

Newsletter 134 October 2005

Description

Dear Friends,

October the first was a perfect day for being in the bush and we made the most of it. Our first task was to replace the boxes on the All Nations Road site which were lost in the burn. Once the sites were chosen the job was easier than choosing the sites!. We have Phillip to thank for the beautifully constructed boxes and look forward to seeing the entrances chewed to show that wildlife is also appreciative.

The area in which we were working was the site of an autumn ecological burn and it was interesting to note the plants present. Two species of Sun Orchids were found, the Plain Sun-orchid, *Pterostylis nuda*, its common name does not reflect its beauty, the other, the Salmon Sun-orchid, *T. rubra* was plentiful and in bud only. Most likely the Dotted Sun-orchid *T. ixioides*, would also be present. Since the meeting the Plumed Greenhood, *P. plumosa*, has been found. Mark's foot just missed it as we trudged over the ridge "What's this?" he asked. That gives us a second site in the park for this uncommon greenhood. Kaye also added to the plant list by spotting some Broughton's Pea, *Swainsona procumbens*, in the northern block. A reasonably common plant in the seasonally inundated plains country this was a surprise plant for the park.

Back to the burnt block.

The early greenhoods were setting seed and a large colony of Nodding Greenhoods, *P. nutans*, was still quite fresh. Austral Indigo, *Indigofera australis*, was sprouting from rootstock and growing from seed and looking very healthy, in fact throughout the park it is flowering profusely obviously suited by the season. Twisted Parrot-pea seedlings were abundant as were lilies, Pink Fairies, Twining Fringe-lily, with nothing to twine on was creeping over the ground. On the track where we parked the cars the delicate flowers of the Beard-heath, *Leucopogon virgatus*, delighted everyone and viewed through a hand lens their flowers were exquisitely fringed.

Lunch and a meeting at Cyanide Dam with the entertainment provided by the usual birds was a welcome break. The afternoon was spent in the northern block where we walked Turquoise Track a little visited area of the park. While birds were scarce the flowers made up for them. Greenhoods and in particular some lovely Maroonhoods, *Pterostylis pedunculata* were subjects for the photographers. A patch of Creeping Bossiaea, *Bossiaea prostrata*, in full flower, was another photogenic subject. This pea likes full sunlight to open fully.

The young green hops (seed capsules) of the Hop Bush, *Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *cuneata*, were in profusion with some already turning pink as they ripened. This form of Hop Bush is the one common to the plains country it has small glossy leaves and makes a most attractive long-lived garden shrub. On the dry Ironbark slopes Musky Caledenias grew in drifts, with colours ranging from greenish yellow

through to deep purple-tinged white flowers. Yam Daisies, some early everlastings and Chocolate Lilies completed the picture for the day. Turquoise track lived up to its name with the sweet tinkling calls of these little gems of the bird world letting us know they were around. A most enjoyable day.

New Bushland Reserve:

This grassland and Grey Box woodland block is on Research Station Road has been acquired for its good stand of native grasses and lilies, Grey and Yellow Box stands and as Grey-crowned Babbler habitat. We have had two work mornings on the block and have removed over 100 Olives. Additions have been made to the flora list the highlight being a group of Black-tipped Greenhoods, *Pterostylis bicolor* which is on the threatened species list. Another interesting plant was the Scarlet Sundew, *Drosera glanduligera*. Several more work mornings will be needed to clean up the rest of the olives and the next is proposed for Saturday October 22nd to give those unable to come during the week an opportunity to be involved. Please contact Eileen if you are able to attend.

Around the Park:

We still have Swift Parrots as of October 8th. A Regent Honeyeater was seen at Bartley's on three occasions from October 3-5th but despite repeated searching by many people it cannot be relocated.

More very destructive digging has occurred at Bartley's Block. The dams at Bartley's are full and the whole area looks splendid highlighted by the great flowering of the Hedge Wattle, *Acacia paradoxa*, a shrub much loved by the Babblers for nesting.

Rainfall: September:: 70.4mm over 14 days. Year to date: 604.8mm over 84 days. With luck we may meet our average this year.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6TH. Meet at 9.00AM Chiltern Post Office

We will be erecting new nestboxes in the morning and walking White Box Walk in the afternoon. BYO lunch, binocs, sunscreen and water to carry. Contact Eileen: 03 57 261 484

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