

Newsletter 066 August 1999

Description

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Dear Friends

A large gathering of Friends and visitors enjoyed a work free meeting prior to the AGM on Saturday August 6th. Walking in the park on a calm, mild sunny winter day is a pleasurable experience. The walk today took us along Bartley's Track, which runs off Mt.Pleasant Road, and sharp eyes found the tiny orchid, *Pterostylis nana*, Dwarf Greenhood. It was interesting to see the many buds with the furled antennae pointing skywards prior to opening. Blunt Greenhoods, *Pterostylis curta* were present and were small in size and number. Many tall flower stems of *Pterostylis parviflora*, Tiny Greenhood were noted and it was good to see well formed seed capsules present. This orchid flowers in autumn. A large patch of heart-shaped leaves caught someone's attention and closer inspection revealed a sea of tiny brownish flowers on stems 10cm tall. "These are over", remarked someone, but no, they were in fact in their prime and so well camouflaged. Their exact identification is yet to be confirmed so for the moment they are *Acianthus* sp.

Hovea, *Hardenbergia*, Urn Heath, Golden Wattle and the low growing prickly Ploughshare Wattle were flowering well and there was an odd flower on the *Hibbertia*. *Persoonia rigida*, Geebung, was covered in hard green fruits. A few Early Nancy flowers were among hundreds of *Drosera* plants, which had tentacles outstretched to catch errant insects.

Fungi have had a hard time during the long dry warm spell. One species found pushing through the rocky ground was a Puffball of the *Pisolithus* family. It was hard, round, and coloured in shades of cream and brown with patches of black. On maturity it will split and reveal a mass of spores. It is a common species.

Birds were plentiful. A Brown Goshawk was harassing the Wood swallows on the ridge and in the process disturbed a small flock of Swift Parrots and Little Lorikeets. There were so many birds attacking the Goshawk that it was doubtful whether it caught a meal. Yellow-tufted and Fuscous Honeyeaters were abundant, Noisy Friarbirds and Red Wattlebirds were in full voice, and a few Brown Treecreepers were spotted.

Leaving the forest we came out into Bartley's Paddock where a number of little birds were recorded these included Mistletoe Bird, Jacky Winter, a flock of Silvereyes, Blue Wrens, Brown-headed and Black-chinned honeyeaters, Eastern Rosella and White-browed Babblers. A trip to another part of the park, and a little patience, provided the group with good sightings of a Regent Honeyeater. People wishing to hear the call of this species were entertained by its repertoire of mimicry. Great renditions of Olive-backed Oriole, Noisy Friarbird and Red Wattlebird calls rang out but it kept its own call a secret.

After an interest filled afternoon we retired to the Senior Citizens Hall for dinner and meetings.

Around the park

Many visitors from overseas, interstate and Melbourne have enjoyed the park in the past few weeks. Most visitors were seeking Turquoise Parrots, Regent Honeyeaters, Painted Button Quail, Swift Parrots and Heath Wrens. As spring approaches I'm sure the wildflowers will provide an extra attraction. An unexpected sighting for two visitors was a huge Red Bellied Black Snake basking in the winter sun. It was extremely sluggish as we watched it retreat to its shelter.

Dumping of garden rubbish continues to be an unsightly problem in the park, its removal wasting time and resources.

The dry conditions changed overnight on Sunday August 7 when 40mm of rain fell.

From the AGM and General meetings

1. AGM. The Convenor's Report and Financial Statements were presented and accepted.
2. Office bearers for 1999-2000 are: Convenor/treasurer. E. Collins. Secretary: S.Jessup. Public Officer, S.Bush. Committee: N.Bartlett, P.Seely, G.Earl, B.Traill.
3. General meeting:

Approval given to plant Acacia deaneii deaneii in the park. Indigo Shire Draft Municipal Fire Plan tabled for comment. Comment closes August 27. Accounts were passed for payment.

Guest Speakers for the evening were Dr Ian Lunt and Dr Barry Traill

Ian presented a beautifully illustrated talk about the precious and diminishing grasslands of Victoria. The recently declared Terrick Terrick N.P. with its carpets of wildflowers, is a spot to visit in spring. Ian drew attention to the plight of some species which are present in very small numbers and in restricted or single locations, many being threatened by the encroachment of industry development especially around Melbourne. He explained the importance of fire to maintain the diversity in grassland communities. Kangaroo Grassland requires frequent burning to keep it healthy and to open up the spaces for smaller wildflowers to grow.

Barry's talk featured the Animals of the Night using both slides and sound. Again, the need to protect the diminishing habitat was emphasised and vegetation maps of pre European and post European vegetation cover were shown to illustrate the seriousness of the problem. Barry talked about the feeding habits of the gliders using slides to show how to recognise glider feed trees. Gliders make incisions in the bark to allow sap to exude and later feed on it. Both eucalypts and acacias are used for this purpose.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5TH. MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE AT 9.00AM

Bring gloves, trowel, lunch, energy and a friend. Afternoon walk. All welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

This will be the last newsletter posted to unfinancial members. If you are unfinancial your address label will bear a red line.

Please consider continuing your support for the group. Thankyou, Eileen.

Category

1. Newsletters

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