

Newsletter 223 November 2013

Description

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Dear Friends,

Summer is trying hard to arrive although we are still threatened with yet another late frost. Underfoot we found the ground cover dry and crispy as we made our way to nest box sites. This month the occupancy rates were much lower but we still had Squirrel and Sugar Gliders, the latter with half grown young. A young Sugar Glider was found dead on the ground and its nest box contained ants. Over the many years of inspections this is only the second known mortality. After morning tea we decided to see if we could solve the mystery of the missing box 2A. After tramping up and down gullies Phillip spotted the old box and as we walked to it there was the missing box hanging in a small sapling. It had fallen into water and some thoughtful person had picked it up and hung it on the sapling. We found that the joining spring had broken, so after repairs are made it will be re-hung.

However all that tramping was not without reward as we found a little patch of Scaly Buttons, *Leptorhynchus squamatus* in a damp gully spot. This is uncommon in the park

Scaly Buttons N Blair

After lunch it was time for some botanising along Koala Track. Although the ground cover is composed of largely weedy grasses on the lower slope there were many Onion Orchids, *Microtis* sp. drifts of lovely yellow Spur Velleia and several plants of the uncommon Blue Grass-lily, *Caesia calliantha*.



This year Hover Flies have been abundant, feeding on many flowering plants. They also play a part in the pollination of plants and Neil captured an excellent example of this on a Leek Orchid.

[Leek Orchid with Hover Fly](#) N Blair

There are some lovely stands of Tiger Orchids, *Diuris sulphurea*, and the late Twiggy Bush-pea, *Pultenaea largiflorens* is now at its best. The Beard orchids are over.

In the Pilot section of the park Spider Orchids and Sun-orchids are plentiful and in the damp areas Bulbine Lilies and Milkmaids are abundant. There are also some tiny plants in the wet areas and one we came across was a dainty Trigger-plant, *Stylidium* sp. At only about six centimetres tall and with a miniature flower it is a delightfully beautiful plant. Like its relative the Grass Trigger-plant it has the same sensitive mechanism for pollination.



Other tiny plants in the wet area were Hundreds and Thousands and tiny yellow Square Cicendia. A small patch of Yellow Sun-orchids, *Thelymitra antennifera*, commonly called Rabbit Ears was discovered in another wet area.



Further Bird News

Bartley's Block continues to provide birdwatchers with views of Painted Honeyeaters, Speckled Warblers, Turquoise Parrots and a variety of honeyeaters. Rufous Songlarks are announcing their presence in the grassy areas. A couple of hours spent there will give one a varied bird list. All the park dams are full and are good spots to visit. Depot Dam has a pair of Leaden Flycatchers nearby and they come to bathe in the evening. The Valley Dams are full of life now that the water levels have settled and that includes the slithery life, so take care if you are visiting.

An interesting item

The Painted Apple Moth is a pest of orchards. The wingless female makes a very interesting cocoon for her eggs. The one pictured on the website laying her eggs chose a dead twig and used the spines from her body to protect them from predation. The spines are irritants.





Rainfall

October 35.6 mm over 6 days. Year to date: 553 mm over 52 days.

Next Meeting Sunday December 1st Christmas Tea

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 4 pm or go to directly to the hide at Chiltern Valley No 2. Byo food to share, binocs, sunscreen, hat, water and torch.

We will conclude our activities for 2013. Contact in the field : Eileen 0407 486 480

2014 Calendar sales

The 2014 calendar is the sixth of our productions. We have had a great response to the 2014 issue. Thank you to all who have supported this fund

raising project. Special thanks to Neville for the design and presentation of yet another beautiful representation of what our park has to offer.

2014 Friends calendars available from mid November - the 2014 calendars will cost \$22 plus \$9.15 postage

[Go to the Merchandise page](#) to find out all the details and put in an order

Category

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