

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 28
FEBRUARY, 1993.

What Native is Flowering?

Botanical name: PRUNELLA
VULGARIS
Common name: SELF-HEAL
Family: LAMIACEAE
(Mint family).
Flowering period: November -
February.

Prunella vulgaris is a low-spreading and fast growing herb, (10 - 300 mm high x 100 mm wide) which is found growing in moist soils of river, valley or swamp habitats. In ideal growing conditions this plant can become invasive. Also, due to its rampant self-seeding it is one of the very few native plants to have become a garden weed. If it does appear in your transpiration bed or damp garden control the excess seedlings by removing the dead flowerheads after flowering.

The stalked leaves are in pairs along spreading leafy stems. The leaves are 10 mm - 60 mm long, lightly hairy and dull green. Stems are reddish and square sided.

Flowers are held erect at the tip of the stems as cone-shaped clusters of small purple flowers and broad dark bracts.

Cric Henry.



BICA
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Thanks to all contributors.
Some articles are being
held over for the next
issue.

**BICA NEWS
SUB-COMMITTEE.**

Bill Donaldson
Jennifer Shepherd
Sheila Dixon
Cric and Ross Henry
Mick Woiwood
Jenny Brown
Sid Tunn
Wendi Henderson



THE SCALY
THRUSH
- ZOOTHERA
DAUMA.

Years ago when I first saw this bird I thought it was a small animal creeping through the bush. However, it turned out to be White's Thrush, perhaps more commonly known as the Scaly Thrush. I thought I'd write about them as they are not so common up here.

The burgen clumps, especially the thick and shadowy ones are an ideal place for these birds. They feed from the floor of the bushes, scratching and gobbling up insects, worms and invertebrates from the moss. They do tend to have the same mannerisms as the English thrush in that they rush forward, stand still, then jab their beak into the ground. If you get too close they either freeze, or fly away low into the bushes.

They breed between July and December and make a rather untidy bowl shaped nest of fine roots and bark, and decorated outside with moss or lichen. There are generally 2 to 3 eggs, pale or whitish green with a few red-brown markings on

the larger end.

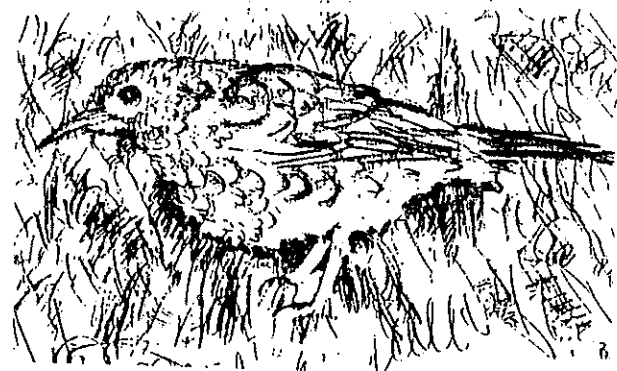
Unfortunately I haven't been able to identify its song so I have to rely on the books which tell me, (though it's mostly quiet), that it can utter a high pitched whistle during the day and sometimes, if you are lucky, a beautiful song at dawn and dusk.

To identify the bird, look for a thrush-like body, brown above, whitish fawn below with an over all pattern of dark half moon feathers. The legs are flesh coloured.

In Australia they are distributed mainly in Tasmania and up the east coast to Atherton with some in the Mount Lofly Ranges and Kangaroo Island in S.A.

An interesting fact is that they also occur in both Siberia and Japan, through most of Asia to Indonesia, P.N.G. and the Solomon Islands. They have even been recorded in Europe. Somehow from here to Siberia seems a world away but there you are.

Sheila Dixon.



SUBMISSIONS.

If you wish to see your article in the newsletter here are some steps to help you.

All submissions should be presented on computer disk(s). There are volunteers who can show you how to do this or even type up your work if you cannot type.

The type of format for the data should be IBM or MSDOS text file (sometimes called ASCII format). Most word processors offer the option to save a file in TEXT (ASCII) format.

AMIGA and ATARI formatted disks are also acceptable. MAC disks should be converted to MSDOS format using SOFTPC or some similar conversion program.

The disk should be 720Kb capacity and 3.5" size is preferred though 360Kb (5.25") disks can be used if necessary. PLEASE do not provide HIGH DENSITY (HD) disks - use only double density, double sided. (DS DD).

Try to label the disk with the name of the relevant file which you want published. Disks can be returned to you by arrangement.

A short note might be helpful if the file is one of many on the disk.

If you can use a typewriter then you can learn to use a computer word processor quicker than someone else typing up your hand written article.

Most articles can be easily typed even with a two finger technique.

This issue would be larger if people had submitted their work on computer disks. I just do not have the time to type up articles at the moment.

Ring me to find out who can help you type your article onto a computer.

Bill Donaldson. 7120632
After 8pm is usually a good time to catch me.

COMMUNITY NEWS.

Sid and Wendy have offered to place a letter box at their front gate to be used by people wishing to drop off articles for the newsletter.

We are also hoping to collect information about local BICA events and general community news for this newsletter. Sid and Wendy will collect these items and pass them on

for publication. We will publish 'ads' if space is available. Donations to help cover costs are welcome.

CHRISTMAS HILLS TENNIS CLUB.

The tennis club is meeting Wednesday mornings and Saturday afternoons. Contact Norm Linton Smith on 7120495 for further information.

YOGA.

If you would like to learn how to relax through yoga exercises there is a class being held on Sunday evenings at the O'Brien's place. Bring a mat and \$8 per week.

Child care is possible by arrangement.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS.

A reminder to pick up your copy from the KG store. We may put them in the new letterbox at Sid and Wendy's house.

COUNCIL TIP.

The proposed new tip site will be discussed at Eltham Council meetings early this year.

PROPAGATE OR PERISH.

The Bend of Islands Conservation Association is at present looking into the feasibility of setting up a propagation scheme within the Environmental Living Zone and asks that anyone interested in putting a little energy into the project to contact it through Mick Woiwod on 7120563. Already, offers of a site have been received from both John and Denise Denyer and Claire Watson.

Claire's site appears to be the most likely option. It is more convenient, has a reticulated river water supply, and a shed available for potting activities.

The project as it is at present envisaged will consist of a rabbit-proofed enclosure of approximately 800 square metres fitted out with an automatic sprinkler system, and incorporating within it a shade house of 250 square metres. Additional to that would be a poly green house and a potting mix enclosure. In the first year it should be capable of producing about a thousand plants.

The advantage of the scheme is that for the first

time our association will be able to have at its disposal a continuing supply of plants grown from local seeds and cuttings, thereby preserving the integrity of the local bushland.

Recent years have seen a decline in numbers of many species of native plants. This has been brought about both by rabbits and the absence of seasonal fires in the district. This scheme will help rectify that imbalance.

It is intended that plants from the scheme be used primarily for an ongoing program of restoration along roadside reserves and the revegetation of areas from which weeds and other exotics have been removed. It is also hoped that as supplies build up excess plants be either sold cheaply or given free to residents of the ELZ.

The scheme should create an ideal opportunity for residents of the district to come together on a regular basis to socialise whilst learning more about their local plants.

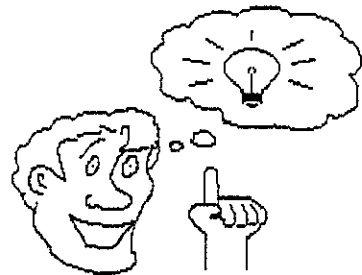
The project will get underway only if there are at least ten local people willing to pledge one hour a week. The Friends of the Warrandyte State

Park, who last year propagated 20,000 plants, have offered to give us all the advice we need on how best to set up the scheme, together with basic training in such skills as seed collection, preparation of cutting material and the appropriate propagation procedures.

At this stage, all we are asking is that those interested in participating register that interest by phoning 7120563. Those who have surplus polythene pots of the smaller sizes, and/or polystyrene boxes, are asked to collect them together for a proposed pick-up day should the scheme go ahead.

LET YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT BE YOUR WAY OF PRESERVING WITHIN THE BEND OF ISLANDS A HABITAT THAT WILL CONTINUE TO ENSURE THE EXISTENCE AND WELL-BEING OF ITS WONDERFUL WILDLIFE.

Mick Woiwod.



ALAN'S ANGLE?

Having received a few editions of the BICA newsletter and enjoyed the ramblings therein it seemed timely to jot down a few reflections on our introduction to the area.

When we decided to escape from the 'suburbia' of Montmorency our wish list included the following:-

A few acres to provide a buffer between neighbours.

A natural bush environment to provide privacy.

A minimum maintenance gardens with minimum lawn areas.

A creek or waterway.

A location not too far out for commuting.

Long term security against the encroachment of suburban sprawl.

To keep the story short the ELZ more than filled our requirements with added benefits including no barkers nests or sunday mower motors. As we searched for our slice of The Bend of Islands we discovered other facets of the area and with this, a growing appreciation for what we had stumbled upon.

Firstly the unique zoning has created, or more accurately preserved, an

area that provides a wonderful place to live. Secondly, we have found a community spirit that would be hard to find elsewhere.

For these reasons I am surprised to hear of disenchantment with the area from some.

Perhaps it's because of pre-conceived or otherwise obtained attitudes against the "greenie extremist" or the "restrictive nature" of the ELZ.

If others have experienced problems perhaps their approach, or lack of approach, may be part of the problem.

The ELZ is one of many zoning options that are available.

Don't buy into an industrial area if you don't like factories!

Don't buy in Doncaster if you don't like concrete. Buy outside the ELZ if you don't want a conservation zone.

We have not encountered unreasonable radicals but a diverse, colourful and enthusiastic group dedicated to the area that they have created or adopted.

We also see the ELZ provisions not as restrictive but as a security to provide, and

hopefully perpetuate, the living environment that we have chosen.

The "Question of Balance" article by Rod Roscholler in the last BICA newsletter posed a few questions and I will take this opportunity to express my perspective.

1. Should the ELZ provisions be vigorously and enthusiastically enforced? Yes, for they provide for the survival of the Bend of Islands as a special place.

2. How active should individuals and local groups be in the ELZ?

As active a role as they choose. If you are interested, become involved. Join the ELZ neighbourhood watch.

3-7 Should we relax or modify ELZ provisions, lay poison etc?

Individual actions should be evaluated carefully with full consideration of their impact on the native flora and fauna.

Decisions on the ELZ provisions must be evaluated with consideration as to what we want our area to be in the long term.

I believe that if we allow the provisions regarding grazing or domestic

animals to be relaxed then we will be heading towards the general rural scene that surrounds us. I hope this is not what the majority want. I also hope that prior rights will gradually become obsolete by natural attrition without any pressure on residents.

8. Should we all be in one group to allow discussion? I have found BICA a realistic way of being involved in the area. The group is open, active and informative as well as providing a pleasant social activity. As I said previously If you are interested, become involved.

I hope Rod's feeling of "a growing sense of moderation" really is a growing understanding and acceptance of what the ELZ is. The zone does have unique requirements but I believe that they are essential to maintain (and improve) the area so that we, and others in the future, may enjoy the unique results.

For Carol and I living in Christmas Hills has been an education. The wealth of local knowledge coupled with the natural phenomena surrounding us provides an ongoing and perpetual entertainment.

All praise to those who had the foresight and dedication to establish this residential 'national park' which we are privileged to share. I am surprised that ELZ's have not been established in other Shires which expound environmental philosophies so that others could choose the lifestyle we have.

Thanks also for the friendship that has been extended so freely. We love it.

Alan Bonny.



LETS

Are you interested in exchanging skills and / or goods? If so, you will find that the local (Plenty Ranges) LETS scheme has a wide range of members eager to provide help. Contact Wendy Bradley for information.
Tel: 712 0396

MUSEUM OPENING.

The Shire of Eltham Historical Society is holding a Community Day with an official opening of The Andrew Ross School House Museum on Saturday 27th, March 1993.

The day will also include the launching of 'The Reminiscences of Andrew Ross' and there will be a pilot project to copy photos and documents for the Museum.

These events will be held at the Kangaroo Ground School House from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm.

Help is needed to find a photograph of Andrew Ross!

There is still much work to be completed and volunteers are eagerly sought.

Contacts:
Wendy Bradley,
PO Box 164, Kangaroo
Ground, 3097.
TEL / FAX:
(03) 712 0396

Mick Woiwood,
Gongflers Drive,
Kangaroo Ground,
3097.
TEL: (03) 712 0563

CRADLE MOUNTAIN OFFER

A Walk Through the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania.

Who would like to join me on a seven day walk along the famous Overland Track? We will be led by Warrant Officer 1 Bob Thompson, Australian Army, Retired, who has done the walk, believe it or not, 34 times! I knew Bob when I was with the Antarctic Division of the Commonwealth Department of Science.

He used to organise and lead soldiers of all ranks on Army Adventure Training exercises, many of which were held on the Track. Other exercises were done in New Zealand and Nepal amongst the mountains and glaciers there. So, to say the least, we will have an experienced guide.

There is no charge for Bob's services, but participants have to be self-sufficient in clothing food and equipment. The only costs will be a possible Park entry fee and a shared cost of \$120 for transport from and to Launceston. We will stay in the comfortable Baden

Powell Scout hut and the more basic Park huts along the route, contrasting with the more elaborate commercial lodge accommodation that goes with the approx. \$1000 guided walk through the area. It will not be necessary to carry tents.

I believe this to be a unique opportunity. The 7 day walk will start on the 5th April. For more information, ring me before 9am or after 9pm on 712 0465.

Norm Linton-Smith

CHOUGH RESCUE.

Another Chough rescue occurred on 23/01/93.

Some readers may recall my story in the July 1989 Newsletter of Jeph Neale's and my release of a white winged chough from the fine nylon fishing line tangled around its legs. Mick and Marg Woiwod had observed a disabled visiting chough for three weeks this year. The bird could not walk, could barely stand and it became very dependent on food they put out every day on the table outside the kitchen.

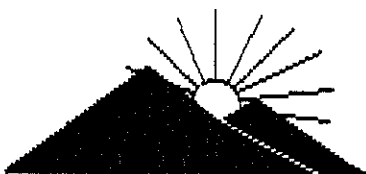
I saw the bird yesterday after Mick had failed to catch it in a baited

inverted cardboard box propped up on one edge with a stick to which a cord leading from the kitchen had been attached. Mick pulled the cord, the box fell down but the bird was too quick and it took to the air, landing and settling on its belly on the grass about ten metres away. Mick taped a stone to the box to increase its weight and reset it. The two of us tried to shepherd the bird back to the table with the trap on it but it refused land there, preferring to eat food on the decking below the table. With care one could get to within a metre of the bird and I could see the thread would around both feet and a stick caught up in the tangle. The bird then flew to a bird bath on a stand about 60 inches high. It sat on the edge and drank; its tail over the edge. Down went Mick on his hands and knees, exhibiting as fine a piece of field craft as I have seen as he slowly approached from behind the bird. The tension rose as Mick got to within grabbing distance and slowly raised his hand and then with a lightning-fast movement had the bird in his hand!

I took the struggling squawking creature while Mick regained his feet and

held it operating with a needle to raise the tightly bound thread from the feet prior to snipping it with pointed scissors. The thread looked like stranded sewing thread. Both feet were so bound up that toes could not be extended fully. The legs were joined so as to prevent walking. Hopping and even standing were difficult for it. Included in the tangle was a stick about 3mms in diameter and 84 mms long. Mick pondered on the thought that this was a plum tree stick and the thread was part of a bird net thrown over the tree. Before releasing the patient he put a blob of orange paint on its tail and on a leg. We hope to see it again, happy and performing like any normal chough. We should always be careful not to discard any materials on the ground, even though they may be degradable because choughs spend so much time on the ground.

Norm Linton-Smith.



WASTE RECYCLING IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS.

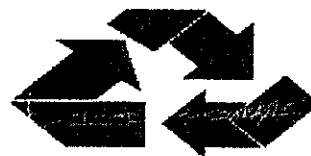
The long saga of getting the Shire of Healesville waste recycling program into the Bend of Islands continues. Mr. Bob Williams, the Shire's project officer seems to be having difficulties in getting the contractor to respond to the proposal that we neither want nor need a recycling bin located in The Bend permanently.

Our proposal is to place a recycling bin at the fire station every two months over a weekend. During that weekend we would advertise the service and keep the area tidy. A permanent bin would take up valuable space at the station and might lead to a litter problem there. It might also be left unfilled for much of the time judging from previous experience.

I gather from Bob Williams that there will be a recycling system in The Bend, but until he can actually get the contractor to consider our proposal in detail he is unable to advise us when it may commence.

I will keep pressing for the

service to start ASAP. If there is no chance of an early resolution we shall conduct another of our community recycling days in the next couple of weeks.



Peter Gurney.
10th February, 1993.



ILLUSTRATIONS.

In this issue are drawings from Cric Henry (Front page), and Tony Harvey (Brown Antechinus).



Thanks to them. Other contributors welcome!

NEXT ISSUE!

The next issue date is not yet fixed but should be before June!

Write your article now!

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