

Newsletter 096 May 2002

Description

Dear Friends

The desired autumn break did not eventuate so the major tree planting scheduled for this month was deferred. However there was still plenty to occupy willing hands. Depot was our first target. Where the trees had not survived from the last planting we opened up the ground and watered the holes to plant a few wattles. The stolen guards were replaced and the chewed trees were trimmed. Chewed parts of the larger trees were trimmed off and some seedlings growing in the burnt spots were covered with branches to protect them until the soil is damp enough to drive stakes in. Some plants of Inkweed were disposed of and weeds around the small trees were removed.

Amongst the working group were three sharp-eyed lads and spiders seemed to be their target. Tye discovered a beautiful spider with a red head and was eager to know what it was. He had found a male Mouse Spider, *Missulena occatoria* which belongs in the trapdoor family. Mouse spiders live in burrows with one or two entrances which have lids. At this time of the year they are often seen wandering in search of a mate. The male is quite aggressive and can inflict a painful bite so is best left alone.

Next on the day's agenda was some follow up weed control at Frogs Hollow. Bridal Creeper was sprayed and some Mullein removed. Well done to the boys who gathered up the rubbish at the picnic area and along the road. While this was going on June and I tackled a stand of English Broom on Magenta Track using the cut and paste method. We will need to follow up this site in spring.

Cyanide Dam was the lunch spot, it is always pleasant to be there and despite the very dry conditions there were Scarlet Robins, two Flame Robins and Yellow Robins, Yellow-tufted and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Weebills, Wrens, Willie Wagtails and delightful Spotted Pardalotes. Cyanide Dam is becoming a well known rest stop for interstate travellers who enjoy the bush. In a week I have come across three groups and one caller saw a Regent Honeyeater bathing at 9.00am! How lucky can you be in such a dry year!

Some of us took a trip to Greenhill Dam to be rewarded with a male Golden Whistler gleaning insects from the saplings around the dam, and a flock of Brown-headed Honeyeaters which dipped, drank and made a lot of noise. The highlight was the Rose Robin which perched on a log right in front of us. Over the day we saw five species of Robin, a Red-capped Robin was spotted on edge of town as we drove through. The Hooded Robin territory was not visited so we missed getting the six in one day!

Around the Park:

Two new plants have been added to the plant list. Both grow at the low water level of Cyanide Dam. *Centipeda nidiformis*, a Sneezeweed species and *Glinus oppositifolius*, Slender carpet-weed. The *Glinus* is the most easterly record for Victoria, the nearest being at Nathalia, and is an "interesting record" according to Neville Walsh of the Herbarium who identified the plants.

Winter flowering Acacia genistifolia, Spreading Wattle, is brightening up the park with its large pale yellow flowers.

Migratory birds are arriving despite the dry. A single Regent was seen at Cyanide Dam in mid April and a group of 4 Swift Parrots have also been seen there. Golden Whistlers and the Robins listed above are back.

Budgies have been plentiful in the grasslands around Chiltern Valley. At Valley 1 there are about ten elegant Red-kneed Dotterels feeding along the margins. There are still a few Wood swallows and Tree Martins around. Please keep a lookout for Regents and call me as soon as possible after any sightings.

At Bartley's Block some healthy Caper Spurge plants are emerging despite the dry conditions. There are several Sweet Briars in full seed on the dam bank so if anyone has spare time in the coming weeks it could be usefully spent there. By the way, for all Persimmon fanciers, the crop has failed this year but the trees are in glorious colour.

Camping Area: Efforts to have a camping area at Depot have been put on hold. Parks Victoria acknowledges the proposal in the Management Plan for a replacement camping site, however this has been put on hold until the new park is in place and a management plan has been drawn up. Meanwhile we will keep up our efforts to create a pleasant area at Depot Road.

FOR YOUR DIARY

FOREST RALLY SATURDAY MAY 18TH , BATMAN PARK, MELBOURNE. It's time to STOP THE CHOP , join us to Rally for the Forests before it is too late. Contact Susie Duncan for details and to arrange transport. 03 57 261 885

May 24th 7.30pm at the School for Seniors, Townsend Street Albury, next to the tax office. A presentation by Dr David Weston on Mistletoes. The Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists invite you to attend. Please bring a small amount of supper.

May 25th 9.00am at Killawarra Forest, Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Survey. Meet at The Camp in the forest.

May 29th Wooragee Landcare group "Supporting the Bush on My Place" Presenters with a a wide range of expertise. Venue: Supper Room Beechworth Town Hall at 7.30. All welcome

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY JUNE 2ND 9.00AM AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE

Brady's Block Bushland Reserve and the Cemetery Bushland Reserve.

Bring lunch, gloves, trowel, plastic bag and gloves. Contact: Christine on 03 57 261 398

AFTERNOON: REGENT AND SWIFT PARROT SURVEY

Category

1. Newsletters

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