

INDIGENOTES

Drawing by Stephen Powell

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August 1996

Not so cryptic tree loss...

By Helen Moss

John Reid is right. The prognosis for the survival of indigenous trees in the urban environment is fairly grim, although I believe that the reasons for their decline are readily discerned, but not so easily overcome.

Most people who have a magnificent Narrow-leaf Peppermint or Yellow Box or River Red Gum or whatever in their front yard either hate it and cut it down soon after they move in or tend to regard it more as an architectural feature than a living thing, affording it scant care or consideration. It is a feature in the garden, just like a bird bath or the gnome in football colours. Life goes on around it.

Let's have a time-lapse view of a couple of years in the life of a remnant indigenous tree in suburbia.....

Our hypothetical tree exists quite happily near the front of an older suburban block (newer, smaller blocks would not have room to accommodate it), clear of the house and to one side, so its roots were not too badly damaged during house and driveway construction and service installation. One fine, sunny day, just prior to the commencement of the summer fire period, the local power authority tree pruners arrive in the neighbourhood to clear the lines. They do not just 'clear the lines', they remove all branches overhanging the lines, plus everything within 3 metres.

Then along comes Optus (probably in the guise of 'Skilled Engineering') to install its cables 1-1.5 metres below the power lines, and there goes another limb from our favourite tree. Not only does the 'pruning' technique used not resemble any arboriculturally acceptable method, but the same chainsaws are used on all trees and are rarely cleaned. This non-sterile practice spreads disease from unhealthy to healthy trees and provides wounds for disease entry.

Orchardists know that they must dip their secateurs in an antiseptic solution after finishing one tree, before moving on to the next. Such stone fruits as apricots and peaches suffer bacterial diseases generally referred to as bacterial canker or gummosis, which are readily spread on pruning implements. I believe that some similar disorders have been spread among street trees (eucalypts) in the Croydon area, leading to tree decline in entire streets.

Such issues become exceedingly difficult to address when Compulsory Competitive Tendering

enters the equation. Everything must be done as cheaply as possible. It is quantity, not quality, that wins the tender. This attitude does nothing to encourage the improvement of pruning techniques.

Our poor tree is still in shock when along comes the local water supply authority to replace ageing pipes. Despite the fact that boring under tree roots is, in theory, a proven and widely accepted practice, it is not considered economical. Trenching costs less and tree root loss is dismissed because trees do not have a dollar value attached. They are just an obstruction. The Gas & Fuel - or whoever they are now - will follow soon after. The notion of common trenching seems to be an anathema to all service suppliers.

If our beloved tree has caused the elevation of any sections of footpath, the local council, or its contractors will, with enormous zeal and enthusiasm, continue the root pruning process so that the footpath can be relaid perfectly flat. Perhaps they will also replace any similarly raised kerb and channel for good measure.

Meanwhile, our neighbour probably does not share the delight we gain from our big, beautiful indigenous tree. He will harangue us unmercifully about that horrible old tree that constantly drops leaves and twigs on his lawn, which he wants to keep neat, and onto his roof, where they clog his spouting and cause it to rust. This may sound petty, but the fact remains that trees are one of the major causes of disputes between neighbours, and the dropping of leaves onto driveways, cars, lawns and roofs is the main reason for complaint. Apart, that is, from the well known and oft cited fact that all gum trees are dangerous (because they are big and might fall) and, as everyone is aware, they are always dropping limbs or falling entirely. I have asked such people how come, if what they are saying is true, there are so many thousands of gum trees still standing. Unfortunately, it seems that once people develop their fanatical intolerance of eucalypts, they are not at all receptive even to the blatantly obvious. "Eucalyptophobia" is a fairly common disorder among urban dwellers.

If we do not accede to our neighbour's wish and remove our glorious gum tree, he will probably move out and sell his property for unit development. The developer will then run service trenches along our shared boundary, severing up to 45% of our gum tree's roots, or, having no requirements for set-backs (from the property boundaries) under

the former Department of Planning and Housing's "Good Design Guide for Medium Density Housing", trench for garage footings right on the boundary or for house footings within a metre or two of the boundary.

So much for our tree.....RIP.

A recent example of "Good Design Guide" adherence by planners in a Melbourne suburb had remarkable and frightening consequences for neighbouring property owners. The unit development in question included one unit constructed within two metres of a property boundary. The neighbouring property, a much older unit development, had a number of large eucalypts at one end. During unit construction in the new development, considerable damage was done to the roots of these eucalypts. The property owner then sent a letter to his neighbours threatening legal action if the trees caused any damage what so ever to his units. His neighbours, a group of elderly and frail pensioners, the youngest of whom is in her late seventies and several of whom suffer from Alzheimer's Disease, were extremely distressed. They could not afford to have the seven trees, three of which were over 18 metres high, removed, but had to anyway.

This situation indicates that there is something direly wrong with the assessment of planning applications. How does this situation arise? Planners could not refuse a permit because the application complied with the "Good Design Guide". Try explaining that to the neighbours! The result was the loss of the last eucalypts in the area.

Council Planning Departments must take off their blinkers and assess development applications in the light of their potential to detrimentally effect vegetation on surrounding properties, The influence of a development does not stop at the fence line.

Let's make no mistake. Council planning staff are extremely busy people who are often harassed by impatient and unpleasant 'clients' and have no training in matters pertaining to vegetation management or the cultural requirements of trees. They simply do not understand how decisions they make about one property can be so destructive to the vegetation on surrounding sites. Obviously, all councils need somebody on staff who does.

Vegetation, whether indigenous or good quality exotic, including established trees, increases property values and higher property values result in a higher rates income for councils. By allowing the destruction of remnant vegetation, councils are shooting themselves very determinedly in the foot. I have encountered instances where planners have allowed the destruction of roadside vegeta-

tion, including trees more than a century old, without any consultation with parks staff, just so the developer can more easily access the site.

It seems that, although councils love to boast about their alleged environmental achievements, they virtually never back the hot air with hard currency. Members of senior management may receive \$100-\$150,000 per annum, while the rate for tertiary qualified and extensively experienced bushland care staff, who are expected to undertake a large amount of work outside office hours with community groups, is \$23-\$29,000 (or less). Need one say more about priorities?

One difficult issue parks staff must deal with is the prospect of being sued if a tree damages people or property. If they receive complaints about a tree, some action has to be taken. Sometimes that action is the writing of letters to concerned residents assuring them that the tree is sound, but more often the tree is either pruned or removed. A couple of years ago, I heard of a complaint about a *Eucalyptus gonitocalyx* on a roadside and sought more information. The tree was a particularly ancient and impressive specimen and the complainant said it was going to fall on his car. Given that there was an extensive service road available for car parking, the complainant was asked why he parked his car under the tree. "For the shade", he said! The tree had some signs of decay near the base of its trunk, and although it would have remained standing for another decade at least, it was removed by a nervous parks superintendent.

In private gardens, horticultural snobbery is rife. Real gardening is about subduing Mother Nature and growing what we want, where we want it. Many well known "garden experts" and personalities advocate European-style gardens with perfectly composed shrub and perennial borders and sweeping swards of immaculate turf. Rare exotics have become status symbols. The would-be gardener is strongly influenced by television programmes like Gardening Australia and Burke's Backyard, which never recommend indigenous gardening. You can bet that any segment on water efficient gardening will focus on South African species. Melbourne Water's "Xeriscape" concept is admirable, but it again emphasises exotics, some of which are widely recognised environmental weeds. It seems that nothing has changed in the last 200 years. We are still a nation of gum tree haters.

Another problematic area is that of property values. First impressions are vital and, in urban areas, perfectly manicured gardens sell houses. The 'natural' look is appreciated only by a small minority, and in many situations, an indigenous garden in suburbia will not just be condemned as untidy, but will be said to devalue, and even physi-

Not so cryptic tree loss...continued

cally threaten, surrounding properties. Don't believe it? Have a chat with a real estate agent sometime.

To finish off on a note of absolute incredulity, here are a few reasons why people have applied to cut eucalypts down in one municipality with tree protection controls:

It drops leaves (one of the main excuses)

It sways in the wind.

It's too big (this applies to anything over 2 metres tall).

One of them came down in the big storm (in November 1982), so the other eight might be dangerous (1994 application).

I have six kids, so I want to cut four trees down (maybe we should be grateful she didn't have a dozen or more children!).

It's dangerous. I keep running my car into it while reversing down the driveway.

I fell out of it two years ago and spent six weeks in hospital (revenge killing???)

Who cares? It's just a bloody gum tree!

Unbelievable as it might seem, these are the realities of the incompatibility between urban dwellers and the last beleaguered (to us, beloved and beautiful) survivors of an era past. No wonder so many of them are history! I have heard it said on several occasions that gum trees should be banned in urban areas. It seems many people regard them as an anachronism. The steady disappearance of remnant indigenous trees from the suburbs of Melbourne comes as not surprise to me. What I find amazing is that, thus far, some of them have managed to survive!

Coming events:

For IFFA events see back cover

Conferences/Workshops/Talks

Sat 31 August, 10am - 4.30 pm. Mistletoe Forum - the Lectures. Organised by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Invited speakers will present short papers on all aspects of Mistletoe. Cost \$30 (FNCV members \$15). Held at the FNCV headquarters, 1 Gardenia St, Blackburn 3130. Contact FNCV office for booking forms on (03) 9877 9860. Booking closes Thursday 22 Aug. Including field trip to the west of Melbourne on Sunday 1 September.

Sun 1 September, 9.30 am. Mistletoe Forum - The Excursion. Field observations, lead by Mistletoe experts. Cost \$40 (FNCV members \$30) for this coach excursion. Bookings close Thu 22 August. Contact FNCV (03) 9877 9860.

Tue 3 September, 8 pm. "Ants - particularly those in Box-Iranbark Forests". Mr Simon Hinkley from the Museum of Victoria will talk about identification and biology of ants. Held at the FNCV headquarters, 1 Gardenia St, Blackburn 3130. Contact Felicity Garde (03) 9818 4684.

Wed 4 September. "Understanding your soil test report" - a city based farmers information forum. Contact Penny Richards (059) 647 088 for further information.

Sat 7 September. "Feral animal and vermin control" - a Whittlesea Agricultural Society workshop. Contact Gordon Taylor (03) 9716 2276 for more information.

Sun 8 September. How to propagate local native plants - a Greening Australia Victoria Training day. This session aims to provide participants with knowledge and skills required to propagate indigenous plants using common techniques. For further information, contact Gerard Clark on (03) 9457 3024.

Mon 16 September, 8pm. "Butterfly plant interaction in the Melbourne Environs" - an illustrated talk presented by Ross Field. Organised by the Victorian Society for Growing Australian Plants. Contact Enid Bowman (03) 9882 5297 for venue details (it will be held in either the Astronomer's Residence or in the Herbarium Hall, Parkville).

Thu 19 September, 8 pm. Is Dieback Declining? The Threat of Cinnamon Fungus. Gretna Weste, University of Melbourne, tells of recent findings that bushland can recover from the devastation caused by Cinnamon Fungus. Held at the FNCV headquarters, 1 Gardenia St, Blackburn 3130. Contact John Eichler (03) 9598 9492.

Sun 22 September. Whole farm planning open day - Arthurs Creek Hall. For more information contact Pat Corr (03) 9714 8270.

Sun 22 September. How to identify your local plants - a Greening Australia Victoria training day. This session aims to provide participants with the basic skills required to research the identity of indigenous plant species. For further information, contact Gerard Clark on (03) 9457 3024.

"Landcare for Educators Vacation Course", Creswick.
Course 2: 30 Sep - 4 Oct 1996. A course designed for teachers, community educators and anyone with an interest in landcare education. Presented by Department of NRE & The University of Melbourne - School of Forestry. Contact Trish Kevin & Geoff Park, DCNR - Creswick Nursery & Landcare Centre. Tel 053 452 200 or Fax 053 452 795.

September 30 - October 3 1996 "Australian Weeds Conference". The Weed Science Society of Victoria Inc., in conjunction with the Council of Australian Weed Science Societies, will be hosting the eleventh of these triennial conferences at Melbourne University. The conference will focus on the significant land use systems - cropping pasture, public lands, forest rangelands and urban areas. Contact Chris Knight, Promotions officer, Australian Weeds Conference, PO Box 987, Frankston, Vic 3199. Tel (03) 9619 2603, Fax (03) 9619 1756.

27 - 31 October 1996 13th Conference - Fire & Forest Meteorology - "International Perspectives on Landscape Fires". Organised by the American Meteorology Society and the Society of American Foresters. This 13th conference will be the first held outside of North America and will be at The Cumberland Resort Lorne, Victoria. Topic areas will include: fire ecology, fire management, fire disaster planning, media issues, smoke, meteorology/climatology, fire physics, modelling, and urban interface issues. Contact IAWF, PO Box 328, Fairfield, Washington, USA 99012.

Thur 28 - Fri 29 November 1996 "Sustainability & Local Environments - Myths, models & milestones." Environs Australia, the local government environment network, proudly presents its second National Conference, held in Sydney. Explore the cutting edge of sustainability practice in local communities. Contribute to the development of achievable goals for the 21st Century. It follows on from 1994 Conference - Local Government Responds to Rio. It is about the people who are in the field and making substantial, real changes, and who are able to share their practical experience. Contact Peter Lyon, Executive Officer, Environs Australia, Ph (03) 9654 1322, fax (03) 9654 1625 or E-mail mcavic@peg.apc.org

Excursions and field trips

Platypus Behind the Scenes Tours. Includes an illustrated talk on the unique platypus by Conservancy researchers. Learn about platypus research techniques & try your skills at spotting wild platypus. Tours run until October. Tour dates: Sun 18/8 & Wed 28/8, Sat 14/9, Sun 15/9 & Wed 18/9. Tours commence at 3 pm and lasts until 5:30. Cost: Adults \$6.50, Children \$4.00, Family (2 adults, 2 kids) \$17.00. Friends of the platypus members free. Bookings essential. Contact Australian Platypus Conservancy, PO Box 84, Whittlesea 3757, Ph (03) 9716 1626.

Sat 24 August - "Wattles of Hochkins Reserve." See the Wattles in Bloom with Cecily Falkingham. Organised by the Botany Group of the FNCV. Meet at the Reserve, Exeter Road (Melways 36 K8) at 10 am. Contact Noel Schleiger on (03) 9435 8408.

Sat 31 August, 7 - 9 pm. Possum Prowl at Cardinia

Reservoir. For enquiries, cost and bookings contact Earth Encounters BH (03) 9574 8444.

August-December 1996 "Birds and Tree Hollows Survey." Another project of the RAOU studying the use and distribution of tree hollows in the Box Ironbark forest of northern Victoria on public and private land. Contact George Appleby at the RAOU head office in Hawthorn on (03) 9882 2622.

Sun 8 September, 2 - 4 pm. Heathland Walk at Braeside Park. For enquiries, cost and bookings contact Earth Encounters BH (03) 9574 8444.

Fri 13 to Sun 15 September, 9am - 12.30pm. Melbourne Wildflower Show. At the Royal Botanic Gardens, Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra. Display will feature native species from all over Australia, but all will have been actually grown in Victoria, with the possible exception of some of the items in the Fresh & Dried Flower Sales area. Presented by Maroondah Society for Growing Australian Plants. Contact Co-ordinator Gwen Elliot (03) 9879 1427.

Wed 18 September. Direct seeding, trials and tribulations - a Greening Australia Victoria Bus tour. This tour aims to enable participants to compare and contrast different seeding techniques. For further information, contact Gerard Clark on (03) 9457 3024.

Sat 21 September. Stagwatch in Victoria's Central Highlands. Stagwatching and spotlighting for Leadbeater's Possum, with the Fauna Survey Group of the FNCV. Contact Ray Gibson for further information (03) 9874 4408.

Sat 21 September, 10 - 1 pm. A VAEE Field Trip to Kinglake National Park looking at Park flora & fauna Management issues. For cost, bookings and more information, contact VAEE on (03) 9428 9812.

Sat 28 September, 7 - 9 pm. Night Explorer Walk at Cardinia Reservoir. For enquiries, cost and bookings contact Earth Encounters BH (03) 9574 8444.

Sat 28 September, 10.30 am. Wildflower Excursion. See the spring wildflowers at their best on a bushwalk with local guide, Beth Bastin, along an Ironbark track at Heathcote. Organised by the Botany Group of the FNCV. Contact Dorothy Mahler (03) 9435 8408.

Sat 28 & Sun 29 - "September Grampians Wildflower Show", held by the Grampians Group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants. For more details see "Snippets" this issue.

Sat Oct. 12 to Sat. Oct. 26, 11 am to 5 pm daily. "Wild Wings" Colourful paintings of beautiful Australian Birds by Janet Flinn. Olinda Art Gallery, 1 Parsons Lane, Olinda (Melways 66 J7). Ph. (03) 9751 1812.

Sat 19 October, 9 - 1 pm. "Fowl in a Foul Setting". A field trip presented by VAEE. The Werribee sewage farm is a bird-watching site of international renown. Waders flying in from Siberia, Orange-bellied parrots flying out to Tasmania, pink-eared ducks in profusion, grebes and kites, cisticolas and rails - this is the place to see birds. Bring binoculars, field guides and your morning tea and we'll see what there is to see. Cost \$18, VAEE members \$12, Concession \$15. Contact Grag Hunt for bookings

Restoration Activities

August

Sat 24, 1pm. FO Sherbrooke Forest Inc. - Project afternoon. Meet at Woodfull Track entrance (Mel Ref 75 E6). We will be tackling mostly ivy on ground and up trees at the lower Ridge Track site. BYO bow-saw or pruning saw and secateurs. Contact Vivien Freshwater (03) 9754 3093.

September

Sun 1, 10am. Warringal Conservation Society. Spring Planting Festival site at the Banyule Native Gardens above Banyule Flats (Mel 32 F1). Contact Karen (03) 9458 4152 or Scott (03) 9459 2929.

Sun 8. 9.30 am. FO Sherbrooke Forest Inc. - Plant Survey. Meet at Main Entrance Picnic Ground (Mel Ref 75 G2). Bring compass, pem and clipboard. Contact Vivien Freshwater (03) 9754 3093.

Sat 7, 9am - noon. FO Brushy Creek Wetlands - working bee. Everyone welcome and refreshments are provided. Meet at the Village School, 9 - 13 Holloway Rd, Crodon North (Mel Ref 37 D6). Contact Kay Vine (03) 9727 7227.

Sat 7, noon - 5 pm. Candlebark Community Nursery - sorting the seeds for sowing in Spring. Village School Kitchen, 9 - 13 Holloway Rd, Croydon North (Mel ref 37 D6). Join us for a cosy Candlebarkian afternoon cleaning and collating seed, as well as data recording activities. Everyone is welcome and refreshments are provided. Contact Debbie McGrath on (03) 9720 6141.

Sun 8, 9am. FO Warriën Reserve - Spring Planting Festival. Meet Warriën Reserve, Warriën Road, Croydon North (Mel ref 36 K12). We invite you to help plant several hundred trees in this year's festival. Bring the family, your gloves and some enthusiasm for this fulfilling task. Refreshments and tools provided. Contact Gavin Anderson (03) 9725 9460.

Sun 15. FO Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee - Project Day. Picnic ground clean-up at Werribee Gorge. BYO gloves and friends! Contact Janet Leversha (053) 674 229 for meeting time & place.

Sun 15, 10 am. Hochkins Ridge Flora Reserve - Spring Planting Festival. Enter via Manuela St, Croydon North (Mel ref 36 K7). Join the friends of Hochkins in stage 3 of their ridgeline planting and maintenance. This very special reserve is a delight to behold in Spring. Contact Laurie Black (03) 9726 0714.

Regular Restoration Activities

1st Saturday of the month:

Greenlink Box Hill - also every Monday and Tuesday at 10am. Minette Russell-Young (03) 9898 1364.

FO Gellibrand Hill State Park - 9.45am. Mark Corr (03) 9557 2783

Loughies Bushland - Nth Ringwood 9.30 am. Meet cnr Kubis & Werac Drv. Carole Clarke (03) 9870 8126.

1st Sunday of the month:

FO Evans Street Grasslands - 9.30am. Helen Graesser (03) 9744 4097 (Mel 113 B10)

FO Fourth Hill - 10 am to 12 noon. Meeting place varies. Dave V. Bockel (03) 9844 2659.

Heathmont Bushlinks - works in 5 different areas 10 am - 1 pm. Roger Lord (03) 9870 5262.

Greenlink Oakleigh - 10am to 1pm, holds working bees every Sun (except on long weekends) at the nursery. Doug Evans (03) 9579 4686 AH, (03) 9556 4433 BH.

Riverlands Conservation Society: Yarra Flats Park - 10 am (between May & Nov). Contact Yarra Valley Parklands (03) 9846 4499.

2nd Saturday of the month:

FO Timber Reserve - 2 - 3pm. Brian Phefley (03) 9844 2659 (Mel 35 G3)

FO French Island - Goeff Lacey (03) 9578 2873 or Francis Garner (03) 9783 4213

Tereddan Drive Reserve, Kilsythe - Graham Lorimer (03) 9728 5841.

URAGE - or on 2nd Sundays, call to check. Bradley Curtis Ph (03) 9 ... (Various sites)

2nd Sunday of the month:

Greenlink Camberwell - 3pm. Diana Burgess (03) 9809 2092 (Mel 60 E7)

Friends of the Yarra - 10am. Also Wednesdays. Judy Rutherford (03) 9347 2252 (Mel 2D D7)

FO Plenty River - 10am to noon. Alice & Kevin Ley (03) 9435 3840. (Various sites)

FO Yandell Reserve - Graeme Paterson (03) 9432 0163. (Mel 21 B1)

3rd Saturday of the month:

FO Bradshaw Park - 10am (9am in Nov & Dec). Dave Bainbridge (03) 9580 5992 (Mel 87 E10)

3rd Sunday of the month:

Men of the Trees - 10am. Planting at Yarra Bend Park. Minette Russell-Young (03) 9898 1364 (Mel 2D D6)

Meander (Menzies Creek & Emerald Tourist track) - 10am. Kate Forster (059) 685 828 (Mel 125 F12)

Brunswick Tree Group - 10am. Eric Ward (03) 9388 2123

FO One Tree Hill - Diane Silveri (03) 9710 1331

FO Wilson Reserve - 10am. Robert Bender (03) 9499 2413. (Mel 31 G10)

Osborne Peninsula Landcare - Margaret Dimech (03) 9844 3812 (Mel 23 J9)

FO Pigeon Bank Creek - 2pm. Linda Bromilow (03) 9844 2541 (Mel 23 J6)

Warringal Conservation Society - 10am. Karen (03) 9458 4152. (Various sites around Banyule Flats)

FO Tindals Wildflower Reserve - 11am. Kim Docwra (03) 9876 3807 (Mel 35 A3)

Last Saturday of the month:

FO Sherbrooke Forest - 2pm (1pm in Winter). Vivien Freshwater (03) 9754 3093

FO Koolunga Bushland Reserve - 10am to noon. Gordon Carter (03) 9762 2117

FO Organ Pipes National Park - 10am. Carl Rayner (03) 9331 2810FO Valley Reserve, Glen Waverley - 1:30 to 4 pm. Contact Alf Salkin (03) 9802 6213

Last Sunday of the month:

Friends of Royal Park West - 10am. Mick Arundell (03) 9380 8075 (Mel 29 C12)

FO the Helmeted Honeyeater - 11am. Nursery activities - Healesville. Jeff Dickinson (03) 9568 2768.

FO Pecks Dam, Montmorency - 10am. Trina (03) 9439 9642 (Mel 21 G7)

FO St Helena Bushland Reserve - 10.30 am. Lawrie Rigg (03) 9434 6685.

Week day activities:

Wurundjeri Garden - 1st Tuesday of the month from 10am to 12pm. Dorothy Sutherland (03) 9818 4706 (Mel 45 A11)

FO the Koorngong - first Wednesday of the month at 10am. Cathy Willis (03) 9844 1841.

Green Link Box Hill - every Monday & Tuesday morning, and the 1st Sat each month. 10 am. Often at Council Nursery in Nelson St, Box Hill. Minette Russell-Young (03) 9898 1364.

FO Sherbrooke Forest - 2nd Wednesdays, 9.30 am. Vivien Freshwater (03) 9754 3093.

Fred Rogers Reserve - Heathmont 12 am - 2 pm. Gwen Elliot (03) 9879 1427

FO the Koalas inc - Koala counts are held at the Koala Conservation Centre, Phillip Island, every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Contact (059) 522 407.

FO Stane Brae - second Wednesdays 10am. Ron Taylor (03) 9844 4285.

FO Warrandyte State Park nursery activities - every Thursdays at 10am. Afternoon activities: walk, flora fauna park skills. Mike Coupar (03) 9844 1650.

This year's "Spring Planting Festival" is coming up in September. For information on your local planting sites call the Festival Hotline on 1800 806 555.

For Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers activities, contact ATCV: (053) 33 1483

For Melbourne Parks & Waterways Parks Activities Program contact the Hotline on 13 1963.

For those interested in a range of volunteer activities run by the Royal Australasian Ornithologist Union please phone Michael Fendley at RAOU on (03) 9882 2622.

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 contact Elissa Kerassitis BH (03) 9457 3024 or through

IFFA's mailing address.

Weed Activities Calendar

Courtesy of Kate Blood

September

11-13 Sept 10th Inter. Conf on Weed Biology
Frances J Gasquez

Sun 29 Sep 5:00 pm 11th Australian Weeds Conf
Univ of Melbourne Fiona Richardson

Mon 30 Sep all day 11th Australian Weeds Conf
Univ of Melbourne Fiona Richardson

October

Tue 1 Oct all day 11th Australian Weeds Conf
Univ of Melbourne Fiona Richardson

Wed 2 Oct all day 11th Australian Weeds Conf
Univ of Melbourne Fiona Richardson

Thu 3 Oct all day 11th AWC - field trips vari-
ous Fiona Richardson

1997

18-22 Aug 50th NZ Plant Protection Conf Lin-
coln, NZ Richard Falloon

8-12 Sept 16th Asian-Pacific WSS Conf Ma-
laysia Anis Rahman

Always check with the specified contacts!

Contacts:

Kate Blood ph wk (03)9412 4187, fx (03)9412 4586,
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Cedex, France, fx(33)806 33262, email:

darmecy@epoisses.inra.fr

Richard Falloon, Canterbury Ag Sc Centre, Gerald St,
Lincoln, NZ, ph NZ (03)325 6400

Anis Rahman ph NZ (07)838 5280, email:
Rahmana@agresearch.cri.nz

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

IFFA recently received an update of threatened taxa and communities and potentially threatening processes currently listed on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. The information was provided by Kerri Northey at the Flora and Fauna Branch of DNRE. It is presented here for use as a pull-out reference.

SCHEDULE 2 - LIST OF TAXA AND COMMUNITIES OF FLORA OR FAUNA WHICH ARE THREATENED

<i>Abutilon fraseri</i>	- Dwarf Lantern-bush	<i>Craterocephalus stercusmuscarum fulvus</i>	- Hardyhead
<i>Acacia glandulicarpa</i>	- Hairy-pod Wattle	<i>Cyathea cunninghamii</i>	- Slender Tree Fern
<i>Acacia havilandii</i>	- Needle Wattle	<i>Cyathea leichhardtiana</i>	- Prickly Tree-fern
<i>Acacia maidenii</i>	- Maiden's Wattle	<i>Dasyornis brachypterus</i>	- Eastern Bristlebird
<i>Acacia omalophylla</i>	- Yarran Wattle	<i>Dasyornis broadbenti</i>	- Rufous Bristlebird
<i>Acacia pendula</i>	- Weeping Myall	<i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>	- Tiger Quoll
<i>Acanthopis antarcticus</i>	- Death Adder	<i>Dasyurus viverrinus</i>	- Eastern Quoll
<i>Acrodipsas brisbanensis</i>	- Large Ant-blue Butterfly	<i>Delma impar</i>	- Striped Legless Lizard
<i>Acrodipsas myrmecophila</i>	- Small Ant-blue Butterfly	<i>Dendrobium speciosum</i>	- Rock Orchid
<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	- Dainty Maidenhair	<i>Discaria nitida</i>	- Shining Anchor Plant
<i>Adiantum diaphanum</i>	- Filmy Maidenhair	<i>Discaria pubescens</i>	- Hairy Anchor Plant
<i>Adriana quadripartita</i>	- Rare Bitter-bush	<i>Diuris cuneata</i>	- Wedge Diuris
<i>Aepyprymnus rufescens</i>	- Rufous Bettong	<i>Diuris fragrantissima</i>	- Sunshine Diuris
<i>Agrostis adamsonii</i>	- Adamson's Bent	<i>Diuris punctata</i>	- Purple Diuris
<i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i>	- Buloke	<i>Drabastrum alpestre</i>	- Mountain Cress
<i>Almaleea capitata</i>	- Slender Parrot-pea	<i>Dysphania simulans</i>	- Spiked Pigweed
<i>Ambassis agassizii</i>	- Agassiz's Chanda Perch	<i>Edelia obscura</i>	- Yarra Pygmy Perch
<i>Amphibromus pithogastrus</i>	- Swollen Swamp Wallaby-grass	<i>Engaeus mallacoota</i>	- Mallacoota Burrowing Crayfish
<i>Aprasia aurita</i>	- legless lizard	<i>Engaeus phyllocercus</i>	- Narracan Burrowing Crayfish
<i>Archaeophylax canarus</i>	- caddisfly	<i>Engaeus sternalis</i>	- Warragul Burrowing Crayfish
<i>Ardea alba</i>	- Great Egret	<i>Epilobium willisii</i>	- Carpet Willow-herb
<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	- Australian Bustard	<i>Eremophila bignoniiflora</i>	- Bignonia Emu-bush
<i>Astelia australiana</i>	- Tall Astelia	<i>Eremophila sturtii</i>	- Narrow-leaf Emu-bush
<i>Austrogammarus australis</i>	- freshwater amphipod	<i>Egernia multiscutata</i>	- Heath Skink
<i>Bettongia gaimardi</i>	- Tasmanian Bettong	<i>Euastacus diversus</i>	- Orbest Crayfish
<i>Bettongia penicillata</i>	- Brush-tailed Bettong	<i>Eubalaena australis</i>	- Southern Right Whale
<i>Boronia galbraithiae</i>	- Aniseed Boronia	<i>Eucalyptus aggregata</i>	- Black Gum
<i>Borya mirabilis</i>	- Grampians Pincushion-lily	<i>Eucalyptus cadens</i>	- Warby Swamp Gum
<i>Brachyscome muelleroides</i>	- Mueller Daisy	<i>Eucalyptus crenulata</i>	- Buxton Gum
<i>Brachyscome tenuiscapa</i>	- Mountain Daisy	<i>Eucalyptus froggattii</i>	- Kamarooka Mallee
<i>Brunoniella pumilio</i>	- Dwarf Brunoniella	<i>Euphorbia planiticola</i>	- Plains Spurge
<i>Burhinus magnirostris</i>	- Bush Thick-knee	<i>Euphorbia tannensis</i>	- Desert Spurge
<i>Burrarnys parvus</i>	- Mountain Pygmy-possum	<i>Euphrasia scabra</i>	- Rough Eyebright
<i>Caladenia audasii</i>	- Audas' Spider-orchid	<i>Eusthenia nothofagi</i>	- Otway Stonefly
<i>Caladenia calcicola</i>	- Limestone Spider-orchid	<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	- Grey Falcon
<i>Caladenia fragrantissima</i>	- Cream Spider-orchid	<i>Furina diadema</i>	- Red-naped Snake
<i>ssp. orientalis</i>		<i>Galaxias cleaveri</i>	- Tasmanian Mudfish
<i>Caladenia hastata</i>	- Melblom's Spider-orchid	<i>Galaxias olidus var. fuscus</i>	- Brown Galaxias
<i>Caladenia robinsonii</i>	- Frankston Spider-orchid	<i>Galaxiella pusilla</i>	- Dwarf Galaxias
<i>Caladenia rosella</i>	- Rosella Spider-orchid	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	- Wilga
<i>Caladenia thysanochila</i>	- Fringed spider-orchid	<i>Glycine canescens</i>	- Silky Glycine
<i>Calochilus richiae</i>	- Bald-tip Beard-orchid	<i>Glycine latrobeana</i>	- Clover Glycine
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami</i>	- Glossy Black Cockatoo (eastern subspecies)	<i>Gobiomorphus coxii</i>	- Cox's Gudgeon
<i>Calyptorhynchus magnificus</i>	- Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Goodenia macbarronii</i>	- Narrow Goodenia
<i>Carex cephalotes</i>	- Wire-head Sedge	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	- Painted Honeyeater
<i>Carex paupera</i>	- Dwarf Sedge	<i>Grevillea barklyana</i>	- Gully Grevillea
<i>Carex tasmanica</i>	- Curly Sedge	<i>Grus rubicundus</i>	- Brolga
<i>Casuarina obesa</i>	- Swamp Sheoke	<i>Gymnobelideus leadbeateri</i>	- Leadbeater's Possum
<i>Celmisia sericophylla</i>	- Silky Daisy	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	- White-bellied Sea-eagle
<i>Chaeropus ecaudatus</i>	- Pig-footed Bandicoot	<i>Heleioporus australiacus</i>	- Giant Burrowing Frog
<i>Charadrius rubricollis</i>	- Hooded Plover	<i>Helipterum strictum</i>	- Upright Sunray
<i>Chlamydera maculata</i>	- Spotted Bowerbird	<i>Hemichroa diandra</i>	- Mallee Hemichroa
<i>Climacteris affinis</i>	- White-browed Treecreeper	<i>Hemiphysalis mirabilis</i>	- Hemiphysalis Damselfly
<i>Comesperma polygaloides</i>	- Small Milkwort	<i>Hibbertia humifusa</i>	- Guinea-flower, new ssp. (North East)
<i>Craterocephalus fluviatilis</i>	- Murray Hardyhead	<i>Hypseleotris compressus</i>	- Empire Gudgeon
		<i>Isopogon prostratus</i>	- Prostrate Cone-bush
		<i>Kelleria laxa</i>	- Drapetes
		<i>Lagorchestes leporides</i>	- Eastern Hare-wallaby
		<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	- Swift Parrot
		<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	- Malleefowl
		<i>Lepidium aschersonii</i>	- Spiny Pepper-cress
		<i>Lepidium hyssopifolium</i>	- Small Pepper-cress
		<i>Lepidium monolocoides</i>	- Winged Pepper-cress
		<i>Lepidium pseudopapillosum</i>	- Erect Pepper-cress
		<i>Leporillus apicalis</i>	- Lesser Stick-nest Rat
		<i>Leptorhynchus medius</i>	- Annual Buttons
		<i>Lichenostomus melanops cassidix</i>	- Helmeted Honeyeater
		<i>Limnodynastes interioris</i>	- Giant Bullfrog
		<i>Litoria spenceri</i>	- Spotted Tree Frog
		<i>Lovettia sealii</i>	- Tasmanian Whitebait
		<i>Maccullochella macquariensis</i>	- Trout Cod
		<i>Maccullochella peelii</i>	- Murray Cod
		<i>Macquaria australasica</i>	- Macquarie Perch
		<i>Manorina melanotis</i>	- Black-eared Miner
		<i>Megascolides australis</i>	- Giant Gippsland Earthworm

Melaleuca halmaturorum	- Salt Paperbark	Sarcochilus falcatus	- Orange-blossom Orchid
Melanotaenia fluviatilis	- Murray Rainbowfish	Senecio behrianus	- Stiff Groundsel
Melnea crassa	- Fat Spectacles	Senecio macrocarpus	- Large-fruit Groundsel
Miniopterus schreibersii	- Common Bent-wing Bat	Spathula tryssa	- planarian
Mixophyes balbus	- Southern Barred Frog	Sphenomorphus kosciuskoi	- Alpine Water Skink
Mogurnda adspersa	- Purple-spotted Gudgeon	Sterna albifrons	- Little Tern
Morelia spilota	- Carpet & Diamond Pythons	Sterna nereis nereis	- Fairy Tern
Myoporum floribundum	- Slender Myoporum	Stictonetta naevosa	- Freckled Duck
Myrmecia sp. 17	- bull-ant	Stipiturus mallee	- Mallee Emu-wren
Nannoperca variegata	- Ewens Pigmy Perch	Swainsona brachycarpa	- Slender Swainson-pea
Neophema chrysogaster	- Orange-bellied Parrot	Swainsona galegifolia	- Smooth Darling-pea
Neophema pulchella	- Turquoise Parrot	Swainsona murrayana	- Murray Swainson-pea
Ninox strenua	- Powerful Owl	Swainsona plagiotropis	- Red Swainson-pea
Ogyris otales	- Small Brown Azure Butterfly	Swainsona purpurea	- Purple Swainson-pea
Olearia astroloba	- Marble Daisy-bush	Symplocos thwaitesii	- Buff Hazelwood
Onychogalea fraenata	- Bridled Nailtail Wallaby	Synemon nais	- moth
Pachycephalus rufogularis-	Red-lore'd Whistler	Synemon plana	- Golden Sun Moth
Paralucia pyrodiscus lucida	- Eltham Copper	Thaumatoperla alpina	- stonefly
Butterfly		Thaumatoperla flaveola	- stonefly
Pedionomus torquatus	- Plains-wanderer	Thelymitra epipactoides	- Metallic Sun-orchid
Perameles bougainville	- Western Barred Bandicoot	Thelymitra matthewsii	- Spiral Sun-orchid
Perameles gunnii	- Eastern Barred Bandicoot	Thelymitra merraniae	- Merran's Sun-orchid
Petaurus norfolcensis	- Squirrel Glider	Thesium australe	- Austral Toad-flax
Petrogale penicillata	- Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby	Thismia rodwayi	- Fairy Lanterns
Pezoporus wallicus	- Ground Parrot	Thylogale billardierii	- Tasmanian Pademelon
Phascogale calura	- Red-tailed Phascogale	Trichanthodium baracchianum	- Dwarf Gnephosis
Phascogale tapoatafa	- Brush-tailed Phascogale	Tympanocryptis lineata lineata	- Lined Earless Dragon
Phebalium wilsonii	- Shiny Phebalium	Tympanocryptis lineata pinguicolla	- earless dragon
Philoria frosti	- Baw Baw Frog	Tyto novaehollandiae	- Masked Owl
Planigale gilesi	- Paucident Planigale	Tyto tenebricosa	- Sooty Owl
Platydoris galbana	- marine opisthobranch	Wahlenbergia densifolia	- Fairy Bluebell
Poa saxicola	- Rock Tussock-grass	Westringia crassifolia	- Whipstick Westringia
Polytelis anthopeplus	- Regent Parrot	Xanthomyza phrygia	- Regent Honeyeater
anthopeplus (eastern subspecies)			
Polytelis swainsonii	- Superb Parrot	<i>Communities</i>	
Pomaderris cotoneaster	- Cotoneaster Pomaderris	Alpine Bog Community	
Pomaderris sericea	- Bent Pomaderris	Alpine Snowpatch Community	
Pomaderris subplicata	- Concave Pomaderris	Butterfly Community No. 1	
Pomatostomus temporalis-	Grey-crowned Babbler	Caltha introloba Herbland Community	
Potamalosa richmondia	- Freshwater Herring	Central Gippsland Plains Grassland Community	
Potorous longipes	- Long-footed Potoroo	Cool Temperate Rainforest Community	
Pleucogaster		Fen (Bog pool) Community	
Potamalosa richmondia	- Freshwater Herring	Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland Community	
Potorous longipes	- Long-footed Potoroo	Limestone Pomaderris Shrubland Community	
Prasophyllum chasmogamum	- Spreading Leek Orchid	Montane Swamp Complex Community	
Prasophyllum diversiflorum-	Gorae Leek Orchid	Northern Plains Grassland Community	
Prasophyllum subbisectum	- Pomonal Leek Orchid	Plains Grassland (South Gippsland) Community	
Prototroctes maraena	- Australian Grayling	Red Gum Swamp Community No. 1	
Pseudomys novaehollandiae-	New Holland Mouse	Rocky Chenopod Open Scrub Community	
Pseudomys shortridgei	- Heath Rat	San Remo Marine Community	
Psophodes nigrogularis leucogaster-	Western Whipbird	Sedge-rich Eucalyptus camphora Swamp Community	
Psoralea australasica	- Tall Psoralea	Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community	
Psoralea cinerea	- Hoary Psoralea	SCHEDULE 3 - LIST OF POTENTIALLY THREATENING PROCESSES	
Psoralea parva	- Small Psoralea	Alteration to the natural flow regimes of rivers and streams.	
Psoralea patens	- Spreading Psoralea	Alteration to the natural temperature regimes of rivers and streams.	
Psoralea tenax	- Tough Psoralea	Collection of native orchids.	
Pterostylis baptistii	- King Greenhood	Increase in sediment input into Victorian rivers and streams due to human activities.	
Pterostylis basaltica	- greenhood	Input of organotins to Victorian marine and estuarine waters.	
Pterostylis cucullata	- Leafy Greenhood	Input of petroleum and related products into Victorian marine and estuarine environments.	
Pterostylis despectans	- greenhood	Input of toxic substances into Victorian rivers and streams.	
Pterostylis truncata	- Brittle Greenhood	Introduction of live fish into waters outside their natural range within a Victorian river catchment after 1770.	
Pterostylis woollsi	- Long-tail Greenhood	Loss of hollow-bearing trees in Victorian native forests.	
Ptilotus erubescens	- Hairy-tails	Predation of native wildlife by the introduced Red Fox	
Pultenaea graveolens	- Scented Bush-pea	Vulpes vulpes.	
Pygopus nigriceps	- Hooded Scaly-foot	Prevention of passage of aquatic biota as a result of the presence of instream structures.	
Rhinolophus megaphyllus	- Eastern Horseshoe-bat	Removal of wood debris from Victorian streams.	
Rhodope genus	- marine opisthobranch	Spread of Pittosporum undulatum in areas outside its natural range.	
Rhynchoedura ornata	- Beaked Gecko	Soil and vegetation disturbance resulting from marble mining.	
Riekoperla darlingtoni	- Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly	Soil erosion and vegetation damage and disturbance in the alpine regions of Victoria caused by cattle grazing	
Riekoperla intermedia	- stonefly	The introduction of exotic organisms into Victorian marine waters.	
Riekoperla isosceles	- stonefly		
Rulingia pannosa	- Clustered Kerrawang		
Rulingia prostrata	- Dwarf Kerrawang		
Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides	- Button Wrinklewort		
Sambucus australasica	- Yellow Elderberry		
Santalum lanceolatum	- Northern Sandalwood		

Snippets:

Brisbane City Council Managing Bushland

IFFA receives the newsletter of the Toohey Forest Protection Society in Brisbane. It often gives us some insight into what is happening in conservation land management in Brisbane. Their latest two issues have described the structure and objectives of the bushland management personnel in the city. Brisbane City Council is the largest city council in Australia covering a large metropolitan area so the staff described below probably have to manage a lot of ground. The personnel hierarchy below highlights one quarter of the section; there are four natural area regions, including south, in the city.

The Conservation Ranger's position has the following objectives:

- development and enforcement of policies and local laws designed to enhance and protect the values of natural areas;
- identifying and overcoming problems by taking direct action where appropriate or notifying the appropriate people;
- assisting in the implementation of fire management strategies to ensure protection of life, property and ecological values in accordance with established legislative and safety procedures and fire management plans;
- participating in the development and review of natural area management plans to ensure they address the requirements of environmental sustainability and are responsive to the needs of the community and stakeholders;
- providing advice and support to volunteers, community interest groups, and participants in community projects in natural areas and
- assisting in the development and implementation of interpretive programs and activities to promote awareness of the ecological and recreational values of natural areas.

Source: Toohey Forest Protection Society Newsletter, May and June 1996

Australia's Weed Scandal

Quarantine is a farce, says Nature Australia. Our protocols impose strict curbs on animal imports, but freely welcome in weeds in the guise of new ornamental and pasture plants. All but two of our 18 worst weeds were deliberately introduced.

Source: RoySocVic Notes on the News, 1996/1

Input Sought for Heritage Guidelines

The Australian Heritage Commission is inviting local communities to help create a comprehensive guide on recognising and caring for heritage places. The Commission, through a recently-announced **Heritage Guidelines Project**, will draw on the expertise of local government, community groups and interested individuals to develop practical guidelines for helping local groups to record and care for their heritage. They will be the first guidelines to integrate natural, historic and Indigenous heritage in a single approach.

The project, together with the *Coastal Heritage Identification Review*, is being funded under the Commonwealth Coastal Action Program. The Heritage Guidelines will enable councils and communities to locate their places of special value and to make sure they can be protected both through the planning system and through community initiatives.

The Commission has enlisted consultants Context Pty. Ltd. to consult widely in developing the guidelines. They are particularly interested in hearing from people about:

Similar guides: examples of guidelines that work and those that don't - and why?

Local needs, interests and resources: how can the Guidelines best meet different local needs and interests, and be adaptable to varying levels of local resources?

Contact: Context Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 193, West Brunswick, VIC 3055, Ph. (03) 9380 6933, Fax: (03) 9388 2496, E-mail: context@peg.apc.org

Environment Management Capabilities Database

The Environment Management Capabilities Database (EMCD) increases the profile of Australia's environment management industry, within Australia and around the globe. The database currently lists the environmental expertise of more than 750 companies and public sector organisations - expertise including instrumentation and monitoring equipment manufacture and supply; enviro-technologies, environmental consulting services including engineering, information

technology and legal services.

The EMCD is an element of a network of databases, called EnviroNET Australia. This network provides information on environmental education courses, research and development into waste management and pollution control, and cleaner production case studies in Australia. The network was launched in December 1995. Since it's launch, the database has generated world-wide interest from industrial, academic, government and commercial sectors.

This interest is attributable to the emphasis placed upon the accessibility and utility of the database during its development and updating. The database is available throughout the world via the Internet. The EnviroNET Australia homepage can be found at:
<http://www.erin.gov.au/net/environet.html>

Further information about environmental solutions is also provided by Envirolink. It was set up by the EPA and the Environment Management Industry Association of Australia (EMIAA), and is maintained by the EMIAA. For those who cannot access the Internet Envirolink provides a 'one-stop-shop' for information on environment management solutions, and is available by phone (Australia wide Freecall 1800 500299 - or 3229 8522 for Brisbane), fax (07) 229 8577) and e-mail (emiaa@peg.apc.org).
Contact for more info:
Nigel Kirk, (06) 274 1781 or Email environet@dest.gov.au

know that they are not alone in their madness. People elsewhere in the world share their passions and are repeating patterns seen in Australia: seed is being collected from threatened habitats, plants are propagated, then used revegetate to core areas. By closely observing their successes and failures, people are learning an enormous amount about their local ecosystems.

The methods and the information generated is separate to academically based ecological research which examines one or several species, but not whole ecosystems.

So says Stuart Pimm, reviewing a new book called *Miracle Under the Oaks* (Nature, 1996), which describes the history of hands-on revegetation in America. The story begins in 1975, when Steve Packard started collecting seed in remnants south of Chicago and began weeding and planting out some of those remnants. At that time, the state of Illinois had native vegetation covering 0.1% of its land (sound familiar, grasslanders?). He and his colleagues began replanting those remnants, but soon found they needed fire. Also they found that surviving species did not always represent the original vegetation, and historical surveys were needed to develop a more accurate representation of the original prairie.

This book describes the history and experiences of the Illinois revegetators and many other projects, most involving prairies. It also asks a series of questions about restoration that also have been asked locally. Is reassembly possible? Will the same communities always arise from a certain climate, soil and fire regime? Do we consider new communities and assemblages in order to sustain species and ecosystems?

So far, I have only seen the review of the book, published in Nature (Jan 18, 1996) but will endeavour to obtain a copy and see how these ideas relate to the Australian effort. To find a review of indigenous revegetation in the conservative but respected Nature is encouraging. People take heart: there are many like you, who have independently come to the same conclusions; proving perhaps, that you can't keep a good idea down.

References:

Pimm, S.L. (1996) Designer Ecosystems, Nature, 379, 217-218.

Stevens, W.K. (1995) *Miracle Under the Oaks: The Revival of Nature In America*. Pocket, New York, 333pp.

From Roger Jones
New evidence that productivity and sustainability is influenced by biodiversity
Conservation ecologists use a number of arguments from

Research Notes:

Replanting the Prairie

Local guardians of threatened habitats will be pleased to

ecological theory to justify the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity. Two of these are that diverse ecosystems are more stable, and that they have higher productivity thus are more sustainable. These arguments originally stem from Darwin, but have been developed within ecological science over the past 50 years. However, due to the difficulty in experimentation, these theories have proved difficult to confirm. For example:

field trials have too many degrees of freedom (ie. it is hard to tell which processes are active and which are not),

laboratory experiments bear little resemblance to the real world,

duplication of experiments has not occurred/been possible.

Increasing stability across progressively more diverse ecosystems has been fairly well studied. For example, evidence from the rangelands study program in CSIRO shows that the healthier and more diverse rangelands resist grazing better than degraded examples (Mark Stafford Smith, pers. comm.). Now, new evidence published recently in *Nature* (Tilman, Wedin and Knopps; February 22, 1996) shows that productivity and sustainability is affected by biodiversity in prairie ecosystems.

The hypothesis is that different species utilise nutrients more efficiently as they compete for, and fill, niches at the interface between the soil, soil water and plant roots. Fuller utilization reduces nutrient leaching and therefore diverse systems move towards sustainability as more nutrients are retained within the vegetative zone.

A total of 147 plots were planted on N-limited soil and contained 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 or 24 species. The species were drawn at random from a pool of 24 prairie species of grasses and herbs. After two years, productivity was positively correlated with diversity. Lower levels of N sample close to, and beneath, the plants show that more mineral nitrogen was being used and less leached.

Surveys of native grasslands shows that this relationship was maintained in mature areas of even higher diversity. Some of the possible mechanisms are discussed but the authors stress the need for more work in the area.

Sustainability in a natural grassland system, without the artificial addition of nutrients, is closely correlated with diversity. This will come to no surprise to people whose observations confirm this hypothesis, but the description of these carefully designed and maintained experiments give both the theory and observations a more solid footing.

Reference:

Tilman, D., Wedin, D. and Knopps, J. Productivity and sustainability influenced by biodiversity in grassland ecosystems, *Nature*, 379, 718-720.

From Roger Jones

Brief Reviews:

From Roger Jones

Two Western Australian Publications:

Invasive Weeds & Regenerating Ecosystems in Western Australia.

Proceedings of the conference held at Murdoch University, July 1994.

Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, 1995. Edited by Gary Burke. A4 Softback, 106 pp. RRP \$10 through the publishers (Address: ISTP, Murdoch University, Murdoch WA 6150).

This conference was held by the Wildflower Society of Western Australia with Murdoch University, King's Park and Botanic Gardens with the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators. It was held during the period prior to the release of the draft National Weed Strategy in January 1995. The proceedings are a collection of papers presented at the conference and written especially for the book.

The papers present a number of views, strategies and basic research into environmental weeds from a Western Australian viewpoint. Much of the material is very useful. It is a pity that the introductory material does not come to grips with defining an environmental weed; several alternatives are offered and none are sufficiently robust. However, the thrust of the views offered shows that the core meaning of what environmental weeds are, appears to be fairly well understood by all.

The resolutions from the conference discussed topics such as the commercial sales of weeds, screening before importation, increasing local government activity in the area and community awareness. These resolutions are at the committee stage. Two draft weed policies are presented, one from WA and one from the Federal Government. Many of their recommendations remain untested.

Among some of the very useful sections include a list of environmental weeds for WA, and articles that deal with control, policy, education and a number of projects that may be encouraged by collaboration with people doing similar things in other states. Given the price, it is well worth purchasing by anyone with a business or personal interest in weeds.

Growing Locals: gardening with local plants in Perth.

West Australian Naturalists Club, 1996. Robert Powell and Jane Emberson. A4 softback, 123 pp, RRP \$19.50 + postage (PO Box , Nedlands WA 6909).

Growing Locals is a guide to growing local native plants in the Perth Region of WA. It consists of eight chapters which provide general material on the concept, propagation, and establishment of local native plants. The Appendices also

contain a comprehensive list of plants occurring in the region grouped by habit/major taxonomic divisions and alphabetical order with occurrence for a number of ecologically distinct regions.

The book is taking the line of local rather than indigenous as a label for local native plants, believing that indigenous is less accessible for the novice. This may be so, but it leaves local in charge of a concept that requires a great deal of scientific attention and careful definition; it is hard to closely define a word with a wide common usage.

However, the book is clearly written and presented, with a number of text boxes describing selected subjects in some detail. It is well illustrated and easy on the eye; many hours of work have obviously gone into the book. It will prove to be of great benefit to both people and ecosystems in and around Perth, and may also save some of their precious water resources in the future, if people take its basic messages to heart.

Book Reviews: Attracting Frogs to your Garden

By Kevin Casey

This slender book written by an enthusiast is crammed with information, in detail loving enough to remind anyone of the childhood joy of hatching tadpoles. The difference is that the author likes the resultant frogs even better.

Frogs are in decline throughout the world. Many unusual Australian species are almost extinct, such as the gastric brooding frog or platypus frog, which incubates its tadpoles in its stomach then expels them as young frogs through its mouth. This Queensland rainforest species hasn't been seen since the mid 1980's. Kevin Casey's book explains how to create frog habitats in the backyard as a way of preserving our own fast disappearing native frogs.

Frogs, he writes, are small and unobtrusive but rather tough little creatures whose needs are simple. They must have shelter (from sun and wind), permanent moisture, places to hide (from predators such as dogs, cats and foxes) and to breed, and a plentiful supply of insects for food. Pesticides and frogs don't mix. They don't mind leaf litter and general untidiness, and they like humidity.

So why not learn from this fascinating book how to convert part of your garden into a frog habitat? Kevin Casey explains how to construct simple ponds (or utilise a baby's bath), how to handle eggs and tadpoles, how to identify frog calls, how to catch and kill a cane toad (24 hours in the freezer), how to attract suitable insects and which

native plants to grow. At \$14.95 plus \$2.00 postage from P.O. Box 6095, Upper Mount Gravatt, Queensland 4122, it's not only great reading but tremendous value.

(The Victorian Frog Group is at P.O. Box 424, Brunswick 3056. The Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative, Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield tel. (03) 9482 1710 occasionally runs frog days in the display garden beside the nursery.)

Source: The Age 13 July 1996

Wildlife and Woodchips

By David Lindenmayer

Reviewed by Liz Ingham

Wildlife and Woodchips is a confronting title, and an accurate one. From the first words you are left in no doubt that woodchipping is the major threat to the Leadbeater's Possum. The reader is treated as an intelligent amateur, and given enough detail of observation that you feel as though you had been there, along with 2000 volunteers who participated in 'stagwatching' surveys.

After examining the history, biology and habitat needs of the species, a chapter is devoted to the life cycle of the trees which, if left alone to grow old, become the species home. Next the effects of clear-fell logging are described, and compared to the natural disturbance from fires etc. (and what do you know, they have nothing in common).

Lindenmayer's conclusions is as simple as it is dire. Continuing current logging practices, now that the species has been properly studied, is tantamount to making a decision to deliberately allow Leadbeater's Possum to become extinct.

Source: Potoroo Review No. 151, Aug.-Sept. 1996

From the Editor:

I got a letter a couple weeks ago from "fairly devoted subscriber" and "delighted recipient of *Indigenotes*" from Balmain NSW. Gail Abbott asked several questions including:

Do we have any significant NSW membership?

Is there other groups in NSW that minimises support for an organisation like IFFA in NSW?

Is there a problem of containing size in the newsletter that would be exacerbated by extra-Victorian content?

I will try to answer these questions and highlight my philosophy as editor.

IFFA does have a group of NSW subscribers, I believe it's in the dozens out of approximately 600 subscribers. We also exchange newsletters with a few NSW organisations. The amount of people in NSW exposed to *Indigenotes* is probably higher

because of the pattern of *Indigenotes* reading; it appears that it gets passed around organisations quite consistently.

I can't answer the second question very well because I don't live in NSW and don't know the dynamics of life there. I suspect we are just not known in the state even though we might be able to meet the interest of many individuals beyond Victoria.

The size of *Indigenotes* is not usually a problem because of an overabundance of contributions. The newsletter fluctuates between 12 and 16 pages because of the different levels of contributions. 16 pages is the limit because of our printing and mailing system but we sometimes don't have enough material to fill them.

We are also very willing to, and do, accept contributions from anywhere to keep the publication interesting. What matters is that the material provides inspiration, ideas and information. I believe there are two main objectives for

Indigenotes:

Provide specific information to help Australians contribute to the promotion of nature conservation objectives in our society and

present and discuss important nature conservation issues that help individuals understand those issues and inspire them to practical action in the myriad possible ways.

These objectives for providing information are basically met by the contributions of members and the gleaning of information from other sources. As editor I put the vast majority of contributions into the newsletter because they meet the general objectives discussed above. I also glean material from around the world as it flows across my metaphorical desk. *Indigenotes* is a product of the members who submit original material or information from other sources.

So, to all members, you make *Indigenotes* what it is and if you want to see more and different material from beyond Victoria then it is up to you to help get that material submitted for publication.

Thanks for your support...

Lincoln Kern

House with Indigenous Garden for Sale in Northcote

On another note my landlord is selling my rented house. It's a nice California bungalow in the up

and coming sunny suburb of Northcote, on the edge of Fairfield near Victoria Rd., and would be an excellent investment as simple real estate.

However, the indigenous garden I have developed over the last four years may be of special interest. I've planted many indigenous trees and shrubs and a native grassland in the frontyard, with Blue Devils, Bulbine Lilies, direct-seeded Kangaroo Grass etc, and created thickets of Silver Wattle and a wetland with Woolly Tea-tree and sedges in the backyard. The next-door neighbours are also establishing a substantial indigenous garden as well.

In light of this imminent sale my partner and I have decided to buy a house, but probably elsewhere in Northcote for less money and better for our needs. It would be wonderful if this house gets a owner who would appreciate all of the hard work and rare genetic resources I have put in. The house will go to auction on September 7 1996 and the agents expect to get from \$145k to \$155k for it.

If there is anyone out there interested please give me a ring.

Lincoln Kern (03) 9481 4682

Submitted by Kate Blood

IFFA activities:

IFFA (Vic)

Next meeting:

Tuesday 27 August, 7:30 pm at the

Astronomer's Residence

at the Botanic Gardens, South Yarra
(Melways 44 A12).

**We will be discussing the
"Victorian Parliament
Inquiry into Pest Plants"
and attempt to define the
general structure and
content of a submission
the Inquiry.**

**Please come along and help contribute
to this process; it is an issue IFFA has
pushed for many years and will
hopefully continue its good work.**

Committee meeting:

**The Committee meeting is now the second Monday
of every month.**

SPIFFA

**Public meetings are on the first Monday of every
month at 7:30 pm at the Waterfall Gully
Community Centre, corner of Bayview Rd. and
Nixon St., Rosebud.**

Contact Jon Greening (059) 855561.

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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**Contributions to Indigenotes should be sent to the
editors — the deadline for the next issue will be
September 14th. Contributions can be typed or hand
written but computer disk copies on IBM-compatible
format is preferred.**

*The views expressed in Indigenotes are not necessarily
those of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.*