

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Arthropodium strictum*
Common name: Chocolate Lily
Family: Asparagaceae
Flowering Period: October to December

Chocolate Lily is a small tufted grass-like perennial herb with linear, flat, slightly channelled leaves 10-60 cm long and 1-10mm wide. Erect flowering stem to 35mm high with branching single flower arrangement. Mauve flowers 15mm wide are star shaped with black anthers. Flowers have a sweet chocolate fragrance and smell delicious.

After flowering, leaves die down to dormant fleshy tuberous rootstock during summer and commence regrowth following the autumn rains.

The underground tubers are a cultural food plant, which are roasted and eaten.

Chocolate Lilies grow in all states of Australia, excluding Western Australia. They can be found growing in well drained soils in grassy areas, woodlands and open forests and can grow in full sun to semi shade. This is a delicate species that would have once been prolific in our area, unfortunately they are now becoming increasingly sparse due to past land management, over grazing and decreased rainfall.

A very attractive plant that can be great planted in your garden in groups. Best planted in an established part of the garden amongst native grasses.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is finally here after another long, cold winter. With some winter rains, the native orchids seemed promising, although the recent dry spell has halted their progress somewhat. If your property is like mine, there is much weeding to keep abreast of and preparations for the summer season.

The BICA committee has been busily working behind the scenes in a variety of different capacities throughout the year. Some of the highlights include:

- Further involvement in the Sugarloaf Link Project. Many properties have received some free weeding, and with the recent appointment of contractors, fox and deer control is starting. It is not too late to sign up for the project if you have not already done so! Contact the BICA Secretary for further details.
- Monitoring of the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan process. Over 750 submissions about the draft were made to Nillumbik Shire Council (including a BICA submission and many from individuals in our local community), and reportedly, the majority of these submissions were in favour of rejecting the Draft in its' current form, and including more explicit environmental protections. Although the Bend is in some ways protected due to the SUZ2 planning scheme, we still need to be vigilant about the potential "watering down" of the environmental values in the local area. Keep vigilant about the progress of this vital document!
- Purchasing of two compliant cat-traps. These can be borrowed if you have a sighting of a cat on your property. As the traps are compliant, if you catch a cat in one of the traps, you can contact the Nillumbik Ranger, and the cat will be collected and removed from the area.
- Erection of a deer-exclusion fence. A result of a successful funding application, a fence has been erected in an area along Gongflers Drive, to exclude deer and other wildlife from grazing/trampling sensitive vegetation. Many thanks to Dylan Osler who has gone above and beyond in his management and commitment to this project. We look forward to seeing how the vegetation recovers.
- Funding for Wildlife Cameras. BICA has been successful in receiving a Community Environment Grant, which will allow us to purchase some wildlife cameras for use in the wider community. This will be a terrific way to gather data about the wildlife in the area, on both private and public land. Look out for notification about community workshops in the New Year, which will be held to help train residents in how to operate the cameras.
- Local community events. Many events have been held to involve the local community - Canoe Run, Orchid Walk, Earth Hour Family Event, Wattle Walk, Night Event and monthly Landcare. All of these events provide a great opportunity to learn more, celebrate the Bend and spend time with like-minded individuals. It would be great to see some new faces!

Thank-you to all of the dedicated community members who have volunteered their time to be involved in BICA this year. Thanks to BICA Committee members - Pam McMahon, Rodrigo Castellanos, Julie Martindale, Jo Henry, Phillip Wierzbowski, Kimberley Kifun, Deirdre Lucas, Michael Dempsey, AB Bishop and Mike Pelling. Also thank-you to the Planning Sub-Committee – Carol and Alan Bonny, Janet Mattiske, Frank Pierce and Robyn Duff, as well as the Sugarloaf Link Sub-Committee – Tserin Wright, Jo Henry, Deirdre Lucas, Dylan Osler and Gavin Masters. Liz Mildenhall has continued to do a brilliant job monitoring Roadside Vegetation Management, and Wolfgang Krause performs a vital service of keeping us all up to date with what is going on, by adding the signs to our Sign Tree at Oxley Bridge – much appreciated!

Remember to stay connected via our BICA Website <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/>, become a friend of the official BICA Facebook page, "Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA)", and of course, most importantly – make sure that your BICA membership is current. BICA subscriptions are due now, and having as many BICA members as possible, allows us to represent the community in a variety of ways.

Our AGM is fast approaching on November 24th, and I urge anyone who is interested in helping to maintain our area, to put their name forward as a member of the committee. Preservation of our area does not just happen – we need to work at it constantly. The BICA committee are all volunteers - no prior experience is necessary, and it is always great to have fresh ideas, different perspectives and contributions. See you at the AGM!

Sue Grad

BICA President

INDEX

Page

1. What local plant is flowering?
2. President's Message
3. Working with our Shire
4. Sugarloaf Project update
5. SUZ2 & You
Nillumbik War on Waste
6. BICA Community Involvement
Report
BICA calendar
7. Protection of a significant hotspot in
the Bend
8. Round the Bend Conservation
Co-operative - A history part 2
9. Round the Bend Conservation
Co-operative - A history part 2
Invitation to BICA AGM
10. News from Fire Brigade
BICA Big walk and Pub walk
11. Secretary's report
- 12-13 The fascinating story of the
Bullock Jewel Butterfly and why
it's endangered
14. BICA Bird survey 30 year
anniversary
Merlin - A new app for identifying
birds
15. Bird notes
16. Candid Critters
Native pet rescue in the 1980s
17. Bend of Islands Photographic
competiton 2019
18. From the editor
Welcome to the bend
Contact BICA
BICA Facebook page



BICA MATTERS

WORKING with OUR SHIRE

Report re meetings with Nillumbik Shire Team Leaders for Open Spaces and Unsealed Roads 2019

You might have noticed quite a few meetings taking place along the roadsides around the Bend.

Thanks to Carol Bonny, Alan Bonny, Cric Henry, Deirdre Lucas, Julie Martindale, John Roberts and Peter Mildenhall for their input at different times. We've continued to meet with Laura Mullan, Open Spaces Team Leader, Andy Knight formerly in this position and mentoring Laura, and Darryl Cullen, Unsealed Roads Team Leader. We've also had the opportunity to talk with grader drivers and see reports from Enspeg, the consulting arborists.



Roadside Vegetation & Hazardous Trees Management

This work involves the management of roadside vegetation so that the roads are safe for motorists' everyday use and especially for safe access/egress in emergencies. The shrub vegetation, mostly Burgan is hand weeded. Hazardous trees are assessed by the arborist and subsequent works carried out by contractors. Box Clearance to enable safe passage for vehicles like fire trucks is also included. We meet with Laura and Andy before the works commence, give local knowledge re flora and fauna habitats, mark these areas that require extra sensitive work and ask lots of questions. After the work is completed we pass on any community feedback.

We've had a Protocol for such management in place since 2017 which aims to keep the roads as safe as possible at the same time as protecting the flora and fauna - the reason why we live here. We aim for minimalist impact, so trees are most often pruned rather than lowered and, in the case, where they must be lowered, the aim is to leave them on the ground for habitat.

The Protocols are reviewed from time to time. If you wish to see details please contact Liz or BICA Secretary.

Unsealed Roads

As a result of community feedback about grading of the roads earlier in the year we have also worked on a protocol, some of which includes:

- The grader is to be parked on the corner of Upper Catani and Henley Road

- The grader driver will avoid degrading the bush when turning. Natural barricades may be employed
- Grading will avoid scraping the banks
- Swales will be maintained with the back hoe (rather than grader) and any excess material will be removed
- Current Roadside width to be maintained
- A reminder that no wood is to be collected from the roadside

We very much appreciate Darryl's readiness to address issues and consult with us and the efforts of Gary the grader driver in implementing the outcomes. We are continuing to fine-tune the protocol.

A big thanks to Laura, Andy and Darryl and we hope to continue working with them in the future.

Liz Mildenhall
on behalf of BICA



BICA MATTERS

Sugarloaf Link Project Update

As you may already have heard, Nillumbik Shire Council has finalised the appointments of Fox and Deer control contractors for the next 12 months of the Sugarloaf Link Project.

Fox Control

Ken Keyes from Melbourne Wildlife and Pest Control (0438 728 400) has been calling signed up landholders to ask about known fox den locations. If identified, these can be fumigated prior to fox young emerging.

Trapping will be aligned to be of greatest benefit to our precious Phascogales, but reduction of fox populations can occur at any time between now and March. Juveniles disperse in mid-summer, with males moving larger distances than females, so early summer will be a likely time for trapping to take place.

Ken will shortly begin arranging site visits. He will then prepare a plan and calendar of what fox control actions he will undertake, and which properties will be included in works.

If you have recent and fairly regular wildlife camera images of foxes please advise the Project Officer (Michelle Hanslow) as this will assist in identifying target areas.

Deer Control

Richard Francis from ABZECO (0414 475 654) and Jacob Haddad from Victorian Pest Animal Control (0417 106 903) are our appointed deer contractors.

ABZECO has been working collaboratively with VPAC to map out known and likely deer bedding and feeding areas, as well as determine tracks that deer regularly use across the project area. This information has been compiled and detailed in a Tactical Plan and will be used to determine the best control areas, and outline methodologies that could be employed in different terrains.

The mapped information along with their expert knowledge of deer behaviour has enabled the two contractors to select key properties/areas where they expect to find a high number of deer and where they will be able to quickly cull the most deer due to ease of access for shooting and retrieval.

These properties have been contacted and most site inspections have now been undertaken, with access points, hazards, deer presence and safe control areas identified. Shoot Plans are currently being prepared. These will be agreed to with the landholders and approved in writing by the District Firearms Officer before works can commence.

Shoot dates will be planned approximately 2 weeks ahead, however actual operations are dependent on local weather conditions on the night, so flexibility will be required. We are hoping to start mid-November.

Current target areas for VPAC are Henley Bridge Road, Rob Roy, the Co-Operative (along the aqueduct track) and Bills Track. ABZECO is focusing on One Tree Hill Road, Henley

Road (east of Yanakie Block, north side of the road), Oxley Road, Sugarloaf Track and Ridge Road.

After the first round of operations we will assess successes, refine if required, and then extend the works to other sites. Essentially the current approach is to start with the areas where we will get the most bang for our buck, and working out into the more 'difficult' areas, or where deer are more transient.

Council is pleased with this approach to focus initial control in areas which should provide rapid results. These sites may not be high in biodiversity, for example they may comprise more open land. However, control at such sites is expected to quickly reduce deer numbers across the project area, and reduce the numbers which are moving into the more valuable bushland areas.

Weed Control

In 2018-19, the project completed 19.5 hectares of weed control in Parks Victoria estate, targeting Blackberry, Spanish Heath, Broom, Black Wattle, Pittosporums, Gossamer Wattle and Pines.

Private land weed control was also undertaken, coordinated by BICA and implemented by Tserin Wright (Canopy Connection). 56.5 hectares of weed control was completed across 16 properties in the Bend of Islands.

A fantastic job all around!
Special thanks to Deirdre and the BICA sub-committee, and the contractors for their hard work in such a short timeframe.

Weed control will re-commence shortly, and contractors will be contacting the landholders within the wider weed control area to initiate works or arrange site inspections to determine the scope of works required.

General Info

There has been a great response to the project. 297 private properties were initially invited to participate and 74 properties - nearly 25% - signed up. Of these, 67 properties were interested in deer control, 65 for fox control, and 49 for weed control.

If you would like to be kept informed of fox trapping and deer shooting plans and dates, or you signed up but have not received any email updates regarding the project, please contact the Project Officer to ensure Council has your email and phone details.

Michelle Hanslow: Environment Project Officer
(Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)

Ph: 9433 3543

Email: Michelle.Hanslow@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



BICA MATTERS

SUZ2 & YOU – DUAL OCCUPANCY

Living in the Bend provides a unique residential national park experience and it is our responsibility to ensure that the experience will be available for others in the future.

Wherever you live there is a planning scheme that defines what can, or cannot, be done in that region. For Bend of Islands the planning schedule is SCHEDULE 2 TO THE SPECIAL USE ZONE ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING - BEND OF ISLANDS usually referred to as SUZ2.

The SUZ2 was created over 40 years ago by the residents of the day and is part of the State Planning Scheme with Nillumbik Shire as the responsible authority.

The lot sizes in place were created long before the SUZ2 and are arguably way too small for residential conservation. The zone provisions were drafted to ensure optimum environmental protection from our presence. The limitation on the scale of site development and the requirement for a 'single dwelling' is designed to minimise our impact.

This is addressed by some of aims in the 'Purpose' section of SUZ2

- To provide for residential use of the land consistent with the need for protection of the native bushland environment.
- To limit the site coverage of the development or use, (including kitchen gardens) to a single envelope so that the landscape and environmental qualities of the area are maintained and enhanced.
- To ensure that the density, design, appearance and impact of the use or development reflects the native bushland qualities of the area.

Section 2 of the SUZ2 specifies that a permit is required for a single dwelling.

The requirement specifies:-

Dwelling - Must result in no more than one dwelling on the lot

More than one dwelling is referred to as DUAL OCCUPANCY and is NOT permitted within our Zone and some other Zones within the Nillumbik Shire. Sheds and studios converted to residential use are not permitted and Nillumbik Shire Council is the responsible authority to police this provision.

Have a look at the full SUZ2 document:-

https://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/nillumbik/ordinance/37_01s02_nill.pdf

Alan Bonny

NILLUMBIK WAR ON WASTE GROUP

Local Benders have been involved in a local group aiming to encourage Council to phase out single use plastic items, straws, take-away food containers, excess food packaging etc (not just plastic bags) as plastic bags are to be banned in Victoria as of November this year

The group are quite organised and equipped with costumes (some are vegetables), a theme song (written and performed by Ross Henry and accompanied by John Roberts on the sax) and Pearl the platypus (a sculpture by Tim Read, highlighting impact on waterways)

Last month they visited the Eltham Shopping Centre and more recently appeared in Diamond Creek.

They are looking for your support and currently circulating a petition.



to be involved contact:

Rowena Jonas

0414 476 007

contact@rowenajonas.com



BICA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

REPORT April-December 2019

Apart from our regular monthly activities, which includes Landcare, Cafe Benders and Bird Watching, our extra events included:

EARTH HOUR - a wonderful family evening learning all about Earth Hour, Ecological Webs, Frogs and Bats.

The many kids present were so enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge, whilst enjoying the magic of the night bush.

WINTER SOLSTICE LANTERN WALK- This was a great success. Lanterns lit, we walked in the darkness to the "three bears cottage" and back for hot soup and gingerbread cake. Wonderful singing and laughter by the kids. A fun event for all

GENERAL MEETING - a good turnout to hear local Committee member AB Bishop give an enlightening talk on the connectiveness in Buloke communities.

THE BIG WALK- a most enjoyable walk through the tracks in the Kinglake-Warrandyte park, followed by homemade wood fired pizzas and drinks. This made for a fun day.

WATTLE WALK- a quiet meander with Local aborist Tserin Wright down Catani Boulevard, looking at our many local wattles. Nine species were seen

ORCHID WALK-a well-attended Spring walk led by Frank Pierce. Diversity seemed to be somewhat down on previous years but it was enjoyed by all.

PUB WALK- Peter Mildenhall led a most interesting and enjoyable walk through some of the great scenic reserves in Nillumbik including Wimbi Reserve, Boomers Reserve and into Bulwidgi Reserve, ending up at the St Andrews Pub.

Thank you to all who put in their time, talent and effort to make these events happen.

Pam McMahon



BICA CALENDAR

Please note these upcoming events in your diary. Join with the local Community to not only hear about what has happened in the area in 2019, but join in the end of year festivities.

9th November 5.30pm – BICA Night Event

24th November 2pm - BICA Annual General Meeting

14th December - cafe benders Christmas Evening

Look for regular emails and our Facebook page for details of events.



PROTECTION OF A SIGNIFICANT HOTSPOT IN THE BEND

In June BICA received a Land Management Incentive Grant (LMIP) from Nillumbik Council to construct a Deer exclusion fence on the Gongflers Drive Yarra River Escarpment. Acacia Environmental Management did a fantastic construction job in difficult site conditions. The fence is approximately 200 metres long and 1.5 metres high. It will help protect a high-quality vegetation community which is significant in both a local and regional context.

The area is of high botanical significance due to its floristic richness; which includes 40% of all indigenous species recorded in the Bend. This species richness is largely due to the variation in topography and habitat (riparian zone, exposed sheltered cliffs and upper slopes). In addition to this the site contains a number of regionally significant flora species including the largest stand of *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia) to occur within the Yarra River Catchment.

Due to relentless grazing pressure, plants had not been recruiting successfully. Without the fence, this trend would continue and ultimately result in the demise of the *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia) population and the continual loss of species diversity and structure throughout this site. Previous concerted efforts had been made to guard recruiting plants but, due to preferential grazing, they had struggled to establish above the tree guards. Since the fence was constructed, there has already been good tip growth beyond the guards and also a number of young seedlings are growing well.

Another significance occurrence is *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* (Yarra Gorge Form), which is currently under taxonomic revision. The site also contains a range of herbaceous species which are either highly restricted or not found elsewhere within the Bend of Islands, including: -*Levenhookia sonderi* (Slender Stylewort), *Brachyscome diversifolia* (Tall Daisy), *Craspedia varibilis* (Variable Billy-buttons), *Cynoglossum suaveolens* (Sweet Hounds-tongue), *Ranunculus lappaceus* (Forest Buttercup) and *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* s.l. (Clustered Everlasting). There are also two old records by Cam Beardsell of *Podolepis jaceoides* s.s. (Showy Podolepis) and *Derwentia derwentiana* (Derwent Speedwell) which have not been observed in recent years.

It was great to get this area protected just before spring as the vegetation growth is already noticeable inside the fence with species, that are elsewhere heavily targeted by herbivores, putting on new growth. These include - *Correa glabra* (Rock Correa), *Coronidium scorpioides* (Button Everlasting) and *Tetralthea ciliata* (Pink Bells).

It is hoped that, with the reduction of herbivore grazing pressure, the *Banksia marginata* will regenerate and increase in population size, thus avoiding a tragic local extinction.

While the focus is on the *Banksia marginata* (Silver Banksia), it is hoped the populations of the other significant species, which have been grazed out of many areas, will again increase. The fenced area will become a reference area, showing what other similar areas within the Bend of Islands may once have been like.





Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

A history – part two. (part 1 published BICA Newsletter 92 May 2019). John Roberts



The running of the Co-op is very inclusive with expectations that all members will make considerable contributions in expertise and time towards the day to day operation, and acceptance of the co-operative decision-making structure. The co-operative structure provides a large support community with extensive and diverse skills, and the strength achieved by acting co-operatively.

An early example of such collective strength was the Co-operative's ability to install underground power. Following a robust debate about 'to be or not to be connected to the grid' all members swung behind the decision to connect to the electricity grid. This collective strength allowed the Co-operative to overcome the formidable bureaucratic obstacles (in that era the State Electricity Commission reigned supreme) and muster their internal political and technical expertise as well as their energetic and competent membership, to design and install more than 2km of underground power and telephone cabling for the 32 housing sites.

Over the years, it has been this collective response that has equipped the Co-operative with the capacity to tackle a wide range of environmental and other challenges. Highly invasive weeds have been managed or eliminated and a unified voice adds gravitas to addressing external threats. The co-operative structure has also provided the tools to address internal tensions.

As the name suggests, the two essential elements of the Co-operative's structure are Conservation and Co-operation. But it is the third, Governance, which is crucial to understand the mechanics of how the Co-operative operates, makes decisions, solves problems and maintains focus.

Individual leased house sites are essentially private, subject to meeting clearly defined site-management issues in the lease, not dissimilar to a strata title (now company title) where the Co-operative fulfils the role of the Body Corporate. The individual house sites were determined at the time of the establishment of the Co-operative and form part of the original planning permit. These sites were chosen to minimise impact while facilitating reasonable access. A Board of Directors is elected annually to conduct the day-to-day affairs, assisted by a range of working groups that deal with specific areas of interest, including Flora, Control Burns, Building and Infrastructure, Work Parties, Site Visits, Archives, Membership, and Marketing. It is expected that all members should, over time, contribute to these activities.

In the 48 years of operation there are inevitably contentious issues that arise. In the first instance Directors' resolve these matters being fully cognisant that they operate under a 'social licence' from the entire membership. Any decisions that are considered particularly contentious are taken to a general meeting of all members. It is expected that all members respect and abide by resultant decisions. Consequently, the formal dispute procedures within the Co-operative's Constitution (that is based on the model rules for Co-operatives) are a very rare occurrence, and never progress beyond Directors' mediation.

On the rare instances where a member persists in not abiding by the Co-operative's rules, the Co-operative Lease and Constitution provide powers to sanction that member, and where a member's actions threaten to undermine the integrity of the Co-operative and its members, ultimately expulsion. Illustrative of the effectiveness of the Co-operative's



Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative A history – part two continued

membership procedures, that ensure incoming members are fully conversant with the Co-operatives expectations and the members' responsibilities, these sanction procedures have been commenced on only a handful of occasions over the 48 years and in each case quickly resolved without having to resort to expulsion.

The Co-operative embraces diversity and a healthy tension of competing ideas. It is these Governance arrangements that have ensured a resilient, enduring and harmonious community of members focussed on the main game, Residential Conservation. The rewards of living in a unique bushland environment are obvious.

Clearly this arrangement is not for the faint-hearted but it has served well those whose values align with the Co-operative principles. The quality of the bushland, and the living environment of members, is protected. And the cost of housing has been contained by a combination of controlling the cost of land, owner-builder 'sweat equity', and limited financing options.

A bigger question, however, looms behind all of this. The success of the Co-op's model in constraining housing costs runs counter to the prevailing expectation that land and housing are financial asset. Are we up to the challenge of putting the social value of conservation and housing ahead of land and housing as a financial investment?

*This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in Arena Magazine, Feb-Mar 2019 edition.



For more information see RTBCC website: <https://www.roundthebend.org.au/>

1. Photovoltaic and battery storage technologies were relatively limited and expensive. It was an era when the optimists thought that we were on the cusp of a renewable energy revolution; alas nearly 50 years later we are only just seeing this realised.

2. Most woody weeds have been eliminated or controlled, (eg South African Boneseed is now rarely found and most other woody weeds and environmental wood weeds controlled). Grass weeds are generally more difficult to control because of the myriad external vectors that introduce weeds. The Co-operative's rigorous weed management strategies have been successful in controlling external weed incursions and prevented serious weed infestations associated with living in a bush environment.

3. Responses to inappropriate neighboring development proposals, efforts to reduce conservation and planning regulations, management of feral animals, all require vigorous and credible lobbying.

Invitation to the BICA Annual General Meeting

Spend an afternoon with your neighbours - find out about local issues and what BICA has been working on throughout the year. The afternoon will begin with the Annual General Meeting, then a presentation by a guest speaker (details TBA). Stay for a chat and afternoon tea – please bring a plate of food to share.

WHEN: Sunday November 24th 2019

TIME: 2pm

WHERE: Julie Martindale's home, 94 Catani Blvd, Bend of Islands.

WHY: To be involved, find out what has been happening, help to elect a BICA committee for 2020, pay your BICA subs and have a great community get-together.

ALL WELCOME





News from the Fire Brigade

Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

From our Captain

I recently had the pleasure of talking to some Community Fire Guard members in the Bend. One of the discussions involved the role of CFG in aiding recovery, which was something a number of people had not considered. The PPRR disaster management model (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) is a comprehensive approach to risk management, which can be applied at many levels – agency, CFG, and personally. It means at each level, it is helpful to plan all of these aspects to manage, and survive, a disaster.

Prevention includes things like declaration of the Fire Danger period, Total Fire Ban days, house design etc. Preparedness is the main focus for many of us – pre-season readiness, cleaning up around the house, fuel reduction, tanks full of water, making a plan etc. You should be well into your preparation now, as the Fire Danger Period is likely to be declared around the end of November. Response means enacting your plan. Remember to mind your Ps and Qs! Purse, Pills, Prescriptions, Passport, Pets, Paperwork, Policies – and get the answer to any Questions you might have –What is the fire danger tomorrow? What time is the worst time of the day? When should I leave? What is the plan for the day? Who do you need to tell?

We usually don't think much about actively planning our recovery, but it is clear that planning for recovery can make the transition back to "normal" much easier than it might otherwise have been.

What does "recovery" look like for you? Your neighbours? Your neighbourhood? It was said that a few years after Ash Wednesday 1983 fires, in Aireys Inlet, only a handful of marriages/relationships remained intact. We know that "recovery" at Cockatoo was very different to community recovery in the tightly socially connected Upper Beaconsfield. How can we plan for good social outcomes? We do know that social links and connections aid individual and community recovery. I think this is an important role for CFG. Perhaps your Fireguard Group could talk about what "recovery" might look like. You could start by writing a list of things that would be most important to you in your "new" life as you recover from a disaster.

Dianne Simmons

BICA Big Walk and Pub Walk



A couple of the great features of the BICA year are the Big walk and the Pub Walk which provide an opportunity for community members to wander the bush tracks and by ways of the local area. An added feature is the chance to share a drink and a meal at a local pub or similar!

This year's Big Walk on June 30 was a little different as we started in St Andrews and did a scenic 16 km loop through nearby bushland and scenic reserves including Happy Valley area, One Tree Hill, Roberts Road and ended up at a Hermann's house in St Andrews for a well- deserved pizza and a few wines.

The Pub Walk which is about to happen will see a 7 k walk from the end of Long Gully Rd in Panton Hill up through some beautiful bush tracks to Queenstown and on to the Heritage trail and into St Andrews for a pub meal.

Look out for the notices/emails and Facebook entries when they appear and all are welcome!





Secretary's Report

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS and NEW MEMBERS

As you know, we are living in a very special place, which combines residential living with positive environmental outcomes. But to maintain and protect the environmental values of the Bend, the participation of residents is vital.

A strong membership means that BICA can be an effective and credible representative voice when we engage with various different land management bodies. It also means we can do lots of stuff on the ground, such as run regular community events and the Landcare group.

So, we would like to encourage you to renew your membership for the next 12 months, or to consider joining BICA as a new member.

Membership cost is:
\$20 single, \$10 concession or \$30 Family.

You can renew or join at the AGM, or pay the subscription amount directly to the bank.

For more information about membership or our bank details please contact the Secretary at bicacomm@gmail.com or by phone 0403 184 153.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The BICA AGM will be held on Sunday November 24 starting at 2pm at 94 Catani Blvd, Bend of Islands.

Please come along to learn about everything BICA has been doing this year and to help set the direction for the incoming committee.

Julie Martindale
BICA Secretary

Why?



You probably noticed as you were driving into the Bend recently the incredible spread of thistles that had developed on the chook farm hill. It appears these invasive weeds have been spreading into the road verge from adjacent properties and DSE land.

Frank and I attacked these weeds this week (21st & 23rd) and after two monumental efforts have removed all the thistles up to the fence lines on each side of Henley Road from the top of the hill down to the bridge.

Unfortunately there are still Stinging nettles and thistles on the other side of the fences on private property and of course, Pattersons curse spreading down the road verge.

You may ask why?... This land is not part of the ELZ. The adjacent landholders don't seem

to show any interest in the problem, and we all have plenty of our own weeds to address.

I can't answer for Frank but I couldn't continue to drive down this weed alley watching the blue flowers starting to head and pretend it wasn't happening. It was a prelude to a massive seeding which would eventually impact the ELZ itself.

Frank and I have done this thistle & blackberry removal task bi-annually over the last few years, I think this year has been the worst, read hardest and more plants. I guess we will probably keep up this job as long as we still have the energy.

Everybody can do their bit, the more people the quicker and easier the tasks become, think Landcare. After all, we all moved here because of a love for the environment we live in.

We shouldn't be frightened to band together to help protect it.

Neil Taylor

A new pet?



Liz and Peter seem to have a new resident in their garden!



THE FASCINATING STORY OF THE BULLOAK JEWEL BUTTERFLY AND WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

Presentation given by AB Bishop at the BICA General Meeting

The pretty Bulloak Jewel Butterfly hails from a pin-prick sized area in south-eastern Queensland, just above the border, west of the Great Dividing Range. It was discovered in the late 1960s and immediately declared rare and endangered. The reason it's considered rare and endangered is not just because its naturally restricted distribution, it is a bit more convoluted! Here's the story...with a few extra snippets of information I'm hoping you'll find as interesting as I do!

The BJB (sounds quite groovy now, hey!) is one of 400-odd species of Australian butterflies. Worldwide, butterflies are classified into five groups, their names might be familiar: 1. Skippers; 2. Swallowtails & Birdwings; 3. Whites & Yellows; 4. Nymphs & Allies; and lastly, 5. the Blues, Coppers & Hairstreaks, of which our BJB belongs to. Many species in this group have a restricted distribution. Another thing they have in common is their association with ants...eg the Eltham Copper Butterfly (ECB).



orange, yellow or other coloured jewel-like markings. And while a butterfly's spots may seem 'just' pretty to us, their patterns allow each species to be able to identify their own. Pretty cool, hey! Okay, onward we march!

We know that larvae feed on the Allocasuarina leaves, but what about the butterflies, which are nectivorous. The she-oaks are wind pollinated, so don't need to attract pollinators, so don't produce nectar. BJB adults feed from any tree species (with 'normal' flowers) that are flowering when they're flying. **They tend to stay high above the ground, and won't feed on low-growing shrubs.** Two trees that flower when the butterflies are on the move are the spring-flowering Dogwood (*Jacksonia scoparia*) and the summer-flowering, Smooth-barked Apple

(*Angophora costata*).

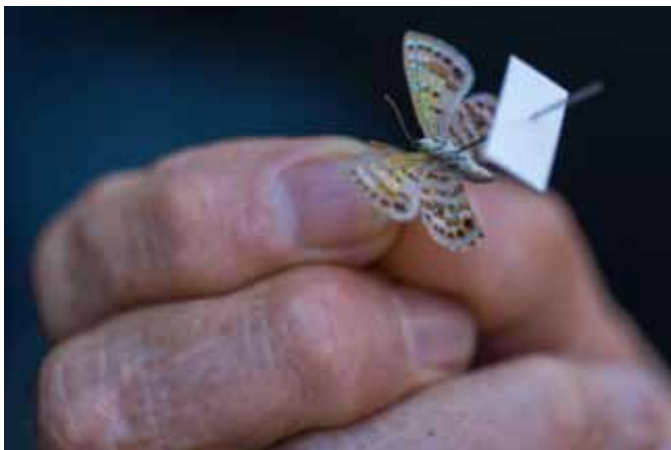
Like many Aussie trees, the Angophora genus plays host to various mistletoes. These semi-parasitic (they tap into the tree's water reserves, but generally make their own food) aerial plants are given a bad rap because it's (incorrectly) thought that they cause the demise of their host. Australia has 90 species of mistletoe - the most in the world...got to be an ecological reason for that, right?! It turns out that mistletoes are veritable zoos - providing food (nectar and pollen) and safe habitat for a HUGE number of critters...including butterflies and ants.

A quick digression to the Mistletoe bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*)



that feeds on the seeds of these plants and is absolutely integral to their survival. The cute, St Kilda barracking bird unwittingly distributes mistletoe around the continent simply because it poops onto branches rather than the ground like any 'normal' bird would! As the seeds pass through the bird's digestive system, the hard coating preventing them from germinating is removed. They are then deposited onto branches with their very own fertiliser packet, where they germinate and quickly send roots into the tree's water transportation cells.

As I mentioned earlier, butterflies in the Blues, Coppers & Hairstreaks family tend to have associations with ants. Well, the BJB has a mutually-beneficial relationship with a particular species of ant that lives either in the allocasuarina or, you guessed it, in the mistletoe of nearby angophoras!



BJB's scientific name, *Hypochrysops piceatus* may be a tongue-twister but, as most scientific names do, gives us a picture of the species (animal or plant) when we dissect it...the name, not the animal or plant! Hypo translates as 'underneath' and chrysops as 'gold-coloured' - so we can ascertain that the wings of this butterfly are shimmering gold-coloured underneath. Piceatus means 'spotted with pitch' - letting us know that it has black spots on the wings...in this case, the undersides also. We know it's in the 'Blues, Coppers & Hairstreaks' family, so it won't come as a surprise to know its upper wings are blue.

So that's the scientific name out of the way, but what about its common name? Well, 'bulloak' or 'buloke' is the common name for the 10-20m dioecious tree *Allocasuarina luehmannii* that grows in eastern Australia from north Queensland through to south-eastern South Australia, west (and north) of the Great Dividing Range. **This tree produces the hardest wood in the world.** Allocasuarinas and the related casuarinas are known as she-oaks. Much like the Eltham Copper Butterfly larvae feed only on Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*), **the BJB larvae have a taste for the leaves of this particular allocasuarina only.** 'Jewel' is a nickname given to butterflies in the *Hypochrysops* genus because their wings are shimmering gold underneath (remember?!). and have





THE FASCINATING STORY OF THE BOLLOAK JEWEL BUTTERFLY AND WHY IT'S ENDANGERED continued



But before we get to the relationship, how do the ants who are living in the mistletoe of the angophoras get to the allocasuarina? They walk! They tramp out of the mistletoe, down the 20m+ tree and **along fallen branches and leaf litter connecting the trees**. These ants do not like touching the ground!

When they get to the allocasuarinas, the ants spend their days protecting BJB eggs and larvae. After the butterfly has laid her eggs on the branches of the allocasuarina the ants sniff the eggs to ensure they're BJBs and ferry them into the safety of holes that have been bored into the world's hardest wood. Caterpillars raised with ants have a 500 times greater chance of survival than those that aren't.

Back-tracking a step, the holes were bored by the larvae of a species of Xyloryctidae moth - otherwise known as wood moths. **The older the tree, the more Xyloryctidae holes...the safer habitat for BJB larvae.**



Back-tracking another step (!) how does the BJB know to fly to the *allocasuarina* to lay her eggs? I'm glad you asked! Heard of scale insects? Of course, you have, because at one time or another most gardeners have had to deal with them...and know that ants are usually associated with scale as they produce a sweet substance called honeydew that ants eat. There are about 8,000 described species of these sap-sucking insects worldwide - in the northern hemisphere scale tend to 'prey' on plants in the Asteraceae family - daisies. In the southern hemisphere it's the Myrtaceae family - i.e. the eucalypts, angophoras, etc. that is victimized. As our BJB flutters above the landscape, it spies the scale that it knows lives in the *Allocasuarina leuhmannii* with the ants that look after its larvae, and descends.



When the BJB eggs hatch (in the safety of the Xyloryctidae holes) the ants literally carry the tiny caterpillars to the **young, new leaves** to feed under the cover of darkness. The vulnerable youngsters are protected from predators such as parasitoid wasps by the ants, and at daybreak, are returned to the safety of the holes. When they're too big to carry, the larvae follow a communication pheromone trail laid by the ants. Whilst they're munching on the new growth, the larvae exude a similar honeydew to the scale from various parts of their body. Ants just love this high-carbohydrate substance and will go to any lengths to protect the larvae. Not only that, they stroke the caterpillars to make them feel good and exude more honeydew! If that seems a bit too far-fetched, just imagine if your partner suddenly started exuding chocolate or Dom Perignon Champagne, how much attention you would suddenly pay them!

Getting back to why the Bulloak Jewel Butterfly is endangered, you'll notice that every now and then I've used bold type - these are clues as to why it's endangered. The fact that the *Allocasuarina leuhmannii* produces the hardest timber in the world means that it was/is much sought after for fence-posts and wood turning. Older trees, which have the most holes bored by the Xyloryctidae moth larvae (used by the BJB larvae for safety) are usually the first trees targeted for removal.

Remember also that the larvae only eat leaves of this particular plant and they only eat tender new growth. Unfortunately, during times of drought (a recurring condition in today's climate) the trees don't produce any new growth. Other factors behind their endangered status is that the butterfly adults mostly feed in flowering trees, which are often felled for road widening or agricultural pursuits. Also, we know that the ants won't walk on bare ground and when fallen timber is cleared for firewood, or destroyed by fire, or 'dangerous' leaf-litter is removed for bushfire mitigation, the ecological chain is broken.

So that's the story of the beautiful Bulloak Jewel Butterfly. While it's extremely sad that it's endangered, the glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel is that there are now three tracts of land set aside for its protection - let's hope it's around for many years to come.



BICA BIRD SURVEY 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday 12th May 2019 the BICA Bird Walk celebrated 30 years of monthly bird surveys. Yes – that’s thirty years. Each month for 30 years, a small group has enjoyed walking round the Bend of Islands recording, where they went, the conditions on the day as well as the birds they see. The records are kept locally and also sent to the Birdlife Australia Birddata Atlas to contribute to the Australian database of bird populations and their changes over time.

The Bird survey divides the Bend of Islands into 3 broad areas which are surveyed regularly –

- Box / Stringybark forest – between Henley Rd and the Yarra river
- Box/Ironbark forest – north of Henley Rd including the Co-op
- Watson’s Creek including Yanakie

As a result of the surveys, new birds have been added to the Bend of Islands List which now stands at 174 different species of birds recorded. Another important aspect of the survey is that it tracks sightings of rare and threatened species such as Lewin’s Rail, Square-tailed Kite, Powerful Owl, Grey Goshawk and Eastern Great Egret.

To celebrate 30 years, participants, some of whom are pictured in the photo above, enjoyed a special morning tea with delicious cakes including a 30th Anniversary cake. There was special recognition given to Frank Pierce for sustained (and sustaining) leadership and dedicated record keeping over 30 years.

Surveys happen on the second Sunday of the month. In summer, we meet at the upper corner of Henley Rd and Catani Boulevard near the fire station. Starting times are in the BICA Calendar. Come along. -

Robin Duff



Merlin - A New App for Identifying Birds

Australian birdwatchers are very fortunate in the selection of field guides that are available for the country. There are several with different authors and although most people have a favourite, they are all good, well-illustrated with clear, accurate plates and maps as well as comprehensive text. Two of these have now also been released as phone Apps. This has expanded the identification tools to include the calls and songs of birds. One challenge, when you are looking for birds locally, is that there are 700-800 species in an Australian field guide that you need to search through.

Cornell University Lab of Ornithology has developed a 'FREE' App to answer the question, "What is that bird?"

GET MERLIN APP

It asks you questions to help you identify an unknown bird sighting. Merlin’s first and most important questions are that date and location. It then asks you to describe the colour, size, and behaviour of the bird you have seen. Merlin then offers a shortlist of possible species based on descriptions from Cornell Lab. It has a function to identify a bird from a photo but I haven’t used this. I think that the photo quality would probably need to

be high. While this was originally developed for North America, it has recently been expanded to include the birds of Australia.

It also has an 'explore birds' function where you can get a list of the birds seen in your current location and order them by likelihood of being seen. Either, on the day you are looking, or over the whole year. Merlin lists 209 species that are likely to be in Bend of Islands. These are grouped into 3 levels based on how often the species have been recorded on the past. The very likely and quite likely birds are mostly the ones you would expect, however some of the unlikely ones are really very unlikely. As we continue to see new birds in the area some of these unlikely birds may be discovered.

So, I recommend that you download Merlin and give it a try. The developers are happy for feedback. And, of course, if you have any bird questions there are several residents of The Bend who are happy to help you and to develop our community’s knowledge.

Can you identify these 2 birds?

Gavin Masters





BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since April 2019.

Lyrebird Records

10 new Lyrebird records have been reported. 2 in the gully north of Henley Rd near Taylor's; 8 from Stevenson Creek north of the Co-op on Skyline Rd.

We now have 347 Lyrebird records reported since July 2000.

Details and analysis, updated at the end of each year, can be found on the Birds Page of the BICA website.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. Our records form concrete evidence that the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor is working and that 'Stevenson Creek/Skyline escarpment' is an important part of this link.

Bird Survey Highlights

The outstanding sightings for the period were -

- April: 30+ Woodswallows, Gang-gang Cockatoos and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos were all seen at Yanakie
- May: 2 Pelicans flew over our little 30th Anniversary party (see Robyn's article) at Yanakie Carpark
- July: A Lyrebird was heard and it led us on a 'wild-goose-chase' – we got very close but dipped on a sighting or photo. A Little Wattlebird (a first for our survey) was seen just north of the Co-op
- August: & September: brought the early spring migrants – Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Pallid Cuckoo and a very early Oriole (probably passing through).
- October: more migrants had arrived - Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistler

Other Interesting Observations

On 28/20/10 Dylan & Gavin both had visits from White-winged Trillers and Frank heard a White-throated Gerygone on Skyline Rd.

The White-throated Nightjars have arrived back for the season, they were first heard on 3/10 on the Co-op.

New Birds for the BICA List.

Royal Spoonbill was seen flying over Rudi's on 1/9/19 and has since been seen flying over Gavin & Mal's a couple of times.

Our list for the area currently stands at 174. This includes quite a few recent additions, some of which are clearly a result of climate change.

The Birds Page of the BICA Website has lots of links to information about the birds of our area, as well as a summary of our on-going bird survey. All sections have recently been updated. See-
<https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/flora-and-fauna/birds/>

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce, (97120237), or email – jmandfp@bigpond.com - especially Lyrebirds.

All are welcome on the bird survey walks on the 2nd Sunday of each month. See the BICA Calendar for start times; we meet at the top corner of Henley and Catani.

Frank Pierce





CANDID CRITTERS

Using wildlife camera to connect the community with nature in Bend of Islands

BICA has been the lucky recipient of a Nillumbik Community Environment Grant. Funds from this grant will go towards the purchase five wildlife cameras and associated equipment.

This means BICA members will now have access to six wildlife cameras.

Bend of Islands is home to a wide variety of wildlife species. But as many of these critters are nocturnal or cryptic (i.e. not easy to find or see), many residents may be unaware they are sharing their patch of Bol with such critters.

Over the next few months, BICA will be running 'Candid Critters' workshops to teach BICA members to use wildlife cameras. Once a member is trained, they will be able to access and use the cameras whenever they are available.

BICA plans to collect the data from the cameras in order to build up a picture of what critters live in Bend of Islands, and where they hang out. This data can then be uploaded to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas to help build a valuable resource for both public and private land managers.

Watch your email inbox over the next few months for notice of when the workshops will be run.

Deirdre Lucas



NATIVE PET RESCUE IN THE 1980s

This little ringtail possum's name is Putti after the cherubs in Renaissance Art.

Syd was feeding her fruit which was one of her favourites, as well as gum leaf tips, bottlebrush, rose & gum blossoms, and avocado skins ... & moths.

She was orphaned on the road outside our house in the Bend Of Islands and just saved from the wheels of a car.

The vet had explained that young ringtails are difficult to rear – but this one was very special and got lots of love !

We carried her around in our pockets or a little pouch, and she slept in a picnic basket by our bed. She was potty trained !

She bonded to us strongly. We eventually released her over a 10 day period, as a young male came acourting nightly and brought her back to her verandah open caged home. The day we knew she would leave us permanently she licked me for an hour or more, as if to say farewell.

Months later she brought her 2 babies back for us to touch in a paperbark tree in our front garden ... it was an extremely moving experience.



Ona Henderson



BEND OF ISLANDS - PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2019

This is your opportunity to use your creativity to capture a digital image of something in or related to the Bend of Islands and a chance to win a prize including your own copy from Botanical Author, Leon Costermans' 'Native Trees and Shrubs of South Eastern Australia', or 'Underwater Garden' posters from Port Phillip Bay by Freddie Leong.

Date: October - December 2019, closing date: Dec 7th.
Winners Announced Dec 14th

Category 1: 'Open Theme'

Please submit your favourite image of any plant, animal, insect, fungi, landscape, art or cultural heritage from within or related to the Bend of Islands.

Category 2: 'Crazy Kookaburra'

Submit your best image of a 'Crazy Kookaburra' within the Bend of Islands. See sample images below



Kookaburra Karma



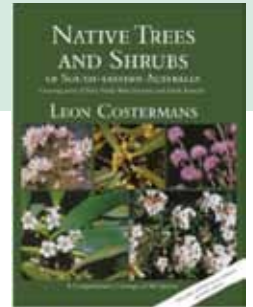
Kookaburra Cocktail



Kookaburra Conversation

First Prize

Leon Costermans' Native Trees and Shrubs of South Eastern Australia



Second prize

Selection of poster from 'Underwater Garden' by Freddie Leong



Term and conditions:

- Enjoy using your creativity to capture a digital image using a phone or camera of something in or related to the Bend of Islands.
- You can enter more than once,
- Please provide a name or title for each individual image,
- Select Category 1: 'Open Theme' or Category 2: 'Crazy Kookaburra'
- Please submit all images electronically to: - Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com
- Must provide contact details of applicant and consent to reproduce image for non-commercial use by BICA committee with relevant permissions.
- Any enquires, contact Phillip - Ironbark Road, (0411) 409 - 815

CAT Traps



BICA has purchased two compliant cat traps that are available for borrowing. They are available at the Mildenhall's with full instructions for use

CAFE BENDERS

Come and join us for Coffee and Cake at Café Benders held every third Saturday, starting at 10.00 am until 12 noon at the South Fire Station, 6 Catani Bv, Bend of Islands.

All proceeds go to the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade





From the Editor:

Thank you to all who have contributed to this Newsletter

Special Thanks to Jo and Tobey who have jointly produced our Newsletter Introduction What Plant is Flowering.

A Very Special Thankyou also to Cric Henry who has produced this page over many years of our newsletter editions.
A fantastic effort.

Keep sending in your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands
jmandfp@bigpond.com

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WELCOME TO THE BEND

Welcome to NEW BICA MEMBERS,
we hope you enjoy participating in
our community.

Alana Duncan
Gareth & Kate Millington

BICA Facebook Page

We want to be able to keep you up-to-date with what
BICA is dealing with on your behalf and we want
you to be taking part too.

Join up and we'll keep the information coming!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/157412771573945/>

