

# FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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

## November Field Day

The November field day consisted of two activities with the first being a review of the 2022-23 Grasslands planting followed by a bushwalk along the section of Ryan's Road near the intersection with Howlong Road.

### 1. Review of 2022 planting at Grasslands Block – Helen Carse

At the field day the group inspected most of the 10 revegetation sites. At 8 sites, 6 species of trees/shrubs, mostly acacias, were planted and at 2 sites *Grevillea alpina* only was planted. The survival rate on the higher sites was better than on the 3 sites between and below the lower dam where the drainage was poor after the wet year. The Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) has grown very well and is also naturally regenerating in the area. The Spreading Wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*) is also doing well and the other species have 1 or more specimens at each of the 6 sites. There have been losses in the Grevilleas, more so at the lower site under the Ironbark and these will need to be replanted as they are a species required by NECMA. Several other species will also need to be replanted and where they are planted can be reviewed to improve survival rates. Some of the Lightwoods (*Acacia implexa*) and Varnish Wattles (*Acacia verniciflua*) have been broken or bent once they grew above the guards and we could consider using taller metal guards.

The erosion control on the upper dam and on the gully above the lower dam seems to be working, especially at the latter site and there has been natural regeneration in both areas. Overall, the success rate for the planting is around 65-85%, but the numbers of each species will be reviewed closer to the planting season.





Grasslands Block planting and Friends gathering.  
Photos: Helen Carse

## 2. Bushwalk along Ryans Road – Neil Blair

The second part of the morning was spent on a bushwalk along a section of Ryans Rd which was typical Chiltern sandstone with quartz intrusions. There is evidence of spot gold mining in the area with apparent limited success.

The area is in the northernmost section of the park facing the riverine plains and is notable botanically for a dominance of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) so that the open forest is a Grey Box – Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) forest with sporadic White Cypress (*Callitris glaucophylla*) and Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*).

The upper midstorey was dominated by Golden Wattle but the lower 'heathy' layer was much more diverse. There was a predominance of 'egg and bacon' peas with Twigg Bush-pea (*Pultenaea largiflorens*) in flower accompanied by late flowering Showy Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia sericea*) and the Narrow-leaf (*Daviesia leptophylla*) and Broom (*Daviesia genistifolia*) Bitter-peas both with immature fruit pods. Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*) was also common.

Amongst the herbaceous plants the Sticky Everlasting was plentiful and colourful and one plant with its flowers having a colour variant was noted. The prostrate Ivy Goodenia (*Goodenia hederacea*) added to the yellow dominance which was in part offset by the beautiful blue of the Blue Finger-flower (*Cheiranthra linearis*) and the Tall Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia stricta*).

On the ground circular bare patches were noted. These are known as platelets and are made by foraging Painted Button-quail, alas not seen nor heard on our walk although sightings have been made in the Park over the last month. Also noted was a termite nest at the base of a dead tree trunk. A discussion was held on the role of termites reducing the ground litter and the frequent finding of the nest broken by an echidna, who feeds on the termites. Less well known was that the Lace Monitor (a large goanna found in the Park) also breaks open the termite nest and lays its eggs within.



Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) normal and colour variant.  
 Painted Button-quail foraging platelet.  
 Photos: Neil Blair

**Ghost Moth (*Hepialidae* sp.) – November image in the 2023 calendar**

The family Hepialidae, commonly known as Ghost and Swift Moths, contains some of the largest and most obvious Australian moths.



Ghost Moth (*Hepialidae* sp.). Photo: Brian Pritchard

There are about 150 species of ghost and swift moths found in Australia. The common name “ghost moth” comes from a European species whose white ghostly males are seen hovering over open ground in a conspicuous display flight to attract females.

These moths fly in late summer and Autumn into early winter. They sometimes emerge on mass after rains. They often come to domestic lights. The earliest adults appear in January, but they are most common in March and usually disappear by April. The males come to lights more readily than the females, and are more uniform in size.

The species occurs in New Guinea, and along the eastern seaboard of Australia, and is a common species in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

The larvae live underground or in stems and the empty pupal shell can often be seen protruding from the tunnel.



Ghost Moth (Bardi grub) pupal case. Photo: Neil Blair

Sources: Australian Museum and Neil Blair

## 2024 Friends calendar

The Friends calendar for 2024 is **now available** in two formats (A3 and A4) as was the case for the 2023 calendar.



The calendars are now available from the Chiltern Post Office, the Rutherglen Information Centre and from our Secretary – Tony Murnane. Prices of the calendars have not changed but the postage has increased. An order form is available in a separate flier.

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**Rainfall** October 2023: 77 mm. Total for the year to date 2023: 628 mm.  
The corresponding total last year was 1,017 mm after 236 mm for October 2022.  
The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

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**NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

The Christmas gathering will be held at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam near the bird hide.

Meet on site from 4:00pm

BYO food and drink and a chair. Please bring a plate of something to share.

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**Dates for 2024**

**For 2024:** Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February, Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September, Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October, Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

**Rule of Thumb:** For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

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