

To conserve and enhance the diversity of native flora and fauna of the Glen Fern Valley Bushlands while preserving community access and encouraging education and compatible uses for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.
Edition No.13 Spring 2005

TREE PLANTING DAY A HUGE SUCCESS

friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc. 



An excellent turn out of around 25 group members enjoyed a sunny winter's morning on 17 July to plant 400 native trees, shrubs and grasses along the Glenfern Road frontage of the Reserve. The plants, provided from the Southern Dandenongs' Community Nursery at Bird's Land included trees such as Black Wattle and Narrow-leaf Peppermint and shrubs and grasses such as Spinosa, Sweet Bursaria, Weeping Grass and Rudis Veined Spear Grass. The Shire of Yarra Ranges donated half of the plants and 300 guards, weed mats and sets of stakes. The other half was paid from the subscription dues of the Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands. Well done to all members for helping make it possible.

Footnote: Most appear to be doing well at the time of writing although a small number were lost to vandals.

Meeting with Melbourne Water Nets Great Result

A meeting on-site in June with Melbourne Water has led to works to install some rocks above Ferny Creek where the banks were badly eroded by illegal 4WD access. This action, along with the new fence, has reduced 4WD and motorbike activity so significantly that some badly eroded tracks are now disappearing under regrowth. What a great result! Melbourne Water has also agreed to treat weeds along the creek during Summer. We are in the process of contacting landowners along the creek abutting the Reserve as part of the preparation for this work. Our thanks to Melbourne Water for their welcome support.

President's Message Spring 2005

All of the great events at Glen Fern Valley Bushlands this year reflect well on the support received from our supporters and will benefit all users of the Reserve who do not seek to damage it. It is also good to reflect on the benefits that more active volunteers receive. This year a major theme has been to increase the knowledge and skills of committee members to better advance the cause of the Glen Fern Valley Bushlands regeneration project. Some members attended a course on bushland regeneration; others have become level 2 first aiders and the September working bee at Birdland provided seed collection & treatment skills for a larger group.

Networking has also been a major theme. We have exchanged working bees with Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery. From the Shire provided First Aid and Bushland Regeneration courses we have collected a considerable list of other Friends group contacts with whom to share information and make common cause in dealing with many challenging issues.

At the AGM in October all committee positions will be open for election to all financial members. If you'd like to join our committee, share the load, share the achievements and some personal development on the way then come along and volunteer. If you'd just like to vote then come along!

Ian Rainbow

President, Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands

A Photographer's Paradise



Glenfern Valley Bushlands can be many things to many people. To the hobby photographer it can provide excellent opportunities to capture examples of Australia's unique wildlife...almost at our own back door.

A visit one morning a few months back resulted in the photo opposite, a Common Ringtail Possum, unusually active in the early morning sunshine.

So next time you're out in the Reserve remember to take your camera too. You never know what may appear before your eyes. And the views are excellent too!

photo: Mark Fanthorpe

Timelines

Tracking our ever changing Reserve throughout the seasons

- ❑ BlackwoodWattle, Cape Wattle, Black Wattles and Silver Wattles all flowering,
- ❑ Boneseed, Patterson's Curse, Spanish Heath flowering,
- ❑ Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flying over the Reserve.

- ❑ Koala and Eastern Grey Kangaroo sighted in Reserve
- ❑ Fan-tailed Cuckoos returning to the Dandenongs (Spring is on its way)

Help reduce damage by 4WD vehicles and trail bikes and dumping of rubbish within the Reserve by reporting illegal activities to the **Shire of Yarra Ranges Ranger** on **1300 368 333**
24hours/7 days a week.

Our Reserve Flora

Marsilea drummondii

By Serg Zaccaria

Nomenclature:

Family: Marsileaceae

Botanical Name: *Marsilea drummondii*

Common Name: Nardoo

Authority: A. Braun



Description:

Rhizomatous, perennial, 2 to 30cm high (Typical 8-10 cm) *M. drummondii* is an aquatic or sub-aquatic fern and consist of two pairs of opposite leaves forming a circular blade, each leaf wedge-shaped and capable of floating on the surface of water. *M. drummondii* may be mistaken for four-leaved clovers because of the pattern of the four leaf blades. A clue to this plant being a fern is seen in the unfolding of the new fronds. Careful examination shows the young leaves to be coiled and these unfurl like a typical fern crozier or fiddlehead. On water edges the leaves often form a tangled mass and are held semi-vertically out of the water. In deep water they either float on the surface or are held erect above the surface. Leaflets are generally covered with fine hairs. The hairs resist drying in the atmosphere and probably assist flotation. Leaflets exhibit the phenomenon of furling when the intensity of light becomes low. They tend to "close up" in the evening and on very dull days. Nut-like structures on stalks develop from the rhizome, which grows in the mud. These "nuts", edible sporocarps develop from modified leaves and it is within them that spores develop.

Geographic distribution:

M. drummondii is endemic to Australia and is found in all states and territories (Except in Tasmania & the ACT)

Cultural Requirements:

M. drummondii is well adapted to arid and semi-arid environments and is able to respond to changing water levels. Spore production and germination can be triggered by variations in moisture. Plants survive well on damp mud, but with the drying of the soil, the leaves shrivel and the sporocarps become detached and dry, these lodge in the cracks of the drying mud where they can remain viable for 20-30 years. When inundation again occurs, the sporocarps open and new plants are produced

Its primary habitat is river flood plains. Nutritious food can be made from the spores of this plant if it is prepared correctly. Aboriginal people in arid Australia collected the spore cases, roasted them, discarded the cases then ground the spores to make flour.

M. drummondii has been recorded on a number of different soil types, ranging from sands to clays

Our Reserve Birds

The Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

calyptorhynchus funereus

With its slow wing beat flight and 'kee-ow' call, the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo is an easily identifiable bird visitor to the Reserve.

Often seen ripping bark on trees to get to grubs beneath or feeding on pine nuts the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo is the largest Cockatoo in the Dandenongs. Often seen in small flocks they are a wonderful bird to behold.



photo: Mark Fanthorpe

Working Bees

Working bees are held every 3rd alternating Saturday or Sunday morning of the month. Members, Committee and interested supporters meet on-site to take part in weeding, rubbish removal and inspections of previously weeded areas. Everyone is welcome. Entry for cars is via the Parks Victoria (Fire Access) gate on Glenfern Rd, Upwey (about ½ way along the land) The site reference is Melways 74G10. Please bring gloves, hand tools, water, and, depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. In the event of inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

**Next working bee is scheduled for Sunday 16 October 2005 at 9.30am - 12.30pm.
This will be our annual Community Day
with flora and fauna walking tours, weed identification & free plant give-aways**

Last working bee day for 2005: Sunday 20 November. 9.30am - 12.30pm.

Volunteers attending working bees will have noted a new emphasis on the conditions for participation and signing attendance rolls. This has been required by changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act. It is very important that volunteers sign the attendance roll to ensure they are covered by insurance. Insurance cover is limited in extent, not necessarily covering medical bills covered by Medicare. We hope to have the position fully clarified in the near future.

Garden Weed Removal Hints

from Marilyn Thomas

Agapanthus – Long smooth dark green leaves coming from a central cluster, with round flower heads, usually white or blue. Small plants can be pulled up, but be sure to get as many of the roots as possible. Check the area, as new plants will come up from any pieces left behind. Larger plants are best cut back rather than pulled, as the roots can spread up to 1 meter across. Spray new leaves with herbicide as they appear. If you wish to keep the plants, be sure to cut off the heads after flowering, before the seeds develop, and burn or dump in a plastic bag.

And last but not least...

- ◆ Our **Annual General Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday 12 October 2005** at 7.30pm. All welcome. For venue details and for catering purposes please let Ian know if you want to attend on 9754 8425 or irainbow@bigpond.net.au.
- ◆ We now have 3 members of the committee trained to level 2 and a First Aid kit provided by the Shire. At least one First Aider should be in attendance at all future working bees. We would like to collect a list of First Aiders who might attend our working bees, so if your certificate is current please let us know. It is always good to have back up during a working bee.

Why not become a member of our Friends Group. The benefits?

- ◆ Make a tangible difference to your local environment and meet like-minded and knowledgeable people
- ◆ Learn about indigenous plants, environmental weeds and discover the local animals and birds
- ◆ Unwind and enjoy nature activities
- ◆ Be connected and informed, through our colour, quarterly newsletter, about the many positive improvements happening in our Reserve

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