

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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

August Field Day

The task this month was to plant some areas that had previously been tracks. Former sections of Hill Gum Track and Bar Trail near the Chiltern-Yackandandah Road were planted, guarded and strewn with debris so that it was clear that vehicles were not meant to use the areas.



Planting in progress on Hill Gum Track. Photos: Neville Bartlett

Silver Banksias (*Banksia marginata*)

Over a number of years, there have been attempts to enhance an area of Silver Banksias (*Banksia marginata*) along a section of Settlers Road. In June 2020, over a hundred plants were added to the few original old Silver Banksias and the new plants have been disrupted by grazing pressure from deer. The success rate of the 2020 planting was very encouraging and, over recent weeks, over 70 healthy plants have been provided with new wire netting guards held in place by second-hand steel droppers that have been collected from the Grasslands Block. Thank you Richard and Tony for your efforts.



Silver Banksias (*Banksia marginata*) with new guards. Photos: Tony Murnane

Wattle Day – 1st September – Neil Blair

Twenty eight wattles are to be found in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park (CMPNP), of these 22 are considered native to the Park and 6 are thought to be introduced. Whilst the majority flower in early Spring there are others that flower around the year.

For those wishing to work on their species identification skills the following can be helpful:

- 6 wattles have 'feather'-like leaves which have paired leaflets known as pinnae. 4 of these wattles flower in the Spring – Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*), Wyalong Wattle (*A. cardiophylla*), Silver Wattle (*A. dealbata*), Early Black Wattle (*A. decurrens*). Silver Wattle is the only native, the other three are introduced.

Counting the pairs of pinnae can be helpful in field ID. Cootamundra Wattle only has 3 – 4 pairs, Wyalong and Early Black Wattles have 5 – 12 whereas the native Silver Wattle has 8 – 20+ pairs.



- 22 wattles have phyllodes which look like typical leaves often being mistaken for Eucalypt leaves. They are in fact flattened stems that replace the 'feather'-like juvenile leaves. This process can often be seen clearly especially on Red-stem (*A. rubida*) and Blackwood (*A. melanoxylon*).

Features to note in the field are the structure of the veins, particularly if there is only or if there is more than one main vein and whether all veins run longitudinal or branch like a tree (dendritic).



- The inflorescences of Wattles are generally of 3 types.

(a) **Axillary** whereby the inflorescence stalks (peduncles) arise from the leaf bases (axils)



(b) **Spike** which is unbranched and the inflorescences are attached without stalks



(c) **Racemes** and **Panicles** where the inflorescences are attached by stalks to an unbranched (raceme) or branched (panicle) main axis.



These observations will make identification much easier. For Book Identification Leon Costermans' small field guide "Trees of Victoria" or the larger reference book "Native Trees and Shrubs of South Eastern Australia" are recommended. Digital references include VICFLORA and the Flora section on the Friends website.

Ranger's Report – Scott Cunningham

Thanks to all volunteers that attended the August planting morning. The efforts to close and rehabilitate this area is greatly appreciated.

Brian is on leave until October with Team Leader responsibilities managed out of the Wangaratta office until his return.

Whilst we have no funding for invasive plants this year, our new ranger Brad has been busy drafting a strategy and we hope to be able to carry out some limited control ourselves in the coming months.

Over September we will be working along Reedy Creek, hoping to improve a couple of camping areas and close some of the informal and unsafe vehicle tracks.

2024 Friends AGM – Saturday 14th September 2024

The 2024 AGM for the Friends group will be held on Saturday 14th September 2024 and the timetable for the day is:

- Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 3:00pm. There will be a walk in the Park guided by Glen Johnson. Food can be delivered to the Senior Citizens Hall beforehand if desired.
- Gather at the Senior Citizens Hall at about 5:30pm for a dinner. Please bring a plate of food and whatever you wish to drink. Some soft drinks and juice will be provided. Please advise of what you plan to bring so that we have a suitable variety available.
- The Friend's AGM will take place at about 7:30pm followed by a talk entitled "Peas in the Park" by Glen Johnson.

Peas in the Park - Spectacular, diverse, and essential to ecosystem function – we'll investigate and marvel at our unique Pea flora. It's not all eggs and bacon!

Our Speaker – Glen Johnson

Glen has over 30 years of multi- agency experience in biodiversity conservation and threatened species management with the Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA). Glen left DEECA in Jan. 2024 and is now a Senior Ecologist with Wild Research Pty Ltd (working mainly on threatened frog recovery projects). Glen has worked in a diversity of environments from mallee to alpine, forest to riparian, and box ironbark to lowland grassy ecosystems. He has extensive experience in the conservation of numerous threatened species in the Park.

Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*) – August image in the 2024 calendar – John Hawker

Pterostylis nana became known to science in 1805 when it was collected in the bush near the Tamar River, close to George Town, in northern Tasmania. Dwarf Greenhoods are part of the snail orchid alliance: a group of about thirty species mostly found in Western Australia, with half a dozen named species in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania. *Pterostylis nana* is a colony forming species (as illustrated in the photo below) that flowers freely in good seasons. In the Park, they grow in open forest, dry heathy forest, and sometimes amongst wattle scrub regrowth. They are pollinated by tiny male gnats, usually in the late afternoon on warm, still and humid days. Clouds of tiny gnats can be seen around the flowers rapidly seeking flowers to pollinate.

Dwarf Greenhoods are often dug up and eaten by wallabies and White-winged Choughs. The small tubers were an aboriginal food resource.

Pterostylis nana is relatively common and well conserved in the Park.



Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*). Photo: John Hawker

2024-25 Subscriptions are now due

Thank you very much to all of those who have joined or renewed membership with the group.

The annual subscription for membership of the Friends group is now \$20 per year for an individual or family. We are updating our membership records so that we have reliable ways of contacting members if unusual things happen with emails. A member of the committee may contact you to ensure that we have up to date information.

Rainfall: July 2024: 65 mm. Total for the year-to-date 2024: 298 mm. The corresponding total up to the end of July 2023 was 483 mm.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING – SATURDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2024

Wildflower walk, dinner, AGM and talk by Glen Johnson.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 3:00pm.

The Senior Citizens Hall will be open from about 2:30pm so that food can be appropriately stored for later in the afternoon/evening.

Remaining dates for 2024 and 2025

For 2024: Sunday 6th October, Saturday 2nd November and Sunday 1st December 2024.

For 2025: Sunday 2nd February, Saturday 1st March, Sunday 6th April, Saturday 3rd May, Sunday 1st June, Saturday 5th July, Sunday 3rd August, Saturday 6th September, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 1st November and Sunday 7th December 2025.

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.

