.00 postage and handling. A sample of the pamphlets will be included in a mail out again in the next few weeks.

Thank you to all those who have been involved in the Network over the last year, and we hope to hear from more indigenous nurseries and seed collectors in the future.

Over collection of seed from remnant vegetation and the permit system

By Sue Mills

Background/Context of Problem

Approximately two years ago the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association (IFFA) hosted a series of workshops entitled 'Seed collection and horticulture of indigenous plants - strategies, standards and future directions'. These workshops were convened to address common issues of concern regarding conservation and propagation imperatives for the horticulture of indigenous plants. Speaking at a workshop, Graeme Lorimer succinctly captured these concerns by saying "in some areas revegetation cowboys are raping the natural vegetation of it's seed; genetic time bombs are being set by growers with no understanding of genetics; money is being wasted on plants of the wrong species or provenance; and the industry is getting a bad name in some quarters because of sloppy practices."

The response of indigenous seed collectors, plant growers and others to the workshops was strong enough to warrant the establishment of a sub-group of IFFA to specifically address issues raised. This group became the Indigenous Nurseries Network (INN). One of the prime concerns of the group over the past two years has been the perceived problem of overcollection of seed from remnant vegetation. Verbal evidence suggests that the problem is one of increasing severity. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has identified seed collection as a threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. The existence of a permit system also suggests that unregulated seed collection is a potentially threatening process that has been officially recognised to some extent.

One of the major contributing factors to this problem has been the perceived failure of the current seed collection permit system to address the problems in terms of:

- * issues of permits (numbers and types)
- * the level of information required re amounts, types and sites of seed collections.
- * limited 'policing' of legal and policy requirements in relation to conditions of permit issue.
- * the probability that many seed collectors are not obtaining permits prior to collection¹.

The Network is arguing that seed is a natural 'resource' and one which is increasingly threatened by an industry that is unable or unwilling to self-regulate, and is not subject to systematic

government regulation. The seed industry could potentially be viewed in a similar way to the regulation of the fishing industry, i.e. a recognition of the dwindling resource and concurrent development of a stringent permit and 'policing' system.

A working group has been set up to look at ways and means of tackling the whole issue. This working group will be meeting on Tuesday 27th July prior to the IFFA meeting. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

In addition, I am required this semester to undertake an Individual Research Project in partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Social Science (Socio-Environmental Assessment and Policy) at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. I have decided to research the seed collection permit issue for this project so that background information will be available for the development of options. The research findings and policy options will be presented to a public meeting around November. The proposed Aims and Objectives of the research project are below - comments are welcome.

Aims and Objectives

1. To investigate (and if possible determine) the total amount of seed collected in Victoria and identify markets and end use;
2. To investigate and describe the current permit system (including the legal and policy context) for seed collection within the DCNR;
3. To investigate Departmental guidelines for seed collection practises;
4. To identify and document the level of current use of the seed collection permit system;
5. To investigate and document any incidence of seed collection outside the permit system.

¹ Roy Gray from Blackwood Seed Collectors, South Australia says that "All large seed collectors in this State collect without permits (illegally)" and that this is due to the 'draconian' regulations (from 'Sowing the Seeds', Direct Seeding and Natural Regeneration Conference, Conference Proceedings, Greening Australia, May 1990, p. 139). Although permit systems differ from State to State it would not be surprising if this is the case in Victoria as well.

Snippets:

Indigenous Success Story

Operation Revegetation is one of the oldest community indigenous plant nurseries in Melbourne, initiated in the early 80's as a joint project of the Knox Environment Society and Fern Tree Gully High School (now FTG Secondary College). Its main aim was, and still is, to preserve and foster an appreciation of our native flora and to provide habitat for local fauna. It has served these aims very well.

Despite being tucked away in the corner of the FTG Secondary College (Melways 72 A 12), Operation Revegetation has been open to the indigenous plant buff on Sundays for many years. The backbone of this nursery are the volunteers who staff it on a monthly roster basis. Braving sun, wind and rain these hardy people get to have 'hands-on' experience with indigenous plant propagation as well as dealing with customers and meeting new people. New volunteers are always welcome, and this type of work, apart from being very sociable, is a great way to learn the indigenous flora of the outer Eastern suburbs. With approximately 100 species for sale, and new species being constantly added, it is also an indigenous gardeners heaven, provided the garden is situated in the foothills region.

This year has been a busy one for the nursery. After propagating approximately 35,000 plants last year, we set about this year to reach a target of 60-70,000 indigenous tubestock. Despite a setback in the form of a fire which destroyed our seedbank, we look like achieving this end. Operation Revegetation prides itself on being an ethical nursery, collecting under permit and selling only local provenance material, whilst still being very active in pushing the indigenous plant ethos. With the continued support of our volunteers, Operation Revegetation is currently extending its services to include revegetation and environmental education. This should see our nursery move into the next few years with a renewed vigour and outlook, and reaching out to the general public as a source of environment information and indigenous flora.

Greg Bain - Co-ordinator of Operation Revegetation (Ph. (03) 801-3140). For more information about the Knox Environment Society and its activities, write to P.O. Box 336, Boronia 3155.

Part Time Employment Opportunity

Operation Revegetation Pty. Ltd., the community based indigenous nursery of the Knox Environment Society Inc. is wishing to expand its range of services and educational programs.

Individuals wishing to work within the fields of environmental management and education are invited to send expressions of interest with relevant details before September 1st to:

The Directors,
Operation Revegetation Pty. Ltd.,
c/o 72 Scoresby Road,
Bayswater, 3153.

Pine Burn - French Island

There has been a magnificent burn of 450 ha in French Island State Park, part of a long term burning program to control major infestations of Cluster Pine, *Pinus pinaster*. Fay and Clive Gordes are surveying this area on a regular basis to monitor the burn's effectiveness in Pine control and more importantly to document the ecology of burnt heathland. This monitoring will be happening on many weekends over the next 12 months. Anyone interested in burnt heathland is welcome to join them, they can be contacted at 772-9668. You will need to bring a bike to the island to get around.

Standing Up For Your Local Environment

What can I do about that proposed chemical storage site? Quite a bit (see sections D,E,F). Can miners start prospecting on my land without my permission? Basically yes (see section G). A publication from the Victorian National Parks Association will give you guidance on these questions and many more. *Standing Up for Your Local Environment: An Action Guide* (revised third edition) was written by Jenny Barnett and answers the need for a summary of Victorian planning and environmental legislation. It advises residents on how to influence the outcomes of environmental planning processes.

Local issues are often complex and confusing and even single issues can cut across an intimidating range of legislation. Where do you start, what rights can you claim and what powers do you have to assess and perhaps halt a development? And how do you find your way through the mass of laws that govern the planning process and land use in this state?

This book tells you how to use the planning system (planning schemes, planning permits, changes to land use and assessment of environmental impact); gives a guide to issues and legislation (pollution, mining, fire prevention, roadside management, flora and fauna protection and historic sites) and offers general advice (how to influence your council, using Freedom of Information and where to get legal assistance).

There have been so many changes to planning and environmental laws and processes in recent years, this latest revision has been a massive task. Among the changes to legislation Jenny has included are Environment Protection, Health, Mineral Resources Development, Flora and Fauna Guarantee, Native Vegetation Retention Controls, dog and cat control and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

STANDING UP FOR YOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT: AN ACTION GUIDE

Written by Jenny Barnett, Illustrated by Veronica Holland RRP \$15 plus \$2 postage.

Contact: Victorian National Parks Association (03) 654 6843.

Sites of Natural Significance Workshops

Many residents in the Upper Yarra and Dandenongs region are not aware that they are living on a Site of Natural Significance. Often they find out when they apply for a permit to develop their property. To help you, the Upper Yarra and Dandenongs Environmental Council is running a series of workshops for owners and managers of Sites of Natural Significance.

The first workshop, held at Christmas Hills in May was attended by over 100 people. Topics included why sites were significant and how to manage them to promote the retention of native flora and fauna. Todd Soderquist and Lindy Lumsden gave fascinating talks on Bats and the Tuan. Later participants were able to observe these creatures in the bush. Groups visited local properties to explore issues like the use of fire in vegetation management, disposal of waste waters and site planning.

Corridors were the focus of the second workshop at Healesville. Andrew Bennett from the Arthur Rylah Institute presented some interesting statistics. Melody Serena from Healesville Sanctuary lead the group along Badger Creek pointing out Platypus and Water Rat habitat. Rubbish, especially the plastic packaging for 6 packs, and cats, all pose threats to these species. The workshop wound up on the banks of the Watts River to view the revegetation efforts of the local group Bushlink. Weed control techniques were also demonstrated.

It is planned to run 5 more workshops. If you own or manage a property on a Site of Natural Significance you will receive an invitation to one of these workshops. Friends groups working on public land designated significant will also be invited. There may, however be some spare places for other interested people.

For more information phone Jenny Francis on 755 1398. To enrol for a workshop contact the UYVDRA on 735 3888 3 weeks prior to the start of the workshop.

Highlights of the Program:

21 August Lillydale Shire

Speakers will include: Andrew McMahon, Rodger Elliot, Peter Menkhorst, Steve Craig
Workshop Groups will visit sites in Wonga Park, Montrose, Mt. Evelyn, Lilydale

11 Sept Dandenongs

Speakers will include: Andrew Bennett, Scott Seymour, Rob Wallis, John Groves, Vivien Freshwater
Workshop Groups will visit sites in Sassafras, Upwey, Menzies Creek, Sherbrooke Forest.

9 Oct Southern Dandenongs

Speakers will include: Andrew Bennett, Beth Gott, Darcy Duggan, Ilma Dunn, Garrique Pergl, Graham Clutterbuck.

Workshops will include: Fire and Vegetation Management and Weed Control Techniques

30 October Macclesfield & Yellingbo

Managing your Rural Property - An opportunity to visit other nearby properties

20 November Upper Yarra

A rare opportunity to spend a day at Caulfield Grammar Farm and explore the Wetlands, Little Yarra, and the Dairy Farm. See next issue for more details on these last two workshops.

Another LCC Submission

Well, I did get the submission on the Land Conservation Council's Melbourne Area, District 2 Proposed Recommendations completed in time and submitted. It wasn't comprehensive but dealt with several aspects of the Proposed Recommendations including the inadequate Central Highlands National Park proposal, the proposed downgrade of Dandenong Ranges to a State Park and comments on a few other areas that we knew about. I would like to thank Graeme Lorimer, Fay and Clive Gordes and Vivien Freshwater for their contributions. I could have used a lot more information.

I have begun working on another submission to the LCC, for the Descriptive Report on the Marine and Coastal Investigation. We can get in a bit earlier with our comments in this process. The Descriptive Report will be commented on by the public until September 9 and later in the year Proposed Recommendations to Government for the Marine and Coastal system will be released for more comments.

The Descriptive Report includes all the information that is available about the values and uses of in marine and coastal areas. The area to be investigated extends from the Victorian off-shore territorial limit (5.5 km) to a distance approximately 1 km inland from the highwater mark; it includes land (terrain and overlying water) affected by marine, estuarine and coastal processes. Islands surrounded by marine and estuarine waters are included in the investigation. The Council's subsequent recommendations will apply only to public land. In making recommendations to provide for the balanced use of land in Victoria, the Council is to have regard to the social and economic implications relevant to its recommendations. Two major projects will also contribute to the the Descriptive Report. These are a survey of saltwater recreational fishing patterns in Victorian, and an Environmental Inventory of Victoria's Marine Ecosystems.

The comments for the Descriptive Report for the Marine and Coastal Investigation are due by September 9. The reports are available from Information Victoria, 318 Little Bourke, Melbourne or Dept. of Planning Bookshop, 477 Collins St. Melbourne or Dept. of Conservation offices at Portland, Warrnambool, Geelong, Wilsons Promontory, Yarram, Bairnsdale, Orbost, Cann River and Mallacoota. IFFA has one for reference in Melbourne. I need some input on this issue from you members out there, any bits of information will be useful or write your own submission and send it to me so I can borrow some of the material for an IFFA submission.

- **Lincoln Kern**

IFFA activities:

IFFA (Vic)

Next meeting:

Tuesday 27 July at 7:30 pm* at the Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra (Melways map 2G ref 12A). "Grasslands: A National Park" A forum hosted by Vanessa Craigie and James Ross. All welcome. *NOTE THE EARLIER MEETING TIME. Speakers will still start at 8:00, promptly.

Committee meeting:

Thursday 5 August at Damien Cook's, 12 Alexander Avenue, Clayton. 6.30pm onwards.

SPIFFA

Mon 2 August Waterfall Gully Ctty Centre, Cnr Bayview Rd and Nixon St, Rosebud South at 7.30 pm. Contact Mark Adams (059)851 122.

Indigenous Nurseries Network subcommittee:

27 July Tuesday 6.30pm. (before main IFFA meeting).

Working Group on Over-collection of Seed

Contact Murray Ralph (03) 419 3040 or Sue Mills (03) 383 2937.

NSW activities:

Next meeting:

Monday 2 August 7.30 - 10.00pm. Subject: **Soils Ain't Soils** - by Simon Leake, Soil Scientist, Sydney Environmental and Soil Laboratory. Simon has pioneered urban soil science in Sydney and and has worked with both urban and agricultural soils for the past ten years. He will discuss the recognition, management, reversal and prevention of urban soil pollution with particular reference to indigenous flora and reclamation and revegetation of land. In the Maiden Theatre, Mrs Macquaries Rd, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Contact Sally Fisher (02)9706486 (work), Penny Brown or Andrew McGahey (02)9133681 (work)

Membership

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

Membership includes
11 issues of Indigenotes per year.

Memberships should be sent to the Membership Secretary. Include your name, address and phone numbers, and a bit about yourself.

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Coming Events: To be determined.

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Contributions to Indigenotes should be sent to the editors — the deadline for the next issue will be August 6.

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