

Newsletter 133 September 2005

Description

Dear Friends,

The final fall of 25mm in August was just what was needed in the park. However the predicted showers for our Friends Day did not arrive, instead we enjoyed a perfect spring day for our weeding. The ground was soft and the roots of the Spurge and Genista had little grip on the soil making them easy pickings as we worked to the flute-like calls of the Grey Butcher-bird, the piping Yellow Robin and noisy White-browed Babblers. With a little follow-up effort we can ensure neither of these pests sets any seed so that each season we are depleting the seed stock in the soil. And how long does the seed last in the soil? Well, we have been working on these two weeds for over 10 years so surely they must be getting close to extinction! The Howlong Road re-veg site looked really great, plenty of Chocolate Lily leaves, lovely patches of the Dwarf Greenhood, *Pterostylis nana*, daisies, tiny Pennyworts, Golden Wattle seedlings, mosses and lichens all making the effort worthwhile. Several hundred seedlings were dealt with, many just emergent, so another short attack next meeting should deal with late arrivals.

The sights at Bartley's Block were very disturbing. Large areas had been dug over, some to a depth of 50cms, with no attempt to level the diggings out. Much of Chiltern's history revolves around the Bartley family and to see the homestead and brewery sites dug up is quite distressing.

Lunch was enjoyed at the Indigo Goldfields Cemetery with Brown Treecreepers, Yellow-tufted and Fuscous Honeyeaters, rather vocal Eastern Shrike-tits and shrieking Little Lorikeets. Our afternoon walk took us along Cemetery Road where we inspected the Deane's Wattle and the through the grassland to the junction of Riley's and Greenhill Roads. On the way Chris spotted a Leopard Orchid also know as a Donkey Orchid, *Diuris pardina*, in bud. A delightful find was a lovely spray of almost white Hovea mixed with deeper purple sprays. We stopped to look at a seemingly just green bank which revealed a wealth of interesting plants. Tiny rosettes of the Black-tipped Greenhood, *Pterostylis bicolor*, masses of tiny Yellow Stars, *Hypoxis* sp, mosses and lichens with fruiting bodies and small ferns. Further down the track we spotted some flowering Broom Bitter-pea, *Daviesia genistiolia*, a low growing pea with sharp needle-like leaves which is only rarely found outside the park. At the Cryptandra site we were pleasantly surprised to find that the plants had recovered well from the drought and herbivore grazing and were sporting lovely sprays of white bells. Although it looks like a heath it belongs to the Rhamnaceae family so we all learned something today.

Biodiversity Week:

Local activity: Visit to Mt Pilot on Tuesday September 13th from 9.00am to 12 noon to look at the bush two and a half years post-fire. Orchids, wildflowers and birds among other things.

New Bushland Reserve:

This grassland and Grey Box woodland block is on Research Station Road had been acquired for its good stand of native grasses and lilies, Grey and Yellow Box stands and as Grey-crowned Babbler habitat. However it has a considerable number of olives on it. We are looking for volunteers for a mid-month activity to remove the smaller ones and tag the larger ones for parks staff to fell. If you can assist please give me a call on 57 261 484. This interesting block has been added to the United Mine Reserve.

Around the Park:

The summer migrants are arriving, noisy flocks of White-browed Woodswallows were seen at Lappinâ??s Dam on September 1st. The violent storm claimed the Hooded Robinâ??s nest and probably many others. The first Donkey Orchid, Diuris pardina, was spotted on Donchi Hill on the first day of spring. There have been three reports of sizeable groups of Diamond Firetails in the area which is very good news. Swift Parrots are still with us but no Regents can be found. There are a few Noisy Friar-birds feeding in hybrid eucalypt along Battery Hill Road. Elsewhere in the park it is strangely quiet without these large honeyeaters and even Red Wattelbirds are fewer in number.

Terrick Terrick NP:

Parks Victoria invites interested persons to the Terrick Terrick NP on Friday September 30th to Sunday October 3rd. The gathering is to form a Friends Group for the new park. Weekend activities will include Plains Wanderer search, grassland walks, fauna survey, plus other activities. Booking is essential. Camp sites available. Contact Eileen if you would like further information.

Rainfall: August: 96.4mm over 15 days. Year to date: 534.4mm over 70 days. We have had more rain in 8 months this year than fell for the whole year of 2002. We have had not had an average rainfall year since 1992 when 1035mm fell..

Letâ??s hope we get good spring rains and reach the average this year.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY OCTOBER 1ST. Meet at 9.00AM Chiltern Post Office

We hope to erect some new nest boxes. A walk around Turquoise Track in the afternoon for wildflowers, orchids and birds. Leader John. BYO lunch, chair, binocs, and gloves. Enquiries: 03 57 261 484

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