

# INDIGENOTES

Please see back cover.

# The Plains Wanderer

**A regular forum for articles on grassland and woodland conservation. All contributions are welcome. A whole series of articles were submitted this month that fit well under the Plains Wanderer banner.**

## Grassland creation myths

You can learn a lot from a garden plant.

A tussock of Kangaroo Grass is in full flower outside the bungalow where I write these essays. I just went out to measure it. It stands one metre tall and has 79 flower stems. Right now it carries 1076 seeds. I expected it to contain just a handful of seeds, so my coffee went cold while I counted them all. Over 1000 seeds; not bad for a plant that, in the wild, is usually called a “poor seed producer”.

Observing the vigorous growth and prolific flowering of well-tended garden plants reminds one of the interminable stresses that plants experience in the field: of insufficient space, water, nutrients and light. John Delpratt, from Burnley Horticultural College, once astounded a conference audience with a 6 inch pot packed full of a single plant of the native *Hypericum gramineum*. In the wild, *H. gramineum* consists of the odd straggly stem with a few small yellow flowers. It's common name, the “Small” St Johns Wort, is usually quite apt. John's pot contained one big, bushy plant, not small at all, covered with flowers, and capable of producing vast quantities of seed.

Gardens being contemplative places, the vigorous growth of my *Themeda* plant set me to wondering about the size of grass tussocks in the wild. *Themeda* tussocks in nearby rail-line remnants usually only reach to about knee high, and most have very few flower stalks and seeds.

Historically, though, it seems that taller *Themeda* plants may have been common-place. Many explorers wrote of the tall stems of Oat Grass (as they sometimes called *Themeda*) reaching up to their horse's stirrups. This image of boundless fertility prompted the swift conversion of the original grasslands to Australia's sheep belt.

Botanists have, on occasion, mused over the fate of the tall *Themeda*. One suggestion is that the tallest plants were preferentially grazed out by sheep, leaving only the smaller plants to survive. A similar fate has befallen Wallaby Grasses (*Danthonia* species) in pastures on the NSW Northern Tablelands, where plants growing in intensively grazed sheep camps are shorter than those in less intensively grazed paddocks nearby. This difference is genetic, not environmental, and is perpetuated in pot plants in the glass-house<sup>1</sup>. The greater grazing pressure near the sheep camps has selected against the tall plants and favoured small plants: rapid evolution in action. (Interestingly though, the seeds from some small plants can grow into tall plants, indicating that such genetic changes are not a simple one-way street).

Another idea is that the grass tussocks were more widely spaced in the years Before Sheep (B.S.), with large areas of bare soil in which native herbs grew. James Fleming wrote last century, “The face of the ground is one-third grass, one-do stone and one-do earth, mostly newly burnt”, and G.A. Robinson noted from Carisbrook that “The soil of this upland plains is red with bare patches; a root of [*Themeda*] to 1 and 2 square feet of barren soil”<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps sheep trampling destroyed the soil crust between the tussocks, allowing more *Themeda* plants to become established in the gaps, at greater densities than before. The dense swards of Kangaroo Grass may then have choked themselves up, stunting the height of the flower stalks.

Who knows? To be blatantly rude about it all, perhaps I should also ask, “who cares”?

Looking back is a common pastime for grassland aficionados. Whenever I give a public talk, I am inevitably asked what I thought the original grasslands looked like, how they behaved, what effects did extinct marsupials have, how often did the aboriginals burn, how hot were their fires, what was the soil like before compaction, and so on.

Judging from their frequency, such questions must be vitally important for grassland conservation. But I venture that, if we do really do need these questions, we need them psychologically, not ecologically. To persist with grassland conservation, perhaps we all need our personal vision splendid, our mythical view of a dreamtime Eden, to contrast with Lizzie's annus horribilis of the present. But important as such visions might be, they are damn near irrelevant ecologically.

All ecologists have their own version of a dreamtime grassland. All the visions vary, all are vague, ill-defined, romanticised, with little more substance than Madonna's second-last single (can anyone remember that?). None of the visions can be anywhere near the truth. By necessity they are all based on a meagre selection of skimpy historical quotes, fleshed out by observations of existing grassland remnants. Grassland ecology today must be profoundly different to that in the years Before Sheep, so all such stories must, by their very nature, be innately flawed.

For better or worse, we have to accept that our supreme grasslands are in our best remnants, not in our best dreams. A roadside in western Victoria is the Daintree of the plains. It should be promoted and managed as such. Perhaps all of these remnants look nothing like they did Before Sheep. Who knows. Who cares?

I suspect that a major problem with grassland conservation is that too many of us are pre-occupied with looking backwards rather than forward. Too many discussions on how we should manage grasslands in the future are based on wishy-washy ideas from the past, about the hypothetical impacts of extinct fauna or unknown Aboriginal burning regimes. (Can this be yet another form of cultural appropriation, the invention by whites of a dream-time mythology about burning by blacks?).

If grasslands are to persist into the next century as anything more than weedy native pastures, we need vigorous activity from a wide variety of perspectives, including remnant conservation, protection, management, restoration, education and horticulture. And we have to dispose of our dream-time myths.

We can learn a lot from a garden plant. We can learn something from the *Themeda* plant outside my bungalow. But the most concrete fact presented by this vigorous tussock has nothing to do with the grasslands Before Sheep. Instead it concerns the grasslands of tomorrow: an equally mythological vision, the restored grasslands of the future.

The tussock in the garden demonstrates the

potential vigour of plants in well-tended seed orchards, and the vast resource they can produce. Over 1000 seeds from a tussock of a plant renowned for being a poor seed producer. Imagine the seed that can be produced by species capable of producing far larger quantities of seed. Instead of continuing to rip-off seeds from surviving remnants, we can - and have to - develop large, communal seed orchards to produce the vast quantities of seeds necessary to restore damaged and depauperate grassland remnants.

Perhaps we do need dreamtime myths. I remain to be convinced. But if we do, I'll wager that grassland restoration is the only creation myth worth cultivating.

#### References

1. Scott, A.W. and Whalley, R.D.B. (1984). The influence of intensive sheep grazing on genotypic differentiation in *Danthonia linkii*, *D. richardsonii* and *D. racemosa* on the New England Tablelands. *Australian Journal of Ecology* 9, 419-429.
2. Both quotes from Scarlett, N.H. (1992). Soil crusts, germination and weeds - issues to consider. In "Propagation of Threatened Australian Plants in Victorian Reserves" by N.H. Scarlett and R.F. Parsons. (Project 45, World Wide Fund for Nature Australia).

**By Ian Lunt  
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# Good Harvest for Landcare

A group of Landcare members west of Melbourne have responded to the growing interest in native grasses by building their own seed harvester.

Jack Droomer, a farmer from Werribee, was contracted to harvest native grass seed three years ago by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to enable revegetation of the Organ Pipes National Park. Up until now Jack had been bailing the ripe grass as "hay" using a conventional windrower and baler and a 100 hp tractor. The hay was then loaded onto a truck and transported to the propagation site where it was spread manually. After harvesting thirty hectares using this method last year, Jack decided there had to be a better way.

"Baling the grass as hay was too clumsy and, because the sites were small and spread from Laverton to Greenvale, the preparation and transport time was often more than the job itself", he said. So Jack designed his own alternative - a conventional seed harvester front mounted on a small vehicle which enables a one pass harvest operation and limited relocation time.

"Once I had the idea it took no time at all to develop the unit", said Jack. "I got a few machinery experts together for a think-tank and we soon perfected the design.

The harvester concept has impressed many Landcare, conservation and revegetation groups which have provided the finances to start the project. A Grassland Harvester Group has been formed to gain support for the machine and they now require a vehicle to mount the harvester on.

The native grass business looks set to expand rapidly in the next few years. Demand already exceeds seed supply and interest is growing rapidly. VICRoads have expressed interest in obtaining seed for their freeway batters in areas that are natural grasslands and could become a major customer.

Bacchus Marsh Aerodrome may also see the benefits of the relatively maintenance-free natives which remain green over summer. They have approached the group to supply seed to replace existing species on their air strips.

For the mechanically minded; Jack used a Massey Ferguson 585 conventional header front as

well as other components such as the fan, elevators, bins (which will be modified to enable broadcast sowing of seed direct from these storage units) and hydraulics. "I virtually took the harvester to bits and rehashed it to suit our needs", said Jack. A commercial hydraulics pack will enable remote control of the harvester from the cabin - what a luxury!

The unit will enable more sites to be harvested this summer due to the efficiency of only transporting one machine around, and the mechanical broadcasting of seed using air jets.

**Kathy Cavanagh**

**VFF Landcare Project Officer**

Sourced from the October 1993 edition of *Trunkline*, published by the Victorian Farmers Federation.

## **The Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus* as a dispersal agent of the environmental weed Serrated Tussock *Nassella* *trichotoma*.**

**Lawrie Conole, 2/45 Virginia Street, Newtown,  
VICTORIA 3220.**

Serrated Tussock *Nassella trichotoma*, a serious agricultural and environmental weed declared noxious in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, is indigenous to Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay (Lamp *et al* 1990). Introduced *Nassella* species, particularly Chilean Spear-grass *N. neesiana*, bear a close resemblance to some indigenous Spear-grasses *Stipa* species, and the two genera are included in the family Poaceae, tribe Stipaea (Willis 1970). Red-rumped Parrots *Psephotus haematonotus* are small, broad-tailed parrots (Psittaciformes: Platycercidae), abundant and widely distributed throughout south-eastern Australia (Blakers *et al* 1984).

*N. trichotoma* propagules are principally dispersed by wind action (Lamp *et al* 1990) and entire panicles have been carried at least 16 kilometres (Campbell 1982). On December 30, 1993 I found enormous accumulations, up to a metre deep, of *N. trichotoma* panicles blown up against fences and roadside Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, Yellow Gum *E. leucoxylon* and Varnish Wattle *Acacia verniciflua* along several kilometres of Reids Road, northern Brisbane Ranges. Drifts had also gathered on the tarmac in places, and I observed small groups of Red-rumped Parrots feeding on seeds from the road in these places.

Carr *et al* (1992) list animal (external), animal (internal), wind and water as dispersal agents for *N. trichotoma*, and regard it as an environmental weed posing a very serious threat to at least four broadly defined vegetation communities in Victoria. Watching the Red-rumped Parrots feeding, it became clear how important animal agents of dispersal can be. Wading up to their bellies in *N. trichotoma* panicles, the parrots exhibited great potential for collecting seeds in their plumage.

Forshaw (1981) states seeds and fruits of grasses, herbaceous plants and to a lesser extent trees to be the principal diet of the Red-rumped Parrot, and that these are mostly procured on the ground. Hall (1974) notes decortication of only a proportion of exotic Paterson's Curse *Echium plantagineum* seeds found in crops of Red-rumped Parrots in South Australia. Extrapolating from this example, allowing for decortication of most (but not all) ingested *N. trichotoma* seeds, a potential for dispersal of seeds in excrement by Red-rumped Parrots as well as externally in plumage is indicated. Given the high nutrient levels known to be favoured by *N. trichotoma* (Lamp *et al* 1990), the deposition of viable seeds coated in bird excrement may impart a further advantage to the plant in its dispersal into indigenous vegetation communities.

### References

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- Lamp, C.A., Forbes, S.J. & Cade, J.W. (1990) *Grasses of Temperate Australia. A Field Guide*. (Inkata Press: Melbourne).
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# Snippets from the Southern Highlands of New South Wales:

This information was provided by Greg Stone of Woodlands Revegetation in Moss Vale, NSW in an effort to provide some insights from outside of Victoria. Thanks for the contributions!

## From the Southern Highlands of New South Wales

Ever since Governor Lachlan Macquarie visited the Southern Highlands and wrote in his diary that the area resembled 'a fine extensive pleasure ground in England', tourists have come to enjoy green, rolling hills, European trees and stately gardens. The geological and botanical diversity of the region, however, also provides much for anyone with an interest in indigenous flora and fauna. Local awareness and appreciation of these natural resources is widening and groups and individuals are becoming active in surveying, promoting and preserving the indigenous biota.

## Yarrawa Brush at Robertson

The Robertson Environment Protection Society (REPS) has been active in the preservation and regeneration of the Yarrawa Brush (warm temperate to cool temperate rainforest) associated with the high rainfall and basaltic soils of the region. Since the 1860's an estimated 2450ha of rainforest has been reduced to remnant patches, including the 5ha Robertson Nature Reserve - perhaps the most intact remnant of Yarrawa Brush. The Reserve is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, however, members of REPS have been responsible for ongoing regeneration work with weed removal having a high priority.

Towards protecting and preserving Yarrawa Brush on private lands, REPS has also begun a programme of seed collection and propagation of rainforest species for planting on the properties of interested landholders. Particular attention is being given to the development of corridors linking the scattered remnants.

'A Guide to the Yarrawa Brush - Trees, Shrubs and Vines of the Robertson Rainforest Remnants' was published by REPS in early 1993 with the aid of funds from the Save the Bush Programme. The 78 page booklet provides an introduction to the history, ecology, conservation and regeneration of

the Yarrawa Brush rainforests in addition to a guide to fifty plant species. A description each species is accompanied by a black and white photograph (usually of foliage) and some general comments regarding propagation. Clear line-drawings and the easy-to-use text of the key based on leaves makes the guide even more useful for botanically-minded visitors as well as local residents with an interest in caring for the patch of Yarrawa Brush on their property. Copies of the booklet are available for \$5.00 donation (postage included) from the REPS Secretary, Mrs. Helen Tranter, P.O. Box 45, Robertson, N.S.W. 2577.

## Revegetation of the Wingecarribee River

Located between Bowral and Moss Vale on the floodplain of the Wingecarribee River is the district of Bong Bong, where the site of one of the first European settlements in the region (early 1820's) is presently being developed by the Wingecarribee Shire Council into a 26ha park for passive recreation. The most significant part of the development is the plan to restore the indigenous plant communities associated with the site.

Council adopted a consultants report which recommended not only that the river and floodplains be revegetated so as to restore the seriously degraded aquatic and terrestrial communities, but also specified the collection of propagation material from local provenances. This marks a major philosophical shift for a council renowned for promoting tulips, exotic gardens and the 'English' landscape of the region.

The revegetation work will be undertaken over several years using a combination of techniques, including some direct seeding which is to be carried out by Greening Australia.

# Coming events:

For IFFA events

see back cover

## Conferences/Workshops/ Talks

8-11 February. Tuesday-Friday. **Conservation through sustainable use of Wildlife.** A public forum on the use of biological resources for conservation and sustainable development. Location: Centre for Conservation Biology, The University of Queensland. Contact: Secretariat (07) 365 2527.

19 March. **The 1994 Friends of National Parks Network Seminar.** The Seminar is proposed to feature practical workshops, large and small, metropolitan and country. Venue: The Herbarium, Birdwood Ave Sth Yarra.

4,5-6 October. 1994 National Greening Australia Conference. **A Vision for a Greener City: The Role of Vegetation in Urban Environments.** The conference will examine the multi-disciplinary issues related to vegetation in both capital cities and country towns through three sub themes: Ecology of Cities and Country Towns, Planning for Conservation and Development and Management of the Environment. Location: Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, Western Australia. Contact Martine Scheltema (09) 4812144.

## Excursions and Field Trips

20 January. 10.00am-1.00pm. **Koala Watch and Survey at Warrandyte State Park.** Help the rangers in their program count koalas living in the park and then join in a chat over billy tea and pancakes. Bookings (03) 844 2659.

22 January. **Leadbeaters Possum Stag Watch at Jilpanger Scrub.** The next FNCV stag watch will be surveying some new sites so more people will be needed. Please contact Ray Gibson (03) 874 4408 for details.

23 January. **Koori Culture and Bush food. at Organ Pipes National Park.** 2.00pm. Aborigines lived in the grasslands for thousands of years. Join the rangers in rediscovering some of the hidden culinary delights and traditional practices. Booking essential (03)390 1082 between 11am and 1pm.

29 January. **Evening with the stars at Organ Pipes National Park.** Discover the wonders of the Southern sky at night and learn how to find your way with the stars. Booking essential (03) 390 1082. Bring binoculars if possible. Adults 2.00\$, conc\child 1.00\$, family 5.00\$.

29 January. Saturday 7am. **Breakfast with the Birds at Kinglake National Park.** An early morning adventure in search of the elusive lyrebird, followed by breakfast. Meet the "Friends of the Lyrebird" and find out about their annual lyrebird surveys. Adults 4.00\$, Children 2.00\$, Family 10.00\$. Bookings (057 865 351 8.00am-4.30pm.

29 January. Sunday. **Cape Schanck, Pt Nepean National Park.** A VNPA organised coastal walk along a moist shady track through tea tree to Cape Schanck and return with glorious views of the coast. Early start, allow for a swim. Contact Janet Fyvie (03) 5099283.

30 January. Sunday 2-4.30pm. **Parkcare discovery walk at Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve.** Join a ranger for a walk through the heathland dunes and discover plants, animals and spectacular views. Billy tea and damper. For bookings call (03) 785 0111 between 9.00am and 4.00pm.

4 February. Saturday. **The FNCV are organising a general excursion to Edward Point Peninsula, south of St. Leonards on the Bellarine Peninsula** to study shells, wetland geomorphology and birds. Bring lunch, hat, plastic bags, notebook, bathers and binoculars. Involves a two hour optional walk. Transport by private vehicle. For further details contact Dorothy Mahler (03) 425 8408. Meet in Bluff Rd. at junction with Drysdale-St Leonards. Mel ref. 241 B9.

5 February Saturday. **O'Brien's Crossing - Tunnel Point, Lerderberg State Park.** A VNPA organised walk through fine bush scenery, possibly wildflowers. Walk on the old Channel track. Lunch where the miners diverted the

river through a tunnel. Return along the Lerderderg River bank. Contact Doug Myers (03) 306 6560.

6 February. Sunday 10am-12 noon. **Animal tracking at The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve.** Many animals are hard to see in the Australian bush. However there are many clues to show where they have been. Join a tracking adventure looking for tracks and signs. Bookings essential. Ring during BH (03) 785 0111.

6 February. Sunday. **Walk, Talk and Gawk: Marysville.** The magnificent Central Highlands - ancient myrtle beech forest, tree fern gullies and waterfalls. BYO lunch. Contact Jane Calder (059) 652 372

27 February. 10.00am-3.00pm. **Macedon Ranges walk.** Join a ranger for a walk through messmate and gum forest along the spine of the Macedon Regional Park. Enjoy the views and catch a breath of mountain air while learning about past and future management of the Macedon Ranges. Bring hiking boots, hat and lunch. Bookings essential (054) 261 866 between 8.30am and 4.30 pm.

## Restoration Activities

### February

5 Sat 9.45 am. **Gellibrand Hill.** Meet at the work centre. Possibly doing a fauna survey and weeding. Contact Mark Corr (03)557 2783.

5 Sat. 10 am **Green Link Box Hill activity day.** Working activities every Monday and Tuesday morning at the council nursery in Nelson St, Box Hill. Contact Minette Russell Young (03) 898 1364

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2 Sat 10-noon. **Wurundjeri Garden.** This Koori food garden by the Yarra in Hawthorn has been established for three years. Glan Avon Rd. Mel. ref. 45 A11. Planting and weeding. Contact Dorothy Sutherland (03) 818 4706.

12 Sun 3-5pm. **Green Link Camberwell.** Weeding, planting and seed collection in Welfare Pde. Meet at the corner of Dion St and Welfare Pde. Mel 60 E7. Contact Diana Burgess (03)

809 2092.

13 Sun 10 am. **Meander...**a group caring for the Menzies Creek and Emerald Tourist Track including weeding, planting and track work in the creek Reserve. Meet at A'Vard Picnic Ground. Melways 125 F 12. For further details contact Kate Forster (059) 685 828

15 Tues 6pm. 19 Sun 10am-12 noon. **Brunswick Tree Group.** Working at Union Bush Park. Moonee Ponds Creek. Eric Ward 388 2123.

20 Sun. 10am. URAGE (Upwey Regional Action Group for the Environment). Project day. Weeding and planting to restore indigenous vegetation along Ferny Creek, Upwey. Meet at the corner of Deans and Morris Rds, Upwey. Mel 74 k12. Contact Rob Stevens (03) 754 3792.

22 and 23rd 10 am. Men of the Trees. Soil mixing. Deep Rock, Yarra Bend Park; Melmap 2D, ref D6. Minette Russell Young (03) 898 1364.

26 Sat **FO Sherbrooke Forest** Project afternoon. Cestrum near Neumanns track and ivy on edge of Foden Track. Meet at 2pm on Grantulla Rd at the beginning of Neumanns track, Kallista. Mel ref 75 D5.

**For 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 Jo Ferguson (see back cover)**

# Snippets:

## Indigenous Park and Wetland in Brunswick

Seventy Metres from the Merri Creek to the West of the Northcote Golf Links lie four hectares of a former quarry and tip in North-East Brunswick.

At its last meeting for the "Year of Indigenous Peoples" the Brunswick Council resolved for the development of a park with "an informal indigenous theme" to be named after consulting with the Koorie community, with "Planting to extend throughout the park of exclusively indigenous grassland and grassy woodland species of the Merri Creek valley and comprise a mixture of grassy open areas and wooded areas with shrub understorey" together with "A naturalistic wetland area ... to provide secure wildlife habitat and assist in managing storm water runoff from the park land and nearby built-up areas."

So the aim is to have something of the size and style of the beautiful remnant Napier Park in Essendon with perhaps a touch of the Cooper Street grasslands and a wetland to help manage flows and water quality in the Merri Merri.

Indigiphiles may wonder if we have bit off more than we can chew?

The design could have been more problematic, if suggestions for planting the most infamous weed of the Adelaide hills (*Olearia oleosa*) had been adopted, but questions will arise which would test many a member of IFFA experienced in broadscale revegetation.

For example should we :

- \* import (possibly weedy) topsoil or rely on clay tip capping for a planting substrate?
- \* beg for soil from local re-stumpers?
- \* plant grasses on a large scale or rely on direct seeding?
- \* revegetate progressively in strips with subsequent scalping of downhill areas and seeding ? and
- \* what level of weed invasion (e.g. windblown thistles) is unavoidable and how can it be minimised?
- \* how can we best evoke community involvement?
- \* what potential has the site as a training place for the Northern suburb's unemployed (~20%)?

Answers to these and more questions must come quickly (perhaps through a work shop) as a May Day deadline has been set for a detailed plan.

So please - m'aidez and give your ideas to Brunswick Tree Group convenor Eric Ward on 388-0411 or at 119 Edward St Brunswick 3056.

## Bushland on the Urban Block Information Pamphlet

We have a wonderfully unique and diverse Australian flora to care for. All remaining bush areas must be treasured and protected at all costs - we can't afford to lose anymore! This includes any remnants in urban backyards.

The Friends of Sherbrooke Forest, together with Di Ward, Parkcare Co-ordinator, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have produced this informative pamphlet which is now available - **free!**

The pamphlet contains information that is easily understood and includes topics such as 'The First Steps to Take', 'Weed Removal', 'Re-planting', 'Drainage' and 'Fire Protection'.

**To obtain copies, please contact Di Ward on (03) 651 3420.**

## Deadly Beetle on Pittosporum?

The following tidbit was found in the Age gardening section, we thought it might interest some of you. It is a question from a reader:

I have a Pittosporum which is losing many of the leaves at its tips. There are numerous black bugs with white spots on the plant. Could they be the cause of the problem? If so, what do I do to get rid of them?

L.V., Lancefield

The insect you describe is referred to as Pittosporum bug or beetle. Its sap-sucking results in leaf drop and I have seen severe cases where plants have died after losing more than half their foliage.

With small attacks, the beetles could possibly be controlled by squashing them with the fingers but be warned: this will give off a decidedly unpleasant odour. If the beetles are present in larger numbers, it will be necessary to spray.

Kevin Walsh

**Source: Age, Saturday, 11 December 1993**

# Timelines of the Yarra Middle Yarra Region - Seasonality Calendar

What are the hidden calendars of the web of life, what are the significant patterns and rhythms, the major events that make up the seasonality of the year? The Wurundjeri Tribe of the Yarra had their songlines to enable them to remember the environmental events, we have lost ours.

Yarra Valley Parks, The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and the Gould League of Victoria are organising a gathering of interested naturalists on **March 26-27 at Paddles Park, Templestowe.**

You are invited to join this gathering, which will begin to piece together the rhythms and patterns of the natural world in the Middle Yarra Region. The idea is that naturalists of all persuasions will come together at a campsite, bringing their notebooks and old diaries with them and work systematically through the calendar year, volunteering 'significant event' information from their records. On this launch weekend an initial data base will thus be created and the file would be held open for a further 3 months to allow for further contributions.

The data will be analysed for the detection of significant patterns and something akin to the lost aboriginal calendars will be created, providing a more sophisticated management tool than the present European based four seasons calendar. This will establish a benchmark for discovering future trends. Should the idea prove successful, other localities will be tackled in the same way, with the aim of eventually re-discovering all the Australian calendars.

So, come and contribute your diary records, remembered sightings and your intuitive hunches on nature's clock or just come for the oral history and the gathering that will begin recording the data that will give us timelines and storylines of the Middle Yarra Region.

#### Program:

Friday 7:00 - 9:30pm. Seasonality Presentations - Invited Speakers

Saturday 9:00 - 12:00pm. 23 March - 22 June  
Envirofest Break

2:00 - 5:00pm. 23 June - 22 September

Sunday 8:00 - 11:00am. 23 September - 22 December

12:00 - 3:00pm. 23 December - 22 March

For more information phone Glen Jameson on 846 5540 and Please RSVP either by phone ((03) 846 4499), Fax ((03) 846 4463) or mail (Timeline Weekend, Yarra Valley Parks, P.O. Box 568, Templestowe 3106). Envirofest will also be held on the same weekend 25-27 March, Westerfolds Park.

# Westerfolds Park Envirofest '94

A festival celebrating our environment and those who care for and about it; Melbourne's first and only comprehensive Environmental Exhibition. Staged on **25, 26 and 27 March 1994 at Westerfolds Park, Templestowe**, the festival will present technologies, strategies, practices, ideas and interests for the preservation, enjoyment and recovery of our natural heritage.

## Raising Awareness \* Educating \* Entertaining

### For the Trade: Friday 25 March, 1994

\* For those responsible for environmental management.

\* Presenting a comprehensive trade day geared to land managers, commercial service and product providers, community leaders and the media.

\* Major exhibits and demonstrations and seminar sessions for the decision makers.

### For Everybody: Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March

\* Sustainable small holdings - doing it right on 5 acres.

\* Ecologically Urban including sustainable building technologies, energy conservation, low allergy construction materials.

\* Composting, worms and green waste.

\* Water, pure and simple - drinking it, treating it, fishing from it.

\* Energy.

\* Green business, jobs and careers.

\* Playing in the great outdoors - just for kids.

\* Australian native forests - a festive celebration of Australian trees and timber.

\* Bush walking and camping.

\* Revegetation - buying the right plants.

\* Market Lane - From a compass to a composting toilet - a chance to shop for all sorts of interesting things that have some connection to the environment.

Plus lots of fun activities including jugglers, face painting, music, arts and crafts, talks and demonstrations, Rock Climbing Wall and human powered vehicles.

Trade Day, Friday 25th

9:00am to 3:00pm

For further information ring 03 532 8611

Public Days, Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th

9:00am to 6:00pm

Adults \$6.00, Children (under 16) and Concession \$3.00, Family Ticket \$12.00

Snippets from the Southern Highlands of New South Wales:

This information was provided by Greg Stone of

Woodlands Revegetation in Moss Vale, NSW in an effort to provide some insights from outside Victoria. Thanks for the contributions!

# IFFA activities:

## IFFA (Vic)

### Next meeting:

Tuesday 25 January at 7:30 pm at the Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra (Melways map 2G ref 12A).

**Doug Robinson** will speak on "**The Decline of the Grey Crowned Babbler**". All welcome.

**February Meeting:** Doug Frood will speak on Victorian Wetlands.

### Committee meeting:

Thursday 3 February at Dale's, 22 Stortford Ave Ivanhoe. 6.30pm onwards. Contact Dale for details.

### SPIFFA

Mon 7 February Waterfall Gully Ctty Centre, Cnr Bayview Rd. and Nixon St., Rosebud South at 7.30 pm. Subject: **Marine Algae presented by Tom Sault**. Contact Mark Adams (059)851122.

## IFFA (NSW) activities:

### Next meeting:

Monday 7 February 7.30 - 10.00pm at the Maiden Theatre, Mrs Macquaries Rd, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. **Dr Paul Adam**, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of N.S.W. will speak on "**Wonderful Coastal Wetlands**". Contact Sally Fisher (02)9706486 (work), Penny Brown or Andrew McGahey (02)9133681 (work)

**Cover Illustration:** Carnivorous plants occur in seasonally to permanently damp habitats throughout Australia. In Victoria, 10 species of *Drosera*, or Sundews, and 8 species of *Utricularia*, or Bladderworts, occur, some of which are presented in the sketch. These plants attract, trap and at least partially digest small arthropods (predominantly insects) helping them to survive in low nutrient soils. It was drawn by Robert Gibson.

## 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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### IFFA Field Trip:

A field trip is planned for the weekend of **February 19 and 20 to the north end of Baw Baw National Park (below Mt. Whitelaw) in the Central Highlands**. John Reid will be coming along to share his knowledge of insects and other wonders along with other naturalist types. It's a camping weekend in a mountain meadow; for directions and possible ridesharing info please contact Dale Tonkinson at (03) 499 3095 (ah) or (03) 654 1800 (bh).

### Office Bearers:

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**Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editors — the deadline for the next issue will be February 3.**

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