

Newsletter 108 June 2003

Description

Dear Friends

Welcome rain came a little earlier than forecast but then fungi hunting seems an appropriate activity for such a day. This report of the day has been submitted by Christine Watson.

Fungi Day at Mt Pilot

On Sunday morning eighteen keen Fungi fans braved the rain and headed off to Mt Pilot in search of fungi. With the recent dry weather it may well have been a fungi-less day but as we turned into Old Coach Road a large Horse-hoof fungi (*Piptoporus* species) greeted us on a burnt tree.

As we drove on many more Horse-hoof fungi were sighted, white n cream against their hosts the blackened n burnt Eucalypts.

The Mt Pilot area is still black n bleak after the January wildfire - we inspected a Black Cypress Pines population - an old pine with burn cones having spilt massive amounts of seeds. Saddened that we wont see the big old pines on Mt Pilot again in this lifetime, but enlightened by little green ones germinating and coming thru the soil. Eucalypts, lilies, n grasses, also regenerating albeit rather sparsely.

Although we couldn't see the vegetative body of the fungi - microscopic strings of hyphae - in the soil, litter layer, decaying matter and the plants - we were aware of their presence and the vital part fungi plays in the forest - one being that 90%plus plants - including the Eucalypts and the pines - form a symbiotic relationship with fungi at root level - the plant provides the food as fungi is unable to produce its own - the fungi attached to the roots extends thru the soil n acts to absorb water and nutrients and provide protection against pathogens.

The Orchids - Parson's Bands, Little Greenhoods and Midgees were just finishing flowering - orchids rely on the fungi also to obtain food as orchid seeds contain little nutrition - the fungi obtain this from other plants until the orchids can produce their own.

A Koala, dead n decomposing - even in death - still clinging to a wild cherry tree - a stark reminder of the loss of life wildfire brings. But life goes on - Susie found fresh Powerful Owl pellets - containing the bones of a Ringtail Possum and Sugar and Squirrel gliders - & Peter finding *Pinus radiata* seedlings coming thru in the burnt pine plantation.

The unburnt reference area provided lots of fungi fruiting bodies - really spore-releasing bodies - but guess you can call them fruiting bodies if you eat them. Although some people cant eat fungi cos the cell walls are chitinous (as in Insect bodies) - not ligninous (as in plants). We found a host of Fungi - John identified many species - Polypores, tough n woody on dead n decaying branches

â?? Jelly fungi, on wood â?? Boletes, fleshy n porous â?? Agarics, gilled fungi â?? n lots Thelephores, leathery shelves on dead wood. The rain coming down steadily a meeting n fooded up many headed for home n drier places â?? a group of intrepids continued on for an enjoyable walk in the forest, wet but happy

Around the park:

Parks staff conducted three burns in May, on Donchi Hill, Depot Road and Ballarat Road. Good soaking rain on the following days should have encouraged seed germination. Lilies and grasses are already providing a green tinge. Several large fire fungi, Polyporus mylittae, emerged two weeks after the burn. The burn on Ballarat Road was specifically to encourage regeneration of Senecio garlandii and only time will tell if it is successful.

Around Frogs Hollow there are nice clusters of the luminous fungi Ompholotus nidiformis growing at the base of red gums. It can be found on a variety of native plants as well as exotics such as pinus sp. It is a poisonous fungi and produces white rot on the host. Also fruiting at present is Rooting Shank, Xerula australis and someone remarked that their colour reminded him of pikelets. Yes, it is edible.

On a further flora survey of the Dillwynia Track block John identified Viola betonicifolia, Showy Violet, so adding another plant to the flora list. Also found were a couple of olives which escaped the saws.

Rainfall: 53.2mm fell over 7 days in May. Total for the year: 141.4 mm on 20 days.

More on Butcher-birds:

On May 28th John Hawker recorded a Pied Butcher-bird on the Beechworth-Tarrawingee Road, 15 kms west of Beechworth. Philip and Eileen recorded a Grey Butcher-bird in a paddock near Frogs Hollow. Both these species appear to be extending their range.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY JULY 12TH 1PM AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE.

Our guests for the day will be Dr Phil Suter and Rachel Elso whose topic will be â??Invertebrates - backbones of the forestâ?• We will be visiting a wetland and a forest dam to gain further insight into the workings of the environment. Visitors most welcome.

Tea: 6pm at the Senior Citizens rooms in Conness Street. AGM: 7.15pm Speaker: 7.30pm Contact: S. Duncan 0357 261 885

FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FALLS DUE ON JUNE 30 TH

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It would be appreciated if you would mark your envelope "Membership" and post to P.O. Box 60 Chiltern 3683. Thank you.

1. Newsletters

2012/06/22

eileen

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