

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 Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc.  
Edition No.18 Autumn 2007

## FENCE REMOVING TEAM IN ACTION!



Photo: Ian Rainbow

In the usually quiet time over mid-Summer a lot has happened in Glen Fern. Strenuous extra working bees were held to remove the balance of the mesh fence around the old quarry site. The last of the poles were removed from the site in early May. Some tidying up is in hand between the Friends and the Shire.

*Well done to all on this challenging task!*

## What's been happening?

- ✿ The Shire have Yarra Ranges has been clearing tracks and a truck turning circle in the centre of the old quarry is done. More work is planned
- ✿ Melbourne Water has arranged weed control works along the creek for a 3rd year.
- ✿ Blackberries have been sprayed throughout the reserve



Planning is well under way for the next event  
**Tree Planting Day on Saturday 26th May, 9:30-12:30.**

We will have 350 trees to plant

**ALL WELCOME**

Call Ian on 9754 8425 AH or check the website for further details.

 friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## - Autumn 2007

This year we have attracted support from Uniprint Pty Ltd with a generous donation and printing our newsletters. Debco Pty Ltd has donated water-conserving materials for tree planting. Many thanks from the Friends to Uniprint and Debco and to Sandra Cory for making the connection.

Our most recent working bee was to widen the short link track between the Depot and Glenfern Ridge Tracks (check your map or get one at our website). Life was made easier by Richard Homersham's closed trailer, which not only carries our tools but also has a fold down shelf for serving morning tea. Luxury! Richard is very kindly lending us his trailer until the Friends can acquire a purpose designed one of their own.

Very short talks about a weed, indigenous plant or animal or bird given by committee members are new feature of working bees. These are a great idea to offer a bit extra to members. It fulfils part of our community education goal and challenges the committee members to swot up! If any other Friends want to do this too they are most welcome.

This year our weeding strategy will be to specifically poison seed bearing Sweet Pittosporum (by frilling and filling using a backpack injector on loan from the Shire) to prevent new plants arising and to stabilise the population that can then be slowly eradicated over the next few years while regeneration restores habitat. More urgent attention is needed for

Agapanthus, Sallow Wattle and Hawthorn, which are all in the very early stages of expansion in this reserve. "A stitch in time will save nine" was a major lesson from a recent conference of the Weed Society held at Burrinja. Attendance was kindly funded by the Shire for three of the committee. We learnt a lot and met many people active in weed control.

Of course, we won't forget Boneseed! We have it very much on the back foot now, but its seeds can last up to 20 years in the soil and are activated by fire, so a careful watch must be maintained!

**Ian Rainbow,**  
President,

*Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands*

## OUR RESERVE BIRDS

### **The Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*).**

A solitary pigeon rarely seen, more often heard making its mournful deep resonant slow "whoop" repeated every few seconds. It is more often seen than its reclusive cousin the Brush Bronzewing (*P. elegans*). The sound of clapping wings on taking flight is typical of pigeons. A ground feeder they seek seeds of grasses and herbs, and also trees and shrubs. They nest mainly in spring to summer but can breed at other times.

*Photo by Ian Rainbow*

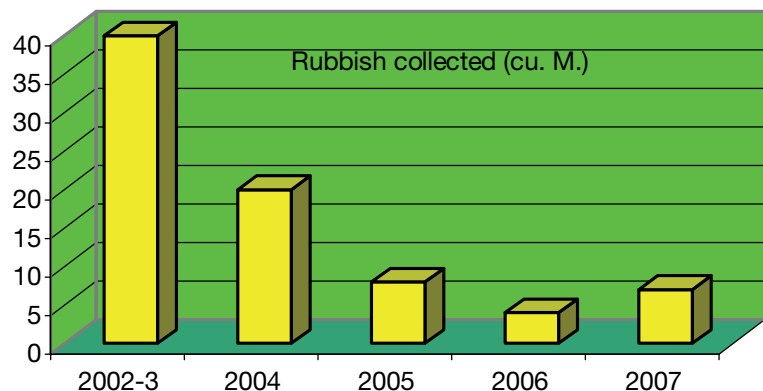


## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

### Sunday 4th March

This was a great & surprising success. We not only filled the 2 two metre skips but also collected enough tyres to fill a three-metre skip and another half a car body! Well done to the eleven participants of all ages who uncovered such an unexpected amount! What will we find next year as more weed thickets are removed?

Trailers were loaned by David Moncrieff and Andrew & Linda Fullagar. Many thanks for making available these essential tools for this job.



**IF YOU SEE ANY RUBBISH DUMPED OR GRAFFITI IN THE RESERVE PLEASE REPORT IT PROMPTLY TO THE SHIRE OF YARRA RANGES ON 1300 368 333.**

# Garden Weed Removal Hints

by Marilyn Thomas

**Spanish Heath  
(*Erica lusitanica*)**



Photo: Ian Rainbow

- > Woody evergreen shrub with fine needles and small round white flowers. Flowers winter to early spring.
- > It smothers & displaces indigenous grasses, herbs & orchids.
- > Small plants can be hand pulled, especially after heavy rain, and larger ones dug out with a mattock or garden fork.
- > Larger plants can be cut & painted with glyphosate.
- > It needs to be kept away from buildings, as it is quite flammable.

## Tracking the changes in Glen Fern Bushlands through the seasons

- ✿ *In flower now:* Smartweed, Mistletoe
- ✿ Rufous Fantails breeding over summer,
- ✿ Bassian Thrush, Wedgetail Eagle, Eastern Whipbird and Scarlet Robin seen in the last 3 month
- ✿ Gang Gang Cockatoos common & creaking while flying over
- ✿ Swamp Wallaby, Echidna, Koala seen recently
- ✿ European Wasps very common this year (MW contractors have marked 3 nests with red/white tape near eastern end of creek)
- ✿ Very large Boletus fungi appearing after rain and in the cooler weather.

## NEXT WORKING BEE: Tree planting Saturday 26th May

Last year Tree Planting was a hugely attended event and we put in over 500 plants. Unfortunately a large number of the plants died in the following drought, although there were some surprising successes. Who would have thought the Hedge Wattles would have survived in the hard rocky soil on the exposed ridge near the Cypress Trees! Learning from this result we will plant earlier to catch more rain, using fewer and tougher trees this year, in better areas and use better planting techniques, such as giving the seedlings a drink of Seasol beforehand, digging larger holes, adding water conserving materials from Debco, and with luck a little drink of water to help remove any air pockets around the roots. The Shire has donated 300 plants, from the Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery in Birdsland. Some of these are Yellow Box grown from seed collected in Glen Fern last year and cared for at the SDCN. A free plant will be given to all.



Photo: Ian Rainbow

**Smart Weed or Slender Knotweed (*Persicaria decipiens*)** is flowering now. It grows in the wetter areas or even in the creek. It grows as a spreading perennial herb in leafy clumps. The yellowish green leaves often have a brown splotch. The flowers are tiny and pink and held on slender spikes. It is one of several knotweeds occurring across Melbourne. *Persicaria* is a genus well known worldwide (try putting it into Google images!). The seed is an important food for water birds. Propagation is by seed or division or by rooting at the nodes where they contact the ground.

# The Glenfern DIARY for 2007

- \* Sunday 18th February
- \* Sunday 4th March –  
*CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY*
- \* Saturday 17th March
- \* Sunday 15th April
- \* **Saturday 26th May**  
***NATIONAL TREE DAY***
- \* Sunday 17th June
- \* Saturday 21st July
- \* Sunday 19th August
- \* Saturday 15th September
- \* Thursday 18th October – AGM
- \* **Sunday 21st October –**  
***COMMUNITY & WEEDBUSTERS DAY***
- \* Saturday 17th November  
9:30 – 12:30 am  
Central car park  
Glenfern Road, Upwey  
Melways 74 G10

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

### **BLITZ GRAPHICS**

*Designer and Maintainer of our Website.*

Phone Roger Vize on 9754 6910

for your website needs.

<http://blitzgrapfx.tripod.com>

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13 Edinburgh Street, Huntingdale, 3166

*Printer of this newsletter*

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### **BUNNINGS SCORESBY**

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### **DEBCO PTY LTD**

*Donor of planting supplies*

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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 1/2 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 a Fire Ban or inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

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