

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

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Website: <https://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

September pea walk, dinner, AGM and talk by Glen Johnson

The day was sunny but the breeze was chilly and the Park is very dry. After gathering at the Chiltern Post Office we headed to the corner of Bartley's Track and Howlong Road for a pea walk conducted by Glen Johnson. In practice Glen covered almost all of the plants in that location.



Glen in action telling us about peas and other plants. Photos: Neville Bartlett

Dinner with an excellent assortment of dishes supplied by attendees was followed by the AGM and a talk "Peas in the Park" by Glen.

Glen's talk described how peas were spectacular, diverse and essential to ecosystem function.

30 plus native species of pea have been recorded in the park (with likely a few more not formally recorded but present) with 16+ genera represented.

There are 9 FFG listed threatened species - 7 endangered and 2 critically endangered including the EPBC Act listed *Swainsona recta*.

There are also 22 species of introduced (exotic) peas in the park including 10 Trifolium or Clover species and Montpellier Broom etc.

Leopard Orchid or Tiger Orchid? – Neil Blair

Currently the Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*) is out in the Park and in the next few weeks the Tiger Orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*) will be appearing. I notice that difficulty in correctly identifying these 2 orchids is quite common especially when there is only one species present so no comparison can be made in the field.

When seen together, such as these two photos, differences can be readily seen in flower shape and dark patterns but without the comparison it is often more difficult.



Left: Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*) and Right: Tiger Orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*). Photos: Neil Blair

One observation that can reliably differentiate between them is an anatomical difference. Look carefully into the deeper middle part of the flower below the central 'disk or hood' and in the Leopard orchid 2 ridges will be forward projecting whereas in the Tiger orchid only one ridge is present. Once recognized this anatomical difference will give an accurate identification.

Friends Committee for 2024-25

The following were elected at the September AGM.

President: Tanya Thompson
Vice-president: Jennifer Davidson
Secretary: Liz Maartin
Treasurer: Neville Bartlett
Committee: Tony Murnane, Richard Jerome and John Hawker.

Webmaster: Tony Marsh
Newsletter Editor: Neville Bartlett

Ranger's Report – Scott Cunningham

With Brian away till mid-October, Liam Mahney, ranger from Wangaratta is acting Team Leader at Beechworth. Thanks again to the friends for planting at Mt Pilot, hopefully the plants, guards, mulch and rocks will deter bikers and keep everyone on the walking track!

We have been busy planning for multiple track closures on Woolshed Rd, works should be complete by end October. Additionally, we have improved access to some camping areas, beginning a more structured approach to camping along Reedy Creek.

Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*) – September image in the 2024 calendar



Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*). Photo: Neil Blair

The common name, Red-stem Wattle, can be misleading at times as not all *Acacia rubida* have red stems and other Wattles, especially Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) can have red stems. Plants were generally named from dried specimens and as *Acacia rubida* dries to a deep red (see pic) it is thought that this is where the name derives from.



Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*). Photo: Neil Blair

As both Golden Wattle and Red-stem Wattle flower at the same time with similar flowers in both colour and arrangement, and are often tall shrubs that co-exist in the same area, identification can be difficult. A good starting point is to study the leaves. From the pictures it can be seen that Red-stem wattles have blue-green leaves that are curved, widest at the centre and taper to a narrow tip. Golden wattle leaves are green, straight, widest in the distal half of the leaf and have a broad, rounded tip.



Left: Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) leaf and Right: Red-stem Wattle (*Acacia rubida*) leaf.
Photos: Neil Blair

2025 Calendar

Our 2025 calendar in A3 and A4 format is currently being produced. More details about pricing and how to order will be supplied in the October newsletter..

Rainfall: August 2024: 24 mm. Total for the year-to-date 2024: 322 mm. The corresponding total up to the end of August 2023 was 543 mm. Only 128mm in winter - according to my records the driest winter since 2006.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.

Data supplied by Mick Webster.

NEXT MEETING – SUNDAY 6th OCTOBER 2024

A wildflower walk in the Mt Pilot section of the Park is planned.

If you are planning to go directly to the Mt Pilot area, please contact Neville (on 0412 399 239) beforehand so that we can make sure that you have the latest information on where we will be.

Meet at the Chiltern Post Office at 9:00am.

Remaining dates for 2024 and 2025

For 2024: 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.
