

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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

Inc. No. A11100A

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WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Hakea decurrens ssp physocapa*

Common name: Bushy Needlewood

Family: Proteaceae

Flowering period: May to September

A newly described species which has been separated from *Hakea sericea*.

An erect narrow shrub, up to 2 metres high, with long, stiff, cylindrical, dark green leaves, up to 6 cm long, with a needle-like point at the end. The leaf ridge extends a short distance down the stem. The fragrant white flowers appear in clusters of up to six flowers in the leaf axils, i.e. in the angle of a leaf with the stem. The flowers are very showy and long lasting. The stems are reddish brown and contrast brightly with the green leaves and white flowers.

The nut-like woody fruit, 2 cm long x 1.3 cm wide, has a double pointed beak. The fruits are important for identification, one distinguishing feature being the thin width, (1 - 2.5 mm), of the red brown wood layer of the inner valve of the woody fruit. The fruits can stay on the shrub for years, until the heat of a bushfire stimulates the fruit to split in two and release the winged seed, or the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos rip open the woody fruit in their search for the seeds for food.

The flowers provide nectar for honeyeaters, butterflies and moths and attract insects and consequently the birds that feed on them. The prickly shrub provides a safe habitat and nesting site for the smaller birds.

The plant is suited to a wide range of conditions, preferring full or partial sun and a dry, well drained soil.

Propagation is by seed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's still winter and we have had a couple of minus degree days down here on the river to prove it but we don't complain. The birds on the other hand are not all that impressed with their bath water being frozen. The gold of our beautiful wattles brighten up the cold days and the wonderful call of the Grey Shrike-Thrush is a reminder that spring is not too far away. Over this last week the eagles have been giving a wonderful display flying overhead. Working on the first floor of our building I felt I could almost reach out and touch them. Fabulous!

Nillumbik Mayor Lex deMan and deputy Mayor Bob Stubbings were given a guided tour of the Bend of Islands by Alan and myself. The tour covered most areas of the Bend including a visit to the Krause home to look out at the Heritage Golf Club. The house is also an excellent example of building in the ELZ demonstrating how to build on a difficult site with minimal impact. Back to Robyn Duff's home for morning tea and an opportunity to discuss the ELZ and issues such as SPI powerline clearing and the Heritage Golf Club. It was a pleasant morning with our guests showing a lot of interest in the area. Thanks to Marie and Wolfgang for once again letting us use their home as a showcase. Also thank you to Jenny for baking yummy cakes and Robyn for playing host.

See you round.

CAROL BONNY

FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks once again to the contributors to this issue of the Bend of Islands Conservation Association Newsletter. Articles on living in the ELZ as well as news and issues concerning the flora and fauna of our area are always welcome and may be submitted in any format. Email to mccallum@minopher.net.au or saved to floppy, 100Meg zip or compact disc. Typed or hand written hard copy also.

Are there any people out there who would be prepared to do illustrations for articles at short notice? Black and white line drawings that can be scanned successfully are required. Please let me know. While I am at it, we haven't had a cartoon in the BICA News for ages. What about it?

JOHN MCCALLUM

THANKS!

I would like to thank everybody who took part in the work party at my house while I was receiving treatment in hospital recently and in particular Alan Bonny, Neil Harvey and Pierre Noirjean who I understand were the principal organisers. I am indeed very fortunate to live in a community of such kind and caring people and I'm proud to call you my friends. I was quite surprised and overwhelmed by the end result. Thank you again for your support and friendship.

STEVE

FIREWOOD SUPPLIES

How's your wood supply going? At this time of the year you can expect to pay around \$180/tonne for seasoned Sugar Gum, if you can get it. Shane McKenzie, the wood merchant who supplied the 30 tonne of unseasoned SG a few of us shared in at \$100/tonne last year (which is burning beautifully I might add) is currently offering wood from the same source as previously for \$125/tonne delivered in foot lengths. It's not quite ready for burning yet though because it's still on the ground in 30 foot lengths and so hasn't been fully seasoned, but the advice I'm getting is that it's going to be increasingly difficult to get SG at a good price in Melb so now is the time to stock up for next year.

I'm interested in buying some of this wood and I'm looking for others who are would like a share in a 12-13 tonne truck load. Let me know if you're interested and I'll organise the delivery. With the smaller truck it can be home delivered so we avoid the hassles of last time. First in first served.

Contact Steve email: stevecraigaus@hotmail.com

PLANTS FOR SALE

The following local plants are available for sale as tubed plants. Also available are a small number of specialty plants. Contact Dylan Osler and Jo Henry for details. (Phone 97120501)

Wherever you get your plants ensure that they are from local seed or cutting to protect the unique vegetation of the area. Bend of Island provenance plants are available from Carol Bonny as well as from Jo and Dylan.

PLANT TYPE	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	H x W (m.)	ASPECT	SOIL
Medium Tree (8-13m. high)	<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle	8 x 6	Full/semi sun	Moist
	<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle	10 x 6	All aspects	Dry/moist
Small Tree (5-8m. high)	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	Lightwood	5 x 4	Full/semi sun	Dry/moist
	<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	Black Sheoak	6 x 3	Full/semi sun	Dry
Tall shrubs (3-5m. high)	<i>Hakea decurrens</i> <i>ssp physocarpa</i>	Bushy Needlewood	3 x 2	Full/semi sun	Dry
	<i>Olearia argophylla</i>	Musk Daisy-bush	3 x 3	Full/semi shade	Moist
Medium Shrub (1-3m. high)	<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>	Spreading Wattle	2 x 1	Full/semi sun	Dry
	<i>Pomaderris lanigera</i>	Woolly Pomaderris	2 x 2	Full/semi sun	Moist
	<i>Spyridium parvifolium</i>	Dusty Miller	1.5 x 1.2	Full/semi shade	Dry/moist
Low shrub (Up to 1m. high)	<i>Acacia brownei</i>	Heath Wattle	0.5 x 1	Semi sun	Dry

THE LATEST EXPLOITS OF THE BOOTBENDERS

Carol Bonny

A very windy winter morning saw our enthusiastic walkers car pool to the start of the trek up in Kinglake somewhere! The crew of nine staggered up the first steep hill admiring the heath and early wattles flowering along the way, a good excuse to pause for a breath. Time for morning tea and a chat and then on our way again. Not much further and to our relief the hill flattened out. Plant diversity changed along the way and so did the intensity of the wind and cold. A sheltered spot for a lunch break with more chatting before a descent to Lyrebird country. The highlight was coming across a male bird scratching a few metres from the path. Not concerned with our presence my bird impressions coaxed him into his serenade repertoire including magpie, grey currawong and yellow tail black cockatoo. A pleasant day's walk ending with a visit to the St Andrews Pub for a drink or for some an ice cream binge! If you are interested join us when you see the Boot Benders sign at the bridge.

COMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEETING 11th August at Colin's and Kathy's. First house on Co-Op A track. 97 Skyline Rd

Guest-speaker: John McCallum on Ferns

Please bring a chair and arvo tea to share

THE SEPTEMBER FIELD NIGHT has changed into a Field afternoon with a guided tour of the Gawa Trail. Meet at 2 pm on the 21st at the Gawa Trail on the Eltham Yarra Glen Road just past the Watsons Creek Antique shop and Tea Rooms. Mick Woiwood will conduct the tour and we can adjourn to the Tea rooms for refreshments afterwards. That evening will be the Café Benders Bash at the Fire Shed. A great afternoon of activity followed by a good evening at Café Benders. Bring along your musical talent and join in.

KOALA COUNT 16th November. Annual collation of data on Koala populations around Melbourne.

PUB WALK October 27th don't miss this Annual event.

VICTORIAN FIREWOOD STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER

Steve Craig

The Victorian Government is developing a Firewood Strategy to support an ecologically sustainable supply of firewood for Victorians and to ensure that adverse impacts of firewood collection and use are minimised.

By the time you read this article, submissions on the draft Strategy will have closed. However, public meetings will be held later in the year prior to a final Firewood Strategy being released for public comment.

The Victorian Firewood Strategy will be based on the National Strategy endorsed by the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) in June 2001. The first step in developing the Victorian Strategy has been to prepare a Discussion Paper in order to stimulate informed discussion of issues associated with firewood collection and use and to allow public comment to be included in the preparation of the Strategy.

There is a need for a Firewood Strategy because the total annual firewood consumption in Victoria has been estimated to be between 1.2 and 2.5 million cubic metres (0.7 and 1.4 million tonnes). At least half this amount is believed to come from private land, which is largely unregulated. It's also estimated that there is a significant amount of illegal firewood collected on both public and private land.

The aim of the Discussion Paper is to stimulate informed discussion and comment about firewood collection (both domestic and commercial) and firewood use.

The Discussion Paper is a valuable resource document covering a broad range of issues relating to the collection and use of firewood in Victoria. Part A considers firewood consumption and collection, including an analysis of consumption estimates, a discussion on where firewood comes from and how it's acquired by consumers. Part B examines the regulatory arrangements controlling the collection of firewood in Victoria, both on public and private land. Part C explores the impacts of firewood collection and use and Part D looks at future firewood consumption and supply options.

It is anticipated that the Victorian Firewood Strategy will:

- * Suggest strategies to improve information about sources of firewood and its use;
- * Provide a means of increasing community awareness about issues relating to firewood collection and use;

* Encourage the firewood industry to develop practices that are both economically and environmentally responsible;

* Encourage improved efficiency of firewood use, increased use of plantation-grown sources of firewood, and use of alternative energy sources where appropriate;

* Identify sustainable sources of firewood from both public and private land, such as plantations and woodlots for firewood production in areas where firewood collection is posing unacceptable threats to native vegetation and fauna.

The issues identified in the Discussion Paper and during the subsequent public consultation phase will form the basis of a Victorian Firewood Strategy and so I urge everybody who uses firewood for cooking or heating to comment on the Strategy when it is released for public comment later this year.

You can download a copy of the Victorian Firewood Strategy Discussion Paper from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment web site www.nre.vic.gov.au

FENCING

BICA Landcare have been removing old fence remnants from the area. The ELZ planning scheme does not allow boundary fencing unless it is required for grazing use by prior rights. If you have some old wire hanging around your place how about removing it, rolling it up allowing the animal residents safe and unrestricted access to their habitat.

HELP WANTED

Our Community Involvement Sub-committee is looking for new recruits. If you think you might be able to spare a few hours two or three times a year to help coordinate BICA activities then this is just the job for you. Please ring Jenny Taylor 9712 0614

BRAND NEW BENDERS!

Welcome to the first third generation baby in the Bend. Thanks to the proud parents Jo and Dylan, Cric and Ross Henry now have a beautiful little granddaughter Aeshna Ella Henry.

Vanessa Franz and her partner Tristan have a new son Jiah making ex-residents Wally and Jan Franz grandparents.

BURGAN, BELLBIRDS AND DIEBACK

John and Megan McCallum

Land for Wildlife held a Field Day on May 25 on the Hubbert property in Bouchiers Road, Kangaroo Ground. The topic was Burgan, Bellbirds and Dieback. We attended the very informative morning where a number of speakers discussed aspects of eucalypt dieback. Kate Mackie from DNRE co-ordinated the event.

Richard Loyn also from DNRE talked about the long recognized correlation between Bell Miners and dieback while David van Bockel from Warrandyte SP reported on results of Burgan removal on native vegetation. David Cameron then gave an interesting summary of the current revision of the species that we know as Burgan. During the ensuing discussion it was clear that a number of people had come to the event in the hope of obtaining a quick and easy answer to what was causing dieback on or near their properties. This was not to be had and Kate sent a summary of the matters mentioned by the speakers. It is appended below. A further issue seemed to be the matter of clearing Burgan in the Shire of Nillumbik, a matter not new to readers of the local press.

Kate's Summary

1. Eucalypt dieback is a very complex process, there are various known contributing factors, and in many cases a combination of these will be involved. Some of these include pathogens such as Cinnamon Fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), changes in local hydrology, altered nutrient regimes (e.g., run-off from septic tanks), loss of 'ecological companions' (especially indigenous under-storey species), infestation by insects and natural events such as drought. It is important not to jump to conclusions about the causes of tree health decline but to observe closely and intervene only cautiously.
2. While Bell Miners can contribute to eucalypt dieback by 'protecting' sap-sucking lerps, they are a native species of relatively restricted range and need to be respected as such. At a big-picture level, the management of this problem needs to include addressing habitat fragmentation, which favours the success of this species at the expense of many others.
3. Although partial clearing of under-storey was suggested as a way to evict Bell Miners from an area, this decision must be made with due consideration to the negative impacts that under-storey removal can have on an environment. In addition it must be remembered that a permit is required to clear native vegetation
4. Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) is a plant that can easily form a virtual monoculture in a disturbed environment, although in many situations it exists as a natural part of the

ecosystem and poses no threat to other species. In other cases it may be appropriate to thin or clear it, but such a decision should be made carefully, with input from qualified persons. Again, a permit is required to thin or clear it.

5. Burgan has many benefits; dense thickets of it can prevent the incursion of environmental weeds, and provide good habitat for many species of fungi and orchids. In addition many native bird species use it as habitat.

6. There are at least six forms of Burgan in the state, some of which are likely to be recognized as separate species in the near future. Two forms occur in the Nillumbik area, one of which is not invasive, and the other (invasive) type is endemic to the Yarra Valley and therefore should be considered as a rare plant (although not in any way threatened).

TRANSLOCATION OF WILDLIFE

Steve Craig

Following a talk on reptiles at the BICA General meeting in February 2000 by Michael Taylor, a keeper from the Healesville Sanctuary, a number of people asked me to comment on the feasibility of reintroducing Lace Monitors, or Tree Goannas as they are more popularly known, to the Bend of Islands. Goannas have been recorded only once in the ELZ, in about 1985, although there is anecdotal evidence of sightings in the late 1960s and early 1980s (McCallum 2000).

The Tree Goannas currently known to occur closest to the Bend of Islands are on the southern edge of the Kinglake National Park around St Andrews and Steeles Creek. These areas are connected to the Bend of Islands by the Watsons Creek Nature Conservation Link and it is possible for Tree Goannas to move along this wildlife corridor into the Bend of Islands as Lyrebirds appear to have done (Pierce 2000). So why are they now apparently absent from the Bend of Islands, what caused their local extinction and should we re-introduce them to the Bend of Islands?

This raises the somewhat controversial subject of translocation of wildlife and the issues that need to be carefully considered before we undertake the movement of any species of wildlife into areas where they were previously known to occur.

According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN (1987), translocation is the movement of living organisms from one area with free release into another. The three main categories of translocation are defined as follows:

- 1 Introduction of an organism is the intentional or accidental dispersal by human agency of a living organism outside its historically known native range.

2 Re-introduction of an organism is the intentional movement of an organism into a part of its native range from which it has disappeared or become extinct in historic times as a result of human activities or natural catastrophe.

3 Re-stocking is the movement of numbers of plants or animals of a species with the intention of building up the number of individuals of that species in an original habitat.

The translocation of wildlife is a powerful wildlife management tool if used properly and can result in great benefits through increased biodiversity values and the conservation of threatened species like the Tree Goanna. However, like other management tools it has the potential to cause enormous damage, particularly to local wildlife populations and their habitat if applied incorrectly, for example the release of Koalas into isolated areas of habitat resulting in severe defoliation of trees and the death of Koalas.

In this article I would like to focus attention on the subject of re-introduction of wildlife in addressing the issue of the possible re-introduction of Tree Goannas to the Bend of Islands. The IUCN (1987) defines re-introduction as the release of a species of animal or plant into an area in which it was indigenous before extermination by human activities or natural catastrophe. Re-introduction is a particularly useful tool for restoring a species to an original habitat where it has become extinct due to human persecution, over collecting, over-harvesting or habitat deterioration, but where these factors can now be controlled.

Before re-introducing any species to an area where it occurred previously, a number of criteria will need to be satisfied, including the following:

1. The biological needs and original habitat requirements of the species must be fully satisfied in the area where the release is planned. This requires a detailed knowledge of both the needs of the species and ecological dynamics of the area of re-introduction. For this reason the best available scientific advice should be taken when first contemplating a species re-introduction.

2. An ecological study should assess the previous relationship of the species to the habitat into which the re-introduction is to take place and the extent that the habitat may have changed since the species was last recorded in the area. Re-introduction should only take place where the original cause/s of extinction have been removed and consideration given to re-introduction if measures have been taken to reconstitute the habitat to a state suitable for the species.

3. Local residents will need to be consulted and their attitudes taken into account. As well as environmental impacts, there are likely to be social and economic impacts if the re-introduction of a species that was previously persecuted, over hunted or over collected is proposed. The positive and negative effects of the

proposed re-introduction will need to be fully assessed.

4. The individuals to be re-introduced must come from the closest available race or type to the original animals or plants and preferably be of the same race as that previously occurring in the area. If individuals to be re-introduced have been captive bred or cultivated, changes in the species should be taken into account and allowances made for new features that may affect their ability to re-adapt to the original habitat. In the case of fauna they will need to be carefully weaned back into the wild to ensure their chances of survival are maximised and their movements closely monitored following release.

5. Before commencing any re-introduction project, the approval of private and public land managers, including the Department of Natural Resources, is required and sufficient funds made available to ensure that the project can be completed, including a monitoring phase.

6. Monitoring of animals and plants that have been re-introduced must be an integral part of any re-introduction program. Where possible there needs to be long-term research to determine the rate of adaptation and dispersal, the success or failure of the program and the need for any future releases. The species impact on the habitat and other local flora and fauna will need to be monitored and immediate action taken to address any adverse impacts.

As you can see from the above criteria there is much to be considered before undertaking a re-introduction program and I hope this article will promote some constructive discussion on the subject.

References

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (1987). IUCN Position Statement on Translocation of Living Organisms (<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/pubs/policy/transe.html>)

McCallum (2000). Reptiles in the Bend of Islands. BICA Newsletter No. 47.

Pierce (2000). Bird Notes. BICA Newsletter No. 49

FIREWOOD FACTS!

Open fire places generate more particulate pollution than slow combustion technology and older model slow combustion stoves more than newer models (Boyle 2000). An open fire fueled with Red Gum purchased at \$165/tonne costs over \$3000 a year and is the most expensive form of domestic heating. (EEV 1998).

References:

Boyle R.B. (2000). Firewood and air quality. In: Burning Issue Conference, Bendigo, June 8 and 9, 2000 VNPA In: Victorian Firewood Strategy Discussion Paper, Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002.

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Peter Gurney

I am currently the BICA Treasurer and one of my roles is to keep a record of membership payments. I thought that readers may be interested in a bit of a report on our membership and also a few of the foibles of receiving payments. You know how it is in the Bend - advertise a function, meeting, working bee, or special event to start at a certain time and virtually no-one shows up until half an hour later (at best)! Well, getting people to pay their BICA membership is something like that.

At July 2002 the current ordinary membership is 92 (each family membership being counted as 1), plus 6 life members - making a total BICA membership of 98. Of these members:

- * 83 are residents or landowners,
- * 12 do not live or own property in the area but are interested enough to wish to be members
- * 3 are non-resident, non-owner life members,

From my records I believe there are 106 private properties in the ELZ, and a further 16 properties owned by Melbourne Water. Therefore, discounting the MW land almost 80% of residents and property owners are members of our community conservation association. This must be a very high percentage of membership when compared to representative local community groups elsewhere. Certainly, Nillumbik Council recognises that the BICA Committee does in fact represent the Bend of Islands community on many planning and conservation issues. This ensures that we are involved by Council on all relevant issues and that when the BICA Committee makes a submission on a planning or conservation matter it is taken very seriously indeed.

To those landowners or residents who are not current members of BICA I strongly encourage your membership in 2003 - it is even not too late to pay for this year! Please contact me if you are unsure of your membership status (phone 9712 0408). There are two very important planning issues that will involve BICA over the next few months and the Committee can speak as an even more representative group with more members. The issues are the imminent development of the Henley golf course as part of the Heritage Golf and Country Club, and the management of vegetation under the high tension power lines that pass through the area. Both of these issues potentially have considerable ramifications for the ELZ and may impact considerably on our bushland, wildlife and our community.

Thanks to all financial members for their support this year and may I please encourage everyone to pay the 2003 membership subscription when it comes due in November (or at least by December). Details and a payment form will be included in the BICA Newsletter published prior to the 2002 Annual General Meeting which is now scheduled for Sunday 24th November at 2 pm.

2002 Membership Foibles - (note: membership is due in November):

- * only 29 paid memberships by 31st December 2001
 - * 72 had paid by 28th February 2002, including the Co-op which has 32 members
 - * 90 had paid by 30th June 2002 and 92 by mid-July
 - * 4 people have tried to pay twice, and one succeeded.
- Being Treasurer is fun! Are there any takers for 2003??

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

If you have not renewed you BICA subscription for 2002 please detach and return to:-

BICA Treasurer c/o Post office Kangaroo Ground 3097

Please find enclosed my subscriptions for BICA membership.

2002 BICA SUBSCRIPTION.	Family membership	\$20
Single membership \$10	Concession membership	\$6

Name.....

Phone.....

Address:

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The next glittering occasion will be.....

The General Meeting on August 11 2002

Venue: Colin's and Kathy's. First house on A Track (97 Skyline Rd)

Speaker: John McCallum on Ferns

Coming events (see inside for some more details)

Field Day on September 21 at 2.00 pm. Tour of Gawa Trail

Pub Walk on October 27

Koala count on November 16

If undelivered return to: Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.
C/o Post Office. Kangaroo Ground 3097

**BICA
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