

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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

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Number 62 April 2005

WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?



Botanical name: *Xerochrysum viscosum*

Common name: Sticky or Shiny Everlasting

Family: Asteraceae (Daisy family)

Flowering period: August to April

Xerochrysum viscosum is found in dry sclerophyll forest, red gum and box woodland, on shallow, stony and heavy soils.

It is a multi-stemmed and branched perennial herb, 70 cm tall and 50 cm wide, with shiny, sticky, bright green linear leaves. Bright yellow everlasting daisies, about 2 cm diameter, appear at the end of the stems. The flowers are very showy and flower over a long period. Petal-like, stiff, papery, shiny, yellow bracts surround the many tiny daisy flowers. These yellow bracts are in whorls, with the outer layers tinged with brown.

After flowering, single seeded fruit with a feathery attachment, form into tight clusters in the old dried flower heads. At maturity the individual fluffy seeds are released and spread by wind, to sometimes germinate long distances from the parent plant.

Prefers an open, sunny position in dry, well-drained soils, tolerating a semi-shaded position. The plant dies off in summer after flowering and re-shoots from the base in autumn. The plant is not long-lived, but pruning in winter and extra water in summer will encourage new growth and extend the life of the plant.

Provides food for butterflies and insect eating birds.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

A very recent addition to the Bend of Islands plant census, having been identified at the end of Gongflers Drive, in a small area fenced for regeneration purposes

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My favorite season. The first month of autumn has passed by with very little rain and very little change in the temperature. I am sure that won't last.

While resting during a bout of "cold in the head" during a very rare particularly warm period in March, I spent a lot of time catching up on a bit of reading. The most pleasant spot was on our tank beside the bird-bath. The variety of birds I saw was wonderful. Two species that I had not seen at our place before were the Brown Headed Honey Eater and the Firetail Finch. Also coming in for a brief visit was a Rufous Fantail; I have not seen that stunner for many years. It made having a rotten head cold during a few very hot days worthwhile. Probably these little beauties visit all the time but if you are not out there you miss their comings and goings. So, get out there and see what visits your place.

The General Meeting in February was a great success with an excellent attendance. Thanks to Leanne and Robert for hosting the event. Our guest speaker after the formal meeting was Ian Endersby and he was a great hit with his slides, stories and passion for insects.

A couple of regional planning issues are bubbling and BICA will be participating in two VCAT Hearings over the next months. When we make submissions we introduce ourselves as representing our membership which is over 70% of the owners and residents of the area. Is your membership up to date? We need your support.

See you round.

CAROL BONNY

PINING AWAY

Carol Bonny

The skyline view from our house has changed with the removal of the pine plantation from the Parfitt's a few years ago and now the partial removal from Debbie's and Peter's next door to them. Great to see Henley Road almost pine free.

The revegetation and regeneration with local provenance plants at the Parfitts has been a great success and I'm sure there will be the same outcome for the new works.

Thanks to all the property owners that have been participating in the pine eradication program and thanks to our Landcare Coordinator Peter Gurney for his ongoing efforts to remove pines from the Bend of Islands.

Most of the works have been implemented and made possible with Biodiversity Grants from Nillumbik Shire. If you have any pines or other weed problems on your property that you cannot manage I'm sure Peter Gurney would love to hear from you to discuss the options.

WHEELIE THOUGHT PROVOKING!

Alan Bluhm

I thought the article *Little Red* in Newsletter 61 touched on some good points about reducing our household landfill burden.

Changing to an 80 litre bin might not be the answer for everyone, but if we're all taking conscious steps to *reduce, reuse and recycle* in that order rather than just discarding our waste on auto-pilot simply because that's the system someone else has devised for us, then we'll be steadily refining our individual waste habits in ways that will benefit our environment more.

I read on an internet site that packaging makes up about half of our garbage by volume, so for me that will be the next place to go in my waste awareness journey. For instance, I've been known to reach for small light bulbs in non-recyclable plastic blisters stuck on a card, but I know they can also be found in boxes that are solely cardboard.

Thank you, Little Red, for giving me a timely nudge when I was um, just dropping off.

MORE ON RECYCLING

Mia Peterson

It has been pointed out that there is room for confusion in the anonymous article printed in the last BICA newsletter. Mia (not the author of the said article!) provides this clarification.

Last year I went on a tour of the recycling centre. The Machines are massive, the noise deafening and the smell! Yucko! All the same I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

The event was organised by the council, I am sure we could go again if there was enough interest.

On the topic of recycling I would like to point out that the anonymous article in the newsletter was misleading. Soft plastics, which include rice cracker trays and tim tam trays cannot be recycled. A good rule of thumb is, if you can easily squash it then it is considered a "soft plastic". The anonymous article also states "err towards recycling rather than landfill" where as Tamara Allen, an Environment Officer at Nillumbik, recommends the opposite "When in doubt leave it out".

The aim is to have as few contaminants as possible; the cost of re-trucking the rubbish is monumental to the ratepayer and the environment.

If you have lost your info package [or maybe you recycled it?] ring the depot on 94363555 and they will post another. They will also happily answer any queries about items of which you are uncertain.

CANOES AT EASTER

Neil Harvey

The weather was glorious with sunny skies and a gentle breeze. The BICA Dozen set out down to the Yarra through a new route as access via Heritage is no longer permitted. Fortunately Rob Laughlin came to our rescue providing access down the hill over his new property. Chris Tabecki brought his canoe for two and we used it to ferry people across to the other side to pick up the rest of our canoes at Homestead Road. The walk along the other side took about 15 minutes so we were warm and ready to duel with the mighty (it actually had deeper water this year) Yarra and the rapids.

Young Ryan went solo in a Bass single canoe for the first time and had a successful and dry run until he abandoned ship for a quick swim at the end. Singles were the go for Colin, Michael and myself as well. George and Felicity Hampel joined us for the first time in their own Kayaks. Although experienced and much quicker through the water they joined the fun and watched the various antics as we negotiated the rapids with various degrees of success.

Wolfgang and Marie have the habit of going under at precisely the same rapids each year and it looks like becoming a tradition. Marie has suggested that a Bass single may solve that in the future. Greg Phillips was accompanied by his wife Janet for the first time and all were smiling at the end so another trip is on the cards.

After about 3 hours we arrived at Claire's house on the river at Oxley Road for a welcoming hot cuppa with fresh cake and a brandy to smooth the coffee. Claire's hospitality is legendary and she has received every canoe group (over the past 17 years) with a smile and lovely goodies to restore our energy. Thanks Claire.

All of you who have been down the river know the beauty of the Bend from a different angle with the water birds, and the green dense foliage clinging to the steep cliffs and the subtle homes peeking through the bush. Come again and join the day it's always fun.

After the paddle we all adjourned to the hospitality of Mick and Marg Woiwod to tell lies and enjoy good food and wine. The Woiwods always go to a lot of trouble and a good night was had by all. See you all next year



Enjoying a cuppa at Claire's

BABYBENDERS

New residents Melanie and Kirk now have their first girl, Wanda, after three boys.

Anna and Mark have another little girl Anouk, sister for Ella and Keely.

First child for Tai and Lesley a little boy, Obi

Frank Pierce has joined the proud grandparents group with the arrival of Eva and the Gurneys join the mob with their grandson Darcy.

Congratulations one and all and may all the new parents in the Bend get their fair share of sleep

FOOTPRINTS ON THE LAND

Mick Woiwod

They were there 25 years ago when we bought our Bend of Islands block. The Board of Works had put nine home sites up for auction on a single day and in the weeks leading up to that event we'd walked each one in turn, determined to choose the best on offer. Most showed signs of some previous occupant driven out by the 1962 fires. On one, simply rows of concrete stumps where a weekender had once stood. On others, heat-twisted bedsteads, rusty iron, and shards of crockery at the end of barely visible tracks in from the road. Virtual palaces of shattered dreams!

At times we sat among the rubble in search of its occupant's story that mostly escaped us to live on as memories of what might have been. Who were these people driven out by fire, never to return? And it hadn't always been fire. Others had been driven away by of all things 'water': the threatened construction in the 1970s of the immense Yarra Brae Dam, designed to put these beautiful blocks deep underwater, had also played a role.

And then there was one block with an entirely different story. A rustic weekender intact, high up on a bench above the Yarra, a secret sort of space with stone paved floor, ti-tree walls and iron roof and a truly magnificent view of Mt Lofty and the ranges beyond. It had me particularly intrigued. Who could have dreamt this one up? Years later I learnt that it had been built by an ABV2 executive as his secret retreat from the rat-race; that is until he found himself forced to abandon when retrenched by one of the razor gangs of the 70s.

The block Marg and I had knocked down to us that 1980 May day had its unique story to tell too. A driveway leading downhill to a burnt out house-site with its brick chimney still standing; a pump by the river buried deep in silt; a pipeline leading up the hill to where a water-tank had once stood and rolls of rusted cable that had once towed cable trams around the streets of Melbourne. Parts of the tram itself stood on a neighbouring block. Tutsan and belladonna lilies everywhere, brought in to beautify what had been seen in that far-off era as unbeautiful bush that still defied our attempts to remove entirely.

The block's first occupant of the European mould had attempted to have it earn its living as a market garden, hence the pump and water lines and netting fences and cart-tracks leading nowhere. It had been indeed a battle royal but the bush had won in the end and used fire to heal its damaged soul. Another lesson learnt! The bush has many secrets for those seeking answers.

When we began building all those years ago I unearthed a large slab of rock that the market gardener had apparently blasted from the river below. A pace further on was another, then another: a stepping-stone pathway winding forever through the bush. I dug them all up until I had enough to pave the front entrance of our future home and build a 20 metre long dry-stone wall a metre high.

We all have impact on the land and in the years to come others will walk this land to ponder what motivated today's people to do what we have done. Who knows what this unique place we know as the ELZ might look like a hundred years from now other than that both fire and ourselves will have left faint footprints upon its surface with hopefully a lesson or two yet to be learnt!

THE BATTLE OF MANY PINES

Peter Gurney

BICA members and other readers of this newsletter will know that over the last fifteen years one major focus of the BICA Landcare Group has been the eradication of pine trees from the Bend of Islands environmental living zone. We aren't there yet! However, I can tell everyone that each year we get a little closer through the efforts of people at working bees, by land owners who request us to eradicate pines and by the good support of Nillumbik Council through landcare funding grants specifically for this purpose. I estimate that over 2,500 pines have been removed from the ELZ since 1990.

In 2004 we eradicated approximately 80 pines by felling and by "drilling and filling". The latter technique involves drilling holes in the base of each tree at about hand span apart around the trunk and then injecting herbicide (Roundup) into each hole. The tree then takes about 6 months to die and when the tree eventually falls some years later the indigenous understorey around the tree has often re-established itself and the tree, being much lighter when dead, causes little damage when it falls. Then, over the next ten years or more it rots away providing good habitat for insects, spiders, fungi and lichens, and mulch for the regenerating bushland.

This year Nillumbik Council has granted BICA Landcare another \$2,500 for pines removal. During the Autumn and Winter this money will be used to fell four large trees in a confined space on a property in Gongflers Drive, and to make a start on the remaining small pine plantation in Henley Rd extension. The pines at the latter property will be removed over the next couple of years. A contractor will fell the trees and our working bees will clean up the mess, sort out the firewood and burn off the branches and trimmings. Good winter work!!

Furthermore, over this summer the Landcare Group has “drilled and filled” 45 pines and seven Spotted Gums from properties in Ironbark Rd and in Henley Rd/Skyline Rd. So by year’s end another 80 - 100 pines will have disappeared and further bush regeneration will have commenced.

Why are we concentrating on eradicating pines? Mainly because pines spread so widely and freely through bushland! Pines support very little native fauna, although some animals and birds will nest in them as an ‘opportunistic’ tree, and pines also kill off indigenous plants at ground level through their very acidic pine needle droppings. It seems rather strange that in Australia with some of the rarest and most biodiverse flora and fauna communities on earth we tolerate pines, one of the most common plants on the planet, taking over our endangered bushland. Pines are not indigenous to Australia but come from the northern hemisphere. Most of our ELZ pines were planted in the 1960’s by British and European migrants who were nostalgic for the flora of their homelands. Many of them have now grown into very large trees indeed and are commencing to seed and spread. We are now successfully halting the tree’s spread in the ELZ. If we continue the rate of removal at that of the last five or six years we may have a ‘pine free’ Bend of Islands with resultant enhanced biodiversity within ten years.

I already have offers from landowners for pine eradication in 2006, and there are some trees I have my eye on for a bit later on. The Landcare Group is happy to help any landowner who would like to have pines, or other exotic trees, removed. We can offer advice, assist land owners with biodiversity grant applications, apply for specific Landcare grants, help with labour and provide replacement indigenous plants at a very small cost. Just get in touch with me if you have any questions, or any trees you would like removed (phone: 9712 0408).

LANDCARE WITH FRIENDS

Sheila Dixon

One of the more pleasurable tasks up here in the Kangaroo Ground-Christmas Hills area is Landcare. This takes place in many areas of Australia and is a bit like the ever present fire brigades or SES groups. It’s doing something for your patch of Australia with care. As this is a conservation area we need to keep an eye on it so that being relatively near the outer suburbs, it doesn’t get weedy and lose it’s bush identity.

Roughly once a month about 12 of us get together at a spot which has been identified with some sort of runaway pest. People keep an eye out for unwanted botanicals which could even be normal garden plants that have been here for a while. One of our group waged war on various great swathes of blackberries and restored lovely areas of river bank back to what it was when I was a child.

Anyway, we turn up on a Sunday morning, find out what it is we are pulling up and get to work. The gardening gloves and various implements and a nice little quiet spot do the work.

One of the longest jobs was an infestation of onion-weed on the banks of our lovely creek, Watson’s Creek. A lovely Australian creek with natural growth along most of it, but near Henley Rd. Bridge it has gathered these unwelcome weeds. We spend quite a few Sundays digging the hundreds of bulbs that have formed what looks like a mass of snowdrops in season. When this is done then it’s time for the great pieces of weed matting that covers this area.

After a year or two most of the onion weed is suffocated except for a few brave ones that manage to struggle through. Another weeding day and they are practically conquered. This work is some of the most peaceful time I know. Quietly weeding away, knowing that other friends are just over there, is time for the wandering mind. To think about the past up here and listening to the sounds of the country and smelling the earth is good for the soul.

Then it’s time for morning tea. Home made cake and biscuits and billy tea on a fire if it is not summer. Sitting around on logs and finding out the latest gossip. There seems to be a lot of babies arriving up here and the children who were small last year have turned into gangly teenagers. We have some of them on board now in this Landcare caper. How right and proper.

FAUNA SURVEY

Carol Bonny

Some years ago Felicity Faris organised a World Environment Day Fauna Survey for the Bend of Islands and it’s about time we did it again. For the last few years we have celebrated World Environment Day with a Tuan Nest Box Survey initiated and conducted by Steve Craig. Perhaps the Fauna Survey can be an annual event in remembrance of Steve? The results will be collated and displayed on Sunday 5th of June and the data forwarded on to be added to the Wildlife Atlas.

Make a map of your property on an A4 sheet with significant features such as house, driveway, water tank, gully etc and mark on the map approximate location of sightings. While significant species are important all observations are worthwhile. Note the sightings for your property with the species, male or female, number present, what they are doing, date and time etc, all can be reported. Your participation is required and get the children involved.

Forward your survey results to BICA PO Box 304 Kangaroo Ground 3097 by end of April.

THE LONG WALK

Liz Mildenhall

For days I'd been thinking about the logistics of joining Michael Long and so when Peter Gurney's e-mail arrived, I jumped at the opportunity. We set out early, off up the Hume on Tuesday 30th, and Julie, an artist from Warrandyte joined us. Julie brought along a photo of a portrait she'd painted of Michael. Peter had checked out *the long walk* website and our plan was to jump out and join the walkers when we met them along the highway between Chiltern and Wodonga. However we didn't find out until the 7.30 Report that night that they'd had to take back roads and so we went on a bit of a wild goose chase back and forth across the Lincoln Causeway until finally we caught up with them.

It was an inspiring and humbling experience to fall in beside the group in their black shirts printed with *the long walk – where's the love*. They'd already covered 30 ks that morning. Thirty of 300! Some walkers had been with Michael from Melbourne; others had joined at along the way. On Tuesday there were people, including his brothers, who'd come from Darwin, and others from Canberra and Geelong. We shook Michael's hand and he thanked us for coming. He spoke quietly and said he wanted the PM to listen to the elders. A big group of school kids from St Monicas waved the aboriginal flag and shouted, "Go Longee!" There were lots of supporting honks and waves from passing motorists, and for a moment there was hope that Australia could be a more just and compassionate place. On the bridge Michael was met and welcomed by the traditional owners.

The group of 50 grew to over a 100 by the time we crossed the causeway and met up with more supporters at the park. In the park we sat and ate our sandwiches under a tree. We sat alongside a big group of aboriginal people, tired but elated walkers, and on the other side a busload of Greek people picnicked and danced. Australia has such great potential ... We hoped Howard would really listen to Michael Long.

We were lucky we'd made our move this day because we soon learned that Michael had secured his appointment with John Howard and would give his infected feet a break and travel by car to the symbolic walk into Canberra.

It's uplifting to see the publicity that has followed this man's sincerity, resolve and gutsiness. At the same time it's appalling to think he's been forced to do this through frustration and grief over what is happening to his people. Michael Long, no doubt, will keep fighting to make a difference for all Aboriginal people and we must support him. "My long walk was the start of the journey," he said, "but the journey for all Australia has only just begun."

ELDERS SUPPORT GROUP

Mick Woiwod

Last December a small group of elder residents of the ELZ met to discuss how their lives within the Bend of Islands might be managed better. Aware that in coming years problems would inevitably arise, a decision was made to form a group to be loosely known as 'Bend of Islands Elders Support'.

All present expressed a desire to remain in the Bend of Islands for as long as possible and felt that for this to be achieved there'd be a need for forward planning; also that such a move would have potential benefit to all local residents who one day would be required to face a similar problem.

It was decided that much could be achieved at group level but that there'd still be the need to call on wider community support. Current needs revolved around transport. Whilst all were able to drive this had increasingly to be kept to a minimum. It was agreed therefore to apply for fortnightly visits by the Yarra Valley Mobile Library. To this end a petition was circulated at the final Café Benders of 2004, which drew 51 supporters and 117 potential users for the service. The proposed stop for the bus is the present school bus-stop above the fire station.

A second proposal involved use of the Shire of Nillumbik's community bus for occasional outings. The vehicle is a ten-seater with a larger vehicle available in the event of increased demand. Among destinations discussed were: Tarrawarra Gallery, Victoria Market, Federation Square, Yarra and Maribyrnong River Cruises, theatres, botanic gardens, etc. — one local resident has offered his services as driver. Cost of the ten-seater is assessed at \$5 per passenger plus petrol. First trip was 1st March to Tarrawarra Gallery followed by a picnic lunch at Badger Creek.

A decision re a possible weekly community bus for shopping was deferred for future discussion, those in attendance feeling that shopping wasn't a real problem at present. In the event of other Bend of Islanders feeling the need, the issue could be reopened to discuss pick-up points, day of the week and duration at shops.

A further item discussed was assistance with household chores. All elders currently receive some assistance from the Shire on either a weekly basis for house-cleaning or annually for grass-cutting, spouting, windows, etc., with relatives assisting wherever possible. Elders are interested in hearing from young people and other locals willing to offer paid assistance; some tasks too to be accommodated at group level by elders with specific skills.

The social side of things was also discussed and it was felt that this could best be met by getting together on a regular basis for discussion and games. Also discussed was days of total fire ban. Would a community bus be worth consideration to take those not remaining with their homes to a local theatre or other safe haven?

Members ask all eligible residents to attend its next gathering (there is no membership fee to apply) and any resident, regardless of age, with a special need is welcome to attend. The future of Bend of Islands Elders Support is dependent upon community backing. Feedback is most welcome.

The Group meets four or more times a year with a regular news-sheet issued to all involved. For further information contact: 9712 0563

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2005

Tom Fisher

The Bend of Islands celebrated Clean Up Australia day 2005 by removing exactly 6.14 (accurate within a range of plus or minus 50%) kilometres of fencing wire from along Henley and Skyline Roads, as well as cleaning up an even greater length of roadside between Kangaroo Ground and Sugarloaf Dam. Most of the 23 participants, aged between 6 and 70+ formed into small teams to remove the wire, cut it into short lengths, and load it into trailers to take to skips sent by the Shire of Nillumbik. The Shire also contributed Mars Bars for kids of all ages via the agency of Shire Planner Donna Stoddard and young son Lachlan. Others, including community elder and self-styled roadside clean-up expert Sheila Dixon and team Crisi (pere et deux fils), patrolled the road verges, gathering plastic bottles, aluminium cans, and other rubbish and putting them into bags provided by Clean Up Australia for eventual recycling (we filled over one large bin).

With the permission of owners and occupiers, fencing wire was totally removed from Barb Snell's, Michael Skewes and Annie Fogarty's, Therese and Mary Paulkas', and Melanie and Kirk Andrews' places. Barbed wire strands were taken off the property belonging to Jo Douglas and Gerard Banner, which stretches from here to eternity along Henley and Skyline Roads.

The annual Clean Up Australia Day tee-shirt (large) was won by Jethro Alison (extra small), who drew his own number out of an authentic New York Yankee baseball cap. The Fraud Squad will be investigating. Certificates of appreciation were given to Michael and Julian Crisi, as well as Jethro, for their sterling efforts.

It is understood that at dusk mobs of kangaroos were queuing up to enjoy a more open passageway along the wildlife corridor between Kinglake National and Warrandyte State Parks. They have sent a message of appreciation and expressed the hope that the Bend of Islands will continue its good work on their behalf.



A group of happy workers resting after cleaning up Australia!

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

The Fire Shed was transformed into a picture theatre for the April Saturday Night at the Movies with large screen, mood lighting, and gongs to get the patrons back into their seats after interval. A gold coin donation at the door and coffee sales generated over \$90 for our Fire brigade. The door prize of a bottle of wine and a box of chocs was won by Robert Laughlin. A successful night thanks to the efforts of Barb Whiter, Alan Bluhm and Neil Harvey. We just might do it again???

BIRD NOTES

Frank Pierce

The following events can be reported since last November.

Lyrebirds- 9 further record reports as listed in the table:

Powerful Owls- There have been several reports of birds calling at night since late March.

New Bird for the ELZ

Musk Lorikeets were heard then seen and photographed in the northern section of the Co-op on 9 & 10/03/05. They were feeding on the flowering Long-leaf Box. I don't know of any previous record of this species in the ELZ.

Other Interesting Observations reported include:-

Swift Parrots were seen flying over the northern section of the Co-op on 1/03/05. Last year they were recorded on 3/3. Presumably they are migrating from their summer breeding grounds in Tasmania to their wintering grounds in Northern Victoria and NSW

Little Lorikeets were seen by Ross Henry and others on the BICA bird survey walk within the Catani Blvde Loop on 12/03/05

Val Himmelreich saw 2 baby Tawny Frogmouths near her place on 14/12/04

With the more normal rainfall last year we were pleased to see the return of a Rufous Fantail however it did not appear to stay around to breed. The Eastern Yellow Robin population seems to be increasing again on the Coop where it was dramatically reduced during the successive dry years. This demonstrates the vulnerability of even some species that we consider common.

Omissions

Some of the contents of the table I included in my last report flew off into cyberspace leaving many blank spaces. The same thing happened in the table of sighting records in the article about Lyrebirds. If anyone would like the full versions of these please contact me.

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce (97120237) or email - fpandjm@netspace.net.au especially Lyrebirds and Powerful Owls.

All are welcome to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month. Times are as per the BICA Calendar.

RECENT LYREBIRD SIGHTINGS

12 Dec 04	R Forte	Saw a lyrebird at "Fretwell's" lower Catani
30 Dec 04	F Pierce	Heard bird west of 'Pierre's Dam' northern Coop early am
21 Feb 05	J Taylor	Saw female crossing driveway at first big pipe drain (heard JT&FP)
26 Feb 05	M Krause	Heard towards NE of house at 7.30am
28 Feb 05	T Fisher	Saw a male on MW land opposite 116 Catani Blvd.
6 Mar 05	D Osler et al	Heard bird in gully west of Quentin Mattiske's "B" Track, Coop
6 Mar 05	V Himmelreich	Heard bird in gully north of Quentin Mattiske's "B" Track, Coop
27 Mar 05	J McCallum	Heard N of his house, 5.00pm
28 Mar 05	G&M Peterson	Heard near house towards north

A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER!

To all BICA members who have supported us over the years.

Many of you seem to have forgotten to send your fees this year. We need funds to create the services you enjoy e.g. this newsletter. If you haven't paid could you please send your support (30.00 Families, \$20.00 singles & \$10.00 concession) to BICA, C/o Post Office, Kangaroo Ground 3097.

A red spot on your copy of this BICA Newsletter is a reminder that you have not yet paid you membership dues for 2004-2005

NEIL HARVEY

BICA Newsletter April 2005

ANOTHER LOCAL FERN

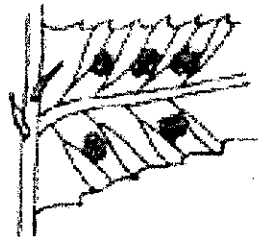
John McCallum

In BICA News 45 (September 1999) there was a note about *Doodia caudata* (Small Rasp-fern). Growing alongside this species on the banks of Watson's Creek is another *Doodia* species. It is the Common Rasp-fern, *D. media*.

Both species share the features common to the genus. They have short rhizomes (creeping underground stems) with fibrous black roots, the fronds have thickened margins with curved teeth (hence the common names), the veins in the fronds fork and the sori (bundles of spore-cases) are short and oblong or linear. Both species can show dimorphism in the fronds. This means that the appearance of the fertile (spore-bearing) fronds is different from the barren ones. The dimorphism is more marked in *D. caudata*, the barren fronds forming a rosette from which the fertile fronds stand erect. Sometimes the newly unfurled fronds are an attractive pink colour.

Distinguishing between the two species can be a little difficult although once you become more familiar with them each species does have its own particular overall appearance.

The feature to look at is the way in which the individual pinnae ('leaflets') can be attached to the main stem. They are mostly sessile (lacking a stalk and attached to the stem by their entire base) and merge into one another. Some pinnae, however, have a short stalk which is an extension of the mid-rib. It is the relative number of these individually attached, stalked pinnae that is the key to distinguishing between Common



Pinna attached by its base.



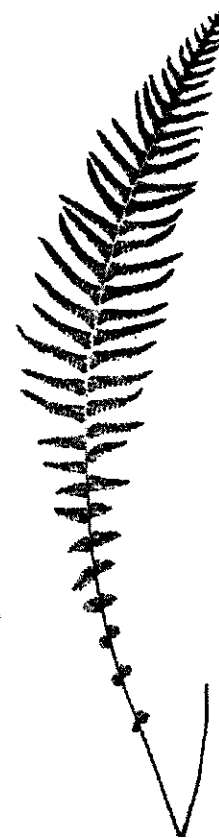
Pinna attached by its midrib

Rasp-fern and Small Rasp-fern.

D. caudata has pinnae attached by the mid-rib only for the bottom half of the frond. *D. media* has this kind of pinna attachment only in the lower third of the frond.

Aside from the differences in the way the pinnae are attached, *D. media* has harsher fronds than *D. caudata*. This latter species usually exhibits very noticeable dimorphism and the pinnae towards the tip of the frond are often merged to form a tail-like structure which gives the Small Rasp-fern its specific name. (The Latin for 'tail' is *cauda*, hence *caudata*). Fronds on plants in this area are 20-30 cm but larger in damper environment.

There is a third Victorian rasp-fern, *D. aspera* which only occurs in East Gippsland and further north. All three species prefer damp sheltered conditions.



Doodia media

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name:

Contact details:

Type of membership:

Individual \$ 20.00

Family \$ 30.00

Concession \$ 10.00

We have tried including photographs in this edition of BICA News. There are going to be problems converting colour pics to monochrome but digital photography may well make things easier. Meanwhile, we will continue to experiment!

Contributions are welcome in any form; typed, handwritten, email, floppy, CD, Zip disc...you name it.

If you are submitting a Word (or any other word processor) document, consider not formatting it. Use single returns for paragraphs and avoid fancy typefaces. Single spaces at the end of sentences are also appropriate.

VIC. 5077

General Meeting: 29 May 2005
World Environment Day: 5 June 2005
Consult the BICA calendar for regular events.

If undelivered return to: Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.
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