

Bend of Islands Conservation Association Newsletter

NO 4 Sept. 1981

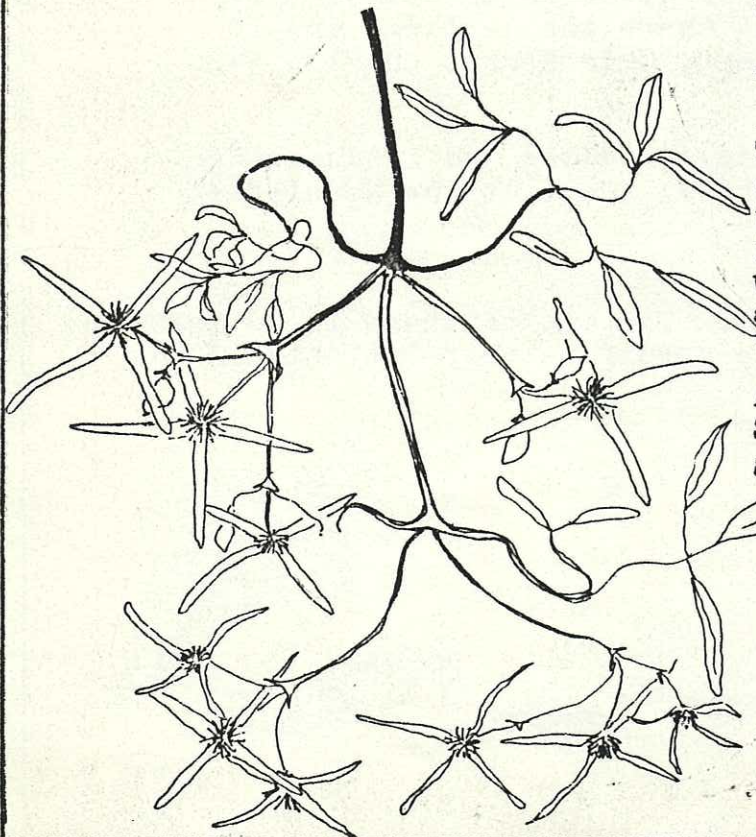
What Native's Flowering?

Botanical Name: CLEMATIS MICROPHYLLA
Common Name: SMALL-LEAVED CLEMATIS
Family: RANUNCULACEAE (Buttercup Family)

A fast-growing, dense climber, this plant will effectively cover a tree-stump. Its leaves are bright green and consist of 6-9 smaller leaflets in each leaf ('microphylla' means 'small leaves'). The leaves of the other Australian Clematis species are divided into only 3 leaflets.

Its flowers are a deep cream colour and have no petals. They are star-shaped and have 4 petal-like sepals (segments of outermost floral parts). The flowers are unisexual, and the female flowers give way to a number of seedlike fruits in the centre of the flower. This fruit is a single seed with a feathery tail about 5 cm. long. In summer these fruit almost cover the entire plant and are more conspicuous than the flowers themselves.

A good example of Small-leaved Clematis grows just past the Schwindts' drive on the right-hand side of Henley Road as one goes downhill towards the bridge. (C.H.)



Notice of General Meeting of Bend of Islands Conservation Assoc.

SEPTEMBER 13th, at 2 p.m., at Neil and Abbie's home.

Agenda

Apologies & Minutes of last Meeting.
Secretary/Treasurer Reports.
Election Vice President.
Subscriptions.
General Business and Guest Speaker.

GENERAL MEETINGS FOR 1981 - 1982.

These three meetings aim to further our knowledge of habitat and wildlife preservation.

The three areas we plan to have covered by guest speakers are:

- (i) general habitat management and preservation
- (ii) specific habitat preservation - a woodland forest area, such as the Bend of Islands
- (iii) a particular problem, the creeping forest threat, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, commonly called Dieback or Cinnamon fungus.

KEEP THESE MEETING DATES FREE:

- November 22nd, 2 p.m., General Meeting.
- March 7th, 1982, 2 p.m, Annual General Meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

These are held at 8 p.m., on the second Friday of the month at different members' homes. They are open meetings and all B.I.C.A. members are welcome. To find out where the meetings are to be held, ring the Secretary, Felicity Faris, on 7120 422, or President, Eric Henry, on 7120 547.

FUTURE ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER:

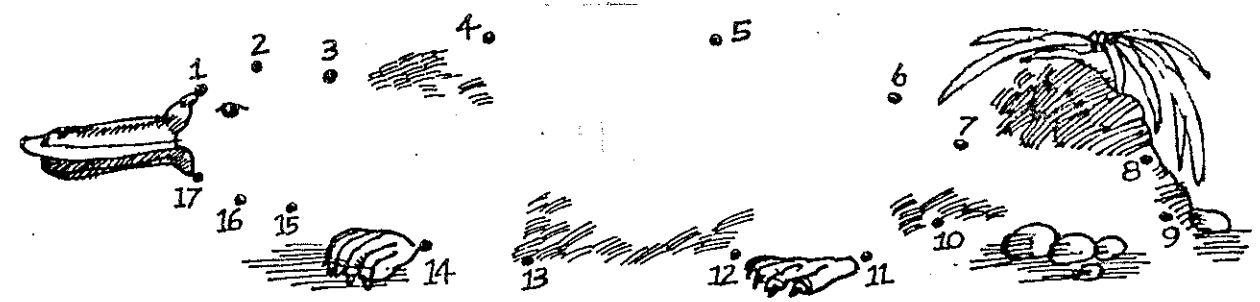
These will cover various aspects of conservation in our area such as 'Building and Landscaping in an Environmental Living Zone'. We welcome suggestions from members. Contact the Newsletter Convener, Tom Fisher, on 7120 451.

WORK PARTIES:

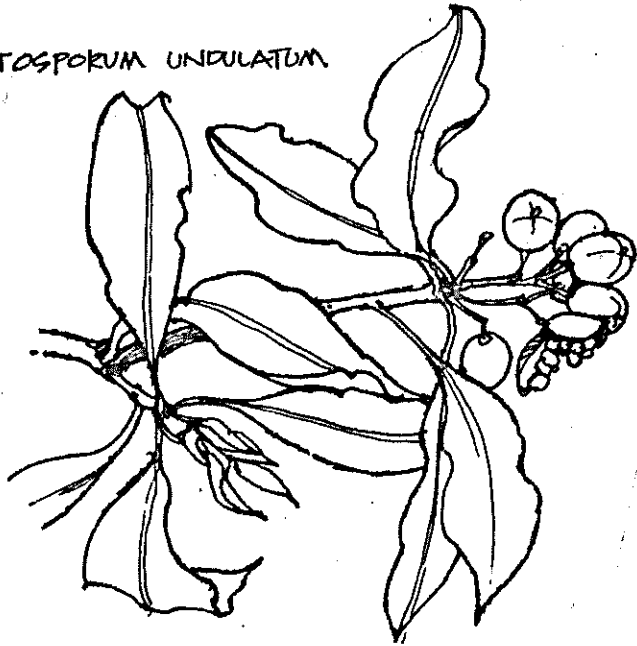
Two Association meetings each year will be preceded by work parties. The aim of these is to help preserve our area by using fairly large numbers of people to tackle specific labor-intensive jobs. We would appreciate any suggestions.

KIDS! Join up the dots between numbers and see what native animal they make.

When you've finished look at page 16 for more about this animal.



PITTOSPORUM UNDULATUM



Weeds

WEEDS - SOME COMMENTS.

By Dr. Bill Parsons.

When I was asked to address your annual meeting in March this year I was delighted because it is not often that I can talk to people about potential problems; usually I am involved only after a problem has been created. In making the following brief comments for your newsletter I should say at the outset that I have had a very brief look at only one part of the Bend of Islands and therefore my comments are limited by that fact.

If native bushland is left undisturbed there will be no weeds but, of course, you are disturbing the bushland merely by living in the area. The question then is how to minimise the problems which will be caused by your disturbance of the environment.

It is interesting to note that some of the existing weeds are native plants which have always occurred in the Bend of Islands but which have multiplied and become weeds due to clearing at an earlier stage for some agricultural pursuits. Two that I noticed were burgan (*Leptospermum phylloides*) and bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*). These will become less important with time now that the earlier disturbance has ceased.

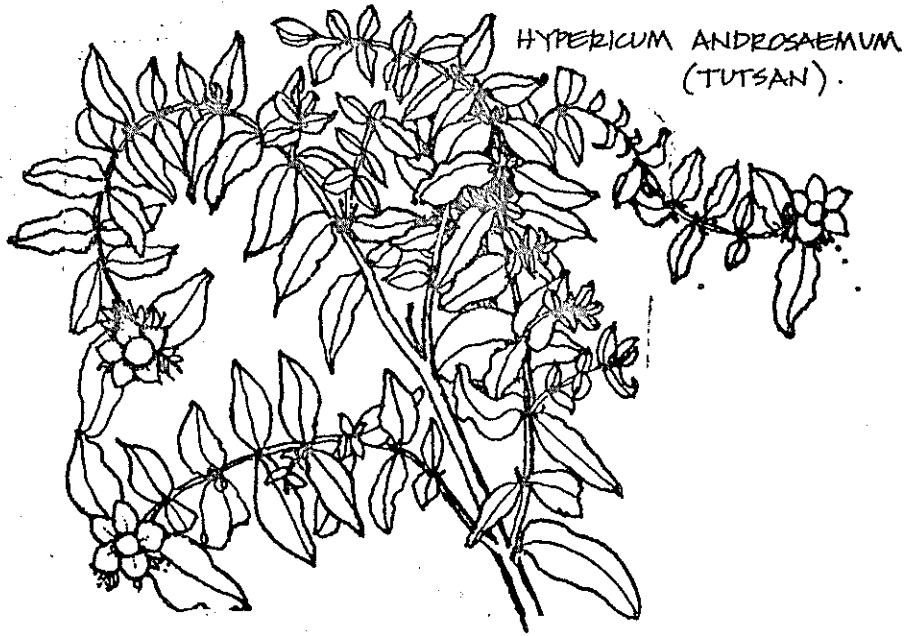
Your real problem will be with introduced plants which establish in the presently disturbed areas. What are these disturbed areas? They can be divided into:

1. earthworks necessary to construct houses, build roads, erect power poles, etc.
2. clearing of fire breaks
3. scratching and grazing by rabbits
4. importation of soil for establishing gardens.

With the first three you would expect to get (and I saw) weeds such as stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and fleabone (*Conyza* spp.). These will be introduced on vehicles, although some seed is quite likely already widely dispersed through the bushland. Even so, seedlings do not establish until niches are provided by the disturbances already mentioned. In the case of imported soil, of course, the weeds you will get will be those occurring at the point of origin; such soil obviously should be sterilized before delivery.

The other big problem is the choice of plants made in establishing your gardens. On my very brief visit I saw two species which should give you real cause for concern. One was tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) which has 'escaped' from its original planting and is now established over a fair area. This plant is of major concern in several parts of Victoria and is able to compete quite strongly with native species. The other one is *dolichos pea* (*Dibogon lignosus*), a creeper, which has taken over in some of our coastal areas. Whether it would do likewise in your heavier soils is not clear, but I suggest you could well do without it.

On the question of control of weeds as they appear, I recommend the Bradley method to you because it makes sound ecological sense. Otherwise I suggest hand removal, taking care not to disturb the soil and surrounding vegetation any more than necessary. Some weeds (e.g. blackberry) are best treated with herbicides, and there is no need to be afraid of these materials; they can be used selectively so as not to damage surrounding vegetation, and the ones available to the general public will not harm the applicator unless he does something really silly with them.



HYPERICUM ANDROSAEMUM
(TUTSAN).

If you try to adopt all the suggestions I have made, I am aware that there can be a certain conflict of interests. For example, frequent clearing of firebreaks will encourage some weeds and yet discourage fires. Obviously you will have to arrive at a compromise, but really you are not likely to be overrun by important weeds as a result of occasional burning or raking.

Dr. W. T. Parsons
Department of Vermin & Noxious Weeds
and author of 'Noxious Weeds of
Victoria'.

ROAD SEALING QUESTIONNAIRE

The public meeting convened by the Shire of Eltham to discuss the possible further sealing of Henley Road supported Cr. Robert Marshall's initiative to distribute questionnaires before Council takes a decision on the matter. The questionnaires will go to all residents and landowners in the E.L.Z., as well as Eltham residents and others who are concerned. It will ask whether respondents want the road sealed and if they are prepared to contribute towards costs, among other questions. A straw vote at the well-attended meeting revealed that of those present 26 favoured sealing and 28 opposed it.

THE 'INVADERS' - WEEDS!

By Dr. Tim Ealey

MEVALEUCA HYPERICIFOLIA

WHAT IS A WEED? A weed is a plant out of place! For example, pine trees are excellent crops on abandoned farmland but are 'weeds' in National Parks and the Bend of Islands forest. Plum Trees produce delicious fruit in gardens and orchards but can be seen choking out native vegetation along the Yarra, as can Willows. Pasture grasses like Fog Grass, Phalaris and African Poa are important to farmers but are weeds in the context of the objectives of a conservation area such as the Environmental Living Zone, where the provisions of our zoning are designed to:

- * protect every item of our local ecosystem
- * improve what may have been degraded
- * live in the bush with minimum impact
- * preserve its essential Australian character.

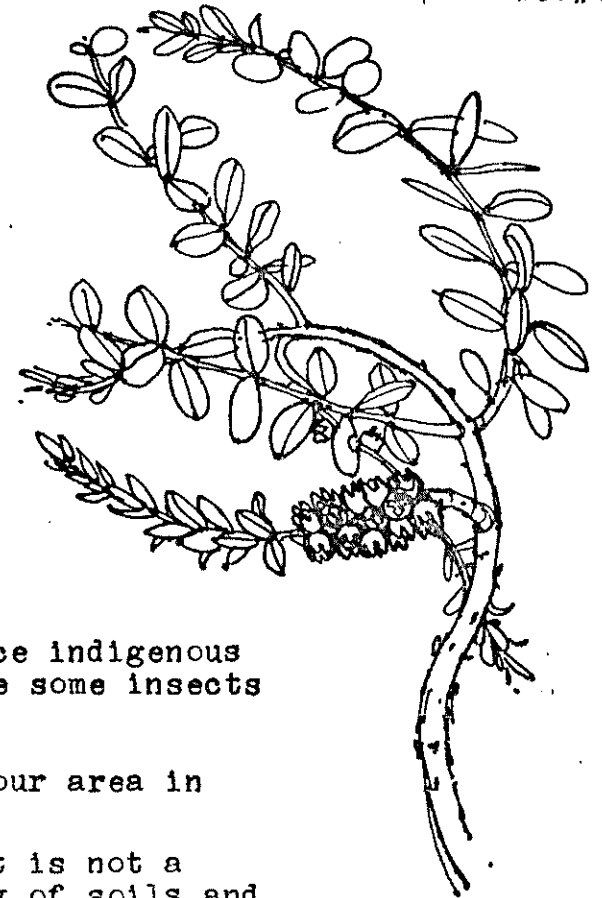
Having compared notes with Dr. Bill Parsons, I will cover the areas which he has not. Therefore I will not mainly be discussing proclaimed noxious weeds, but 'unwanted' invading plants. If you agree with our objectives then we have a significant weed problem and we should all be very worried about it. Not only may some weeds displace indigenous plants but in so doing they may upset sections of the food web and cause some insects and birds to disappear from the district.

OUR PROBLEM PLANTS. The following are plants which have been found in our area in varying numbers.

South African Boneseed: This has 'escaped' from Melbourne gardens. It is not a problem to farmers as stock will eat it. It can grow in a great variety of soils and is not inhibited by low nutrients as are many other of our potential invaders. It can overshadow seedlings (native) and ultimately choke out native bush. Birds, rabbits and foxes will have carried the seeds throughout our land. The bone-hard seeds will survive in the ground for well over 10 years with a few germinating each year. However, fire will usually cause 100% germination. Therefore if you use fuel reduction burning, you should check the area carefully the following spring. We should remember that if a wildfire goes through, there will be boneseed germination everywhere.

Plum Trees: These, and some related species, do extremely well in gullies and along riverbanks. If you take plums into the bush, make certain you bring back all the stones.

Pine Trees: The Forest Commission informs us that because pines grow five times as fast as our local eucalypts and spread seeds up to 8 km, much of our bushland could be choked out in 50 years, especially if assisted by wildfire. The presence of pines may also deter conservation-minded land buyers who



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may know that even when pine trees are cut down the area around them will remain sterile due to pine needles and that seedlings will continue to come up for years.

Hawthorn/Boxthorn etc: These occur near our land and birds may carry the seeds in. I have seen a red stringybark forest completely choked with Hawthorn. Only a powerful and nasty weedicide will kill it, so watch out for it. Boxthorn is a proclaimed noxious weed!

Blackberries: Some plants occur along Watsons Creek, the Yarra and in farmlands, so birds will certainly have carried seeds about. Pull out small seedlings and spray bigger bushes with either Amitrol or Garlon. These are 7 times the cost of 245T but may be preferred. Always ensure that any chemicals used are according to instructions as to concentrations required.

Willows: There are many willows along the Yarra in our region. These are spread by shooting underground stems and are carried by water when small branches break off, lodge, and begin to grow. The Vermin & Noxious Weeds Department advises the use of the 'frill' method to eradicate willows. Details of this method are available from that department.

Oleander: The leaves of this plant are extremely poisonous. They are not native to our area and can be dangerous where there are children.

Introduced Oxalis: This is commonly found in pot plants. It spreads by bulbs reproducing very quickly and is extremely difficult to remove once present. Seed is dispersed so watch carefully in disturbed areas.

Pattersons Curse: This is present in farmland in our area.

Tutsan: This plant has been found in our area, as mentioned by Dr. Parsons. It spreads by fine seed and can dominate bushland. It is best removed by the Bradley method.

Dolichos pea: Also found in our area by Dr. Parsons. This should be removed by pulling out.

NATIVE WEEDS. Many people have planted Australian native plants which are not indigenous to our area in their gardens. We urge those people to keep a close watch on them. If you find seedlings are able to establish themselves in our soil please make certain that the plants do not spread into the bush. The committee would be grateful for information about plants which you notice do spread easily so that others can be warned about planting them. Here is a list of plants which do not grow in our type of forest and are 'native weeds', capable of choking out our own indigenous plants:

* ACACIA baileyana	Cootamundra Wattle
* ACACIA longifolia	Sallow Wattle
* ACACIA saligna	Golden Wreath Wattle
* ACACIA terminalis	Cedar Wattle
* PITTOSPORUM undulatum	Sweet Pittosporum, already here and will choke gullies.
* MELALEUCA hypericifolia	Hillock Bush, bad infestation in Catani Boulevard.
* GREVILLEA	All hybrid strains.

There are many attractive local native plants of all shapes and sizes which may now be obtained from nurseries and which you can propagate yourself from seeds or cuttings. For detailed lists of species native to our area and descriptions, refer to your last newsletter list or contact the committee. These lists contain species native to the Yarra Valley which grow in roughly a 10-mile radius.

Grasses: Some of the grasses which grow in our vegetable gardens will not survive in our low nutrient, low molybdenum soils. African poa grass is an example. A number of pasture grasses will die out without adequate nutrients, so control of nutrients (effluent/fertilizers etc) is the key to control of some grasses. However, others can cause problems - couch grass, south african shell grass, probably fog grass and some of the summer grasses. Neil Douglas and I are making collections of grasses and hope ultimately to have labelled specimens to assist landowners in identifying the bad species.

Thistles & Dandelions: A Herbarium botanist has informed us that thistles found in our area are not a problem; however if you know of any substantial invasions, the committee would be grateful to be informed. The three species of dandelions are all weeds and seem to be spreading. Be sure to remove the root or the plant will shoot up again.

Dock/Sorrel/Fennel: A recent look at a vegetable garden revealed the presence of these 3 plants. All should be removed carefully.

WHAT CAUSES WEEDS?

Soil Disturbance: Allows germination of many species of natives and weeds. It affects different seeds in different ways. It allows moisture into the soil which some weeds need, brings seeds closer to the surface and exposes them to light which may trigger germination. Along roadsides germination of black wattles and dogwood has been caused by disturbance. These native plants and some weed species are early stages in the ecological succession. Some weeds will disappear a year or so after disturbance while others may not. Stinkwort will disappear for instance, but shell grass will not.

Nutrients: This is the worst hazard. Notice the number of grasses, thistles, etc., on a rabbit dunghill. In spring these spots are bright green. Make certain all manure heaps cannot leach downhill and that no septic tank effluent can creep over the surface land. Sensitive natives can be poisoned by nutrients and/or simply be displaced by the weeds nutrients support. If bare soil gets a green look about it in late winter, it is a sign of escaping nutrients.

Burning: This creates bare patches which may possibly encourage weeds and releases some nutrients. On the occasional basis this should not cause a problem as the nutrients from the ash leach away fairly quickly and the summer leaf fall covers most bare patches.

Heat and Light: Many plants need adequate light and warmth, so when you cut down trees during

ACACIA LONGIFOLIA



building keep a close watch on the exposed area until the tree canopy has closed again and reduced the radiation on the ground.

Frequent Raking & Burning: Leaves must be cleared from around houses to reduce the local intensity of a wildfire, to prevent strong winds piling them in burning heaps against sides of houses. However, this practice is likely to cause weed proliferation unless the utmost vigilance is exercised. Other ideas can be tried such as gently raking up the leaves with a bamboo rake and actually carrying them away. (They make good vegetable garden mulch.) Neil Douglas has tried two ideas. Firstly, pulverizing leaves with a motor mower, and secondly, digging them in with a dutch hoe.

Bringing in Soil: Unless sterilized before delivery, soil brought in from other areas usually contains many weed seeds which then become a problem.

Building Materials: It has been noticed that discarded mud bricks and river silt used for mortar have both generated weeds from seeds they contained. Take care where you place these and watch for weed germination. Covering them with thick black plastic could help prevent germination.

Garden Materials: Straw or hay used as mulch on gardens can be full of weed seeds. Use straw in preference to hay and watch closely for germination of weeds. When bringing home seedlings or native plants in pots or trays, check them carefully for weeds and remove before planting.

CONTROLLING WEEDS: (Once you've got them).

The Bradley method is certainly good (see page 9). If you must pull out a plant, compact the earth back into the hole with your heel and then cover it with a good mulching of leaves. This will prevent water infiltration and generally inhibit germination of remaining seeds of the species you are removing.

Mulching is a good way to kill some weeds and prevent the growth of others. Where soil has been disturbed and/or bared, a couple of inches of gum leaves will stop winter growth and will partly rot away by fire risk time. Anything that stops light will kill most plants in time, although some weeds also need a physical barrier. Old bags, plastic, newspapers will work, especially if covered with a little gravel. Clear plastic must be covered or it will act as a glass house and stimulate weed growth.

Some poisons can be used where weeds are bad. Weedex (Paraquat & Diquot) is bad for humans as well as weeds, so be careful with it. However, it becomes quickly harmless as it attaches to soil particles and thus can be a useful weed control. 2,2 D.P.A and T.C.A are safer for humans and were used recently on spreading Watsonias at Peter Burns' corner effectively. They will also kill shell grass. However, these soil sterilents persist for a while and also kill other things. In that project small gums were also killed. There are other poisons available, but chemicals should be used only as a last resort.

CONCLUSION: We do have a weed problem in the Bend of Islands! Some weeds may beat us in the end, but it will take a united effort for us to beat the rest. We are grateful that Dr. Bill

Parsons, an Australian expert, has agreed to help us with advice, but we must do the work and take proper care in the management of our land or the 'invaders' will gradually take over our bush.

NOTE: The committee has detailed information on the 'Bradley Method' and lists of species native to our area. It can also locate particular weed sites in the area. Contact Cric on 7120547 or Felicity on 7120422. If you have a particular difficulty with weeds the committee can also arrange for a qualified person to help you identify weeds and advise on the best way to get rid of them.

The Bradley Method

The following is a brief summary of those aspects of the 'Bradley Method' most applicable to our area. It is taken from the pamphlet Bush Regeneration by Joan Bradley, a copy of which is on file with the Association.

The method is based on years of practice and observation by the Bradley sisters which demonstrates that bush weeding is quite different from gardening. Minimal disturbance to the earth, coupled with the natural regeneration of indigenous plants, will promote a healthy and relatively weed-free bush.

The Bradley sisters have evolved four general rules for bush weeding:

1. 'Disturb the soil as little as possible': use either your hands or, if necessary, the smallest possible cutting tool to sever the roots several inches beneath the surface of the soil ('if the cut ends of the root are left well buried, they don't grow again').
2. 'Sweep back the surface mulch': replace as much soil as possible and restore the ground cover to prevent weed seedlings being encouraged by sunlight on previously unexposed areas.
3. 'Mulch with the weeds themselves': in dry areas, weeds with their roots exposed will not regenerate, but will contribute to the ground cover as they break down over time; this does not apply with certain weeds, e.g. bulbs (such as *Watsonia*), plants that root at every node (such as blackberries), and free-seeders with ripe seed (such as *Boneseed* and *Put* flowering parts in plastic bags to avoid spreading).
4. 'Watch where you put your feet': tread carefully and follow different routes to places where you are working; well-worn paths create erosion, expose soil and destroy native growth.

Spring, the Bradley sisters point out, is the ideal time for weeding. It is especially important in the case of free-seeders to get them before the first seeds ripen. (Also because the greatest leaf fall occurs in summer to mulch, weeds flower in spring and are easy to see, and they disperse their seeds late spring to early summer). (T.F.)

Kid Comments

We thought we'd find out how some of our local kids feel about the bush so we asked them what they do and don't like about it.

- Hamish (7) 'I like it because it's all quiet and there's lots of animals, lots of trees that are good to climb. I don't like trees getting burnt or people chopping down alive trees'.
- Cassie (3) 'I like it cos it's lovely and once I found some roses. I like flowers but I don't like those little yellow flowers'.
- Jo (4) 'I don't like the bush cos it's got snakes. But I like the kangaroos'.
- Kahlil (3) 'I like it cos you can climb trees and walk and it's got kangaroos and possums. I don't like the dinosaurs in the bush'.
- Guy (8) 'I like it cos it's got lots of animals, rabbits and birds and things and it's good for making cubbies. The thing I don't like is if there's a fire it'll go straight up'.
- Jane (9) 'I like it because well there's lots of animals and birds and it's just nice to live here. There's a few things I don't like; there's not many friends around'.
- Matt (7) 'I like feeding the birds but I don't like bushfires'.
- Eamon (5) 'I like it cos I like pulling out trees and going bushwalking., My favourite bit of the bush is tramping on top of old trees. I don't like the road cos it's got too much puddles'.
- Chris (8) 'I like the trees and all that and the birds and making cubbies and riding my bike. There isn't anything I don't like'.
- Amy (8) 'I like it for going for long walks and I like the trees and things. There's not really anything I can think of that I don't like about it'.
- Rupert (6) 'I do like it a bit but I don't like it a bit cos you know those ti-tree things well the branches get in your face; that's what I don't like about it. I like the koalas and kangaroos and everything'.
- Geoff (5) 'I like feeding the birds and riding bikes and doing yo-yo's. That's what I like in the bush. I don't like bushfires and I don't like snakes'.
- Kate (5) 'I like it, specially the wildflowers but how about horses, and cos it's purple. I don't like snakes and sometimes robbers and I don't like foxes'.
- Andrew (7) 'I like it for all the wildlife and trees. I don't like all the hunters which shoot the wildlife and I don't like plants which aren't supposed to be here because they destroy the trees'.
- Kathy (7) 'I like the kangaroos and koekaburras and birds and rabbits and playing in the trees. I don't like the cows and dead trees'. (F.F.)

BEND OF ISLANDS BIRD SURVEY

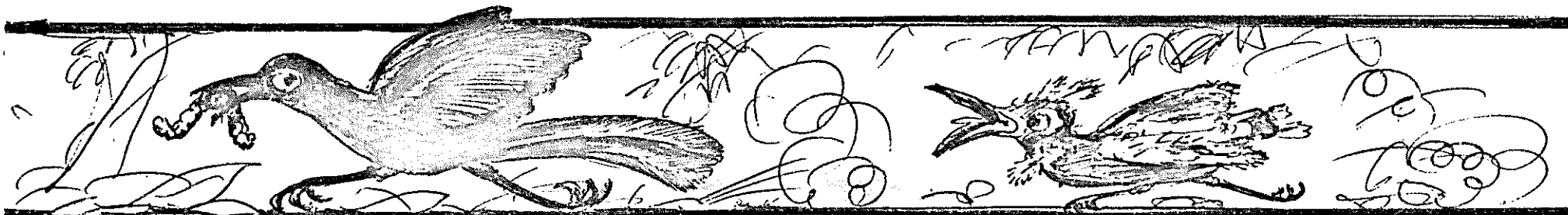
By Jim Mattiske

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The Bend of Islands Bird Survey has been going since November, 1980. In that time we have recorded 107 species in the Environmental Living Zone. Every month, eight families compile a list of birds seen by them on their land and in the wider area of the zone. Most of the people in the group have had to learn the basics of bird identification, which, as most will tell you, is not as easy as it sounds. Most Sunday mornings (until winter rains set in), we have visited a specific area in the zone as a group, and recorded what bird species were present. The type of survey work done so far has been limited by the inexperience of our members, but now the group is ready to begin something a little more sophisticated. While continuing the monthly recording of species present, we will estimate weekly the population of some native common species and any non-native species. Over a period of time, these population figures will be invaluable in monitoring the well-being of bird life in our area and will help to point out any increase in non-native birds so that action can be taken to halt their intrusion.

White winged chough study: Because choughs are such a prominent part of the Zone's bird life and their behaviour is so unusual and fascinating to many people, the survey group is to undertake a special project. The aim of this project is to come to a better understanding of the chough's life cycle and to document their unusual behaviour. By doing this we hope to be able to ensure their survival in the Environmental Living Zone and to contribute to ornithological knowledge. In order to study the birds closely, we intend to catch as many as possible and band them on the leg with a CSIRO metal band and combinations of coloured bands which will identify each bird. The writer has obtained permission from Fisheries and Wildlife in Victoria and our project has been accepted by the CSIRO. Division of Wildlife, Australian Bird-banding Scheme. Banding of many species has been carried out world-wide and choughs have been banded in Australia without any ill effects to the birds.

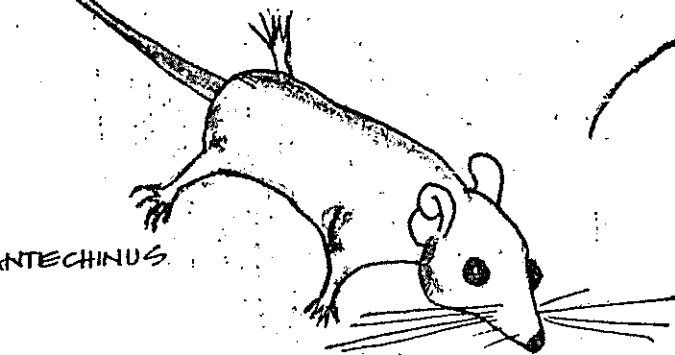
Help required: Residents of the Environmental Living Zone can assist on nominated days in locating groups of birds for banding; can assist in catching birds under supervision, and can help by recording details of sightings of colour-banded birds and advising any of the following people: Jim Mattiske on 719 7492, John McCallum on 7120319, or Digby Gotts on 7120237.



HOUSE MOUSE



ANTECHINUS

VERMIN TRAPS

By John McCallum.

For some time I have been concerned about the danger of killing native mammals when trying to eliminate rats and mice in our house. In the past I have caught the 'wrong animal' with rat traps and have since ceased to use conventional traps. I hope that these notes will help other people with similar problems.

Rats and Mice: Among the numerous species of mammal to have become naturalized in the Australian bush, the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) and the Ship Rat (*Rattus rattus*) are especially troublesome. Particularly at certain times of the year, they can invade homes, producing well-known unpleasant effects. There are obvious ways of minimizing this problem, such as 'vermin-proof' construction and the reduction of 'attractions' like nesting places, food sources, etc.

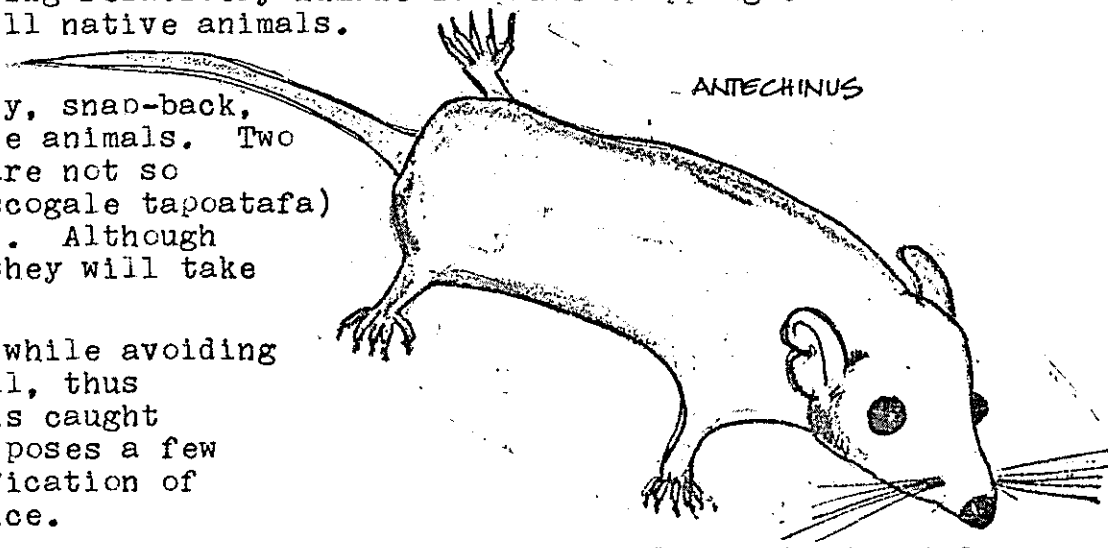
Nevertheless, the need to eradicate rats and mice sometimes arises. The method that has least detrimental effect on the environment while being relatively humane is 'live trapping'. Poisons cause suffering to the victims and may also kill native animals.

Traps: Traps too have their problems. Clearly, snap-back, 'instant death'-type traps can also kill native animals. Two well-known species that appear in houses but are not so unpleasant as rats and mice are the Tuan (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) and the Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*). Although these two species are basically carnivorous, they will take most baits generally used for pest rodents.

The only way, therefore to kill rats and mice while avoiding native animals is to use traps that do not kill, thus allowing the user to decide after the animal is caught whether or not to destroy it. This, however, poses a few problems: types and sources of traps, identification of 'catch', and subsequent killing of rats and mice.

Types of Traps: Several kinds of small mammal traps are available. One is made of sheet metal so that the trapped animal is not visible until the door is opened. Such construction is unsuitable for people not used to handling live animals of this kind.

- ANTECHINUS



A more appropriate type is the wire-mesh variety. To reduce the possibility of the trapped animal's panicking, the user may first put a handful of dried grass inside the trap. A suitable 'universal' bait, much used by mammalogists, is a paste of rolled oats, peanut butter and honey. Bacon or bread and dripping also would lure rats and mice, and probably Tuans and Antechinus as well.

Identification: The Tuan is one of our loveliest and least mistakeable small native mammals. It is a marsupial in the Dasyure group, which includes Native Cats, Tasmanian Devils and the probably extinct Tasmanian Tiger. Tuans are a little longer than rats, grey in colour, and have a pointed snout and much wider gape. Their most obvious distinguishing feature, however, is their black, 'bottle-brush' tail. They also have a distinctive 'tap-tap' signal which they make with both front paws.

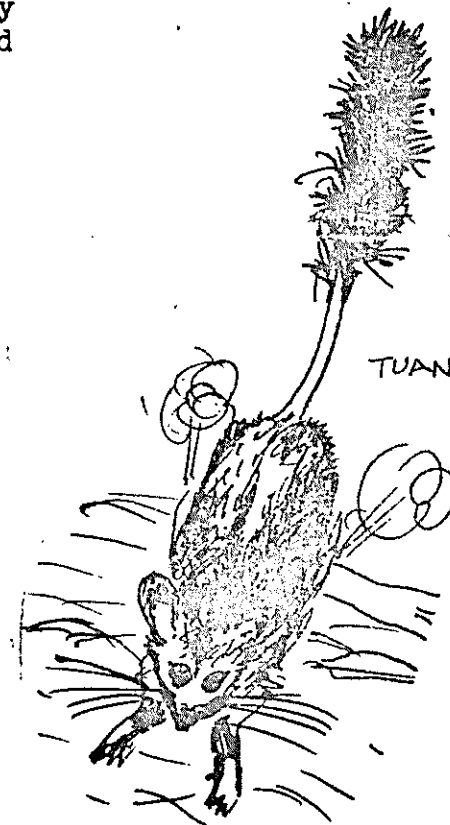
The Antechinus is a little more difficult to identify, but once you get to know them their behaviour makes them very easy to distinguish from mice. In appearance they are between rat and mouse size, and they have the same pointed head and wide gape as the Tuan. Their droppings which are a little larger than those of mice and have pointed ends, contain tiny fragments of insect shells, thus making them readily identifiable.

Both the Tuan and Antechinus lack the unpleasant odour associated with rats and mice. Furthermore, their presence seems to deter rats and mice. Unfortunately this is not a universal law, so the danger of accidentally killing native mammals still exists.

It is worth noting that Bush Rats (*Rattus fuscipes*) also occur in our area. They are a native species and should be conserved. Distinguishing Bush Rats from Ship Rats is a bit complicated, but a good rule of thumb involves the ratio of tail length to head-and-body length: the tail of the Ship Rat is usually noticeably longer than the rest of the body, while the tail of the Bush Rat is not.

Killing: To kill such pest mammals it is most efficient and quite humane to administer a sharp physical blow. Not all people can bring themselves to deliver a coup de grace, but those listed below are willing to help identify trapped mammals and dispose of vermin. It is worth noting that it is illegal to keep any native mammals.

John McCallum on 7120319, Digby Gotts on 7120239 or Neil Douglas on 7120352. NOTE: A Wire Fabricator is prepared to supply suitable small mammal traps for about \$20 and larger cat traps for about \$28 each, if we order at least 5. Please contact me soon if you are interested.



Our Committee at Work.

New Committee: At the last Annual General Meeting the following people were elected:

Office Bearers: President: Cric Henry Vice President: Peter Wilson
Secretary: Felicity Faris
Treasurer: Michael Pelling

Committee Members: Janet Mattiske, Neil Douglas, Rod Shield, Tom Fisher, Andy McMahon, Eilish Cooke, John McCallum.

Since that time Peter Wilson has resigned so the next General Meeting must elect a new vice president. Gavan McCormack and Neil Harvey have been co-opted to fill vacancies.

BISSETT-JOHNSON SUB-DIVISION/MT. LOFTY: Government purchase of these two areas is still under consideration.

LAND SALES: There are a number of allotments on the market within the Environmental Living Zone at present. Advertisements have been organized in the Australian Conservation Foundation's journal and in the newsletter of the Conservation Council of Victoria. If you have suggestions about finding buyers please let us know.

ROAD SIGNS: As reported earlier, it is intended to place signs at either end of our zone, setting out what the zone is about. The signs will be erected as soon as they are ready and will, we hope, acquaint visitors with some of the important regulations of the Shire and the zone.

GAZETTAL OF DOG/CAT AMENDMENT: Pending gazettal of the whole of the Environmental Living Zone Provisions, committee sought and obtained, via the Minister for Planning, the immediate implementation of the dog and cat provisions of the zoning. This is now in force as an amendment to the current Shire of Healesville's blanket interim development order. The amendment has been gazetted and details of the wording may be obtained from the Secretary.

KANGAROO SHOOT: Recently, the lessee of MMBW farmlands within the zone applied for a permit to shoot kangaroos. The committee objected via the appropriate channels and is pleased to report that a permit was not granted.

SUGARLOAF DAM & WILDLIFE: Negotiations are being held with the MMBW to establish wildlife movement patterns which might be affected by the fencing of Sugarloaf Dam boundaries. It is hoped that swing gates can be installed at appropriate places to allow freedom of passage.

AERIAL SPRAYING: Recently a number of homes were showered with super phosphate during aerial spraying operations by adjoining farmers. Objections were lodged with the company responsible and it was established with the Department of Agriculture that there were no legislative regulations applicable to aerial spraying of super. However they were aware that problems existed where residential areas abut farmland and also suggested that it was not advisable to have substantial amounts of 'super' in drinking water. Neither is it permissible for pilots to allow it into waterways. It was also established that from August 1st, 1981, Kangaroo Ground became a 'hazard area'. This means that it is not permitted, other than with a Dept. Agriculture permit, to aeriually spray chemicals. There is also new legislation pending to make 'ground spraying' of

chemicals subject to permit. The Department are concerned that many people are using chemicals in huge quantities and concentrations, not necessary to accomplish the object. They are concerned for the safety of people and the environment.

ROAD SEALING: Following a petition from some residents of the zone for further sealing of Henley Road, the committee felt that its members should be advised of some of the implications of such action. Accordingly it prepared an information circular setting out relevant aspects of sealing and its impact and informing members of the Public Meeting convened by the Shire of Eltham to discuss the matter.

SUBMISSIONS: Since the last newsletter the committee has prepared and presented the following submissions relating to various aspects of conservation affecting our zone:-

Shire of Healesville - re problems occurring within the zoning and enforcement.

" " " - re Effluent Disposal Systems.

" " " - re road.

Review Panel of the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority - re Strategy Plan.

Minister for Planning - re Proposal for Guest House/Restaurant Whittens Reserve.

" " " - re gazettal of dog/cat amendment.

Education Department - re School Bus Extension.

VISITORS TO OUR ZONE: in past months the following people have visited the Bend of Islands.

Cr. Athol Edgeberg - Shire President, Mr. John Bayly and Mr. N. Haines - Department of Planning, Mr. Evan Walker - Shadow Minister for Conservation, Dr. Robert van de Graaf - Soil Conservation Authority, Dr. Bill Parsons - Department Vermin & Noxious Weeds, and many Shire Councillors.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS: Following complaints about the state of Henley Road, Council re-graded and did an excellent job. Recently the Engineer and 9 Councillors together with Mr. Peter Burns and Felicity Faris, inspected the road to look at two sites which Council had received complaints about. The two sites concerned were the large dead tree opposite Burns' House and the corner above the Douglas house. Council has since removed the tree but has advised that at this stage no work will be done on the Douglas corner. Council stated that they would review this situation at a later date.

CATANI BOULEVARDE RESERVE: The Shire has been asked to 'clean up' this area and for rubbish to be removed regularly from bins provided. Council has suggested a 'committee of management', and the committee has requested representation on such a committee.

MMBW ALLOTMENTS: No decision has yet been made as to the future of the remainder of MMBW lots in the Zone, which are subject still to a Tribunal 'objection' by the Association. Hearings have been adjourned pending government decision as to their future.

BOTANICAL SURVEY: The committee has decided to undertake a botanical survey of the zone, and in particular, to map areas of botanical significance and micro-ecologies. Future builders can then learn about significant species requiring protection on their land.

SCHOOL BUS: Negotiations are proceeding satisfactorily concerning the extension of the School Bus route to Skyline Road. (F.F.)

Community Groups

CHRISTMAS HILLS TENNIS CLUB: As a result of pressure from the Club, the MMBW have undertaken to replace the dilapidated tennis facilities taken over by their Sugarloaf Reservoir. They have made an offer to provide area for two courts to the south of the Christmas Hills Hall. They will fence this and provide an asphalt surface to one, which the Healesville Council have offered to 'plexipave'. The Club agreed to accept these offers at their last general meeting on the 14th August.

So we will soon have a first-class set up just 15 minutes from the Bend of Islands, using the hall with its new toilets as the 'pavilion'. If anybody is interested in joining for some hit and giggle or serious tennis, please contact Ross Henry on 7120547.

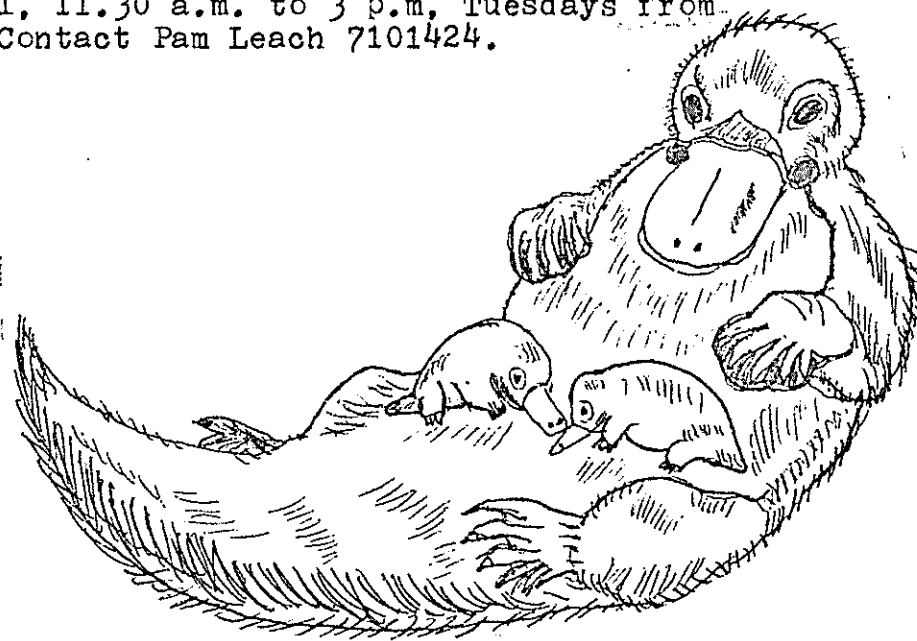
PLAYGROUP: This happens every Tuesday morning between 10 and 12. If you are interested in coming along, contact Pam McMahon on 7301652 or Joyce Harvey on 7120462.

FOOD CO-OP: The food co-op day has developed into quite a family affair with members and their kids enjoying lunch together after the rigours of measuring, weighing and adjusting. The day also provides an opportunity for members to sell hand-made or pre-loved articles. There are a few vacancies so if you'd like to join, contact Eilish Cooke on 7120435.

ST. ANDREWS COMMUNITY THEATRE: Day workshops oriented towards developing whole performances for schools. St. Andrews Hall, 11.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays from 8th September. No fee. Contact Pam Leach 7101424.

The Platypus

The animal you drew is a PLATYPUS! It is a mammal and one of the world's strangest creatures. It makes a burrow into banks of rivers to make a safe home and eats underwater. It produces babies by laying eggs which hatch and the young platypuses drink milk from their mother. If you are very quiet and lucky, you might see a platypus in the Yarra river in the Bend of Islands.



What Native Weeds Flowering?

ACACIA BAILEYANA or COOTAMUNDRA WATTLE

A walk through the Bend of Islands reveals numbers of large, established 'Cootamundra' wattles and many smaller trees and seedlings. Certainly 'Cootamundra' makes a handsome, showy addition to gardens, but in very little time will spread rapidly into surrounding bushland. We will see more and more 'Cootamundras', which are native to N.S.W. but not to our forest, and less and less of our own indigenous wattles and other species, as the 'Cootamundras' choke out other native trees and plants. Botanists stress that 'Cootamundras' have spread uncontrollably to the detriment of other species, and are now an acknowledged 'native weed'.

To retain our bushland in its own balanced state and assist too in preserving the birds and insects appropriate to our Red-Box, Red Stringybark forest, it is necessary to prevent 'Cootamundras' from establishing themselves. The same is true for ACACIA LONGIFOLIA which is often found near to 'Cootamundras' and is also an acknowledged 'native weed'.

We can however, obtain the same 'showy' effect in our gardens using the following wattle species which are native to our forest.

These are all medium trees and are usually available at nurseries. If finding them is difficult, please contact the committee who have information on which nurseries are likely to stock them.



ACACIA BAILEYANA

ACACIA dealbata

(Silver Wattle) a big 'showy' wattle with similar delicate, feathery foliage and bright yellow flowers.

ACACIA mearnsii

(Black Wattle) similar to Silver Wattle in foliage and flowers.

ACACIA pycnantha

(Golden Wattle) Australia's floral emblem, it has dark green leaves and huge very bright yellow ball flowers. (FF)

Assoc. Subscription

RED DOT = SUBSCRIPTION DUE

I enclose \$ (\$5 per person) for membership of B.I.C.A for the following persons. (Please include Name, Address and Telephone Number).

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FIRE BRIGADE NEWS: The bi-annual election of Office Bearers of the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade was held recently. For information please telephone the Captain, Jeff Neale, on 7120458.

The Brigade has obtained the following equipment and donations:

- Two 2200 lt. concrete static water tanks from Healesville Shire.
- \$500 annual grant from the Shire of Healesville.
- A hand held Transceiver from the Shire of Eltham.

In addition, the Brigade has purchased a Floto pump and now owns 12 Listening Sets which have been distributed amongst brigade members. It has also requested a second building in the Bend of Islands to house the Toyota, and a four-wheel-drive International to replace the Bedford. It is hoped that the above will take place in 1982. The Toyota is currently being re-designed by the C.F.A. to eliminate an overloading problem. One of the concrete water tanks will be located near the corner of Henley, Skyline and Catani in the Bend of Islands.

The Brigade would appreciate the support of all landowners and occupiers either physically or financially. Regular training is conducted each Sunday at 10 a.m., at the Christmas Hills Fire Station.

WOMENS AUXILIARY: The auxiliary welcomes any assistance you can offer. It is a major financial contributor to Brigade funds through the annual Firemans Ball and provides meal and refreshment back-up support during major fires to firemen of our own and other brigades brought in to assist. President: Jo Baeviski - 7120392, Secretary: Meg McCallum - 7120319, Treasurer: Rose Wilson-7120220.

CLASSIFIEDS: Contact 7120422/7120547/7120451, if you have something to sell.

- FLEECE: Romney - variegated colours from grey to black, available from mid November, contact Clare Watson on 7120235.
- FLEECE: Romney-Marsh for spinning and white and coloured Lincoln for rug making, available towards end of November. Contact Betty Littlehales on 7120278.
- BLACKSMITHING: Orders taken for items such as candleabras, candlesticks, brackets and hooks. No job too small. Contact Sid Tunne on 7120393.
- LOUNGE SUITE: 3-seater sofa, 2 chairs, dark pine with beige loose cushions. Reduced to \$200. Contact Carol Ann Fisher, 7120451.

NEWSLETTER WORKGROUP:

<u>Convenor:</u> Tom Fisher	7120451	Hilary Jackman	Illustrations
Felicity Paris		Neil Douglas	"
Cric Henry		Cric Henry	"
		Mathew McCallum	" → and Syd.