

# INDIGENOTES

# We Don't Own the Land, The Land Owns Us!

I am the child of the Dreamtime people  
Part of this land, like the gnarled gum tree  
I am the river, softly singing  
Chanting our songs on my way to the sea  
I am the snow, the wind and the falling rain  
I am this land  
And this land is me.

This extract of a poem by Hyllus Maris, a Koorie writer from Shepparton, symbolizes the sacred connection with land (land in the sense of the connectedness of soil, rock, water, animal and plant as a living whole) that distinguishes indigenous cultures across the globe from today's modern societies that tend to be preoccupied with economic growth. Rather than holding land in loving reverence and respect we tend to view it as a commodity, a resource to be bought, exploited, developed and sold. Many argue this profound difference in attitude is the primary cause of accelerated global environmental degradation and resource exploitation.

Australian Aboriginal culture treats land with the same love and respect as they do family and friends. Land is not owned but occupied and cared for as a supporter of life for all plants, animals and people. Individuals have a solemn spiritual duty to maintain the balance and health of the natural world. Far from owning land, we are temporary custodians responsible for its well being.

Native American Indian culture has a similar connection to land, as summed up by Chief Seattle during his famous 1854 speech in which he stated that "... all things are connected, whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth".

Based on this spiritual connection, Indigenous peoples have adopted land management practices that have achieved sustainable management for thousands of years. Contemporary land managers are now looking toward these practices for clues and guidance in their efforts at achieving sustainable land management (one of the primary aims of the Victoria Coastal Council).

Scientific research into the Aranda Tribe's (Central Australia, north of Alice Springs) creation myth for the Red Kangaroo revealed that the sites described in the "songline" (a ritual song associ-

ated with the myth that describes a route and features across the landscape) correspond to preferred habitat sites for the Red Kangaroo. Furthermore the best of these sites correlate to sacred totemic areas. The taboo against hunting Red Kangaroo in these totem sites was in effect a potent conservation tool as the Kangaroo were protected in their best habitat areas. Hence the Aranda's sacred Red Kangaroo procreation ceremonies held in these locations were assured of success as they were based on sound ecological principles as well as mythological religious beliefs.

At the Coast-to-Coast conference in Adelaide a Maori guest speaker from New Zealand spoke eloquently and passionately about their connection with land and gave a detailed account of their "fishing laws" that have operated for centuries to ensure there is no over-exploitation of fishing stocks. Their law seems quite contradictory to our scientific wisdom as it allowed the taking of small size fish at the expense of the larger mature adults as the latter had the reproductive capacity to produce far more offspring than was taken by the Maori. Initially dismissed by New Zealand fishing authorities, this approach is now gaining credence as a viable sustainable fishing strategy.

A recent conference in America between land management agencies and North American Indian representatives was held to discuss environmental restoration and management issues. This conference formally acknowledged that traditional Indian environmental knowledge was equal or superior to that yielded by a western scientific approach as it was based on "...practical insights gained through the successful tending of natural landscapes for food, fuel, water, game and medicines over thousands of years".

Victoria's peak coastal management authority, the Victoria Coastal Council, has aboriginal representation on it and is actively encouraging the involvement of Aboriginal communities in coastal management and policy formulation. It views this as imperative if one of its primary goals is to be achieved, that is the sustainable use and management of coastal resources.

It is now up to local groups and land management agencies to take this lead and invite the involvement of local Aboriginal communities to incorporate indigenous cultural attitudes and approaches into our planning, management and decision making processes along the coast.

On a personal level we can strive to heighten our connection to the sacredness of land. We unconsciously nurture this whenever we care for our garden or walk in a park, forest or beach. These places are our natural "cathedrals", spiritual places we visit to regain a sense of peace and

oneness with ourselves and nature. The greater the untouched beauty, remoteness and size of these cathedrals the greater their impact on us, which is why the coastal environment has such power to impart this deep sense of calm and serenity.

This simple truth of our spiritual connection with land holds the key to our sanity and survival. It is important that we recognize and share this truth with our family, friends and neighbours and that we each do something to nurture our planet on a daily basis. Slowly but surely our society will relearn this respect of land and place its care as the primary goal.

**Russell Irving**  
**Coast Action Coordinator, Geelong**

# Move over Marram

For years the introduced Marram Grass has reigned supreme in the fight to stabilize sand dunes. As pointed out in the recent article in Coastline (Edition 4, p12), Marram Grass was introduced from Europe and North America in the 1880's to help stabilize large dune areas. It has since been used extensively by coastal land managers who have successfully protected many eroding dune areas.

However its continued use in Victoria is now being questioned as other methods have proven to be equally successful in stabilizing dunes and have the added advantage of re-establishing the natural vegetation community at the same time.

## **Problems with Marram Grass in Victoria.**

Marram Grass is an introduced species that outcompetes indigenous primary dune species in Victoria. Unfortunately it does not naturally die out in Victoria and is now widespread across the State. It continues to dominate our primary dune vegetation even in areas where it was planted 90 or more years ago.

Marram Grass is reproductively viable in Victoria's cool climate and sets seed. This is not the case in New South Wales where it dies out after 4-5 years (hence their continued large scale use of Marram Grass and annual pilgrimage to Gippsland to collect more seed).

Another reason Marram Grass dies out in NSW is

its shade intolerance as native shrubs eventually grow above it. In most situations along our coast Marram continues to thrive because most of our indigenous primary dune species have a prostrate or creeping habit and the shrubs fail to reach sufficient heights because of the harsh growing conditions.

Its unique ability to rapidly trap sand and grow vertically through it can dramatically alter the natural contour of the dune system, making them steeper and taller. Our indigenous species tend to be smothered by the vertical buildup of sand and are less well adapted to growing on the steeper slopes.

## **There is an Alternative!**

The Marine Discovery Centre at Queenscliff has had dramatic success with the use of brushmatting and indigenous plant revegetation. For the past 11 years their Winter Sand Dune Revegetation Program has rehabilitated large areas of eroded dunes between Queenscliff and Lorne. The program involves children from schools along the coast who are taught about dune formation and how to reduce human impact on the dunes. They then assist with the restoration of eroded dunes using brush matting and planting of tube stock and cuttings of native plants to the area.

The photos were taken twelve months apart at Torquay and illustrate the successful use of this method to stabilize and revegetate a major dune blowout.

## **Method of Dune Revegetation with Brushmatting.**

Plan to carry out your dune revegetation work during late autumn and winter when the sand is moist.

Collect stockpiles of suitable brushmatting from local tree cuttings. (It is critical when using brush that you aren't introducing a source of weed seed or cuttings to the area.)

Collect cuttings of spinifex runners in areas where it is in abundance. (You may need to consult your local indigenous nursery or Coast Action coordinator for assistance with finding or propagating the spinifex). Refer to the attached diagram for directions on propagation. A minimum of three nodules per cutting is required.

Lay the brush down, starting at the top of the eroded area and working down. Slightly overlapping each layer will help keep it all together. The brush provides an immediate physical barrier to the wind and rain which reduces further removal of sand. It also breaks down providing a suitable

environment for the establishment of planted tube stock and the wind blown seed that gets caught.

Plant a variety of primary dune species in the eroded area. Ensure cuttings and seed were collected locally by your indigenous nursery or group. Species other than Hairy Spinifex to plant could include Cushion bush, Bidgee Widgee, Nobby-Club Rush, Pigface, Sea celery, Coast Saltbush, Clematis, Bower Spinach. You may need to temporarily fence off the area to restrict access and removal of the brush.

Victoria is extremely lucky in that many of our natural dune systems are still remote from urban settlement and relatively undisturbed. It is important to manage our dunes to preserve the diverse range of microhabitats that exist within their slopes, dips and hollows as well as to protect assets built on or behind them.

We now have a proven method of dune rehabilitation that retains the natural shape of the dune and uses indigenous species. It can quickly halt the loss of sand and be used over large areas.

It can sometimes be difficult to obtain suitable brushing material and it may sometimes be more labour intensive but nothing a busload of school children or a crew of volunteers and some commitment to our natural environment can't fix!

If in doubt contact your local Coast Action Coordinator for advice.

**Russell Irving**  
**Coast Action Coordinator, Geelong**

# Orchid still threatened

**By James Ross**

Minister Tehan has issued a press release stating that the Small Golden Moths Orchid has been saved at its only known habitat. Minister Tehan claims that a landmark deal will see both conservation values protected and a major new development proceed on the site. The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) is sceptical of these claims and is gravely concerned at the implications for the future management of threatened species.

Less than 200 individual plants are known to exist on industrial land at Altona. The Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment recently declared a portion of this site (approximately 10 ha) to be Critical Habitat under the provisions of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. The agreement announced by Minister Tehan makes no mention of the Critical Habitat and she has provided no assurances that this area will be protected. The Department has also failed to advertise the Critical Habitat. It appears that the Department, applauded by the VNPA and others for determining this first ever Critical Habitat, would now prefer that it did not exist.

The orchid's home is one of the largest areas of native grassland remaining in the Melbourne region. The community present here is known to be one of the most threatened in Australia and is listed under the FFG Act. Flora and fauna surveys of the site are proposed for the coming spring to determine which areas are to be protected under the agreement between the landowners and the Minister. If, as seems likely, these surveys confirm that the site is of at least state conservation significance, what then? Apparently the agreement allows for some land to be set aside, but how much? Reading between the lines it may be much less than even the Critical Habitat for the orchid alone.

Once again the issues of conserving native grasslands in the urban environment have demonstrated the enormous challenge that still faces the VNPA and others in pursuing biodiversity conservation at an ecosystem level. It would appear that the "Orchid Solution" will, at best, achieve conservation at the garden bed scale - surely the last vestiges of Victoria's Western Plains Savannah deserve better.

**Source: VNPA Newsletter, August 1996**

# My home bog garden experience

By Chris Catterall

I dug a 2m x 3m bog garden eight months ago and had a few problems which I thought worth relating to everyone. I have connected the open ended down-pipe from our garage to empty into the bog. Because of limited space and placement of an island in the centre I found the wet areas resembled a moat and have since drained and reshaped it to include areas of varying depth, width - including areas which exposed as the water level recedes. The deeper areas were in effect clay slab sided holes which is not able to be covered by a layer of soil as it just slides off. I was advised that the fine particles of clay would forever cloud the water.

But what I have found that after about 4 months of rain fill the water matures and the top layer is almost crystal clear.

The other problems in the warmer months were mosquito larvae and the dreaded Blue Green Algae. The mosquito larvae have receded for the moment and the planned introduction of some indigenous fish, whose acquisition I am currently investigating, will make them into fine feed.

ten to twenty birds who come to drink, bath and perch on the overhanging boughs. This Algae smothered any water plants and denied light and oxygen from the water beneath - horrible stuff. A friend at the Victorian College of Horticulture recommended the magical Barley Straw, which apparently contains bacteria which love to eat algae - wonderful! Within 48 hours - problem solved. Now I still see a light slick on the water's surface, but no Algae.

Some time later, I read that extra oxygen, produced through wind driven, wave or ripple action would further improve the water quality. Since the bog is protected from wind by 2m fences I've installed a pump and two outflows from hollow (lumber yard) redgum logs, which I run for an hour every couple of days to push back the light slick and add extra oxygen. The water quality must be improving because I have all manner of critters now living in the water; including thumb-nail size water beetles. Must be about time introduce some froggies.

I never imagined that a small water feature could bring so much enjoyment - the birds, critters and indigenous plants, plus the reflections, movements, sounds of tumbling, pattering water, all come together to make something a little special and show indigenous vegetation in a new way to visitors.

The plant illustrations featured on this page are all aquatic or semi-aquatic and were derived from the book *Plants of the Merri Merri*.  
**Source: Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter, September 1996**

The Algae is caused by high nutrient levels - namely fertile soils (thanks to our dogs) and the

# Coming events:

For IFFA events see back cover

## Conferences/Workshops/ Talks

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.

September 30 - October 3 1996. "Victoria's 1996 Landcare Conference." To celebrate Landcare's 10th Anniversary, a conference will be held at Ballarat. The theme is "Landcare is good business" and will focus on topics such as, managing the farm business, increasing participation in landcare, catchment management, strengthening rural and urban links etc. Information is available from Joanne Safstrom Ph (03) 9412 4011, Fax (03) 9412 4709.

Sun 13 October, "Coastal Weed Workshop". Anglesea Surf Lifesaving Club, Great Ocean Rd, Anglesea. 10 am - 4 pm. Discover how you can help protect our precious coastal vegetation. Entry is free, register at 9.30 am on the day. Contact Sharon Hinton (052) 891 732. Workshop is also to be held in Warrnambool in the CFA Building, 678 Raglan Pde from 10 am - 4 pm. Contact Tracey Pennington (055) 619 950.

Mon 14 October. 10 am - 4 pm. "Environmental Weeds for Educators Workshops". How can we make people more aware of the biggest threat to our bushland? For anyone involved in community education. Life-Saving Club, Great Ocean Rd, Anglesea (VicMap 93 D8 & 296) 9.45 am registration. Or another session will be held on Mon 28 Oct in Warrnambool. To register or for more information contact the Weed Science Society of Victoria, Phone/Fax (03) 9576 2949. Cost is \$20 per person which includes light lunch and notes.

Thu 17 October. "Fire in Conservation" - a Greening Australia Victoria Seminar. This session aims to facilitate informed debate and discussion on the issues associated with burning to meet fuel reduction and conservation outcomes. For info and bookings contact Gerard Clark On (03) 9457 3024.

Sat 26 October. "Improving your coastal plant ID skills" - a GAV training session. This session aims to develop participants skills and experience in identification and recognition of coastal indigenous plants. For info and bookings contact Gerard Clark On (03) 9457 3024.

Sun 27 October. Improving your heathland plant ID skills - a Greening Australia Victoria training session. This session aims to develop participants skills and experience in identification and recogni-

tion of heathland indigenous plants. For further information and bookings contact Gerard Clark On (03) 9457 3024.

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

Sat 19th & Sun 20th April 1997 - The "Eighth Biennial Friends Conference" to be held at the Lord Somers Camp. The conference will have a "wetland" theme. If the area you care for has a wetland, learn more about protecting and preserving it. If it doesn't, learn the value of a wetland and how it can be established. The program is to be developed by the Conference Committee. For more information or suggestions contact The Friends Network News, c/o VNPA, 10 Parliament Place, East Melbourne 3002.

30 November - 5 December 1997. Conservation in production environments: Managing the matrix. A conference to be held in Taupo, New Zealand. There are more production environments than reserves. Integrating conservation with development is essential for sustainability. This conference is a continuation of the theme oriented workshops held in Western Australia and published in the Surrey Beatty & Sons Conservation Series as: Nature Conservation 1: the role of remnants of native vegetation through to Nature Conservation 4: The role of networks. Five full day sessions are planned with invited speakers and structured workshops. For conference details and registration forms contact, Nature Conservation 5: Conservation in production environments: Managing the matrix, School of Environmental and Marine Sciences, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand. Facsimile: 64 9 373 7042, Telephone: 64 9 373 7599 ext 6825, email: sems@auckland.ac.nz

## Excursions and field trips

September-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.

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.

6th October. Opening of the Mullum Mullum Festival. 3 weeks of activity until the 27th October. To be held from 12 pm to 2 pm at Schwerkolt Cottage, Deep Creek Rd, Mitcham. Alan Reid, President of the Victorian Gould League, will officially open the festival at 1pm. Music will start about midday. BYO picnic lunch. Naturalists and botanists will lead nature walks through the Mullum Mullum bushland. For a complete festival program, write to the Festival Coordinator, 58 McIntyre Rd, Park Orchards 3114. Or call Cameron Taylor (03) 9264 1752 pager, or Felicity Lang (03) 9870 0903.

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 (Mel 66 J7). Ph. (03) 9751 1812.

Sat 19 October, "Family Social Walk with Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee Inc." Meet at 10.00 am. at the Coimada Primary School (on the shores of Lake Merrimu). Gary will lead us on an exciting tour of discovery through Merrimu Reservoir and the Pyrete Ranges (Wombat State Forest). Bring lunch to carry, camera, binoculars etc. Contact Janet Leversha (053) 674 229.

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 (03) 9285 9355.

Sun 20 October, "Greenlink Oakleigh Open Day." Activities include: planting activity as part of two guided tours, soup and fresh bread for lunch, stalls & displays. For more information contact group secretary Doug Evans (03) 9568 4090 (AH), or on (03) 9556 4433 (BH).

Sat 26 & Sun 27 October, 11 am - 4 pm. Creek Carnival. Part of the Mullum Mullum Festival. For these 2 days in Spring the Hillcrest Reserve and surrounding bushland will be the site to enjoy the environment, music and sharing knowledge. Activities include guided bush walks, flora and fauna displays, food stalls, local & home made produce, tree climbing, kids activities & environmental workshops. Saturday will feature acoustic and folk sounds. Sunday enjoy five live and fresh bands. Venue: Hillcrest Reserve, Mitcham, Melways 48 K5. For a complete festival program, contact Festival Coordinator, 58 McIntyre Rd, Park Orchards 3114. Or call Cameron Taylor (03) 9264 1752 pager, or Felicity Lang (03) 9870 0903.

Sat 27 October, 1pm. Bus Tour to Grasslands at Mt Ridley or Bald Hill. Organised by the Friends of Merri Creek. Grasslands experts, Vanessa Craigie and James Ross have offered to lead us on a half-day bus tour to the grasslands at Mt Ridley or Bald

Hill. This will be the the first opportunity for Friends to look at either of these endangered grassland sites. Bookings are essential but be fast! Prices: \$5 adults, children free. The bus will leave from the MCMC office, 2 Lee Street, Brunswick at 1 pm. and return at 5 pm. For more info and bookings contact the Merri Creek Management Committee office (03) 9380 8199.

Sun 17 November, 10 am. "Bike Ride to Central Creek Grasslands." Meet car park, Lake Grove Coburg. Organised by the Friends of Merri Creek. Repeating the success of last year's bike ride, Vanessa Craigie and Kat Pawley will lead a bike ride from Coburg Lake, alongside the Merri Creek, to see wildflowers at Central Creek Grasslands. You'll be amazed at this endangered grasslands community still surviving in the suburbs. The ride which is undulating and about 20 km altogether, will return to the car park about 1pm. For more information and bookings contact the MCMC office.

## Restoration Activities

### October

Thu 17, 10 am - 2.30 pm. "Grebes and Growling Grassfrogs". Hume's Greening Program invites you to participate in a multicultural planting festival at Shankland Wetlands, Meadow Heights. Free BBQ and entertainment. For more info contact Lisa Kendal on (03) 9309 1052.

Sat 19, 9 am - lunch. "FO Brushy Creek Wetlands working bee." Venue: Village School, 9 - 13 Holloway Rd, Croydon North (Mel 37 D6). Contact Kay Vine on (03) 9727 7227. Everyone welcome & refreshments provided.

## Major Spring Planting Festival Sites for October are:

Sun 6th, 10am. Dingley (mel ref 88 D8) - involves planting, train rides, sausage sizzle

Sat 12th, 10am. Barr Creek, Kerang/Cohuna (Vic rds 21) - rural site

Sat 12th, 10am. Bael Bael (Reedy Lake), Kerang (Vic rds 20) - landcare planting on adjacent properties

Sat 12th, 10am. Loddon Corridor, Kerang - planting

Sat 26th, 10am. Warrambeen Farm, via Rokewood (Vic rds 76) - Planting tubestock

The Festival Hotline number is 1800 806 555.

## 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) 97285841.

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)

Warrungal 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 2810  
FO 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.

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.

# A Special Event:

## **Northern Plains Wildflower/Grasslands Tour: Spring 1996**

Another Wildflower/Grasslands Tour is being planned by James Ross (Grassland Project Officer VNPA) and Vanessa Craigie (Grasslands Coordinator, NRE).

In 1994 we visited some of the best sites on the eastern and central Western Basalt Plains.

In 1995 we did a whistle-stop tour of some of the best sites on the Western and Northern Plains, as identified in the WWF report on south-eastern temperate grasslands.

Having whetted our appetites last year for the sunny North, in 1996 we intend to take a closer

look at some of the more Northern Plains Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands.

This will be a single day excursion (but rather a long single day), leaving Melbourne early in the morning of

### **Saturday 5 October**

and returning the same evening. We will travel by bus, the size of which will depend on the number of participants.

This tour is FREE. You will need to supply your own food and drink, but otherwise it will cost you nothing!

To assist in planning the tour, please indicate whether you are interested in joining us.

Call James Ross (03) 9650 8296 or Vanessa Craigie on (03) 9412 4199.

We need to have a clear idea of numbers as soon as possible so please don't delay.

# To the Editor:

**From Tein McDonald**

**Dear Lincoln**

It was good to read your acknowledgement of NSW subscribers in the last issue of Indigenotes (9:8, p. 14).

But I was surprised that you did not take the opportunity to acknowledge the recent existence of IFFA in NSW. But never mind, perhaps this is a good opportunity for someone to acknowledge the good work of the various people who worked in IFFA (NSW) over the years - firstly, Judie Rawling, and later, Dannie Ondinea and Sally Fisher. Indeed, Sydneysiders have benefited from dozens of informative addresses, organised by IFFA, on topics relevant to flora and fauna conservation - and we owe these hard-working people a vote of thanks.

While the organisation has now lapsed (due, I believe, to the perennial problem of filling committee positions) the role of holding public meetings on flora fauna topics has been undertaken up by other organisations. In particular, the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR/NSW) attempts to maintain and promote an integrated view of flora and fauna - and welcomes and enquiries from IFFA subscribers.

Sincerely,  
Tein McDonald  
c/o AABR  
The Total Environment Centre  
1/88 Cumberland Street,  
Sydney 2000.

# Yarra Valley Seasons

The Gould League has produced a draft calendar of seasons more appropriate to Australia than the current European-based one. It comprises six 'seasons' based on observations made in their area by Yarra Valley naturalists.

Season	Season's length	European Equivalent	Highlights
One	3rd week August to 1st week Nov.	True Spring	Strong Winds Often Wet Shrubs Flower Birds Nesting
Two	2nd week Nov to 1st week Feb	Early Summer	Feeding of Young Slowly warming Seeding of plants
Three	2nd week Feb to 3rd week March	Late Summer	Sunny, Hot, Dry Electric Storms Insect Swarms Swifts
Four	4th Week March to 4th week May	Autumn	Cooling Increased Rain Flocking Migration Fungi
Five	1st week June to 2nd week July	Winter	Short Days, Cold Rough Seas Antarctic Visitors
Six	3rd week July to 2nd week August	Pre-Spring	Fogs Wattles Bloom Orchids Early nesting

Source: "A Growing Concern" The newsletter of Candlebark Community Nursery Inc. Winter 1996 Edition

## Books and Resources:

### The Biodiversity Series

This series of 'papers' (some stretch the definition of 'paper' eg. No. 9 comprises two volumes and over 400 pages) makes available up-to-date information about Australia's diverse living systems and their importance. The series particularly deals with the threats to our biodiversity and discusses many options for conservation and management within the context of Australia's social and economic circumstances.

This exploration of future options is extremely useful and long overdue. The papers support and expand on, the recently released National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity which lists the principles and objectives for conserving biodiversity agreed to by the Prime Minister and all State Premiers recently. These

objectives are listed with key actions required in areas such as 'Conservation Outside Protected Areas', 'Utilisation of Wildlife', 'Clearing of Native Vegetation' & 'Control of Alien Species and Genetically Modified Organisms'. This succinctly worded strategy is surrounded by lavish colour photography to put you in a 'biopatriotic mood'; it will nevertheless be a useful resource for those who want to find out about the role vegetation management plays in conserving biodiversity, and is equally important in helping justify the objectives when planning and proposing projects.

For further information about the Strategy or the Biodiversity Papers contact GAV. Copies of these publications may be obtained from Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Sports & Territories on (toll free) 1800 803 772

Volumes in the Series:

1. Biodiversity and its value (1993).
2. Australia's Biodiversity: an overview of selected significant components (1994).
3. Country in Flames: proceedings of the 1994 symposium on biodiversity and fire in North Australia (1995).
4. Refugia for Biological Diversity in Arid and Semi-arid Australia (1995).
5. Two Way Track - Biodiversity, Conservation and Ecotourism: an investigation of linkages, mutual benefits and future opportunities (1995).
6. Native Vegetation Clearance, Habitat Loss and Biodiversity: an overview of recent native vegetation clearance in Australia and its implications for biodiversity (1995).
7. Landcover Disturbance over the Australian Continent: a contemporary assessment (1995).
8. Biodiversity and Fire: the effects and effectiveness of fire management (1996).
9. Reimbursing the Future: An evaluation of motivational, voluntary, price-based, property-right and regulatory incentives for the conservation of biodiversity (1996).

**Source: Branching Out (A Greening Australia Victoria Update) No. 2, August 1996.**

## **An Integrated Approach to the Ecology and Management of Plant Invasions**

Abstract from a paper written by Richard J. Hobbs and Stella E. Humphries for *Conservation Biology* Vol. 9, No. 4, August 1995, pp. 761-770.

Plant invasions are a serious threat to natural and managed ecosystems worldwide. The number of species involved and the extent of existing invasions renders the problem virtually intractable, and it is likely to worsen as more species are introduced to new habitats and more existing invaders move into a phase of rapid spread. We contend that current research and management approaches are inadequate to tackle the problem. The current focus is mainly on the characteristics and control of individual invading species. Much can be gained, however, by considering other important components of the invasion problem. Patterns of weed spread indicate that many species have a long lag phase following introduction before they spread explosively. Early detection and treatment of invasions before explosive spread occurs will prevent many future problems. Similarly, a focus on the invaded ecosystem and its management, rather than on the invader, is likely to be more effective. Identification of the causal factors enhancing ecosystem invasibility should lead to more effective integrated control

programs. An assessment of the value of particular sites and their degree of disturbance would allow the setting of management priorities for protection and control. Socioeconomic factors frequently play a larger part than ecological factors in plant invasions. Changes in human activities in terms of plant introduction and use, land use, and timing of control measures are all required before the plant invasion problem can be tackled adequately. Dealing with plant invasions is a urgent task that will require difficult decisions about land use and management priorities. These decisions have to be made if we want to conserve biodiversity worldwide.

**Some of the figures from the above paper...**

### **Weeds: The Ute Guide**

A handy pocket guide to weeds that may prove a boon to those working in revegetation has been developed by PISA.

The full-colour hardcover guide is a unique effort drawing on the resources of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management Systems, and the Victorian, NSW, Tasmanian and WA Depts. of Agriculture.

Creator of *Weeds: the Ute Guide*, PISA's Jay Cummins, said that while most experienced landholders had a good knowledge of weeds on their property, the guide would be useful tool for

## Books Continued:

identifying and dealing with any new weeds before they got out of control. "It's also difficult sometimes to tell the difference between weeds at the seedling stage, and the photos in the guide will allow early identification, which can be an important factor in effective treatment," Jay said.

Weeds: the Ute Guide booklet is available separately from PISA for \$15, and a disk or CD-Rom version is \$27.95.

Further information from Jay Cummins, PISA, ph. (08) 8842 3900; Michael Moerkerk, Agriculture Victoria, ph. (053) 6221 111; or Ross Andrews, GRDC Manager Communications, ph. (06) 272 5525.

**Source: Bush Chronicle, No. 57, August 1996**

## Livestock Watering

The Kondinan Group, a farmer organisation supporting farmers across Australia, have produced a number of excellent resource books in recent years which provide practical information on a range of issues facing farmers.

Most recently, they have published a Rural Research Report on Livestock Water Delivery. This report documents the financial and environment benefits of fencing creek frontages. It then describes the range of pumping options and power sources to successfully provide stock water away from the creeks and rivers via troughs including advantages & disadvantages and cost comparisons. For more details on the report (\$15ea. plus postage) phone the Groups Information Service on 1800 677 761

**Source: Branching Out (A Greening Australia Victoria Update) No. 2, August 1996.**

## New SA grasslands study

Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill came to Adelaide to launch a new report on SA's native grasslands. The research, compiled by consultant Michael Hyde, supported by the World-wide Fund for Nature and funded by the National Estate Grants Program and Save the Bush, documents the location and composition of the State's temperate native grasslands. "When we consider how little of our native grasslands remain after 150 years of European settlement we learn how urgent is the need for grassland conservation," Senator Hill said.

Michael said the Grassland Report could be used as a resource by community groups researching remnant native grasses. It could be used for:

1. learning more about native grasses - individuals or groups could visit the sites surveyed in the book, which were complete with species lists, and study the grasses present;

2. identification of species;
3. locating seedstock for missing species with a view to restocking;
4. assessing native pastures and
5. designing new surveys or collections of species.

Native Grasses Group chairman, Bob Myers, praised the study as the only one of its kind in SA. "Until now it has been very difficult for community groups to get the experience and support they need to be able to do it carry out a grasslands survey. This report gives a model for doing that, and provides them with a lot of the data they need to be able to do it themselves. Michael, in his role as a commercial consultant, is also available to apply his expertise in the area to survey work out in the field, which is also a first."

Michael Hyde can be contacted at Wallowa Mallee Research (085) 382 846. Copies of the Temperate Grasslands of SA report are available for \$25 from Michael, or SA Grassland Project Officer Vicki-Jo Russell on (08) 223 5155.

**Source: Bush Chronicle, No. 57, August 1996**

## Ibis Winners in Colour

A beautiful colour book looking back on the Devbank Ibis Award winning properties of the past seven years has been prepared by the South Australian Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources.

The book takes an in-depth look at each of these State award winning commercial properties, including:

- the overall management strategies of the landholders
- the conservation philosophies and techniques employed
- commercial farming practices
- the native vegetation and fauna on each property
- property histories and anecdotes from the landholders
- colour photographs of the main features of the property

Properties range from the 32 ha intensive agriculture farm of Brian and Lesley Mason at Forest Range in the Adelaide Hills (the State winner in 1990) to the 240 sq. km Arkaba Station of Dean and Lizzie Rasheed (winner in 1992).

This beautifully presented book is available to *Bush Chronicle* readers for only \$5 from Dr. Chris Nance of DENR's Native Vegetation Conservation program, GPO Box 1047, Adelaide, 5001. Ph. (08) 204 8751.

## Biological Conservation and Monitoring

Ian F. Spellerberg and Steven R. Hardes. 1992.

*Biological Conservation.*

**Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.  
123 pp. + vi, ISBN 0-521-39786-3.  
RRP P/b 7.25 Pounds (US\$15.95)**

**Ian F. Spellerberg. 1993.**

***Monitoring Ecological Change.***

**Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.  
334 pp  
H/b: ISBN 0521-36662-3. RRP 50.00 Pounds  
(US\$84.95); P/b: ISBN 0-521-42407-0 RRP  
16.95 Pounds (US\$29.95)**

**Ian F. Spellerberg. 1992.**

***Evaluation and Assessment for Conservation.***

**Chapman and Hall, London, UK. 260 pp  
ISBN 0-412-44270-1 RRP H/b 29.95 Pounds.**

### **Review by Jiro Kikkawa**

**Reproduced from *Pacific Conservation Biology*  
(1995).**

One of the three books Ian Spellerberg published from his broad experience in biological monitoring and conservation, *Biological Conservation*, co-authored by Steve Hedges, is the most elementary, dealing with practical conservation in concise form. It is published in the *Biology in Focus* series to supplement mainstream textbooks for senior biology students.

The aims of the book are "to give an insight into the importance of biological conservation, to describe why conservation is important, to give examples of conservation and, perhaps most importantly, to generate enthusiasm, discussion and action." One-third of the book is allocated to ecological and international perspectives of biological conservation, highlighting significant environmental issues historically, and exploitation of biological diversity globally. The main part of the book offers examples of conservation in practice, ranging from ethnobotanical surveys to biological restoration in natural and human-induced ecosystems. This small book serves as an excellent introduction to biological conservation.

The aim of *Monitoring Ecological Change* is to provide "a basis for practical applications of monitoring from the most basic to the more complex." As Dr. Holdgate, Director-General of the IUCN, points out in the Foreword, "living organisms integrate the impact of many variables" and "their biological efficiency, productivity or balance within the ecosystems they compose indicate the overall health of the system." This is the basis of biological monitoring, which Ian Spellerberg so adroitly applies to environmental quality, biodiversity and ecosystem processes.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part A the author introduces the science and art of monitor-

ing using his own experiences of major environmental impacts in the Antarctic. Spellerberg stresses the need for long-term biological monitoring based on well worked variables and processes. This leads to a status report on environmental and biological monitoring.

Part B gives a practical demonstration of ecological principles and illustrates calculations of, for example, niche breadth and overlap, species of diversity indices and community similarity. Other important monitoring methods, such as biological indicators, ecosystem monitoring and GIS, are explained and limitations noted.

Part C provides practical examples of monitoring, starting with a conceptual flow diagram to show various phases of monitoring, and then demonstrating actual monitoring of bird populations, freshwater environment, habitat and community fragmentation, land use and landscapes and environment impact.

The book is well written and readers will find many illustrated methods applicable to their practical assignments.

*Evaluation and Assessment for Conservation* is said to be "a personal view of ecological evaluation" but follows most ardently the works of respected international organisations in conservation. As the subheading describes, it provides "ecological guidelines for determining priorities for nature conservation."

An interdisciplinary approach is taken throughout the book. The book is well organised; each chapter contains realistic examples (though not as many as in *Monitoring Ecological Change*), boxes for self-contained methods and criteria, conclusions summarising discussions and references. The book should reach a wide range of readers looking for checklists of criteria and a balanced approach to the conservation of natural areas.

In recent years there has been a significant shift in ecological research, from individual efforts of scientists and scientific societies to highly organised programs involving governmental institutions. This change has generated much debate on the purpose, time-scale, standardisation of methods, data analysis and interpretation for ecological monitoring and assessment. Spellerberg's books give answers to many of these questions at different levels of sophistication and redundancy.

The Australasian region badly needs books of this nature, which deal with its unique history of biological evolution and large areas of relatively undisturbed ecosystems. Until such textbooks and handbooks become available, readers will find Spellerberg's well digested methodology useful for

# Books Continued:

application in this region.

## **Southern Bushfood Network** **- some priorities for growers.**

*Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from the "Southern Bushfood Network" Newsletter, No. 2, July-August 1996. The Network is a new network of bush tucker growers and processors who want to more organised about sharing ideas and marketing products. I thought that this article would highlight their current thinking on several issues.*

The bushfood industry is in its infancy in southern Australia but it is developing rapidly. Some plants which are indigenous to southern states have already found a market niche, but there is much work still to be done in exploring the possibilities of local flora.

The working principles that have been provisionally adopted by the network were listed in the first newsletter. Taking these into account, it is suggested that the following steps might be taken by southern growers planning substantial plantings of bushfood species for commercial purposes.

1. Find out which flora are indigenous to your locality. Greening Australia Victoria and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment may be of some help, and information will be made available through the network as it comes to hand.

2. Identify species from this list which have bush food potential. Your local Koori community may be able to help here. Plants described in Koorie Food, Koorie People, by Nellie Zola and Beth Gott, are organised according to regions, and more detailed information about particular plants is available to members of the network. Find out about locally indigenous acacias, for example, before planting acacias that occur elsewhere.

3. Only then investigate species which are not locally indigenous but which may thrive under local conditions.

4. Develop a mixed planting (rather than a monoculture) which includes some species that may have potential as well as some for which there is an existing demand. Avoid introducing or encouraging woody weeds, notwithstanding their being Australian natives, and where possible use local provenances. The GAV list of nurseries gives sources of local plant stock.

5. New products will be trialled with and their potential evaluated by members of the network.

6. Depending on developments within the network over the next few months (these will be reported in Newsletter No. 3) it may be able to handle the wholesaling of selected southern products on behalf of members.

If you would like more information about the Southern Bushfood Network and/or subscribe to the newsletter please write to:

**Southern Bushfood Network**  
**21 Smith Street.**  
**Thornbury Vic 3071**

## Membership / Renewal / Change of Address Form

I wish to become a member of IFFA>  
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Return to:  
Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association  
Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 328  
Clinton Hill 3068.

# IFFA activities:

## IFFA (Vic)

### Next meeting:

Tuesday 24 September, 7:30 pm at the

## Astronomer's Residence

at the Botanic Gardens, South Yarra

(Melways 44 A12).

### 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.

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Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editors — the deadline for the next issue will be October 11th. 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.*

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