

# Band of Islands Conservation Association

Newsletter No 13, October '85

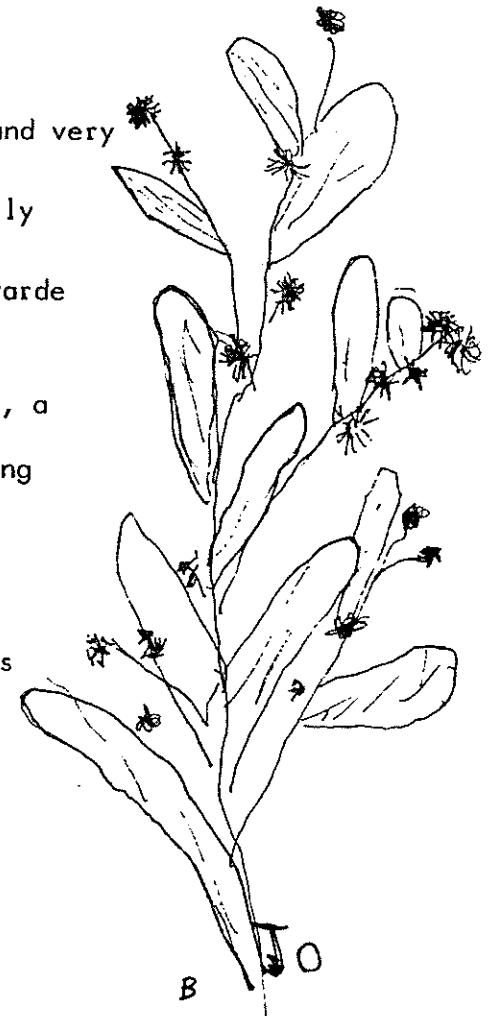
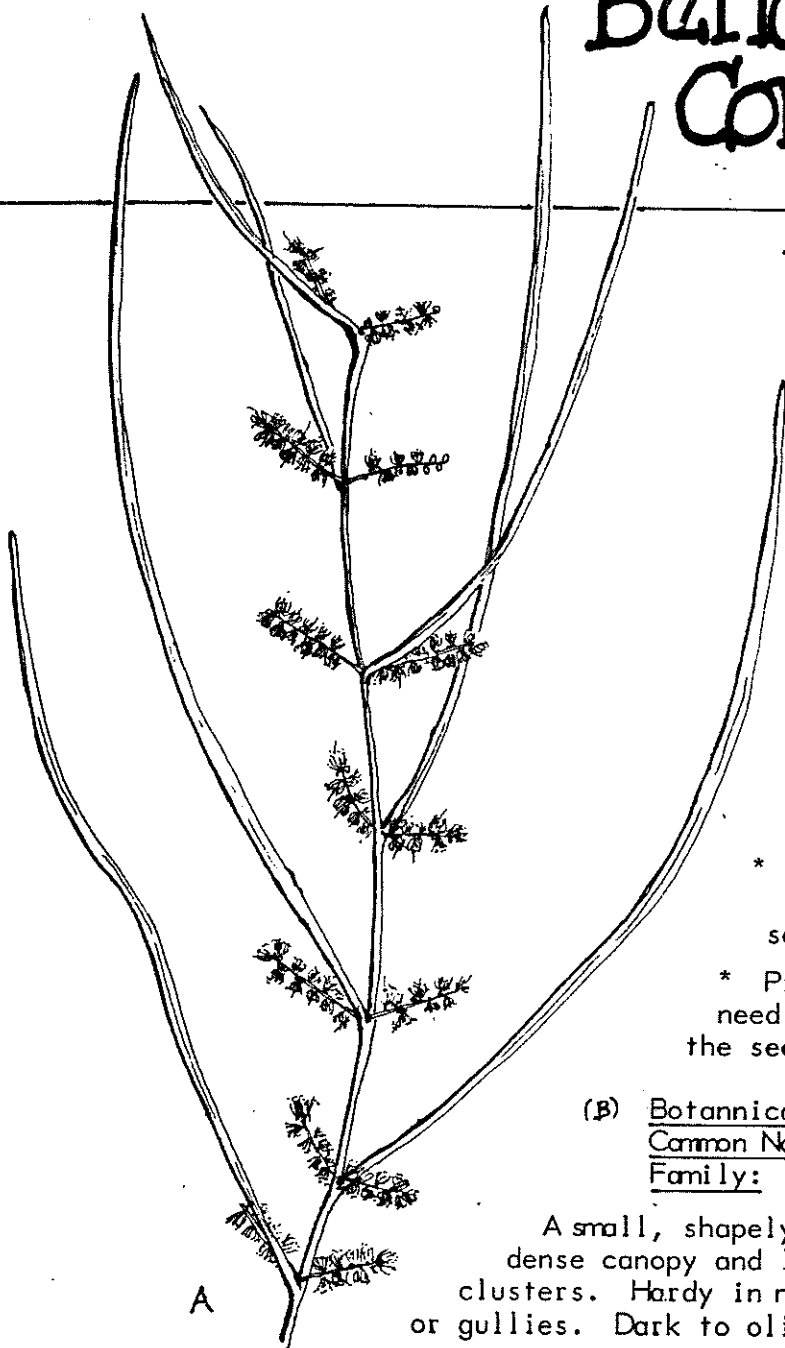
## What Native's flowering?

(A) Botanical Name: *ACACIA mucronata*  
Common Name: Sallow Wattle  
Family: Mimosaceae

- \* A graceful spreading shrub, 2-6 metres high and very showy when in flower.
- \* A shrubby understorey to open forests, usually moist soils.
- \* Examples of this species are in Catani Boulevard outside Weigalls.
- \* Foliage consists of phyllodes (i.e. leaf stalk enlarged and flattened & functioning as a leaf, a characteristic typical of many wattles). The phyllodes are narrow, long, straight & spreading and erect up to 20 cm. long & light green.
- \* The flowers appear in Spring & are yellow spikes 2-5 cm. long, with the individual flowers well separated on the main axis.
- \* Propagation from scarified seed i.e. The seed coats need to be cracked open by pouring boiling water over the seeds and allowing it to sit for 6 hours.

(B) Botanical Name: *ACACIA melanoxylon*  
Common Name: Blackwood  
Family: Mimosaceae

A small, shapely (6-20 metres) hardy shade & shelter tree with a dense canopy and large pale cream ball flowers in short branched clusters. Hardy in most positions & reaches 30 metres in deep soils or gullies. Dark to olive green foliage.



# Habitat

## THE BUSH OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS

Generally our bush is classified as OPEN FOREST or WOODLAND with a canopy of associated eucalypts and an understorey of a range of shrubs, grasses, orchids & other herbs.

The particular canopy & understorey component of any site depends on site factors such as soil, slope, aspect, fire history and biotic factors such as species adaptation and competition.

FOUR MAIN PLANT ASSOCIATIONS exist in the Bend of Islands. Though this may be an oversimplification of the description of the vegetation, it is useful in understanding the bush and comparing it with other areas.

1. RED BOX - RED STRINGYBARK ASSOCIATION: Most common plant association. Typical of steep, exposed NORTH and WEST SLOPES. The DRY RIDGES and on shallow rocky soils.

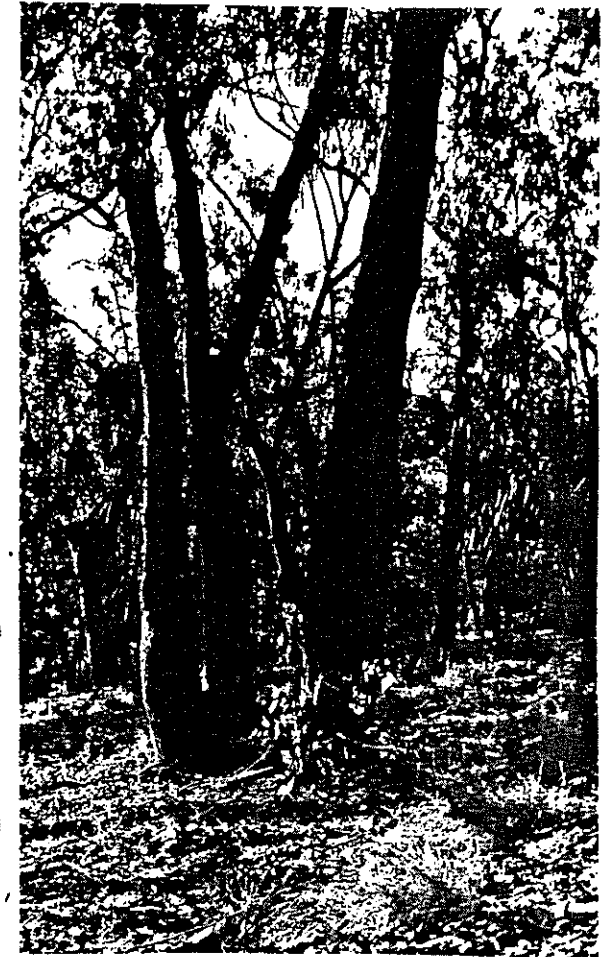
The Canopy includes a number of eucalypts in association, the most common being EUCALYPTUS polyanthemos (Red Box), E. Macrorrhyncha (Red Stringybark) and E. gonicalyx (Long Leaf Box).



The Understorey is generally grassy with an open to sparse shrub layer. The grasses include Poa sieberana (Tussock), Danthonia pallida (Wallaby Grass), & the rhizomatous Microlaena stipoides. The shrubs at low frequencies include Epacris impressa (Carron Heath), Astroloma humifusum (Cranberry Heath), Acrotiche serrulata (Honey Pots), Leucopogon virgatus (Carron Beard Heath), all from the heath family. Hardenbergia violacea (Purple Coral Pea), Kennedia prostrata (Running Postman), Pultenaea gunni (Golden Bush Pea), Dillwynia cinerascens (Grey Parrot Pea), Dillwynia retorta (Small Leaf Parrot Pea), all from the pea family. Pimela humifusum (Common Rice Flower), & several Acacia species such as Acacia genistifolia (Spreading Wattle), Acacia acinacea (Gold Dust Wattle). Some taller shrubs include Leptospermum phyllicoides (Burgan), Helichrysum dendroidum (Tree Everlasting), & Exocarpos cupressiformis (Wild Cherry). Herbaceous plants include Dichondra repens, Viola hederacea, Helipterum species, Helichrysum scorpioides, a few sedges such as Gahnia radula & Lepidosperma laterale. Also common are orchids such as Caladenia, Diuris, Pterostylis & Thelymitra, and the lilies Dianella revoluta, Dichopogon stricta and Anguillaria dioica.

2. RED IRONBARK ASSOCIATION: Occurs in areas characteristic of infertile & eroded soils on ridges and drier slopes.

The Canopy includes mainly Eucalyptus sideroxylon (Red Ironbark) with E. gonicalyx (Long Leaf Box) and E. macrorrhyncha (Red Stringybark).



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## CANDLEBARK ASSOCIATION



Each of these plant associations provides a variety of habitat offering refuge, shelter, food and breeding places for a range of native birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects, without which they could not survive.

## Red Ironbark Cont'd

The Understorey is dominated by sclerophyllous shrubs, the most common being *Epacris impressa*, *Pultenaea gunni*, *Dillwynia retorta*, *Leucopogon virgatus*, *Acacia genistifolia*, *Acacia amata*, *Kennedia prostrata*, *Hardenbergia violacea*. Orchids are frequent, *Glossodia major* being quite common. Grasses include *Danthonia pallida* and occasional *Xanthorrhoea minor*.

3. CANDLEBARK ASSOCIATION: Occurs on deeper soils usually associated with wetter sites, on southerly slopes and in gullies.

The Canopy is mainly *Eucalyptus rubida* (Candlebark) with *E. melliodora* (Yellow Box) and *E. radiata* (Narrow Leafed Peppermint).

The Understorey is grassy with small trees & shrubs. Grasses include *Poa labillardieri*, *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo Grass) with a range of herbaceous plants such as *Dianella*, *Helichrysum* & *Helipterum*. Shrubs & small trees include *Leptospermum phyllicoides* (Burgan) *Acacia mearnsii* (Silver Wattle), *Acacia dealbata* (Black Wattle), *Pomaderris*, *Bursaria* & *Cassinia*.

4. MANNA GUM ASSOCIATION: is typical of moister, fertile sites associated with the Yarra River. This association generally has four vegetation strata. *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum) is the major overstorey species with *Acacia dealbata* and/or *Acacia mearnsii* forming a small tree stratum. All shrubs are numerous and these include *Pomaderris aspera*, *Prostanthera lasiantha*, *Leptospermum lanigerum*, *Leptospermum phyllicoides*, *Casuarina littoralis* & *Bursaria spinosa*. Common species of the smaller shrub layer are *Goodenia ovata*, *Olearia lirata*, *Callistemon paludosus*, *Lamatia myricoides* & *Spyridium parvifolium*. The ground stratum is dominated by the grass *Poa labillardieri*. The sedges *Gahnia radula* & *Lepidosperma laterale* and other herbs such as *Lamandra longifolia* and *Acaena answeiniifolia*. The ferns *Adiantum aethiopicum* (Common Maiden Hair), *Blechnum nudum* (Fishbone) and *Blechnum minus* (Soft Water Fern) are also common throughout this stratum.

## MANNA GUM ASSOCIATION



The Plant Associations of the Bend of Islands (Environmental Living Zone) will be demonstrated and explained at the B.I.C.A FIELD DAY on Flora and Fauna on Saturday 26th October. Why not come along!

# Building and Habitat...

When we build, extend or add recreational areas to our homes, we create disturbance! It may be major, as in the case of initial building, or relatively minor in the case of added activity, but it does have an impact!

Before doing any of these, take time to think about what you'll need to disturb and see if you can do it in the least damaging way possible. During the building process itself, there is major disturbance to sites. You need the house site itself, paths, access ways, areas for storing building materials and parking cars & trucks. Before you start, why not look at the following ....

- \* Is there a cleared or already degraded area where your house could be sited thus avoiding more clearing?
- \* Is there an already disturbed clearway suitable to be used as your driveway?
- \* Is there a way you can build minimizing excessive bulldozing and steep cuts into hillsides?
- \* Will the topography of your site mean runoff/effluent/drainage problems which might lead to increased runoff into natural drains, creeks or waterways?
- \* Is there a particularly lovely wildflower patch on your land which will be destroyed by the site you choose?
- \* Are there signs of native animal shelters or pathways which could be avoided by moving the site? (Even on a practical level, its crazy to put a garden where a warbat moves through, he'll just keep on doing it)
- \* Will the site you choose mean your home is more obvious to others than it could be (remember they can do the same)
- \* Will the design/colour/height/size of your home make it 'stand out' excessively?
- \* Have you thought about construction and BUSH-FIRE? There are ways your home can be made safer in both design, materials, siting and landscaping.
- \* Will the things you need/want around your home mean disturbed areas dotted over the area in a disconnected way requiring further disturbance between the house and whatever facility? If you can confine these in a compact way close to your house you minimize disturbance areas and alienation of land between sites.

WHY NOT SPEND SOME TIME ON YOUR LAND BEFORE YOU BUILD, SEE WHAT ITS LIKE AT DAWN, THROUGH DAY, AND AT NIGHT. SEE IF NATIVE ANIMALS USE IT AND WHERE THEIR SPOTS ARE? GET THE FEEL OF WHERE YOU THINK THINGS COULD BE SITED BEST!

## THE BUILDING PROCESS (Some tips to think about)

- \* Ask your bulldozer driver (if you have one) to skim off topsoil on your house site, set it aside and use it later for landscaping (its the best possible source of soil)
- \* Plant disturbed areas quickly, mulching with leafy litter to prevent weed growth.
- \* Decide what area/s you'll need for the future for garden, paths, outdoor activities and stick to these areas to prevent creation of many different and later un-needed disturbed areas.

## EXTENSIONS AND LATER DEVELOPMENTS

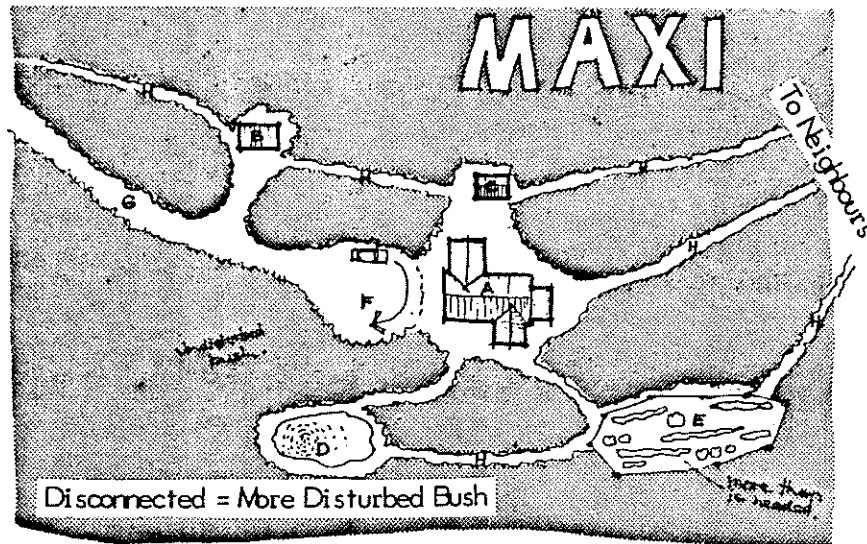
- \* Remember you'll need a permit for construction of any further buildings or developments.

## Building and Habitat (contd)

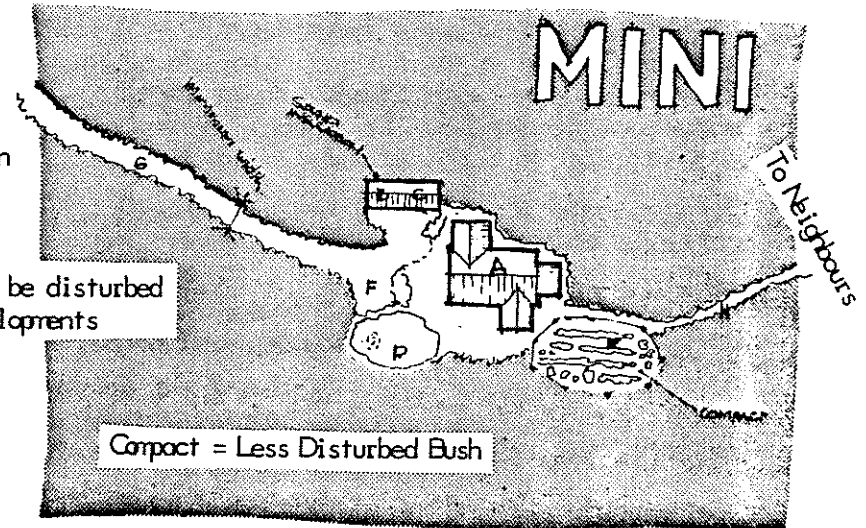
- \* To avoid unnecessary impact, try to keep outbuildings, extensions and outdoor areas confined to an area in the already disturbed/cleared part of your land close to the house site. If, for instance you develop at a distance from the house, you'll need to get there. This means another pathway and in effect, disturbance of all the area between the development site and the house.
- \* Try to locate your kitchen garden close by the house. Its a good idea to place it near the house to the side most threatened by bushfire (usually north) thus obtaining a good growing aspect and simultaneously providing a further fire barrier for the house. Of course transpiration beds are ideal because they need to be close to the house and don't need watering.
- \* Imported soil for gardens contains a multitude of weed seeds and should always be sterilized. You'll probably get weeds anyway once you start gardening but at least they'll have to get there the hard way.

If, when planning your home and surroundings you do take time to think about requirements in the future, you can make provision for these in the area you disturb initially around the house thus saving yourself time and money later and providing greater protection of your surrounding bushland.

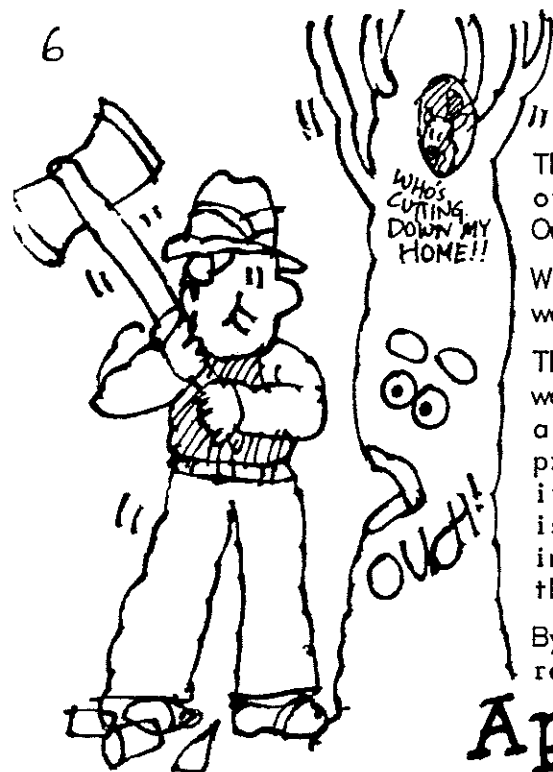
Its extremely easy to destroy our ecology! Much of our bushland contains tiny & fragile plant species which are very vulnerable to disturbance and which support a host of insects, reptiles, birds and other native species. Leaving only trees does not provide the habitat they need. Destroying their habitat disturbs the ecological balance creating a chain reaction of disturbance/destruction to other flora & fauna. The small area you alienate for your home, added to the small areas alienated by each of us separately throughout the zone, soon mounts up and means less and less undisturbed habitat over the whole area. If each of us takes care to alienate as little of our own land as possible, obviously a larger area of undisturbed habitat remains. By limiting use of our own land, we make a valuable contribution towards retaining our bushland ecosystem in a balanced, healthy state, thus ensuring the welfare of our birds, mammals and native plants.



- A Dwelling
- B Shed
- C Shed
- D Dam/Pool
- E Vegie Garden
- F Car Parking
- G Driveway
- H Walkways
- X Bush liable be disturbed between developments



# Taking the Heat out of Forests!



Think about how much firewood you go through in a winter! Think about how many thousands of other people go through the same amount or more! Then think about where it comes from! Our forests are under ever increasing pressure to meet the ever increasing demand for fuel!

With the renewed popularity of open and wood burning fires, there is an increased need for wood to fuel them and our forests just simply don't go on providing forever!

The last newsletter mentioned the possibility of growing trees for firewood. The idea would be for residents to join together as members of a co-operative group and lease already cleared land and plant, nurture and harvest wood for our fires. A rough outline proposal has been drawn up and the idea is definitely there! It IS a possibility, but it would not necessarily be a cheaper source, nor a short term solution. What it would be, is a step towards a responsible attitude to the depletion or destruction of forests everywhere including our own. If firewood continues to be collected without proper care and consideration then our own and other forests will eventually suffer ecological degradation.

By growing our own firewood we can satisfy our own need for fuel and the forests' need to retain its ecological integrity. If you're interested contact Felicity.

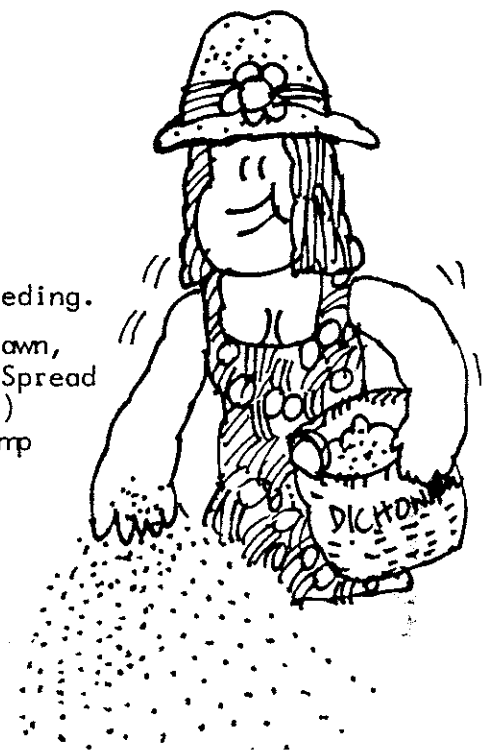
## A patch of green... native lawns!

Have you ever dreamed of lying on a lush, cool patch of soft green on a hot summer's day? Because we can't use normal non-native grasses in E.L.Z, the following may be an answer!

- **DICHONDRA repens** (or Kidney Weed)! This is a prostrate plant with kidney shaped leaves, small greenish inconspicuous flowers and produces roots from its nodes. It can be grown in full sun or in shade, although in shade it has a longer stem. It can be propagated in seed boxes and planted out in clumps 30 cm. apart, or sown directly into the ground. For easier maintenance, its suggested you have a small patch as it needs lots of water and may need weeding.
- **Direct sowing:** (By seed). Sow from October to February. Prepare area as you would for lawn, raking evenly & working through some gypsum (to open up the structure of our clay soils). Spread finely and evenly. Some well rotted mulch (leafy litter) or well rotted hardwood (not pine) wood shavings to retain moisture. Water area well, sow seed and ensure the area remains damp until the seed has germinated.

Wallaby Grass is another native plant which makes a green grassy area. It grows in small clumps and eventually with enough plants, you create the effect of a lawn. You can even mow it! You might like to combine the two species.

Dichondra repens is available in large packets from most nurseries.



# PROPAGATING LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS AN IDEAL WAY TO LANDSCAPE!

Our local native plants are ideally suited for landscaping. They LIKE our soil! Many of them are extremely beautiful too! Many are simply not available commercially. The answer is to propagate them yourself. It doesn't involve any very special skill, is not complicated and of course is much less expensive. This way you can enjoy our lovely native plants around your home and at the same time make a contribution to regenerating bushland.

There are two major methods for propagation - By Seed or By Cutting. Some plants are better suited to one method or the other and for information you could contact the B.I.C.A Committee for a local plant list.

## PROPAGATING BY SEED:

When to collect Seeds? When they are mature (non green & dryish) and then keep in a paper bag until dry.

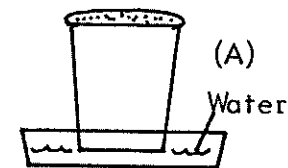
How to Plant? Determine first whether seeds are large or small as they're treated differently. Any seed smaller than a Poppy Seed is placed ON TOP OF THE SEED MIX, whilst any larger than that are placed UNDER SEED MIX at depth 3 times the width of the seed.

Seed Mixture? 2 Parts peatmoss, 2 parts sand (not builder's sand) and 1/2 part loam. Before planting on or in this mix ensure that soil is moist.

Small Seeds? Sprinkle over the soil mix on the surface, keeping soil moist. To avoid losing small seeds and keep them moist by watering from below (SEE ILLUSTRATION A.)

Large Seeds? Bury seeds at depth 3 times the width of the seed and keep moist. Cover seeds lightly, don't pack the soil mix.

Hard Seeds? All Acacia and Pea seeds need HEAT TREATMENT before planting. Place seeds in a container and pour boiling water over them. Allow seeds to soak at least 6 hours. When seed has swollen it is ready to plant. Repeat this for seeds which do not swell the first time.



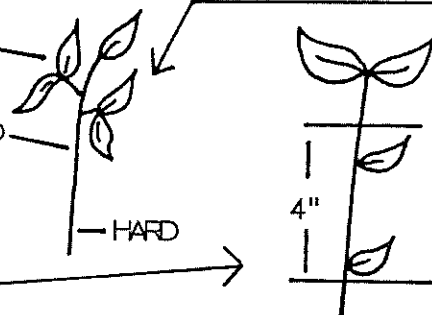
WHEN THE SEEDS ARE IN THEIR POTS, PLACE POTS IN A 'COLD FRAME' for germination. When the plant is half an inch high, repot into a slightly larger pot. (A COLD FRAME IS EASILY MADE .. SEE ILLUSTRATION B.)

## PROPAGATING BY CUTTING:

When to Collect Cuttings? after 'growth flushes' in Autumn or Spring, OR, when new growth has hardened.

Where to collect from plant?

SOFT  
SEMI HARD  
HARD



COLLECT FROM SEMI HARD AREA  
(Not tough & able to snap but not soft & able to bend)

Don't allow cutting material to be exposed to full sunlight. Carry it in a moist plastic bag after collecting.

How To prepare cuttings? Cut below a leaf at the bottom and above a leaf at top. Cut a piece roughly 4 inches long.

Then with a razor blade, remove bottom leaves from cutting and leave only 3 or 4 leaves on it. Then moisten the bottom

of the cutting & apply 'Seradix' Rooting Hormone to the base to assist in root formation.

APPLY HERE



## PROPAGATING NATIVE PLANTS Cont'd

How to Plant? IN a small (4") pot place cutting mixture into it, moisten and place cutting into mixture deeply

Cutting Mixture? 2 Parts Course River Sand & 1 Part Peatmoss.

Then place pot into COLD FRAME (SEE ILLUSTRATION B.) Keep cuttings moist NOT WET. When cuttings have developed roots, remove them from the cold frame and pull out individual cuttings GENTLY and re-pot into a larger pot containing a mixture of the following and well drained.

Re-Potting Mixture? 2 Parts Sand, 1 Part Peatmoss, 2 Parts Loam, 1 Part Compost (this could be broken down leaf mould).

### THE COLD FRAME?

You can make your own COLD FRAME very easily using this guideline.

Place the cold frame in the shade, not full sunlight, say on the east side of your house in winter and south side in summer.

Remember to ensure once pots are in the frame that they are kept MOIST.

WHEN CUTTINGS HAVE ROOTS & SEEDS ARE AROUND  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCH HIGH, RE-POT.

### PLANTING OUT?

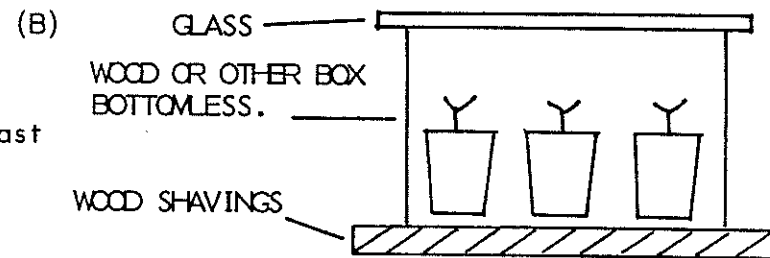
Once your seedlings are at the stage when they're strong and healthy, its best to remove them from the Cold Frame and place pots in a sheltered outdoor area to 'HARDEN OFF'. Leave them like this until you're ready to Plant. To assist plants when placing in the garden, first dig a hole twice the width of the pot and break up the clay in it. Add two handfuls of Gypsum and mix it with the soil from the hole. Add BLOOD AND BONE. Some people also add compost to this hole too. Then Place pot into water until it is soaked and take plant from pot GENTLY and place into hole. Firm down soil around it and mulch with leafy mould followed by watering in. YOUR NATIVE PLANT SHOULD NOW FLOURISH BUT YOU'LL NEED TO PROTECT IT FROM RABBITS AND ENSURE IT IS KEPT MOIST AT FIRST IF THE WEATHER IS HOT.

### COLLECTING SEEDS & CUTTINGS FROM NATIVE BUSHLAND

If we all collected TOO MANY seeds/cuttings from the forest, it would affect the ability of a plant to reproduce in its natural habitat. Take only a few seeds/cuttings at first to experiment, only enough for your own needs. Only take materials from STRONG, HEALTHY, WELL ESTABLISHED plants in the forest. Ideally you'll eventually take seeds and cuttings from plants you've already grown.

### PROTECTING YOUR PLANTS

Unfortunately many of our planted and naturally occurring plants are a source of food for RABBITS! You'll probably need to protect your new plants in the garden by placing wire around them. To help your plants through the dry summer months make sure you mulch them. This can be done with leafy litter, with sawdust (add a little blood and bone so that the sawdust doesn't draw nitrogen from your soil during the rotting phase), or even with newspaper. If you'd like more information about local native species, B.I.C.A has a list available (phone 712 0237) and/or if you'd like a practical demonstration of 'how to do it' Cric Henry or Felicity Faris are happy to oblige. HAPPY GARDENING!





# Conservation Issues near and far

Over the years, the Bend of Islands Conservation Association has largely addressed itself to local environmental aspects although its Constitution suggests concern for broader conservation issues. To give you an idea of the sorts of conservation issues and problems of concern or interest on a Regional, State and National level, we list some of the priorities of other voluntary and government groups.

## LOCAL

- \* Road upgrading - sociological & ecological effects
- \* Feral Animals - presence stray/dumped cats & dogs in bushland
- \* Sugarloaf Dam - implications of recreational uses
- \* S.E.C. Clearance of Lines Act - impact on roadside vegetation
- \* Eradication of Weeds - Shellgrass/willows/boneseed etc.
- \* Friends Warrandyte State Park - Extension of Park area.
- \* Study Group \* Native Flora & Fauna Guarantee proposal.

## STATE

The Conservation Council of Victoria (C.C.V) & the Australian Conservation Foundation are involved in ...

- \* Timber Inquiry - Proposals for better forest management procedures & jobs through conservation.
- \* Environment Movement Conservation Strategy - an alternative to the State Strategy which is disappointingly broad & non specific.
- \* State of the Rivers Task Force - preparation River quality policy
- \* Native Flora & Fauna Guarantee proposal \* Alpine Park

## REGIONAL

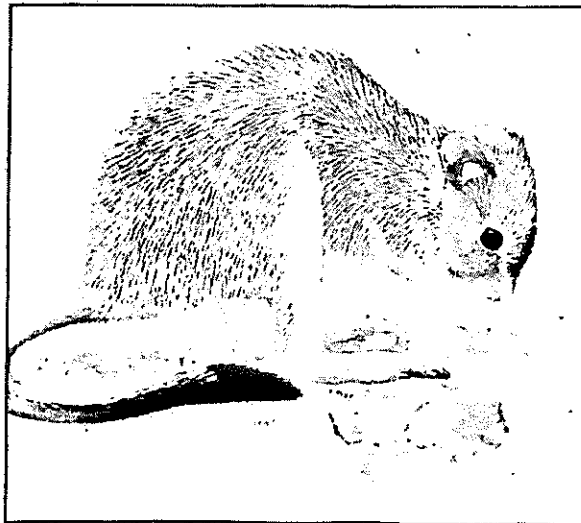
The Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority are currently involved in ...

- \* Fire Awareness Survey - sociological & ecological aspects
- \* Environmental Significance of Linear Reserves - e.g. roadsides.
- \* Warrandyte State Park Extension negotiations
- \* Yarra River Catchment & Tributary Areas - their future uses.
- \* Old Lilydale-Warburton Railway Line - Linear recreation use.

## NATIONAL

The Australian Conservation Foundation (A.C.F) is currently concerning itself with the following ...

- \* Preservation of Wet Tropics - remaining rainforest areas.
- \* Kakadu National Park - extensions to include significant areas
- \* Woodchip export licences \* Hazardous Chemicals
- \* Energy & Peace \* Preservation Wilderness areas.
- \* World Heritage areas \* Development of National Forestry Strategy
- \* Antarctica - efforts to ensure not exploited by mineral finds.



Many of these issues will affect our environment in the future! If you'd like more information contact B.I.C.A.

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

The Brush-Tailed Rat Kangaroo is now EXTINCT in Victoria! A species cannot be removed from an environment without a chain reaction through the whole ecosystem! A disappearing PLANT can take with it from 10 to 30 species of wildlife!

Worldwide we lose ONE PLANT and ONE ANIMAL species each day!

# A Bird's Eye view of The Bend of Islands 1983



CLEARED areas show as SMOCK  
& BUSHLAND as STUBBLED GRE  
WHITE DOTS are HOUSE CLEAR

- A Sugarloaf Dam
- B Aquaduct
- C Pipeline
- D Round the Bend Co-op  
Tracks a, b & c.
- E Skyline Road
- F Henley Farm
- G Eastern end Henley
- H Henley Road
- I Catani Boulevarde
- J Gongflers Drive
- K Ironbark Road
- L 'Bend of Islands' proj
- M Mt. Lofty (future Stat
- N Homestead Road (future  
Canoe Launch developme
- O Warrandyte State Park
- P Oxley Bridge
- Q Watsons Creek
- R Cxley Road
- S 'Yanakie' (MMBW owned
- T Oxley Reserve
- U River Reserve (Shire

# Small actions can save a small planet

It's easy to understand why so many people don't realize just how fragile the ecological balance of a forest is! We're taught little at school about the importance of natural areas and threats to their well-being. We learn about our cute and cuddly native animals but little about their habitat needs and we're taught very early to see bush as merely 'scrub' to be cleared for something better! It's hardly surprising then, that so much of our bushland (over 45% of our Victorian forests have been cleared) has been eradicated without thought for the health & welfare of our forests and streams and the myriad of life systems they support. We're also not taught much about the practical importance of forests and natural systems to our own well being (except perhaps as sources of water and fuel). WE learn little of soil erosion, stream and habitat degradation and the effects of these upon flora and fauna and in the end on the ability of the earth to renew itself, and in doing so, providing necessary life support for PEOPLE! Given all that we're NOT TAUGHT, it's amazing that there is any natural place left at all, especially given our traditional determination to change things to suit ourselves rather than adapt!

It is hard to concern ourselves directly and personally with the many vital survival issues facing people, but we in the Environmental Living Zone, have a rare chance to make an invaluable contribution towards the survival of one natural area. By participating in residential conservation and caring about our own area, we contribute to the retention of one tiny 'natural island'. If enough tiny 'natural islands' are retained, with links between them, then the overall picture looks a little brighter. The combined effect of many retained natural areas linked together by natural corridors, contributes significantly to ensuring the world's natural systems remain intact. We are a tiny piece in the ecological jigsaw and WE CAN CONTRIBUTE PERSONALLY AND DIRECTLY!

We live in dry sclerophyll (open woodland) forest! It is estimated that only 17% of Australia's original open woodland remains today. Our bush is dry, messy and not nearly as dramatic and showy as other types yet in its natural state it supports a vast array of flora and fauna. But, the wild things which live and grow in our forest are very easily displaced or deterred by reduction in habitat!

Building is an activity which creates major impact, as do roads, power lines, telephone cables, tracks and many other things associated with being here. We have chosen to have SOME impact on our area by being here at all, but the DEGREE OF IMPACT we have, is determined by our own actions. If we start out with the intention of disturbing and altering as little as possible, our impact can be minimal. Obviously we need houses to live in, access to our homes, roads to get here and spaces for recreation, equipment and growing vegetables. That's about all we really NEED! We may WANT more!

Many of us lived in cities and suburbs. There, we had houses, cars, gardens and recreation areas all fitted into a small space. We can fit those things into a small space here too, thereby leaving more bushland undisturbed. Just because there's more of what some call 'space' doesn't mean it has been filled! There are two ways of looking at bushland! One is to see it as 'empty space' which can be filled with more 'useful' things. The other is to see it as land already 'usefully occupied' by forest. Unless we start to look at bush as an ally, a means of purifying our air, rejuvenating our soils, giving life to our streams and flora and fauna, providing us with a bond between man and nature, then we don't really see the importance of retaining it.

## Small actions can save a small planet (cont'd)

The survival of PEOPLE is directly related to the survival of our natural environment, our forests, streams and their ecosystems. If these are depleted or degraded beyond a certain point, there will be gradual and detrimental environmental changes. Without our forests and plants, our soils will erode, become drier, saltier and unable to grow things. Our streams will become turbid and polluted (most already are). The air we breathe will be less pure and filled with pollutants, unable to be purified by natural processes through our forests. If vast tracts of land reach that state, then it does not look good for the future. Ethiopia is an example of a country once 80% forested but which now retains only 4% of its natural forest and this had a direct relationship with its inability to feed itself and with hazardous climatic changes. Such things certainly don't happen overnight, but it's a warning, and the elimination of more and more of our naturally forested areas eventually leads to trouble for PEOPLE!

To feel a commitment to conserving the 'Environmental Living Zone', I believe it is necessary to look at the whole of Australia and the world! To see the vast areas of degradation and destruction of natural systems, is to better understand that 'starting little' and personally making every effort to conserve our own area because we are in a unique position to do so, is to make a small but valuable contribution towards retaining this planet in a way which allows people and nature to exist harmoniously for the mutual benefit of both.

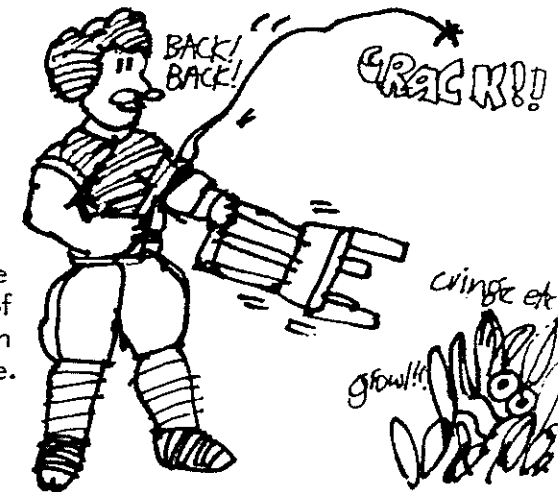
It is within our own personal power to firstly, preserve as much as we can of our own forest (our own allotments), and secondly, to combine with others to preserve the Bend of Islands area as a whole, and finally, to promote preservation of natural areas beyond our borders by this personal and community example. We are here now and enjoying our forest in its presently largely intact state. What is here for those to care is up to each and every one of us as individuals!

We have so much to lose and it's so easily lost. We live on a small planet! I believe that we can contribute to its well being by our own small actions in our own small area and that's really what CONSERVATION is all about!

## Weeds

By living here, we create disturbances which provide ideal conditions for WEED INVASION! For instance, with imported soils for gardens, the weeds you'll get will be those occurring at the point of origin, thus soil should always be STERILIZED before delivery. EXCESS NUTRIENTS also provide another hazard. You may notice the number of grasses & thistles growing on rabbit dunghills. In spring these spots are bright green! Ensure that MANURE HEAPS cannot leach downhill & that no SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT is able to creep over surface land. Sensitive native species can be POISONED by nutrients or simply displaced by the weeds nutrients support. If bare soil gets a green look in late winter, it's a sign of escaping nutrients.

While it's necessary to clear leaves & litter around hares to reduce wildfire impact, areas raked or burned frequently are usually sites where WEEDS tend to proliferate. When you PULL OUT WEEDS, compact the earth back into the hole with your heel & cover it with a good leaf mulch. This prevents water infiltration & generally inhibits germination of remaining weed seeds. MULCHING is a good way to kill some weeds & prevent the growth of others. Where soil has been disturbed or bared, a few centimetres of GUM LEAVES will stop winter growth & will partly rot away by fire risk time. (Further information Newsletter No. 4) If you have a particular weed problem, the B.I.C.A Committee can arrange for a qualified person to help you identify weeds and advise on the best method of eradicating them.



# An exciting New Concept - The Native Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The MOST IMPORTANT PROPOSAL FOR CONSERVATION SINCE THE IDEA OF NATIONAL PARKS!

A State Government proposal for legislation is being developed the goal of which is to enable Victoria's native species (all biota) to survive, flourish and continue to evolve in the wild by updating and upgrading existing protective legislation to meet today's need!

And to address problems such as Pollution of rivers, air and seas, loss of forests through clearing and the spread of cinnamon fungus (dieback), soil erosion, increasing salinity of farmlands and the endangerment and extinction of native species.



The Mountain Pygmy Possum  
ENDANGERED

Some of the suggestions for inclusion in the legislation are:

- Development of an overall planning strategy to ensure better protection of flora & fauna & that development takes consideration of threatened species.
- Establishing an independent scientific panel to assess proposals put forward for the protection of threatened or critically endangered species, populations or endangering processes and to recommend appropriate protective measures.
- Preparing 'Action Plans' (plans of management) for all proposals and in some cases, recommending mandatory protection action.
- Inclusion of all lesser known species for consideration.
- Revised endangered species lists. One to cover all threatened species including currently unprotected plants, invertebrates & fish, the other for critically endangered species.
- The right of any citizen to nominate species to the scientific panel for consideration for protection and in some cases, offering the public the right to call authorities to account if protective measures are not taken where recommended by the panel.
- Operating constraints on 'endangering processes', that is stricter controls on activities known to endanger flora and fauna that are, or could become, endangered. Examples of this include draining of wetlands, the spread of Cinnamon Fungus (Dieback) and salinity.

If passed, this legislation could potentially assist with many current nature conservation problems. To attempt to halt the ever-increasing loss of habitat for Victoria's flora and fauna, it is crucial that those concerned about native wildlife and the environment, support this initiative! By showing your support for the Flora & Fauna Guarantee proposal, you will be increasing the chances of this legislation being passed. If you don't, chances are extremely high that key aspects of the legislation will be taken out, rendering it ineffective in protecting our Flora and Fauna.

## HOW CAN YOU SHOW YOUR SUPPORT?

- \* By finding out more about the proposal (contact Felicity Faris) on 712 0422.
- \* By Becoming a Member of the the Support Group. \$5. (or make a tax deductible donation)
- \* By writing expressing support to Members of Parliament. in your area.
- \* By offering some of your time to assist the newly formed 'NATIVE FLORA & FAUNA GUARANTEE SUPPORT GROUP'
- \* By writing, expressing your support to the Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, Mts. Joan Kirner, 240 Victoria Pde., East Melbourne.
- \* By attending a meeting on the Guarantee on October 25th, 6 p.m. at the Environment Centre, 285 Lt. Lansdale St., Melbourne.

# To seal or not to seal ... the road question

(ONE VIEW FROM FELICITY FARIS)

Once again, the 'great road issue' arises! Once again it occasions intense feeling and debate! There are many reasons for, and many against. For me the choice is easy, having realized when I came here that comfort and convenience were not things I could expect when it came to roads and commuting.

We are regaled with facts such as "road sealing makes cars last longer, provides greater braking safety" and so on. Cars also last longer when they properly looked after and unsafe braking wouldn't be a problem if we didn't drive too fast. Our roads are moderately safe and comfortable PROVIDED, we take conditions into account. Our accident rate is minimal simply because we must drive slowly, to do otherwise would be unsafe as it is on any road. Our road kills of native animals and birds are fairly low because we can't speed. Give drivers (well intentioned or not) a sealed road and they'll speed up, creating a different set of dangers to people, cars and wildlife. (Stand where the bitumen starts sometime, you'll see cars instantly speed up). A sealed road would certainly encourage outsiders to burn through our area at even faster speeds than they do already. In my view its a "chicken and egg" argument to provide a sealed road enabling faster speeds to eliminate safety hazards and inconvenience, when driving more slowly on unsealed (but well maintained) roads can achieve the same result. Speed is the greatest danger, and its my view that in any event a speed limit of 40 Km. per hour should be imposed, whether or not there is a sealed road.

I'm as aware as anybody of the need to be at particular places on time but I fail to comprehend why we must have roads enabling greater speeds instead of allowing ourselves an extra 5 minutes to travel to destinations. I also fail to understand why people buy cars not suited to local conditions, obviously there will be problems. Again, its the old cry of why can't we ever accept what exists instead of being compelled to change things to suit ourselves. I am not saying our roads don't need some attention, obviously they do.

To me, a winding dirt road is an essential element of the Australian landscape. We came here to live in the bush, so why not accept that in doing that, we gave up some of the comforts and convenience the suburbs offer. Why drag the suburbs with us?

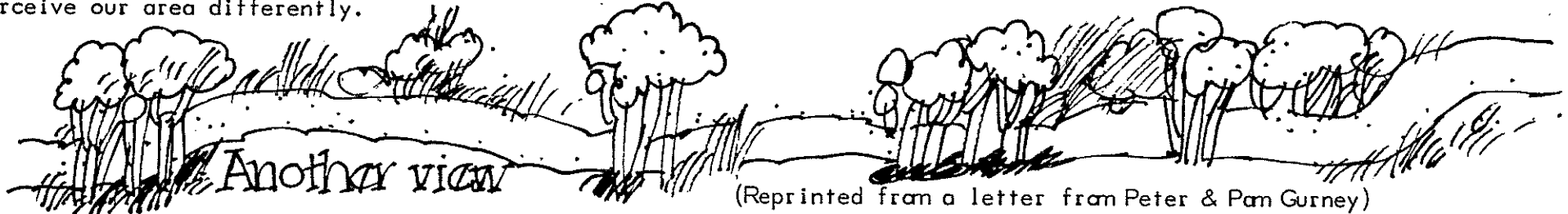
If it should transpire that the M.M.B.W allow passive boating on Sugarloaf Dam, I foresee great problems. Visit figures to reservoirs close to Melbourne allowing such activity, show increases in tourist traffic on major and peripheral roads. (The Board even has a leaflet showing a nice scenic 'round trip' through the area). Any tourist looking at a map would be irresistably drawn to a 'round trip' through the Bend of Islands with a dam at one end, great views in the middle and a river at the other. Residents complaining of dust in summer (a valid complaint but soluble by dense planting and consideration from local drivers), might very well face a worse problem as research shows that sealed roads are more used and attractive to motorists than dirt ones which act as a deterrent. Additional sightseers could mean larger numbers of speeding cars, increased noise, trespassers, cat and dog dumping or just leaving behind, vandalism, rubbish dumping, yahoo behaviour and the very great increase in risk of bushfire, not to mention additional wear and tear on roads and the hazards to roadside vegetation and wildlife nor the dangers to local kids riding bikes about. Already summer visitors present a real problem to those of us living at the end of roads and on the river in the form of wandering yahoos, campers, dogs and the lighting of barbecue fires. Whilst some residents experience dust problems, others have problems associated with tourists. Sealing the roads would certainly 'open up' the area to greater numbers of visitors and exacerbate these.

To seal or not to seal...the road question (contd)

For those residents who do have difficulties with dust perhaps we as a community should address their problem by assisting them to screen out dust with dense plantings and secondly by ensuring that we do not speed past their homes, slowing down completely to avoid raising dust.

Whilst I agree (reluctantly) that some work should be carried out at particular trouble spots on our road, I am totally opposed to sealing the road. I am opposed for the conservation-based reasons of increased speed leading to increased road kills and degradation of some roadside vegetation due to concentrated runoff. I am opposed from a sociological viewpoint because of a lowering of the quality of life in the bush due to increased tourism and I am opposed on emotional grounds having to do with the loss of feeling as if I'm 'in the bush'. I am also very concerned about the increased risk of bushfire should tourism increase.

I am also opposed on a philosophical level. I love our winding, tree-lined dirt road, its winter puddles (which are my yardstick on rainfall and a source of delight for bathing birds and nest-building choughs) and its summer dry feeling. You can sort of tell what kind of day it is by the road. For me its an integral part of our natural landscape. I recognize that a sealed road would offer me greater comfort but I can accommodate its irritations as being just part of the price I pay for living in the bush and not in the suburbs. Why do we need to speed everything up, we should be trying to make our lives slower, less urgent, enjoying the beautiful place we live in! No matter what is said, I know that once that road is sealed it will also be sealed into our consciousness and we and others will perceive our area differently.



"Firstly, we believe that if people drove slower and with more consideration, there would be no need for sealing any roads in the Bend. However, human nature tends to make most people impatient and, from memory, all visitors and many residents drive too fast for the road conditions. Hence dust, road erosion, accidents, wildlife killed & a general decline of living standards for those who live on the area's roads. To us sealing of roads is almost inevitable because of human nature & increasing traffic. Secondly though, we don't see this as necessarily a bad thing if it reduces the risk of accidents along with dust problems for those living adjacent to roads. Any plan to widen or straighten roads must be resisted. As you may be aware, in Europe, there are few unmade roads. All minor roads have kept their rural character. They meander along, winding, dipping, rising and sparing the countryside & its attractions, forcing road users to make the concessions to have the road, not the countryside. This is what we envisage in the Bend. Our roads essentially as they are, with a sealed surface, complimented by an education campaign for residents to drive safely & carefully thereby reducing the risk of accidents and the unpleasant aspect of dust pollution..

B.I.C.A must encourage the Healesville Shire to change their attitude to road making when it comes to sealing the roads in the Bend. The roads should not be altered, merely sealed. Residents must be educated to drive safely & considerately, otherwise the long term results will not be palatable. The roads will become highways and streets."

# For the Kids

## NATURE PUZZLE

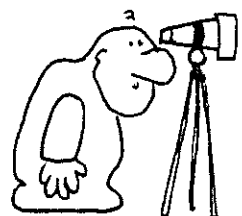


### BIRDS AND ANIMALS

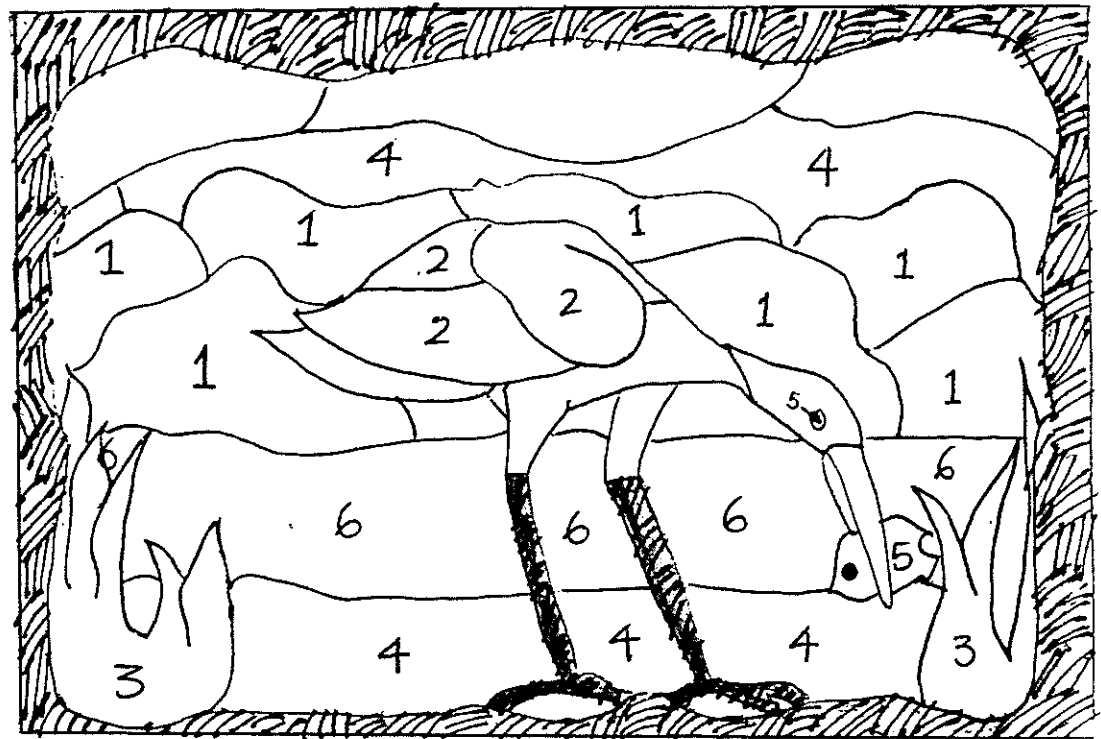
- Wagtail
- Kangaroos
- Owl
- Wombat
- Eel
- Tuan
- Ant
- Possums
- Thrush
- Wallaby
- Galah
- Emu
- Heron
- Koala
- Snake
- Lizards
- Bot
- Wrens

B	W	A	Q	T	A	I	L	O
K	A	N	G	A	R	O	O	S
W	L	T	A	Q	R	W	S	P
O	L	B	L	E	E	L	E	P
M	A	S	A	T	T	K	C	S
B	B	T	H	R	U	S	H	S
A	Y	D	E	F	A	C	I	V
T	B	W	R	E	N	S	D	M
Z	A	K	O	A	L	A	N	S
Y	T	S	N	A	K	E	A	Q
L	I	Z	A	R	D	S	O	D

Words can go across or down the page.



## Colour the Numbers



- 1 Dark Green
- 2 Grey
- 3 Light Green
- 4 Dark Blue
- 5 Orange
- 6 Light blue



# Bushfire - A summer Fact!

With the onset of the bushfire season, all residents need to be aware of the correct precautions and procedures for ensuring safety of life and property.

1. FIRE REPORTING TELEPHONE NUMBERS 712 0454  
719 7487
2. IN THE EVENT OF BUSHFIRE, YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO STAY INSIDE YOUR HOUSE.
3. DRIVING CARS DURING FIRES WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN ACCIDENTS.
4. BY MAKING ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS YOU HAVE EVERY CHANCE OF SAVING YOUR HOUSE IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS BUSHFIRE.
5. THE CHRISTMAS HILLS FIRE BRIGADE WILL BE WRITING TO, AND VISITING ALL HOUSEHOLDS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR FIRE PROTECTION PLAN.
6. RING FOR ADVICE:

CAPTAIN	John McCallum	712 0319
LIEUTS.	David Herd	719 7587
	Colin Berry	730 1409
	Mark Denton	730 1355
	Dianne Simmons	730 1761
COMMS.	Quentin Mattiske	730 1238.

## FIRE BRIGADE AUXILIARY

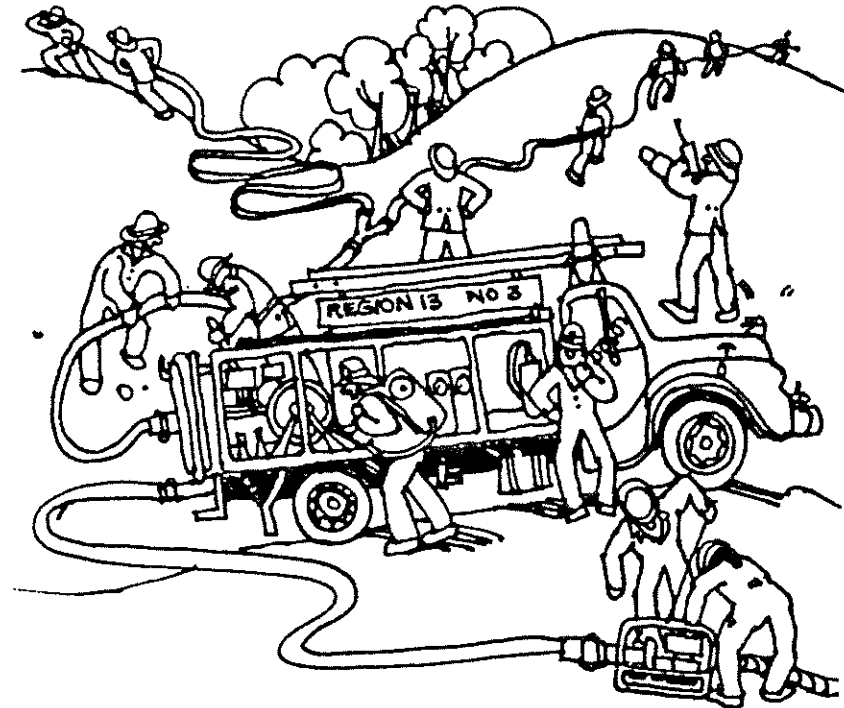
The Brigade needs your support to ensure our members are properly equipped to fight fires in our area.

Meeting Auxiliary: MONDAY 21ST OCTOBER, 8 P.M.  
at Hilary Jackman's home.

Fund Raising: Planned for Saturday 7th December, a FAMILY GAMES DAY AND BARBECUE. Tennis/Badminton/Volley Ball/Cricket Table Tennis/Quoits/Darts etc. Details to be finalised, contact Dee Pelling for more information (712 0286). Round Robin tournaments for kids and adults - Keep that date free and find out more about it later.

Throughout the year the need for testing and maintenance of Brigade equipment continues. Despite a fairly high number of registered fire fighters, this task is more and more falling to a very small number of regulars. Just as importantly, continued training in Brigade procedures & use of equipment is vital if fire fighters are to be really ready for an emergency. A roster for Sunday training has been in operation for the winter and is still current. Please enter your rostered dates on your calendar and make them first priority.

JOHN McCALLUM (CAPTAIN)



# Unwanted animals

Some time ago, (newsletter No. 4), I wrote about small (rat sized) animals and how to deal with them if they are unbearable in your home. Many people have also experienced concern about stray dogs & cats. There seems to be little one can do about wandering dogs other than try to identify them and notify owners. The Healesville Shire Ranger (059 652255) will collect captured strays at any time. It is not possible for Council Staff to hunt & catch dogs here.

Cats are less easy to identify and catch and live trapping is the best method of dealing with them. The Bend of Islands Conservation Association owns 4 large wire-mesh cage traps and these are available to members for loan. Here are some points to remember regarding their use.

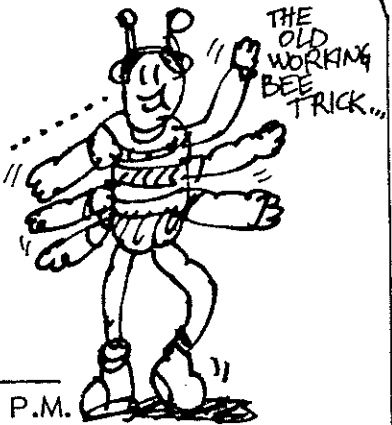
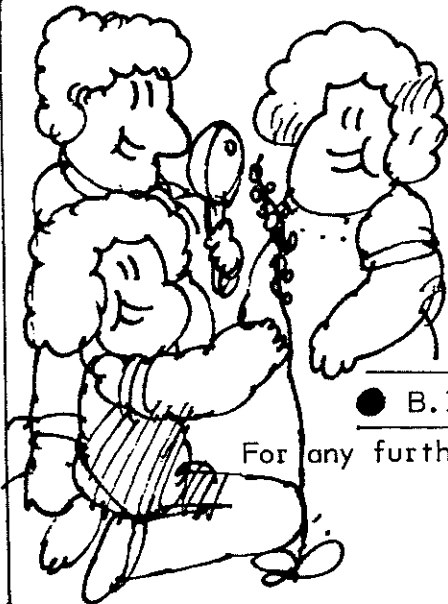
1. Some shelter (bags over the outside or a dry 'grass nest' inside) will reduce the trauma on the trapped animal.
2. Cats often jump on top of cages to investigate before going into traps after food. This will often set off the trap. To avoid this, place half a brick or similar on each side of the part of the food hook which sticks up through the trap at the top.
3. Cats are very wary of entering cages. An irresistible food seems to be sardines. The sardine needs to be wrapped in rag, or you can soak a rag in sardine oil and tie this to the food hook.
4. The Cat Protection Society of Victoria will accept unwanted cats and a small donation is expected. Their address? 200 Elder Street, Greensborough. Telephone 435 1536.

TO BORROW TRAPS CONTACT MICHAEL PELLING 712 0286 & REMEMBER TO RETURN TRAPS WHEN NO LONGER NEEDED.

## B.I.C.A Calendar

- SATURDAY OCTOBER 26TH - FIELD DAY - FLORA OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS
- SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17TH - GENERAL MEETING - 2 P.M.
- SATURDAY NOVEMBER 30TH - WORKING BEE - WILLOWS
- SUNDAY FEBRUARY 16TH - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2 P.M.
- SATURDAY MARCH 22ND - WORKING BEE - ROADSIDE CLEARING
- SATURDAY APRIL 26TH - FIELD DAY - FAUNA OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS
- B.I.C.A COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 8 P.M.

For any further information about these events contact The Secretary, Michael Pelling on 712 0286



Local Litter

FILM GROUP

Contact Pierre or Caroline 7120 390

NEW KANGAROO GROUND CRICKET CLUB

Senior and Junior teams now playing.  
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT RON AT THE STORE

CHRISTMAS HILLS TENNIS CLUB - PHONE ROSS 7120 547  
Is hoping to get enough people to Form Competition teams!

New Members Welcome! Reminder Subs. due  
\$30 Family \$15 Single \$5 Students

FOOD CO-OPERATIVE - Wendi 7120 393 - Cric 7120 547

Premier Cain has confirmed funding for the Central Warehouse.  
Its just taking time but it will go ahead!  
if interested in joining our local Food Co-op  
Ring Cric or Wendi - for details

NEED A BABYSITTER?

Don't have time to pay back the Club?  
Something urgent crops up?  
Contact Melissa or Rachel Pierre 7120 361

CHRISTMAS HILLS PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Telephone Peter Mumme for information  
730 1823

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION  
contributors: Pierre Noijeau, Syd Tonne, Cric Ross, Jo Henry, Hilary Jackman,  
John McCallom, Janet Mattiske, Dee Pelling,  
Felicity Farris,

WHY NOT CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE, PHOTO, DRAWING?  
Contact Felicity Farris or Mick Wai wood.

BABY SITTING CLUB OR PLAYGROUP

Contact Pam McMahon 730 1652

POSTAGE  
PAID