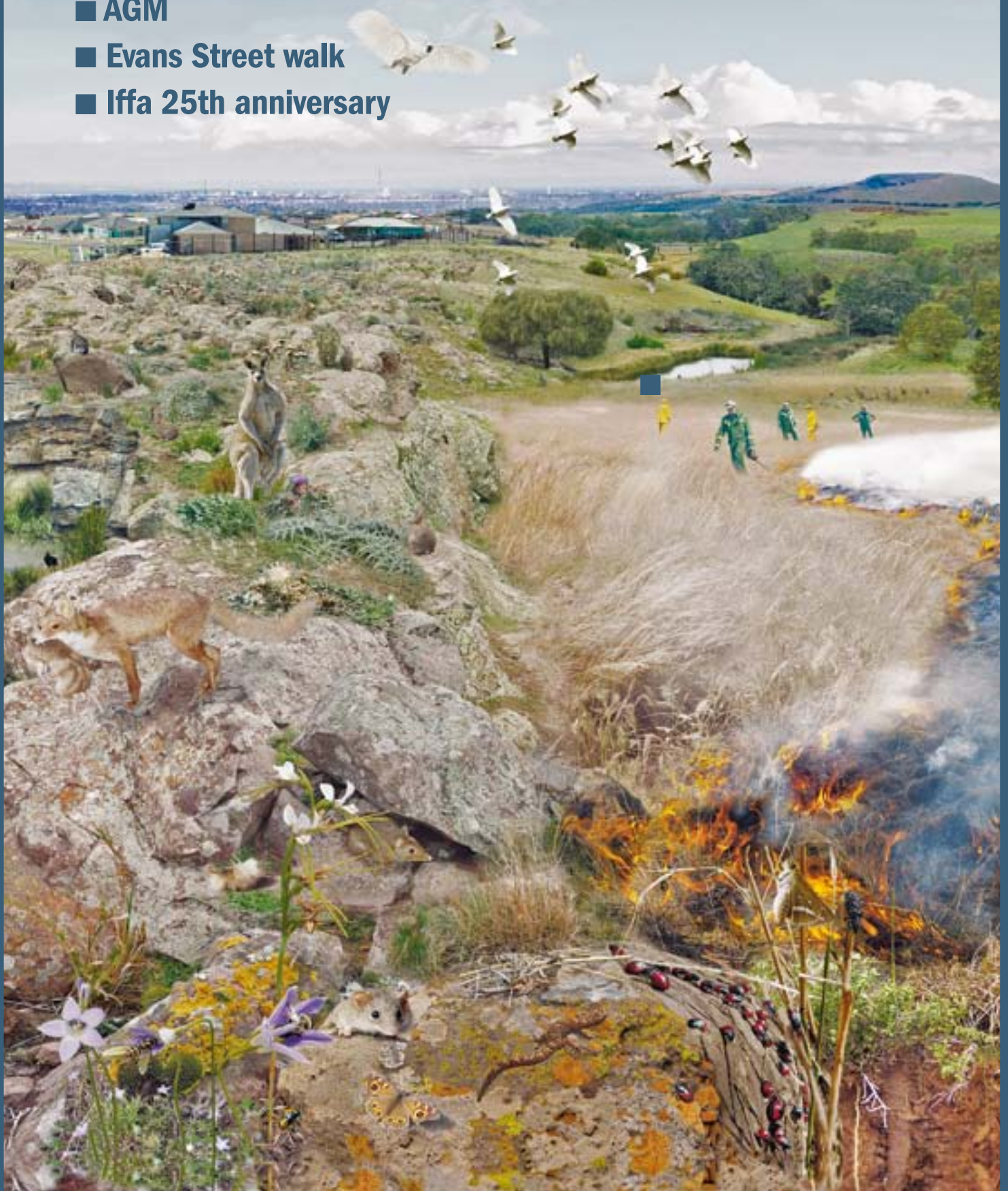


October 2011 Volume 22 Three

# Indigenotes

- Volcano Dreaming
- AGM
- Evans Street walk
- Iffa 25th anniversary



# President's letter

## HOME GARDENING

WHAT have you thought about IFFA's focus on home gardening this year? The theme has generated lively conversation. It is close to home and obviously close to the heart as well.

Garden industry and media engages a large portion of the community but indigenous plants struggle to find wider acceptance. They suffer from a perceived lack of showiness and short period of interest. Indigenous plants are often promoted as an alternative to invasive garden plants so how can we be better advocates for the merits of indigenous plants?

Our own home gardens have the intimacy that allows us to appreciate the subtle qualities of indigenous plants. At the moment I am relishing the texture of soft new foliage of Native Raspberry and fascinated by wriggling Lightwood pods- finally developing after their curious 10 month hiatus since flowering. The flowers of indigenous grasses in early summer combine intricate pattern and swaying movement, a truly hypnotic effect.

Visitors taking part in the winter photographic workshop opened my eyes to the merits of some 'commonplace' plants in my garden. Descriptions of what had captured their visual interest for each botanical subject were often unexpected and sensitive. Building the language and images that help others to recognise a plant's special features we may discover the key to influence traditional gardening. Can we turn a passion for pelargoniums or fervour for forget-me-nots into a love for Lomandra or an ardour for Arthropodiums?!

## MENTORS

CAN you recall someone whose words or deeds were 'good enough to bottle'? Most environmentalists I know can name several people who they admire and consider influential.

The sad news of the recent death of Ron Hateley, whose book *The Victorian Bush; its 'original and natural' condition* was reviewed in the last issue, has made me reflect on the role

of mentors in the environmental field. Ron's curiosity about the way the landscape fitted together left a lasting impression on myself and generations of fellow students of Melbourne University's Forestry course.

Early morning radio recently supplied me with an unexpected mentor experience when I caught a replay of a 2005 interview\* with Helen Gee. Helen is one of Tasmania's leading conservationists with an activist 'career' stretching back to the Lake Pedder campaign. I stowed away several nuggets of her wisdom, most especially her insights into how a person can sustain themselves in conservation efforts over the long-haul.

Our mentors are a conservation resource that we should be valuing, fostering and preserving.

Fortunately, in the case of Ron and Helen, we have their words in print and electronically so their influence may extend widely to those they have never met. But why not attend an event where you can share time with inspiring people... in person? Be sure to take advantage of IFFA's upcoming meeting, celebration and outings which may well provide your next mentor experience.

Brian bainbridge

\*ABC's *Verbatim* podcast of the 2005 interview by Lyn Gallacher with Helen Gee available is at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/verbatim/stories/2011/3277236>

## COVER

The 12 panel grassland panorama, *Volcano Dreaming*, was funded by EPA Victoria, commissioned by Victoria University and produced by Inherit Earth. It digitally merges the work of many photographers. Cover image (detail showing panels 3 and 4) includes images courtesy of Brian Bainbridge, Trevor Pescott, Reto Zollinger and Inherit Earth.

The excellent cover photo from the last issue and picture accompanying the article on Wayne and Ruth Rankin's garden in the last issue were taken by Wayne Rankin. We neglected to acknowledge this in the last issue. Our apologies to Wayne.

## IFFA 2010-11 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 13 November 2011 2pm to 4 pm at Balwyn Library, 336 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn, 3103 (just east of Balwyn Road on the corner of Talbot Avenue, Melway 46 E8). All welcome.

Business will include:

### 1. Acceptance of previous minutes

### 2. Reports on the year presented by the current office-bearers

### 3. Amendments to the rules:

- Firstly to simplify the membership form and its management Amend S4(3)(a) to read "Be in writing in the form approved from time to time by the committee"

- Delete Appendix 1 [i.e. the standard membership form]
- Add section "4(3)(c) be accompanied by the appropriate membership fee"

- Delete S4(6)(b)

- Add section "4(6A) If the committee rejects the application the secretary must as soon as practical (a) notify the applicant in writing of the rejection of the application (b) refund the sum paid with the application."

- Secondly to rename the Youth Representative to the Student

Representative

Amend Section 21 Office Holders by replacing "Youth Representative" with "Student Representative"

- Thirdly to reduce the quorum for committee meetings from 5 to 4: Amend Section 27(1) to say "Any 4 members of the Committee constitute a quorum..."

### 4. Election by members of new office-bearers and two committee members for the year ahead.

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary Michele Arundell (PO Box 77 Kallista 3791) before the meeting. Nomination forms are available on IFFA's website. Office-bearers include:

- President • Vice President • Treasurer • Secretary • Editor • Webmaster • Events Coordinator • Indigenous Nurseries Liaison Officer • Youth Representative/Student Representative • Fundraising Coordinator and Ecological Information Coordinator



## Volcano Dreaming

**V**OLCANO DREAMING (above) is a huge photo montage designed to bring attention to the precarious existence of one of the world's most endangered ecosystems, the wildflower grasslands of the volcanic plains that stretch from Melbourne, across most of southern Victoria, almost to the border with South Australia.

Since the arrival of the Europeans this natural landscape has been transformed, extinguishing much of the original flora and fauna. Some animals and plants have been driven to extinction, while the existence of many others is marginal.

Many individuals, groups and organisations are making efforts to study, protect, conserve and regenerate these threatened animal and plant species, and better understand the ecosystem complex that has nurtured them.

Volcano Dreaming is a touring exhibition that has been produced by the artists at Inherit Earth –

<http://www.inheritearth.com.au/> The exhibition was commissioned by the Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre at Victoria University and currently exists in two copies.

The exhibition aims to show something of the original world of the western plains, what has happened to it, what is being done to help preserve what remains of it and what people can do to help.

If you are interested in using the display for an event contact Millicent Burke at Iramoo on 9919 2815 or [volcanodreaming@vu.edu.au](mailto:volcanodreaming@vu.edu.au) or contact Kerrie Poliness and Peter Haffenden at Inherit Earth on 0419 154 265 or at [www.inheritearth.com.au](http://www.inheritearth.com.au)

## Evans Street Grassland walk

Sunday 6 November 2011, 1pm-3:30pm.  
Melway 382 D6.

**M**EET at 1 pm at the classroom in the Hume City Council depot at the south end of the site, where Volcano Dreaming will be on display.

Walk starts at 2pm. Vanessa Craigie, IFFA's Vice President, will lead the walk. Please confirm your attendance with Vanessa by emailing her at [pete@jix.com.au](mailto:pete@jix.com.au) or phoning and leaving a message (including your phone number) on 0438 516 655.

Native grassland and wildflower enthusiasts have long regarded this as one of the best, most intact and florally diverse of all remnants of the critically endangered native grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

It's home to well over a hundred species of native wildflowers and presents a stunning wildflower display in spring and early summer. You can expect to see Common Everlastings, Scaly Buttons and Lemon Beauty-heads, Rice-flowers, Blue Devils, Parrot-peas, Spur Velleias, Blue Pincushions and Sundews. We might even see Trigger-plants in flower, Feather-heads and late orchids.

## IFFA 25th anniversary get-together

Sunday 4 December, 11:30am-4 pm.

La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary. Melway 19 G5

**V**OLCANO DREAMING will be on display as well as videos, photos, display mementos etc of IFFA's history (bring your own to show, too!).

Meet at 11 am at the classroom near the Nursery. Kerrie and John from Inherit Earth will give a talk at around noon about the process of creating Volcano Dreaming. Then we'll have lunch at the Ironbarks, followed by a guided walk around the wildlife sanctuary.

You can get a location map from

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/downloads/Location-Map.pdf> or the IFFA website.

Please RSVP to Michele Arundell

[secretary@iffa.org.au](mailto:secretary@iffa.org.au) or phone 97553347 and let her know you are coming, by 18 November.

BYO food to share, IFFA will provide some nibbles.

## SEANA Spring camp

29 October, 10:30 am, to 1 November, noon (Melbourne Cup weekend)

IFFA members are cordially invited to book for the South East Australian Naturalists' Association Inc. Spring camp at Phillip Island, hosted by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

SEANA anticipates being able to offer the following activities:

- Mammal trapping, bat trapping and bird watching with the Fauna Survey and Bat Groups
- Rock-pool rambles, shells and beach walks with the Marine Research Group
- Mutton birds, penguins, seals
- Day trip to French Island
- Juniors activities
- Geology of the island
- Microscopy and much, much more.

For more details visit <http://www.iffa.org.au>, the FNCV website <http://www.fncv.org.au>, call FNCV on 9877 9860 or email <mailto:seanacamp@fncv.org.au>

Registration costs: Three full days \$30 pp., day rate \$15 pp per day. (Juniors: \$15 pp., day rate \$5 pp). In addition there will be the cost of the gala dinner, excursions to French Island, penguin parade, etc.



2011

## Bruce and Ann McGregor's garden

This is the second in a series on indigenous gardens and features the McGregor home in inner-city Brunswick



1982

### What was there before?

The south-facing front 'garden' had a couch grass lawn with two pelargoniums. We liked the rich deep black basalt soils, and the north-facing back garden which had lots of fruit trees. The front garden became indigenous, while the backyard has some indigenous species as well as a variety of flowers, fruit trees and vegetables.

### Why did you want to grow an indigenous garden?

We were co-authors of *A planting guide for the Merri Creek Valley* (Merri Creek Co-ordinating Committee 1980) about local indigenous plants, so were already interested and wanted to show them to other home gardeners. In 1981, when we found this house, very little was known about growing indigenous Merri Creek plants. The front garden was always an experimental garden so we could learn about what worked. We also wanted to provide food and habitat for local wildlife. As it turned out some of the plants provided cuttings for

revegetation plantings along the Merri Creek. We also wanted to demonstrate that you could have a garden that did not need to be watered.

### Can you describe the design of the plantings?

Originally we designed the front garden along the lines of a Victorian garden with oval beds on either side of the central path, to complement the 80 year-old house. The oval beds were outlined with borders of *Poa labillardierei* and a few local basalt rocks we uncovered. Inside the ovals were shrubs such as Woolly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*), Sticky Boobialla (*Myoporum viscosum*) and Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*). These plants were all kept pruned to shape. Along the front fence were planted Tree Violet (*Meliclytus dentatus*), Gold-dust Wattles (*Acacia acinacea*), and a Woolly Tea-tree. We wanted the Gold-dust Wattles to grow up and over the central path at the front gate to provide an arch entrance. This arch was there for a few years but was too hard to maintain.

CONTINUED PAGE 5

Along the central path were low Everlastings and a few Lomandras. At the back of the garden near the verandah were taller Kangaroo Apples, a Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and a Silver Banksia, *Banksia marginata*. Along the side fence to the west were several Lightwood Wattles, *Acacia implexa*, and a Bursaria, *B. spinosa*, to provide some shade to the house. Lightwoods and some Rock Correas were planted elsewhere around the garden.

The formal layout became obscured after about 10 years, and no trace remains as plants grew in various forms and directions, died, or were cut down, so now it looks very informal.

### Establishing and maintaining the garden

For nearly two years we did nothing but try to kill the couch grass. This involved several sprayings with Roundup. The garden then received a heavy cover of 'Eucamulch', a byproduct of Eucalyptus oil distillation consisting of chopped Eucalyptus twigs and leaves. Eucamulch was added each year for about four years, by which time the leaf-fall and the prunings provided enough mulch. The only time water has been used is at planting and for a few weeks following, and some targeted hand-watering occasionally during the drought.

Pruning is important to keep the plants vigorous and out of people's faces so it is done three or four times each year, depending upon the season and the plant. The garden is also weeded every three or four weeks to remove the invasive exotic grasses, sow-thistles and sticky weeds which appear from time to time (cats, blackbirds!). This weeding only takes 5-10 minutes but prevents any local seeding.

Over 30 years several plants have died or been removed and have been replaced with other trees. The Boobialla responded well to pruning but after 15 years lost its form and vigour. We planted another Drooping She-oak in its place. Lately we have included more groundcover and grassland plants, particularly along the front fence following the replacement of the brick fence with a woven wire fence.

### What were some of the problems you encountered?

Some of the trees grew too large and had to be removed or drastically reduced. The first She-oak was removed at 20 years of age much to our regret. It grew rapidly upwards and then northwards over the verandah and roof. The spouts were constantly clogged with the cladodes (needles) which rained down. The main concern was really the size of the tree and the potential damage to the house. The second She-oak started to suppress the plants underneath. It died during the drought and we left it standing for a few years as a perch for the birds, until it fell down in high winds.

The Woolly Tea-tree was a problem after rain, when it hung down over the front fence and over the public footpath. The Bursaria also grew much larger than the guide books said and enveloped the power line coming in to the house. One trunk was much thicker than a man's thigh. It has been cut back. The *Poa* were also very vigorous, probably as there was not enough competition. They had to be pruned very hard to maintain



their form otherwise they ended up very tall and leggy. In the end they rotted away under the She-oak needles!

Kangaroo Apples will grow almost anywhere, even germinating in the neighbours' yards. However they do not respond well to pruning. They are relatively short lived and so it is best to push them hard and then start again quickly.

### What benefits have you seen?

We have enjoyed living in the bush in Brunswick. Our daughters had fun playing there, as there are plenty of hidey-holes. The garden has also let us make friends with quite a few people who have made comments while passing in the street. It is also great to be awakened in the morning by the

honeyeaters singing in the tree outside our bedroom. We loved hearing the wind in the She-oaks and still miss this 'windharp'. The long-flowering Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia* spp.) are wonderful during summer. There are also more and more invertebrates, skinks and fungi making the garden home. The garden is relatively low-maintenance.

### Advice to new gardeners?

Read a guide to gardening with local indigenous plants, if one is available. Get advice from a local indigenous nursery. Every garden setting is different, so a degree of experimentation is needed. If there is space, a eucalypt or banksia is good to attract birds (honeyeaters).

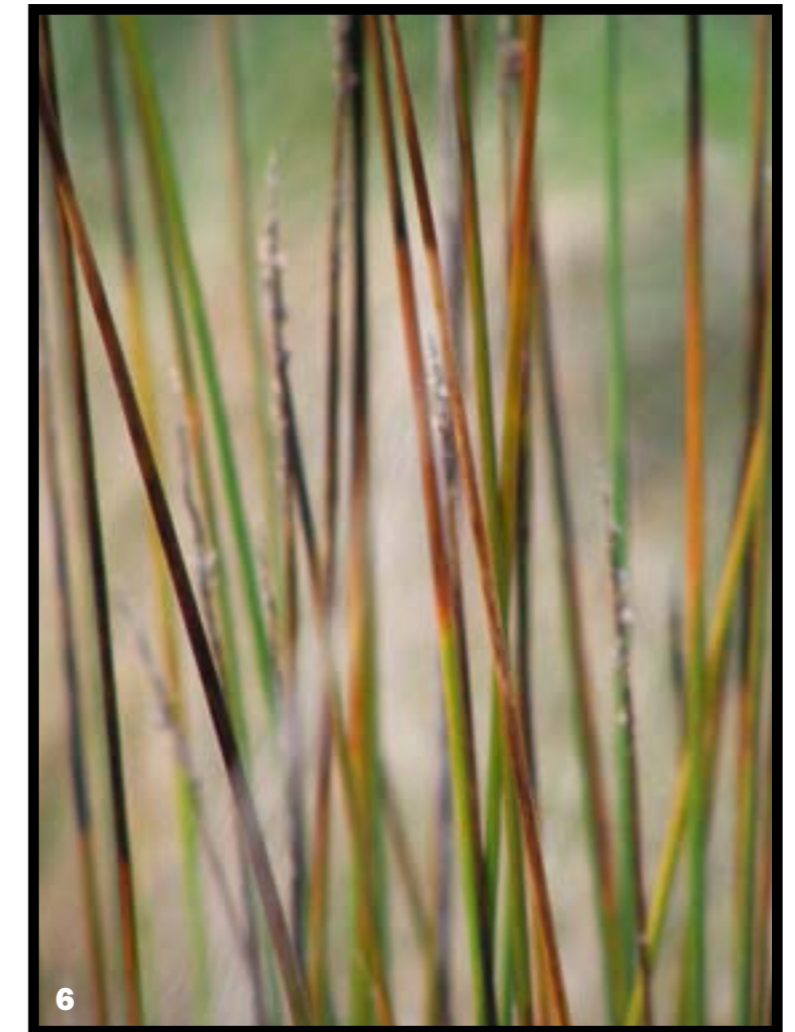
Think about the mature size of plants when drawing up a planting plan. In suburban gardens most large plants will grow even larger than the books say as there is less competition, more resources (runoff water from the paths,

etc) and more shelter than in the bush. Most plants need to be pruned to manage the garden, otherwise they will become too large and some plants may die early. Pruning also helps mulch the garden.

### What's your favourite aspect of your garden?

A large Lightwood on our back fence can be seen from our kitchen table. It has been a great resting place for thousands of birds over the years including Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, various cuckoos, lorikeets and honeyeaters. We even had a vagrant Koel in the tree.

Bruce likes to 'hide' in the front garden while weeding and many people walk past and don't even notice him. We are very pleased to have a number of 30-year-old plants in the garden who are now old friends!



# Indigenous garden inspiration

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP

ONLY A SMALL turnout made it to this workshop but this permitted some very personalised one-on-one instruction. This turned out to be essential as the small selection of compact zoom cameras threw up bafflingly varied terminology and menu options. Our main goal was to take botanical portraits using zoom and a shallow field of view to help isolate a subject from its surroundings. This mastered, the participants then explored the possibilities of this technique on a range of flora in an indigenous

backyard and in nearby parkland revegetation. It was fascinating to review the photos as a group at the end of the workshop. In comparing results and trying to explain the aim of each photo, we gained an insight into each individual's different ways of seeing. The intense observation demanded by the photography had the side effect of stimulating lively discussion about the plants and habitat features of the garden. 'Gardening through a lens' proved to be a very absorbing way to spend a sunny winter's afternoon.



- 1 Low winter light makes it easier to take botanical portraits with saturated, natural colour. Here a native *Geranium* species.
- 2 A shallow field of view isolates a bloom and leaves of Cut-leaf Daisy. The fuzzy background may still contribute important information about the plant's habit and environment.
- 3 It helps to get close to your subject, but not too close if you want the background to be out of focus.
- 4 Brian in action, by Dimi Bouzalas
- 5 Evenly lit Blackwood blossom makes a fine photograph for identification purposes but also evokes an overcast winter's day.
- 6 The stems of Rush Sedge, *Carex tereticaulis*, provide an unexpected source of winter colour. Blurred images like this are good for backgrounds. Tony Faithfull
- 7 Low winter sunshine backlights Blackwood adding drama and a more vibrant mood.
- 8 Framing highlights the pattern of parallel branches studded by blossoms of the Tree Violet
- 9 Close framing, backlighting and silhouette highlight the patterns formed by blossom and leaves.



# Recovery from Black Saturday at Kinglake

Although some flora and fauna species at Kinglake National Park were badly impacted by the February 2009 fire, most of the bushland has recovered rapidly and there have been some exciting appearances of rare species.

**I**N THE months following the bushfire, there were many reports in the media of the bush being 'destroyed' or 'devastated' by the fire event. This was probably not hard for many of the broader public to believe, reflecting on the devastation wrought on human communities and the black, silent forests that were left behind. But these claims were mostly far from the truth and demonstrated a common lack of understanding of Australian ecology. In this article I will provide more detail of what the impacts have been and some of the more positive responses of flora and fauna.

Since the bushfire I have been assisting Parks Victoria with monitoring and survey work throughout Kinglake National Park, over 90% which was burnt on Black Saturday. We began surveying the Park only a few months after the fire and established over 90 monitoring points, where we recorded the severity of the fire at each location and its effect on the vegetation. At most sites, all of the understory vegetation and tree canopy had been burnt, with not even the gullies spared. The forest appeared black and eerily silent, although some small signs of life could still be seen. We saw many wombats throughout the Park which had survived the bushfire in the safety of their burrows and which were now chewing on tree roots to find something to eat. Birds were still pretty sparse and restricted to larger species such as Currawongs which had moved into the burnt areas to search for food.

But by spring 2009 the bush had already begun to recover rapidly. Many eucalypts were now re-shooting from lignotubers and epicormic buds and plant species were beginning to germinate from seed banks or re-shooting back from the roots. A dazzling spectacle was the mass-flowering of both Small and Austral Grass Trees, which attracted a plethora of insects and birds, including the regionally rare Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. Many uncommon birds were now being sighted including massive congregations of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, nesting Blue-winged Parrots and many Rufous Songlarks around the town of Kinglake.

During late spring we began to record some very interesting plant species which had been stimulated by the fire event, adding over 60 species to the Park flora list. It is important to note that these plants did not colonize the area but had been there all along, lying dormant as seed banks. We recorded

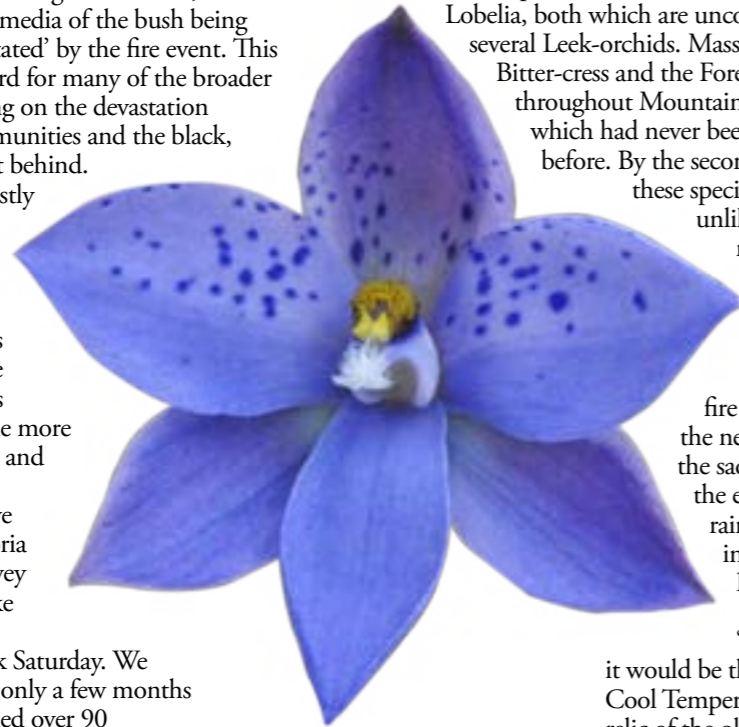
a range of herbaceous species that commonly only flower in the first year or two after a fire event. These species have long-lived seed that lies dormant within the soil, waiting for a fire to stimulate recruitment. They then flourish in the early succession period when the ground is open and the soil high in nutrients, flowering en masse and replenishing seed banks. They then decline rapidly as the understory becomes dominated by thick re-growth of trees and shrubs, and finally become dormant again waiting for the next fire event. Some of these species included the Branched Lobelia and Tufted Lobelia, both which are uncommon in the region, and several Leek-orchids. Mass flowering of the Large Forest Bitter-cress and the Forest Bitter-cress was recorded throughout Mountain Ash forests, the latter species which had never been recorded in the Park before. By the second year after the fire many of these species had vanished and they are unlikely to be recorded again for many decades until the next fire event.

**S**O THERE have been some exciting responses since the fire event, but what have been the negative impacts? To us one of the saddest results of the fire was the effects on small pockets of rainforest in the park, particularly in the Mt Disappointment Reference Area. If any of the bush could be said to be 'devastated' by the bushfire,

it would be these threatened ecosystems. Cool Temperate Rainforest is an ancient relic of the older Australia and covered large areas of the country when fire was far less widespread and frequent. These forests are not evolved to survive and respond to fire like the more recently evolved sclerophyll forests, and as a result are now mostly restricted to deep gullies which receive some protection from fire. However the 2009 bushfire was so extreme that it burnt almost every gully in the Park at high intensity. This included the Plenty River headwaters, where the most westerly occurrence of rainforest along the Great Dividing Range was decimated, killing many ancient Myrtle Beech and Sassafras trees. Some of these trees have re-shooted but many rare ferns that formerly occurred in the understory were killed. This area is now dominated by dense re-growth of sclerophyll species and the future outlook of the rainforest is looking grim.

A range of fire-intolerant plant species have not been seen in the Park since the fire and were possibly eliminated, including a range of rainforest ferns. A sad loss from the Park was the Butterfly-orchid. Prior to the fire the Park supported several populations of this species, one of only several epiphytic orchids found in southern Australia. However the fire killed all known populations and it is uncertain if it will re-colonize in future.

Many fauna species would have been badly affected by the fire, particularly localized populations of threatened species such as the Spot-tail Quoll. Because there are limited



**Spotted Sun-orchid, *Thelymitra ixioides*, flowered profusely near St Andrews after a fuel reduction burn in 2010.**



**Top: Tall Sun-orchid, *Thelymitra media* – three robust plants growing at Broad Gully in the Everard Block. Far left: Swamp Bush-pea, *Pultenaea weindorferi*. This Victorian endemic species has recruited well since the fire and has been fenced to prevent browsing by feral goats. Centre: Lemon-scented Starbush, *Astrolasia astericophora*, a rare species that is restricted in the park to one site in the Mt Disappointment Reference Area. Centre, bottom: Creeping Grevillea, *Grevillea repens*, is endemic to Victoria and Kinglake National Park supports several populations. Below: Dwarf Boronia, *Boronia nana* var. *pubescens* (previously known only from the Grampians).**

populations for this and other species to re-colonize from, their future in the Park is uncertain. The fire also killed many hollow-bearing trees in the Park, which is alarming considering the lack of such trees and the many fauna that depend on them. The Brush-tailed Phascogale is one such hollow-dependant species and surveys since the fire have failed to relocate it within the Park.

To assist in the post-fire recovery of flora and fauna, Parks Victoria rangers (many who lost their homes in the fire) have been conducting a range of inspiring programs. Fences have been erected around some of the threatened plant species to prevent browsing by native and feral herbivores and nestboxes have been placed throughout the Park to provide habitat for threatened fauna. An enormous effort has gone into the creation of a biolink that connects Kinglake National Park to Warrandyte State Park to the south, by re-vegetating previously cleared paddocks with a high diversity of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. This biolink will provide important connectivity between the two parks and will assist

fauna in re-colonizing burnt areas. The Department of Sustainability and Environment has also funded mapping and control of weed species throughout burnt areas, including large areas of Kinglake National Park.

It is now nearly three years since the bushfire and maturing shrub species have created some impressive wildflower shows. Mass flowering of wattles,

including the rare Cinnamon Wattle, have turned entire hills golden-yellow. We are still uncovering some exciting findings and only last month discovered a small population of a Boronia which was formerly only known from around the Grampians area.

If you have not been up to Kinglake National park recently, a walk or drive through the area is highly recommended to see how the bush is regenerating. Some good areas for walking are down the Old Kinglake Road or Everard Track in the Everard Block, while a drive from St Andrews to Kinglake is also a great trip.

**Karl Just**

**CONTINUED PAGE 9**

## Ecological Management & Restoration

### AIMS AND SCOPE

**T**HIS innovative journal edited by Dr Tein McDonald answers the need among land managers for reliable, relevant information about the science and practice of ecosystem restoration and management. It acknowledges the need for two-way communication between researchers and practitioners in devising new hypotheses, sound experimentation, effective treatments and reliable monitoring. Published on behalf of the Ecological Society of Australia, original contributions are encouraged on a wide range of geographic and subject areas applicable to Australasia. All articles and papers are peer reviewed. Three issues of the *Ecological Management and Restoration Journal* are published each calendar year.

### TOPIC AREAS

Improved management and restoration of plant communities, fauna and habitat; coastal, marine and riparian zones; restoration ethics and philosophy; planning; monitoring and assessment; policy and legislation; landscape pattern and design; integrated ecosystems management; socio-economic issues and solutions; techniques and methodology; threatened species; genetic issues; indigenous land management; weeds and feral animal control; landscape arts and aesthetics; education and communication; community involvement.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

IFFA members get a discount subscription price for the *Ecological Management and Restoration Journal* of \$72 (for calendar year 2012) compared with the \$96.80 per annum price (including GST) for individuals. Use the IFFA membership form to subscribe.

## New Report Database

**W**E ARE currently working on a database of ecological reports that has recently become available on the website. We are creating the database as we have found that many reports are very hard or even impossible to access by the general public.

Very soon the database will include some fantastic reports, some of which are very hard to find. These include:

- An unpublished fauna report for the western region of Melbourne written by Cam Beardsell. This report is the unfinished equivalent of the NERO Report.
- Several reports written by Dr. Rod Bird of the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club, including a report on old River Red Gums in Victoria and another on the vegetation and management of

the Fulham Streamside reserve in western Victoria.

- A report on vegetation survey and monitoring in Kinglake National Park since the 2009 bushfire.

To check out the database, simply go to the IFFA website and follow the link to the web library on the left hand side of the screen.

We aim to get as many reports onto the database as possible. If you have access to an ecological report that is in electronic format please contact the editor so that we can include it in the database.

Karl Just

## Werribee Blue Box: a new subspecies

**T**he Werribee River Association is delighted to report that the National Herbarium of Victoria has recently published<sup>1</sup> an official description of the Werribee River catchment's own Blue Box, *Eucalyptus baueriana* subsp. *thalassina*. Taxonomist Kevin Rule has given it the common name 'Werribee Blue Box'. It is noted for its new summer adult ovate or roundish leaves, which give cause for the Latin word *thalassinus* meaning sea-green being used for its name. Vouched specimens were submitted to the Herbarium in December 2002. Plant scientists compared the local specimens and found them to be different from those already described. Seeds were collected from trees at Werribee and Bacchus Marsh and seedlings were produced to verify the new description.

These magnificent trees, which are found along the Werribee River and tributaries, grow from 3 to 12 meters. A small number can be found on rocky hills near the river. There are some on the Werribee Golf Course and one large tree at the Werribee Open Plains Zoo. A few ancient specimens have survived in the Werribee Township. More occur around Cobbledick's Ford and there are remnants upstream to Bacchus Marsh. North of Bacchus Marsh a good number occur on the Djerriwarrh and Coimadai Creeks and in Long Forest. A small number is found along the lower Lerderberg River.

Because the total number is estimated to be less than a few thousand, Neville Walsh, Senior Conservation Botanist at the Herbarium, has classified the Werribee Blue Box as endangered under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. There is very little sign of natural regeneration of these trees except in the population around Bacchus Marsh. The Werribee Zoo has planted hundreds which were propagated from seed. In recent years the Wyndham Council has included the Werribee Blue Box in revegetation plantings near the river. Local indigenous nurseries such as Newport Lakes & Western Plains Flora now stock this plant grown from local seeds.

The Werribee River Association is working to encourage the wider knowledge of the Werribee Blue Box and its

A Welcome Swallow, *Hirundo neoxena*, mines mud for a nest at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, 17 October. Mick Connolly



conservation within the Werribee River Catchment. This is an important part of our heritage and it highlights that there may be other unknown or unrecognised fauna and flora in the west of Melbourne.

For further information contact the Werribee River Association.

Email: werribeeriver@gmail.com

Secretary John Forrester 0401 854 560

Alex Smart, President, 9741 2351

Also see the Association on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Werribee-River-Association-WRIVA/159556397431032>

1. *Muelleria* 29(1): 3-15 (2011)

## Monash University planting policy

**M**ONASH University recently adopted a planting policy which strengthens the role of remnant vegetation and revegetation as a key part of landscaping across all of its campuses.

The vision of the late professor A J "Jock" Marshall, the foundation chair of Zoology and Comparative Physiology, to establish environmental policies at the Clayton campus, is reflected in the new policy.

It aims to provide "a mechanism for maintaining and increasing the coverage of native vegetation . . . while simultaneously facilitating the provision of valued landscapes for sustainable research, education and promotion"

The new plan is designed to cover all Australian campuses and will seek to establish world-class environmentally sustainable landscapes and "the continual improvement of ecological function."

It is planned to achieve this through:

- Planting the correct native vegetation for the intended ecological application.
- Enhancing biodiversity by creating habitats which attract native wildlife and improve the ecosystem.
- Maintaining landscapes and individual features which have specific functions such as improving social and cultural awareness, provide teaching and research opportunities and enhance biodiversity.

The woodland at the north east of the Clayton campus was a part of the landscape when the property was purchased for the new university. It was established as a reserve in 1961, due to the work done by Jock Marshall.

The boundary of the reserve, however, is not the one that was originally planned. The original fence line was staked out well inside the treeline evident on historic photos. This was not deemed right by the rebellious Marshall, and so, with a handful of stealthy, activated students, he infiltrated the reserve late at night and moved the stakes to their current location (well outside the original treeline). The fencing contractors came in early the next day and built the fence around the new line. By the time the university planners realised what had happened it was too late. The fence line is the same today.

The 8 acre Reserve is home to the only remnant vegetation on the campus and supports a rich native biodiversity. It acts as a valuable refuge for many native bird species and of a total of 53 bird species recorded in informal surveys of the Clayton campus in recent years, 16 have been sighted only in the reserve. There are also shallow aquatic habitats in the reserve which are heavily utilised by amphibians and aquatic birds.

Based on an article in *Monash Green News*, April 2011.

# Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association

Victoria's biodiversity thriving and valued by all

<http://www.iffa.org.au>

INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION NO: A0015723B

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*Indigenotes* is the newsletter of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.

The views expressed in *Indigenotes* are not necessarily those of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.

## Call for articles

*Indigenotes* is a newsletter by IFFA members for IFFA members. Stories, snippets, photos, reports from members are always welcome.

If it's something you're doing with flora or fauna or habitat, write it down and send it to IFFA's editor at editor@iffa.org.au.

## Membership

\$40 per annum for non-profit organizations,

\$50 per annum for corporations,

\$25 per annum for individuals, or \$20 per annum concession,

\$35 per annum for families,

\$500 for individual life members or \$700 for family life members.

Membership includes

■ 4 issues of *Indigenotes* per year,

■ Occasional freebies or discounts

■ Discount subscription to *Ecological Management & Restoration Journal* (\$70.40, inc GST)

Membership applications and renewals should be sent to 21 Harrison St, Brunswick East, 3057

Problems with membership renewals? Please contact Tony Faithfull on 93860264 or membership@iffa.org.au



In our last issue I asked for sightings of nesting pardalotes to photograph. Thank you to the kind readers who made contact: Indra, at Mt Martha and Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, Gillian from Glenfern Valley Bushlands in Upway, George from Wurundjeri Walk in Blackburn South, Karen in Emerald and Callum and Matt in Clayton South, where these pictures were taken.

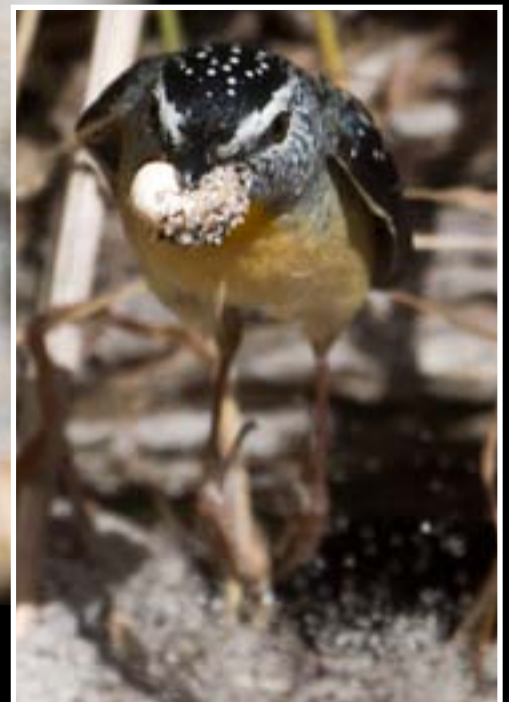
A camera that takes 10 frames per second reveals some fascinating information. The Spotted Pardalote is a vertical take-off machine. It stands at a burrow entrance and leaps, sometimes, twice its own height (below) before taking wing. The image at left shows a bird about three tenths of a second after leaving the nest. Timing courtesy of the Canon corporation and specs for the 1D 4 camera.

Dozens of sequences show ...  
**First frame:** bird in burrow.  
**+0.1 seconds:** head and shoulders emerge, feet hidden.  
**+0.2 seconds:** leaping pardalote with wings tucked in at side.  
**+0.3 seconds:** pardalote in flight. (Sadly, never all in focus).

Dad, below, is taking out the garbage. One suggestion is that he is carrying a sac of chicks' faecal muck and I'd be happy to get advice on this.

Mick Connolly

The project continues ...



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