

Newsletter 252 July 2016

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 252 July 2016

Dear Friends,

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Rain, polling day and very wet roads conspired to cause us to abandon the July meeting. If the weather improves we may have a mid-month attack on weeds and do some revegetation at Grasslands block. Meanwhile the wet and mild conditions in June provided us with a Fungi Frenzy and this will no doubt continue through July. From the minute to the monstrous, poisonous and foul smelling, all were on display and performing a beneficial process. Some providing food for animals, including humans, some attracting insects others breaking down the woody debris of the forest. Featured this month are the poisonous, the smelly, the delicate and the delicious! The flaming warning red *Amanita muscaria* is found under introduced pine trees and is toxic.



The very attractive Little Stinker, *Marasmiellus affixis*, is on dead eucalypt bark and has a most unpleasant smell. Stephanie has captured this elegant species beautifully.



The delicate tiny white *Mycena* sp has a cap of just 3mm and a stem as thin as cotton. I found a colony growing under a Cherry Ballart in a ground cover of chickweed. Apparently it is an undescribed species.



A few species are very good to eat and one that is quite spectacular is the Saffron Milk Cap, *Lactarius deliciosus*. Many species that grow under pine trees are inedible but this one, I am told, really is delicious. So if you are out and about with a camera take the opportunity to record and admire the many incredible fungi on show.



Russula foetens in June-July



Native bees and winter time from our native bee specialist Karen Retra

The last bees â?? keeping tabs on the last bees of the season is trickier than taking note of the first bees of season. The â??firstâ?• are easy â?? you either have or havenâ??t previously spotted some native bees (or for the keen, particular species). With the â??lastâ?• it remains until sometime after the sighting that you know whether it was indeed the last or not. In our area, April and May see a sharp decline in the number of native bees in terms of both species diversity and individuals. In recent years Iâ??ve noted my â??lastâ?• blue banded bees (*Amegilla* sp.) usually around the third week of May. It was just after that this season, with a sighting on the 21 st of May, followed by none for more than a week and a final sighting on the 30 th of May.



But the blue banded bees arenâ??t the last native bees to be seen each season. There were two species of *Lasioglossum* bees I kept seeing for a few weeks longer. One of these bees spent quite a few nights roosting on a plant out the front. Well, I assume it was the same one; else single bees took turns to roost in the same spot! In poor weather it didnâ??t appear to leave all day. In warmer weather it would often be seen foraging on the flowers or disappear for some time around midday and return later

in the afternoon. Overnight the temperatures dropped as low as zero and at times the flower it was sitting on was filled with rain water or dew. I thought it was a goner for sure several times, but amazingly it revived once the temperature rose and the sun was out. It finally disappeared for the last time on the 14 th of June. This timing is consistent with other â??last beeâ?• sightings lâ??ve made at our place in recent years.



I observe native bees in my garden for longer into autumn and winter, than I see them in the bush. There are at least two reasons for this. First, there's often a lack of flowering plants in bloom in late autumn in the bush. (It seems a bit cruel to me when the Ironbarks burst into flower just as it gets too cool for the native bees to be able to enjoy them! Still, plenty of other species, including the Regent honeyeaters take full advantage of their spoils). In my garden and in town in general, there can be more forage on offer throughout autumn, including exotic flowers that the native bees seem to be happy to use.

The second factor at play in my observations is that I spend more time watching plants in my garden than in the bush. If you want to spot native bees, you have to be watching! So my observations are biased to where I spend more time.

(That said, I also target the most likely places and conditions to see if I can spot native bees in more natural settings across the season, too).

Where are native bees over winter, you may ask? The adults don't cope with the cool weather (the rule of thumb is that they need temperatures of 18 degrees to be sufficiently warm to fly. And they need to fly to be able to access food to provide the energy for flight). It's thought the adults of most native bees in our area die prior to winter, although some suggest there may be some species that seek cover in holes (stems or in the ground) and spend the winter there.

At this stage of year, most native bees exist only as eggs or pupae in nests. They have a source of food (their mother provisioned the nest with a "pollen patty") and will emerge as adults when the conditions return to being suitable for flying and their food sources are in bloom. Here, they typically begin to emerge (and be sighted foraging) from late August for the first bees, and into spring and summer for many others.

If you happen to have a bee hotel begin to observe it late August.



Thank you Karen for this insight into bee behaviour (Eileen).

Weed Report

Everything is fairly quiet on the weed front over winter. A few large coots and an *Acacia decurrens* have been killed on the Mt Pilot side on random walks, and small olives pulled up on the Rutherglen Reserve. The briars and Bathurst Burrs are just waiting for spring on Grasslands block! Bridal Creeper is enjoying the wet conditions and will be dealt with on drier days. The *Vinca* at Bartley's Block will also be targetted as soon as possible.

Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve

A short visit by Mick resulted in the removal of a few more small olives. We were given a few *Swainsona recta* plants to trial in the enclosure and Eileen planted them in late June. Old records show that they once grew on the plains so we are hopeful of success. This wet winter has certainly given them a good start.

From the Ranger's Office

Many trees down on park roads. Inform Parks by email to: brian.pritchard@parks.vic.gov.au or ring 0409533220

All closed roads are now open but care is required as the roads are still wet. Keep to the main roads in Mt Pilot to avoid getting stuck.

Please Make Contact

Luke Cruickshank, if you are reading this please make contact re your EFT deposit into the Friends account. It would be good to be able acknowledge your payment and to email you the newsletters. Thank you, Eileen

Rainfall for June

127 mm over 12 days. The rain is not letting up either as July 1st opened up with another 15mm

Next Monthly Meeting Sunday August 7

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9.0am Phone contact in the field: 0407 486 480

Activity to be decided closer to the day.

Membership Renewals Are Due For 2016-17

Friends have achieved a great deal during the past year. Surveys for plants, birds and monitoring, maintaining and surveying mammal boxes, tree planting, weed control and provision of interpretive signage and park furniture are just some of our contributions. Your support for our activities is valued and your membership renewal is vital to our cause. Membership expires on June 30th 2016. Please

ensure your contact details are current.

Method 1 Fill out this online form and mail the membership fee or pay electronically

[Click here to achieve this](#)

Method 2 Print and Complete and mail this application

Friends Of Chiltern Park Inc Membership Form for 2016 - 2017

Name: Telephone:

Email:

Address:

Postcode:

Please print and complete and mail this application to

P.O. Box 60 CHILTERN 3683

To assist, please mark the envelope Membership.

Please find enclosed my membership of **\$15 for 2016-2017** The fee covers the whole family and includes 11 newsletters.

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN Mt PILOT NATIONAL PARK inc MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

P.O. Box 60 CHILTERN 3683

If you wish to pay electronically the details are:

Acc Name: Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park

Bank: WAW Credit Union Co-operative Ltd (Cuscal Limited)

BSB number: 803070

Acc number: 81167

Please add your surname to the transaction.

Please advise Neville (neville@nrbartlett.com.au) when you have made the payment so that we can keep track of payments.

Friends Facebook Group now has 231 members

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/556332777763388/>

We are a group of people interested in Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park in North-Eastern Victoria. People can find much more information on the Park, activities of the Friends and membership details at

<http://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

Why not become a Member, not just a Facebook member? [only \\$15 a year!](#)

Category

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Author

eileen

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