

Newsletter 135 November 2005

Description

Dear Friends,

What a splendid spring and still the rain keeps tumbling down! The peas have excelled themselves and the last of them are still lovely. Exceptionally spectacular was the Yellow Wedge Pea, *Gompholobium heuglii* and not far behind came Twiggy Bush-Pea, *P. largiflorens* and Heathy Bush-pea *P. procumbens*. There are now drifts of Grass Trigger-plants, *Stylidium graminifolium*, gorgeous purple Finger Flowers, *Cheiranthra cyanea*, Blue Pincushions, *Brunonia australis*, Bluebells, Speedwell and Everlastings as far as the eye can see. The last of the orchids, the Tiger Orchid, *Diuris sulphurea* and the delicate Leek-orchid, *Prasophyllum validum*, along with the Duck Orchids and Onion Orchids will be on show for another ten days or so. Yes indeed, it has been a wonderful spring and I hope many of you have been able to enjoy the spectacle.

Many visitors have been in the park and commented on the wildflower display and how enjoyable their days spent in the park have been. We have had lots of birdwatchers seeking the elusive Regent Honeyeater and other Chiltern specialties. Unfortunately and sadly, we have been unable to oblige with the Regents this year and hope for a better year in 2006.

So, what did we get up to on Sunday? Well, Neville spent a lot of time up the ladder, while the rest of us carried gear, nest boxes and provided on ground directions! Jokes aside, it was a great day with seven new boxes installed and one old one replaced. All we wish for now is to see the entrances chewed by prospective owners and that will especially please Phillip who has put so much thought into their design and hanging.

Lunch at Honeyeater Picnic area along with the birds, as always, was pleasant. There was a big sticky bun on offer and the carving up of it was easy, just into five rather generous helpings which we believed we had earned! Thanks, Neville. After lunch and a brief meeting a couple more boxes were erected and three of us decided to check the nest box numbering as there were two boxes with the same GPS number which caused some confusion for a while. The exercise resulted in some strenuous walking over gullies and we definitely worked off the bun!

We have plenty of boxes to begin replacing the dilapidated ones and a plan of attack has been prepared for the future. We will try to get some up in between meetings as time and volunteers permit. Parks Victoria has provided a number of nest boxes for the project and our thanks go to John O'Neill who constructed them to our specifications.

During our rambling we put up a number of Painted Button-quail, some flew low, landed and disappeared as only they can do while others sneaked off into the grass giving only brief views. The weather was perfect for fungi and a few species were noted including some faded Luminous Fungi on a dead stump. A spectacular insect seen was a metallic blue female flower wasp, also known as a "blue ant". Unfortunately it moved too quickly for photographing. Capable of inflicting a painful sting, this wasp is equipped with legs modified for burrowing into soil to locate the larvae of the Scarab

Beetle which she paralyses and then lays her eggs on the hapless body. Just another wonder of nature as was the very long legged Crane Fly seen near it.

Vale Ian Temple. Ian and Carole have been members for many years. However in recent years Ian's wrists required much surgery, and unfortunately none of it was successful. Some months ago he became seriously ill and in early October lost his battle for life.

Friends extend their deepest sympathy to Carole and look forward to seeing her amongst us in the near future.

New Bushland Reserve: Another successful olive removal day on October 22 nd. Thanks to all who came along. The lovely stand of Eutaxia is now free of olives. Three Grey-crowned Babblers were seen on the block, a pair of Leaden Flycatchers entertained us at lunchtime and Brown Treecreepers were recorded for the first time. Several new plants have been added to the flora list.

Despite the drizzly rain a huge Brown Snake was encountered coiled in the grass, we watched it from a distance then to our amazement it disappeared down a hole in the blink of an eye. In the United Mine section of the reserve we marveled at the assortment of rubbish which has been dumped over the years. Hopefully the lot will be dozed into the existing big hole and covered in the not too distant future.

Friends of the Warbys: November 12th 9.00am at Wenhams. Aboretum weeding and AGM followed by wine nibbles and lunch. December 10th, 9.00am at Wenhams. Aboretum watering and labelling. Lunch at Spring Creek. Contact: Catriona 5722 1213 if going.

Around the Park:

Rainfall: October: 103.6 mm over 14 days. Year to date: 708.4 mm over 98 days.

Enjoy the rest of spring.....Eileen

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY DECEMBER 3RD. Meet at 2pm Chiltern Post Office

Venue: Lappin's Dam. Donchi Hill walk, Christmas tea and a spotlight walk .BYO everything, especially repellent! Contact Eileen: 03 57 261 484

Category

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