

Newsletter 107 May 2003

Description

Dear Friends

The rain that we hoped for fell in April and made it possible to dig the holes for the Depot plantings. An industrious group made short work of the task, the hardest part being getting the thick, long wooden stakes into the ground. Hopefully the stakes will not interest would-be stake collectors and the plants will flourish. It was good to see the site being used by bird-watching campers, the second group in two weeks.

We now have four groups of trees in the enclosure and if we can outwit the kangaroos the site should be attractive in a couple of seasons. Thanks go to Jan and Jenny of Sandy Creek Farm Trees who donated the trees.

A small group went off to Mt Pleasant Rd to finish off the Olive trees and the ones we left from last meeting were huge indeed. Philip had a bow saw which made the job a lot easier. While some tackled the Olives and collected old rubbish others began the flora survey for the block. Although it was very dry and the understorey depleted some 30 plus species were listed. It was interesting to note that there was very little Mistletoe on the box trees. The Lilies were responding to the rain but there was obvious pressure on them as â??green pick` for the herbivores.

While we were busy Darren took on the job of tagging the very large Olives in the reference area for later removal by the parks crew. The site is too difficult for Friends to access. Thanks Darren.

Tea was enjoyed at Cyanide Dam, which incidentally is still dry despite the rain. A Koala has called the area home for the last few months and the Brown Tree creepers, Yellow Robins and Superb Fairy Wrens are back.

Coyleâ??s Trail was chosen for the spotlight walk and after the mild day the evening was quite chilly. Brushtail and Ringtail Possums were spotted plus a Squirrel Glider which was initially identified as a Brushtail by the fearless leader. Things that go thump in the night were about and the thudding of the Swamp Wallaby was a common sound. An unexpected find was an Echidna out for an evening stroll however it soon burrowed into the end of a hollow log. No owls were heard despite very professional calling up. A good job done by Mark with the spotlight.

Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater Survey:

The first national survey is on May 31st and June 1st. Please contact me if you are available to survey on either day at Chiltern or the Killawarra site. 57 261 484

Around the park:

Following the rain the dry country honeyeaters which delighted us in April left for warmer parts. The numbers of Noisy Friar-birds decreased and the Regents became hard to find. There are quite large parties of Gang Gangs throughout the park and they can be seen and heard feeding on the stringybark capsules. Perhaps their larger than usual numbers could be attributed to the fires destroying the stringybarks in the Mt Pilot section of the park. A few Swift Parrots have been recorded at Magenta and around the Cyanide Dam area.

It is interesting to look around the park understorey to see the survivors of the drought. Grevillea alpina and Persoonia rigida, Geebung and Flax Lily are ones that stand out perhaps because they are not attractive to the grazers. Peas have not fared well and it may well take a couple of good seasons for them to feature again.

Rainfall for April: 65.8mm fell over seven days making the total for the year 88.2mm.

Indian Mynahs, the most hated of all pest species with its raucous call and scavenging ways, may at last meet its match. ANU researcher Dr Chris Tideman has developed a prototype trap which lures the birds into a cage by means of a decoy bird and food. It seems large traps for public areas could be available soon costing about \$1200 and smaller ones at \$250. Maybe they should be mandatory for the fast food outlets along the freeway!

Olives: From *A Good Weed* newsletter: Olives have been around for a long time and have been trendy since antiquity. John Macarthur introduced olives into Australia in 1805 and this first plant still exists at Elizabeth Farm, Parramatta. Crossman reports: "escapees from cultivated olive groves have invaded native vegetation communities, including grey box woodland; this invasion leads to a reduction of native species richness and abundance; spread by birds; if left unchecked native vegetation will suffer substantial loss". So let us be relentless in their removal.

Annual General Meeting: Just a reminder that this is set for Saturday July 12th. Details in June newsletter.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY JUNE 1ST AT 9.00 am MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE

Fungi Ramble, Mt Pilot section of the National Park.

Byo lunch. Contact: Christine Watson 03 57 261 398

Category

1. Newsletters

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