

## Newsletter 124 November 2004

### Description

#### Dear Friends,

True to the weather forecast the showery day arrived on cue. Undeterred eight hardy members turned up to do the morning work. Over twenty cactus plants were removed from Riley's Road and after a chance meeting with ranger Dave they were handed over for destruction. The Indigo Goldfileds Cemetery, Howlong Road and Bartley's Genista sites were rid of the hundreds of seedlings. The rain softened earth made pulling very easy as the young plants have a very poor grip in the wet soil. However the long slender root is sometimes up to five times as long as the plant is tall. Only a few plants of Caper Spurge were found on Bartley's Block and given the wet early spring this was surprising, perhaps we are winning the war!

A substantial patch of wild garlic was noted and members Dot and Graham volunteered to dig it out at some stage. A few Arum Lilies have escaped from the garden area of the block and these will be removed.

Morning tea just didn't happen! It was replaced by watching a clutch of nestling Jacky Winters being fed. Nearly ready to fledge, these well camouflaged grey-streaked babes had a voracious appetite for the insects delivered by the overworked parents. The nest, a shallow grass cup built on a flat fork of a dead limb, was barely able to hold the two chicks.

A pair of Painted Honeyeaters had a nest high in the outer leaves of a Blakely's gum so the telescope came in very useful giving everyone excellent views of the parents as they fed the chicks a diet of insects and ripe mistletoe berries and changed shifts on the nest. The Painted Honeyeaters arrived in mid-September and this season the conditions have encouraged them to breed. Our attention then turned to the party of Turquoise Parrots which came to feed and magnificent telescopic views of the male bird pleased all present.

After lunch, which was cut short by a downpour, we retreated to the tourist park shelter to have a brief meeting before going in search of a second nest known to be on the Yackandandah Road. It did not take long to locate the nest as these parents were feeding the chicks non-stop, obviously they are a little older than the Bartley's family. These beautiful birds are among the many woodland birds which are a cause for concern as their habitat continues to disappear and their numbers decline.

The rain came back in earnest, nobody complained, and we all headed home after a rewarding day.

Other birds seen included Restless Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Sacred Kingfisher, Black-chinned, Fuscous and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and a lone Pacific Heron flying over Bartley's Block

Among the flowers noted were some lovely plants of purple Finger Flower, Cheiranthra cyanea, the five long yellow stamens arranged like fingers against the deep purple petals make this a very striking late-flowering wildflower along with patches of pink Grass Trigger plants, Stylidium graminifolium. The

flowers of the everlastings were all closed due to the rain. Ironbark Track is worth a walk in the next week or so while the Diggers' Speedwell and everlastings are still looking good. On the ridges the Daphne Heath, Brachyloma daphnoides is in full bloom and on warm days it is pleasantly fragrant.

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Rainfall: October was very dry with just 8.8mm falling over 4 days. Yearly total: 410.4mm over 82 days.

## **Superb Parrot survey day near Nathalia:**

Sunday December 5th. Meet at 7.30am on the Murray Valley Highway at Nine Mile Bend, 23kms west of Strathmerton. Vic-roads Map 22 E8 Contact: Gary Deayton 0358 622 919

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PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE DECEMBER MEETING IT WILL NOW BE ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28TH . This is to allow members to participate in the Superb Parrot count.

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NEXT MEETING SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28TH AT 2PM AT THE CHILTERN POST OFFICE

We will tackle a variety of weeds so bring gloves, a trowel, secateurs and energy! Binoculars are a must and a torch and insect repellent would be advisable. We will have tea at Cyanide Dam around 6pm and take an evening spotlight walk This is the last meeting for 2004. Hope to see you there.

Organiser: Eileen 03 57 261 484

### **Category**

1. Newsletters

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### **Author**

eileen