

# BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

President: Carol Bonny 9712 0648, C/- Post Office, Kangaroo Ground, Vic, 3097 - Editor, John McCallum 9712 0319

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Number 55 November 2002

## WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Bubine bulbosa*

Common name: Bulbine Lily

Family: Liliaceae

Flowering period: September to January



1:5

A perennial lily forming a small tuft of several erect, grey green, narrow and rather fleshy, onion-like leaves, up to 30 cm. long. A stout, leafless, flowering stem, 20 - 60 cm. high, arises from the underground corm bearing clusters of short stalked, fragrant, yellow, 6 petalled star-like flowers, each about 2 cm. across. The flowers appear along the upper part of the flowering stem with the lower flowers opening first. On dull days the flowers close up resembling the flower bud. The flowers are a bright yellow with a brown marking on the underside and with the six anthers in the centre of the flower bearing tufts of yellow hairs.

The fruit is a globular capsule on the flowering stems which contain numerous tiny seeds. When mature the capsules turn from orange brown to light brown and the seeds are dark brown. Propagation is by seed or division.

After flowering, in the dry weather, the plants die down to the underground corm and rootstock. With additional water in Summer and Autumn and with the food reserves of the underground root or tuber, the plant may produce new leaves and flowers, often forming large colonies.

*Bubine bulbosa* prefers an open sunny position and moist well drained soils, though is tolerant of dry conditions. A fast growing and highly ornamental species.

CRIC HENRY

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wow it's almost the end of another year, where did it go?

We have had a very windy few months, I don't like waking in the middle of the night wondering if the next gust is going to blow a tree over or demolish our partly finished abode. The Windy Wednesday did blow some trees over and we lost some very beautiful mature Acacia dealbata around our dam. Unfortunately the largest of them ended up across the track and in the dam. Alan inherited a pair of long waders from his Dad and they came in very handy to get into the water and attack the tree with the chainsaw. After it was out I decided I would don the waders and attack the non indigenous Cumbungi in the dam. I was having a lovely time ripping out the weeds until one leg got bogged. I could have taken my leg out of the waders but that would have meant a wet leg and a still bogged boot. Alan helped pull me out with the rake handle. The Acacia mearnsii are now flowering in great abundance to replace the lost dealbata.

I have mentioned this previously but I would like to remind you that it does take time and energy for us to keep our little piece of paradise intact. If we all contribute a little bit then the workload is shared. Please consider becoming a BICA committee member or become involved in helping the Landcare workers. It's your ELZ too you know!

See you round

**CAROL BONNY**

## LANDCARE GROUP

*Pete Gurney*

Pines Project. Our main focus this year has been on clearing pine trees from Jo Dawson and Gerrard Banner's block at the corner of Skyline and Henley Roads (formerly known as Musso's paddock). Work has not progressed quite as fast as we would have liked mainly due to some difficulties with a tree felling contractor. There were also a few days when work was arranged and the weather was too windy or wet for the contractor to safely fell the trees. However, some 18 very large pines were felled by November and a good bit of the timber has been taken away for milling. The working bees have worked hard to clean up the site and to burn the tops and limbs. There has been a little replanting of indigenous species with more to be done next winter. And mulch is now available for the clearing under the high tension powerlines to spread over the disturbed soil on site.

A further nine large pines were felled in early November. These trees were a bit more difficult to fell and required specialist equipment. As this work is now completed it is

planned that the branches and tree tops be burned before fire restrictions come into force. It is hoped that the trunks of these trees will be suitable for milling and will be removed by the timber millers in the next few weeks.

Other Projects. There has been good work done on fence removal from a number of ELZ properties with the old fencing wire taken away by Nillumbik Council staff. This work clears away rusty wire and unnecessary fences thus allowing the local wildlife to freely pass through properties. It also helps to reduce road kills as animals can easily get off the roads when vehicles approach. We have also continued our site maintenance of the "Gateway to the Bend of Islands", Oxley Bridge. Our work there over the years is now proving very positive with strong indigenous plant growth and the weeds gradually coming under control. Weeding of the 'OnionBloodyWeed' in particular will continue for many years, but we can see that there are less and less plants each year.

Many thanks to all the people who have leant a hand at working bees so generously this year. The numbers of people at each working bee is very encouraging. My special thanks to the "regulars" who show up each month; and to Alan and Carol Bonny and Wolfgang and Marie Krause who have looked after quite a number of working bees this year during my rather frequent absences.

Projects for 2003. The pine tree eradication keeps growing in popularity. Chris Tabecki and Peter Mann have requested support to remove 18 trees from the boundary between their properties in Henley Road extension. Ben van Doonklar has requested help to remove three "tricky" pine trees from his property in Catani Blvd. Robina and Tony Summers are also being assisted to remove approximately 20 pines from their property in lower Catani Blvd. An application for funding from Nillumbik Council Landcare Grants will be submitted for the former two properties. Funding has already been received courtesy of the National Heritage Trust project for improving wildlife corridors along Watsons Creek and the Yarra for the latter property.

However, there is also ivy to remove at a few places on the Yarra River and Claire Watson has asked for help to dig out Iris from the river bank at her place in Oxley Rd. This will probably be a January working bee job including swimming and a picnic on the river bank. Removal of fencing will also continue when it can be fitted into the agenda, as will weeding at Oxley Bridge.

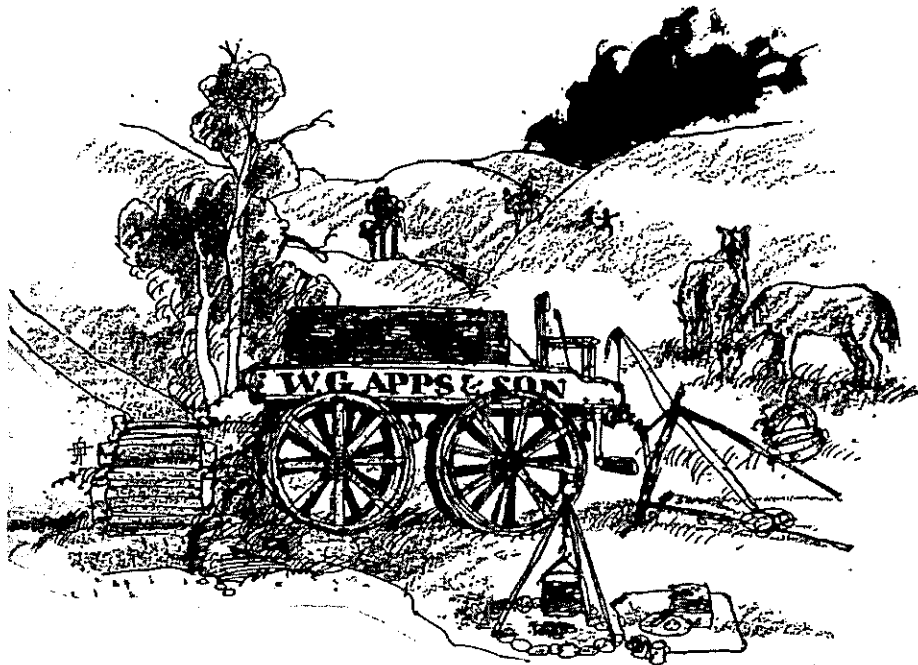
It would be great if everyone in the Bend of Islands could attend at least one working bee during the year. Please put it on your calendar now. There is a working bee on the afternoon of the 3rd Sunday of each month and National Clean-up Day in March. Other working bees pop up from time-to-time and are advertised on the sign tree.

## AN EXCITING UNDERTAKING

Mick Woiwod

It had been one of those summers preceded by a dry spring! Serious outbreaks had occurred around Kinglake and other hill districts north of the Bend of Islands. Without a single brigade to call upon the local community of 1914 had responded magnificently. In the week leading up to 20 February that year, hundreds of volunteers had been out in the hills of St Andrews to save the town.

When it was all over, the good people of Kangaroo Ground gathered in the local hall (opposite the general store) to organise the formation of a fire brigade. As is generally the way with community, a committee was formed with membership agreed at 2/6d a year; a subsequent meeting deciding the next step to be the acquisition of a tanker - or more precisely - a 'bushfire water-cart'. Local blacksmith Jonathon Fryer was approached to build it.



Here's Johno's quote:

*Sirs,*

*I undertake to construct to your order, one bushfire water cart - 3 feet, light steel wheels 11/4" axle - substantial body & frame to carry water barrell & pump & to fit Barrell & Pump when the Barrell & Pump are supplied to me by the committee - no springs - the cart will be covered with one coat of plain paint (red). The price of cart complete to be seven pounds ten shillings (£7.10.0).*

*Johno B. Fryer*

*Blacksmith*

*Kangaroo Ground*

Meanwhile summer had progressed into autumn with the fire season seen to be at an end. It, however, was not to be! On 7th of March another large outbreak occurred outside Lilydale.

It so happened that the previous morning the firm of W.G. Apps and Son, undertakers of Preston, had received a telegram from Kangaroo Ground requesting the carriage of the last mortal remains of a Mr Martin Cameron from his home 'Kelvin Grove' for burial the following Monday at the Rook Rook Cemetery, Campelltown.

Aware of the ruggedness of the roads and that the trip would take them most of the day the driver of the hearse, Mr Roy Apps, and his assistant, George Usher, packed a cut lunch. The hearse they drove, like the yet to be built Kangaroo Ground fire cart, was of course, horse-drawn.

Making an early start they reached 'Kelvin Grove', Kangaroo Ground, 'at about half-past 1 o'clock' and immediately released their horses to graze in a nearby paddock, leaving the hearse, as they put it, 'in the roadway' on the Bend of Islands side of Watsons Creek - opposite what is today Syd and Ona's driveway. The bridge in those far-off days being a low wooden affair which, each time the creek rose, vanished beneath the flow. With all attended to, George & Roy sat down to lunch beside the stream.

Suddenly from across the paddock a figure could be seen racing towards them calling out that the bushfire which earlier had broken out at Lilydale now threatened 'Kelvin Grove', the property in which their charge, Martin Cameron, had died - the home beside the now ancient oak tree, half a kilometre upstream from where the pair sat.

*"We ran to the old Kelvin Grove homestead. The fire had got a firm hold ... house and outhouses (including sheep and pig pens) were swept away in a marvelously short space of time, 100 acres of grass being also burnt. The heat was intense and dense clouds of smoke surged round us."*

It would have been about this time that George and Roy remembered their own precious property standing alongside their lunch spot! There followed a mad scamper back to beat the flames which, by the time they made it were 'half-way across the road' where they'd parked the hearse.

Fortunately for all, the remains of Cameron had earlier been transferred by the family from the now burnt-out shell of the 'Kelvin Grove' homestead to a more convenient roadside residence presumably where Syd & Ona now live.

By now, both Roy & George had had enough of things out here in the hills. They speedily retrieved their horses, harnessed them to the hearse, loaded aboard the coffin, and, as Roy later put it 'moved off at a brisk pace, sunburnt, scorched, and tired, in the direction of Melbourne.' As they departed the scene 'a large party of men rode in from different directions [to work] courageously throughout the whole of Saturday afternoon and night in subduing the fire.'

Today, 88 years after the event much has changed. Roads are now sealed, fire-tankers are larger and communications up quite a few notches from the old bush 'cooee' of 1914.

Fires though have not changed! They can be just as unpredictable and injurious. The secret to survival is preparedness; it's a serious undertaking! Don't get caught in the open between house and safe haven like Roy & George did in 1911.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Melbourne Argus, Tuesday 10 March 1914. The Martin Cameron referred to was the father of Sir Ewen Paul Cameron (1891-1964), MLC for East Yarra, Minister for Electrical Undertakings & Minister for Health (1955-61).

<sup>2</sup>The present name 'Yanakie' attached to the land has to be a more recent innovation.

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## QUICK NOTES

The Fire Brigade fundraising Christmas Café Benders will be the usual night format on Sat 21st December. Gourmet BBQ sausages, vegie burgers available. Bring salads to share and BYO everything else including a seat and table. Come along and join in. From 6:30 pm till late.

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The BICA Dozen raffle tickets were distributed with the October Newsheet. Please return ticket butts and monies to the treasurer prior to the Draw at the AGM. Remember there is also a ticket sellers prize so if you require more tickets contact Michael Pelling 9712 0286

## A WORD ABOUT WOLFGANG

Sheila Dixon

Here are a few positive paragraphs for everybody's friend, Wolfgang Krause. Whether it is a fire, flood or famine he is there, on the fire truck, in his green van or appearing at someone's door with a hammer. I've always suspected that Wolfie can do anything. He once fixed a leak in my roof that came from a rather weird source that only roofs can come up with. He explained how it came about but I am still none the wiser. Very esoteric it was.

Quite patently the fire brigade would not run without him. I have it on good authority that he has a special skill in climbing trees. Now this must mean something. I also know that before our Saturday morning gathering at the shed for our neighbourly catching up, Wolfgang is there before everyone putting out the chairs and tables. The Big Red Truck Green Heart is plonked out on the apron for the kids to destroy and many other little things made ready for our unique time there.

Then there are the Landcare days. Just give him a chain saw and he's away. He probably wants to cut all the trees down up here and this is his way of sublimating it. Then there is the Walking Club and his knowledge of the flora of this place. I reckon you are more Australian than Ned Kelly now Wolfgang.

There are also the little individual things that many people have been touched by. Wood shavings for my garden and many kind jobs undertaken for those who can't always quite manage. Thank you from all of us.

I can hear my long departed mother saying, 'You know that Wolfgang is a very nice man.' For her that was high praise indeed and in this case I have to agree.

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BICA ended the 2002 membership year with 96 ordinary members (individual and family) and six life members, a total membership of 102: a fantastic response from our community, and great support for BICA. This represents a membership equivalent to just over 90 percent of the households in the Bend of Islands. The BICA year is 1st December until 30th November, so membership for 2003 is now due and it would be very helpful if it could be paid by the end of December. Your membership may be paid in person at Café Benders on Saturday 16th November and Saturday 21st December, or at the BICA Annual General Meeting on Sunday 24th November, or by mail. Simply complete the enclosed membership application and hand or post it to the Treasurer BICA, c/o Post office Kangaroo Ground, 3097.

A strong BICA membership is a great way to represent our community as the BICA Committee can speak on behalf of so many when liaising with Nillumbik Council, and other bodies.

## AIR QUALITY AND FIREWOOD

Steve Craig

The burning of domestic firewood is reported to be the biggest contributor to particulate pollution in Melbourne during winter and this is a major health concern, particularly for people with existing respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

In 1995-96, wood heaters and open fires contributed an estimated 70% of fine particle emissions.

Particulate pollution from smoke caused by burning firewood in Melbourne is expected to decline because of a reduction in the use of firewood for heating and also because of the increased use of solid fuel heaters that comply with Australian Design Standards.

The Environment Protection Authority has prepared a draft Air Quality Improvement Plan (AQIP) to address air quality issues in the Port Phillip region of Victoria. The proposed AQIP contains actions to reduce emissions from domestic wood combustion, and therefore improve air quality. The main objectives are to improve the standard of wood heaters and their installation and to promote practices that will reduce emissions from wood heaters.

Open fireplaces generate more particulate than slow combustion technology and older model slow combustion and Pot Belly stoves more than newer models. So if you're thinking about replacing that old and inefficient Pot Belly stove with a new wood heater or perhaps you've decided to install an insert in your open fireplace, then slow combustion heaters that comply with Australian Standard (AS) 4013 are recommended. These heaters have significantly lower emission rates than non-compliant models or open fireplaces.

As well as the burning technology used, the quality of the wood burnt affects pollution. If firewood has a high moisture content, burning is less efficient and more smoke is generated. The draft AQIP proposes regulation governing minimum standards in moisture content for firewood sold in Victoria.

In the ACT, it has been proposed that where wood heaters or open fireplaces are producing large amounts of smoke, the household be approached by "smoke patrols" and offered advice on firewood burning operations. A similar approach may be adopted in Victoria in the future.

The draft Voluntary Code of Practice for Firewood Merchants contains provisions that will have a positive influence on air quality, including:

- \* Information on the type and source of firewood will be clearly displayed and provided to consumers;
- \* Information on correct storage and burning practices will be provided to consumers and;
- \* Only seasoned firewood that meets maximum moisture content standards will be sold

**SOURCE: VICTORIAN FIREWOOD STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT 2002.**

## BIRD NOTES

Frank Pierce

I was away from May to October but, thanks to the stalwarts who recorded the monthly walks in my absence, the following has been reported.

- No new sightings of Lyrebirds.
- Powerful Owls produced one offspring which did not survive the violent storms that occurred.
- On our October walk we recorded 5 species of cuckoos-Shining Bronze, Horsfield's Bronze, Fan-tailed, Pallid and Brush.

### NEW SIGHTINGS

Yellow Tufted Honeyeaters were sighted in the southern part of the ELZ, for the first time. They have only previously been seen on the Coop in years when there has been a particularly good flowering of the red ironbarks.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler was spotted on the river below the east end of Henley Road on our October walk.

Grey Goshawk was disturbed by Quentin Matisse after it had killed a baby rabbit in his transpiration bed. It flew off after dropping the rabbit. Although it did not return within the next hour and a half, the rabbit was gone three hours later.

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An Annual Bird Record Sheet is included in the Newsletter for use in 2003

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce (97120237), especially lyrebirds.

## MELBOURNE 2030

### Janet Mattiske

What kind of city do you want for you and your children in thirty years time?

Now is the time to express your views! The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has prepared a draft Strategic Plan that looks at sustainable growth and aims to keep Melbourne a 'liveable' city. Most importantly for us it focuses on the green wedges. Metropolitan growth must be better managed as it continues to spread outwards. Despite almost 50 years of effort since the city's first planning scheme was prepared, growth has not always been controlled seriously. The 2030 strategy will set firm limits. It draws a line around future expansion - a line between development and rural activity.

The plan states that primary actions to achieve this over the next five years are to:

- Work with local government to set limits to urban growth in metropolitan Melbourne.
- Change the way services are provided in outer fringe growth areas..
- Protect green wedges around metropolitan Melbourne, such as Nillumbik, the Dandenong Ranges, the Yarra Valley, Westernport and the Mornington Peninsula and to use new planning and legislative controls to regulate land use and development in them.

This sounds excellent but it hasn't just been written by planners. A lot of hard work has been done by people who really care. The Green Wedge Coalition, whose member groups are numerous and include the Bend of Islands Conservation Association, have put much effort into this process.

The draft, at this time, has bi-partisan support.

To make it a reality, however, it is most important that it has your support. Submissions will be received until 14 February, 2003

Write now, even if it is only a few lines, to support the Green Wedge concept. Your submission must include your name and address to be accepted. Write to:

Melbourne 2030

Department of Infrastructure

GPO Box 2797Y

Melbourne

Vic., 3001

Or

Melbourne2030@doi.vic.gov.au

It would be good to send a copy of your submission to the Mayor of Nillumbik Shire.

For further information the full strategy document is available on line at <http://www.melbourne2030.vic.gov.au>



## CONSERVATION COVENANTS

The Bonnys have had a Conservation Covenant approved for their property.

The covenant underscores the ELZ provisions and provides another layer of protection against destruction or loss of environmental values for the long term. The conditions of the covenant are negotiable and are site specific and it costs the landowner nothing for the covenant with all costs being borne by Trust for Nature. There is also an ongoing incentive in the form of an Environmental Rebate on the council rates provided by our Nillumbik Shire.

Usually only larger areas than most ELZ blocks qualify but consideration will be given to smaller size lots because of the ELZ and especially if adjoining blocks can be considered together.

If you want to know more about Covenants contact Trust for Nature 1800 99 99 33, Nillumbik Shire 943 33111 or Carol & Alan Bonny 9712 0648.

## NEW SPECIES OF BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE

Steve Craig

Researchers working for the Marsupial Cooperative Research Centre have found a new species of Brush-tailed Phascogale in the south west of Western Australia.

The new species was previously thought to be a sub-species of the Brush-tailed Phascogale or Tuan, found in Victoria and NSW.

Researcher, Dr Peter Spencer, made the discovery by using a genetic method called mitochondrial DNA analysis. He took a small amount of tissue, blood and hair from several Brush-tailed Phascogales in Victoria, NSW and WA and also from the Red-tailed Phascogale from WA, and then compared one region of the mitochondrial of the DNA.

The analysis showed that although the western and eastern varieties of the Phascogale look almost identical, the WA species had been separated from the eastern Australia species for more than three million years. It also indicated that the northern species had been separated for perhaps five million years, making three distinct species.

This has significant conservation implications in Victoria where the Brush-tailed Phascogale is currently listed as vulnerable and the species will now have to be reviewed to determine whether they should be upgraded to a higher level. Our little furry friends could be even rarer than we thought.

References:

“Scientists pull new phascogale out of the hat”. Stephen Brook, Science Writer, The Australian 1 June 2000.

Australian research uncovers a new species of Phascogale

[www.marsupialcrc.com.au/webhome/Marsupial%20tales/phascogale.htm](http://www.marsupialcrc.com.au/webhome/Marsupial%20tales/phascogale.htm)

## MULCH

The Powernet works to reduce vegetation under the powerlines have created a bit of mulch that we have procured for BICA Landcare purposes. BICA members that would like some could repay the Landcare group with a little help on working bee projects. Contact Peter Gurney for details of how you can help 9712 0408.

## BELLBIRDS, BULLANTS AND BABIES

Carol Bonny

There has been much discussion about Bellbirds, Burgan and Dieback and I would like to tell you the history of our property. We acquired in 1992 and the previous owners told us that the Bellbirds had been on site for thirty years and were still the predominant birds when we moved in. We enjoyed the calls and the antics of the resident colony of bells and we were aware that they dominated and chased away all the smaller birds. The only other species present were the larger, less vulnerable ones. Along the river and up the gully a healthy growth of Burgan was present with substantial eucalypt dieback. The surviving stringybarks and red box were noticeably stressed. The lerp infestation was such that you could not find a leaf without a mass covering of the sugary insect covering. About three years after our moving in a pair of wattle birds nested up the hill from the bellbird colony creating a bit of conflict.

Even so, with the abundance of food, we were surprised when the Bellbirds left almost over night. The silence was deafening until a range of little birds moved in feasting on the lerp and it has been interesting to watch the transformation of our bush. Lerp is almost impossible to find and the eucalypts are much healthier. The stressed trees have recovered and new eucalypts have popped up. The Burgan is still growing the same as ever and we now have an abundance of bird diversity that visit in waves with a total absence of Bell Miners. We cannot explain the Bellbird retreat but a new phase has restored a balance.

Mother nature. Isn't it wonderful!

While sitting on our water tank one sunny lunch time enjoying the sights around us something dropped on me from the stringybark overhead. As a matter of habit I brushed away the offending leaf or maybe even a not so welcome bird poo only to find that the object that had landed on me was a very large and agitated bullant. It was rearing up as if I had been the reason for his fall. Not only do you have to be careful where you sit to avoid a sting, you also have to take note of what falls on you. Ouch.

To Anna and Mark Zentgraf, a new baby daughter Keellie, a little sister for Ella.  
To Bear and Amelia their first child, a daughter Bodhi).



## CHRISTMAS STUFF

The Fire Brigade fundraising Christmas Café benders will be the usual night format on Sat 21st December. Gourmet BBQ sausages, vegie burgers available. Bring salads to share and BYO everything else including a seat and table. Come along and join in. From 6:30 pm till late.

## NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT

For a stimulating and adventurous evening..

### WANNA PLAY

Written by Donna Bradshaw. Directed by Karyn Kamminga

At the Carlton Courthouse, 349 Drummond St. Carlton

Come along and support your local writer and director

5th to 21st December, Wed to Sat at 8pm, Sun at 4pm

Tix: Thurs to Sat \$20/\$18 Groups: (10 or more) \$15

Real Deals!: Wed & Sun performances \$15

If you missed buying your tickets at Café Benders then book now by calling: Karyn Kamminga 9712 0621 or Donna Bradshaw 9712 0443

Ross Henry (9712 0547) has offered to organise a bus if there are enough people wanting to go to the performance on Friday December 6.

Your support is truly appreciated! We hope to see you ALL there!

## SWALLOW THIS!

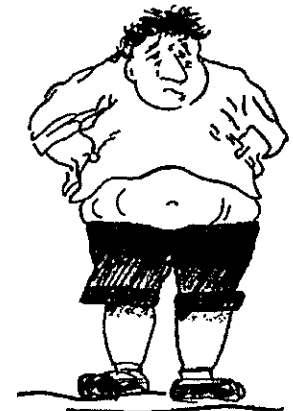
Alan Bonny

Over the last few years we have been telling you the story of our resident Welcome Swallow family. With the refurbishment of the nest this year they have excelled at being successful parents. Watching the feeding we thought four maybe five chicks but on the day that they took their first flight we realized that they were the proud parents of six. It was very busy under the carport with six young and the two parent birds flying around. All of them took to the sky with relative ease and the eight of them would return and squeeze into the nest each night. After a week the young birds seem to have flown the coop and the mad parents seem to be intent on doing it all over again. I reckon they deserve a break but then I am just a human bird!

## THE PUB WALK

From our roaming correspondent

The Pub Walk is part of the calendar of Boot Benders walks so on October 27th a pleasant, sometimes overcast day was just right for the annual event. A noisy mob of around fifteen gathered at the CFA shed to carpool to the beginning of our afternoon trek. Thanks to Mr Gurney, Jo and Gerard and the Summers, a car shuffle saw us all at Nutfield for the start of the three hour walk through rural back tracks with the occasional stretch of native bush. Plenty of worldly discussion helped us over the hills and we arrived at St Andrews around 6 pm for a rewarding cold drink or two. About another dozen Benders joined us for dinner at the pub and a pleasant few hours were spent enjoying the food and company. Diners at a neighboring table were intrigued by our crew and asked if we were a family group. In a way I suppose we are. Thanks to the Summers for again organizing the walk.





## VERSATILE BLACK WATTLE

Steve Craig

The Late Black Wattle, *Acacia mearnsii* or "Garrong" as it was called by the local aboriginals, is a medium sized tree capable of growing to 15 metres but generally is 5 to 8 metres in height. It has bipinnate dark green leaves and strongly scented pale yellow flowers that are visible from October to December.

It is readily distinguished from the Silver Wattle, *Acacia dealbata*, which has greyish green foliage and bright yellow flowers from July to October and the introduced Early Black Wattle, *Acacia decurrens* which has very fine, feathery leaves and bright yellow flowers from July to September.

At the time of writing Late Black Wattles are flowering throughout the Yarra Valley and are particularly noticeable in the Bend of Islands with few other species of indigenous wattles in flower at this time of year.

The Late Black Wattle is reported to be short lived and prone to borer attack, but in deep, moist soil can live for up to 30 years.

This attractive tree is very easy to propagate from seed and has a rapid growth rate when protected from native and introduced herbivores. These qualities, when combined with its nitrogen fixing ability and extensive root system, which helps to stabilise erosion sites, make this important coloniser an obvious choice in any revegetation project.

Its bark, seed pods, leaves and flowers can be used for dyeing. The wood was used by aboriginals for making weapons and the living tree was an important source of gum, which will ooze from the trunk where it is damaged. Balls of gum were kept and later eaten or dissolved in water with flower nectar to make sweet drinks. When mixed with burnt mussel shell or wood ashes it formed a cement for sealing water containers made from the bark of the tree. The bark also provided fibre to make a coarse string, and was infused in hot water and drunk as a remedy for indigestion.

Perhaps one of the most important qualities of the Late Black Wattle is its attraction to our local wildlife. It has been reported that in areas supporting stands of Black Wattles there are likely to be 10 times the population of Sugar Gliders than elsewhere. The main attraction is the Wattle Gum which the Sugar Gliders obtain by incising tiny V-shaped notches into the trunks and upper branches with their razor sharp lower incisors. The gum is a valuable source of carbohydrate and supplements the Gliders diet during the winter months when other food resources such as insects and nectar are in short supply.

Wattle seeds are eaten by a variety of birds including Rosellas, Honeyeaters and Bronzewing Pigeons. Birds such as Thornbills and Cuckoos forage amongst the foliage and the sugary exudates produced by numerous glands along the leaf stems attract a variety of ants and Honeyeaters. The Late Black Wattle is also an important food plant for the larvae of the Common Imperial Blue Butterfly.

The Late Black Wattle is a very versatile plant and well worth considering when you're thinking about what plants to buy or grow for your revegetation or landscaping project.

### REFERENCES:

BETH GOTT AND JOHN CONRAN (1991). VICTORIAN KOORIE PLANTS. SOME PLANTS USED BY VICTORIAN KOORIES FOR FOOD, FIBRE, MEDICINES AND IMPLEMENTS. SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS MAROONDAH, INC (2001). FLORA OF MELBOURNE, 3RD EDITION. A GUIDE TO THE INDIGENOUS PLANTS OF THE GREATER MELBOURNE AREA. THE WONDERFUL BLACK WATTLE BY JANE MARIOT, LAND FOR WILDLIFE, STAWELL, IN LAND FOR WILDLIFE NEWS VOL 5 NO 2 JULY/AUGUST 2002.

## BICA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2PM Sunday 24th November 2002

Venue. Laughlin Residence The Pole House. 720 Henley Rd.

Guest speaker from Keith Turnbull institute will be Jack Craw on Weeds

Please bring a chair a cup and arvo tea to share

## CONTACT BICA

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Website :<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica/index.html>

## IT'S IN THE WIND!

### Michael Polling

It's a bird, it's a plane, no it's a wind powered generator. Drive to peaceful Codrington in Western Victoria and on the edge of a grazing property abutting the ocean is a wind farm of six of these propeller driven devices generating enough power for a town of approximately 12,000 people. If you leave your car you may even hear them and to some they are less of a visual blight than the nearby conventional power lines. In Europe they are even placed in the ocean along the Atlantic coast.

The Australian generators are usually based on German or Danish technology and the largest can generate up to 2 Megawatts each, but this is eclipsed by the output of even one of the Loy Yang brown coal powered power stations in Victoria which has a capacity of 1,000 Mega watts. However their size is still impressive with propeller diameters greater than the wingspan of a Jumbo jet.

You can buy power generated from wind farms through Origin Energy at a slight premium and while there is some doubt about their visual pollution they otherwise would seem to be more environmentally friendly than a coal fired power station.

Pacific Hydro is the main player in Victoria with its Codrington site and the recently approved four sites at Portland and one at Aarat. They also are involved in hydro-electricity with joint ventures in the Philippines and Chile.

Australia has a miserable target of sourcing 2% of its energy consumption from renewable resources. Compare this with Denmark which already is at the 15% level. Greenpeace and the AusWEA organization have created a blueprint proposal however for a 10% level in Australia by 2020, but it seems that Governments are waiting and not initiating action in this area. It can be done and the development of an indigenous manufacturing capacity would of course create a real benefit to Australians. Spain, for example, within a few years is likely to become the largest supplier of this technology, having started deliberately developing an Industry not so long ago.

## ERADICATING FERAL BEES

### Steve Craig

Daily temperatures are increasing as we move from late spring into early summer and this is the time when wild swarms of European Honey Bees are seen before they establish themselves in a more permanent home such as a nest box or tree hollow.

The introduction of these aggressive insects is regarded as a threatening process in Australian ecosystems because they compete with native bees for nectar, are generally

very poor pollinators of native plants and exclude native birds and mammals from tree hollows and nesting boxes.

Here are some useful suggestions on ways to reduce the occupancy of nest boxes and tree hollows by Honey Bees.

Make sure that the total volume of a box is as low as possible. Bees need about one cubic foot of space. Most native vertebrate species prefer smaller spaces for security and temperature control.

1. Half fill boxes for Sugar Gliders with fresh gum leaves to reduce volume and encourage usage. To encourage Brush-tailed Phascogales use shredded stringybark instead of gum leaves.
2. If bees are still in a swarm on a low branch or shrub, you could try contacting the Shire of Nillumbik for the name of a local apiarist who may be interested in collecting the swarm. They may charge a fee for this service.
3. If feral bees have already moved into a nest box, propping the lid open will make the box unsuitable for them, as they prefer the hive to remain at a constant 33.90. Opening the lid makes it very difficult to regulate the temperature of the hive and they will soon leave. After the swarm has left, close the lid again.
4. If bees are already well established, totally block the entrance hole with a rag or some other material. The bees will eat the contents of the comb over a number of weeks and eventually starve. Exercise caution when attempting this technique. Ensure you have someone holding the ladder for you and wear protective clothing. It's best to attempt this at night when the weather is cool rather than warm and to use a light filtered with red cellophane.
5. The use of residual surface insecticides is not recommended as they may discourage future use by target species. Moth balls, naphthalene flakes and pest strips have all been used with success but the odour may discourage occupation by desirable species.
6. Regular inspection of nest boxes during the Honey Bee swarming season is critical to ensure that bees are discouraged from occupying the box at the earliest possible time.
7. Eradicating feral bees from tree hollows is a more complex exercise and is probably best left to a professional pest exterminator.

REFERENCE: "FERAL BEES AND NEST BOXES - A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN" BY DR ADRIAN DANIELL, EDUCATION OFFICER, WILDLIFE RESERVES, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY. LAND FOR WILDLIFE NEWS VOL. 5 NO. 1 MARCH/APRIL 2002



The next Bend of Islands Conservation Association event will be  
**2002 -2003 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

2.00 PM Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2002  
Venue. Laughlin Residence (The Pole House)  
720 Henley Rd.

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