

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. 20 Summer 2008

FRIENDS OF GLEN FERN VALLEY BUSHLANDS RECOGNISED ON AUSTRALIA DAY

Where's the picnic table?

We don't have one!

Can't come to working bees?

Here's your chance to contribute to Glen Fern Valley Bushlands anyway.

We need \$400 to make a picnic table.

Can you spare \$50 (or more!) for this great community project?

The table will be:

- Of long-lasting timber
- Built by FoGFVB
- Ideal for picnics or just a rest on your walk
- Near the main car-park

Send a cheque to PO Box 1283, Upwey Or call Ian Rainbow today on 9754 8425 or e-mail to irainbow@bigpond.net.au

Thank You!

The Friends were proud to receive a Certificate of Recognition from the Shire of Yarra Ranges on Australia Day.

There were 34 groups and individuals recognised in 6 categories. The story behind each award was briefly given and so we are very honoured to be numbered in this company of people who have given so much to the community through their volunteer activities.

Everyone who has contributed to the rehabilitation of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands should feel honoured by this official recognition of their efforts and see it as a landmark on our journey towards completion of the project. It is recognition that our efforts are helping to build capacity and strengthen the community as well as improve the local natural environment. It validates our mission and values, which are to:

- > Protect and enhance natural values
- > Provide safe and compatible recreation opportunities
- > Involve the community in the reserve
- > Ensure sound and sustainable management

Serg Zaccaria (founder), Richard Homersham (treasurer), Ian Rainbow (president) proudly displaying the Certificate of Recognition with Streeton Ward Councillor Noel Cliff (right) and Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation James Merlino (left).



Image: Ian Rainbow's camera

 friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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Glen Fern Valley Quiz Summer 2007

Answers on last page

1. Which of the following weeds at Glen Fern Valley Bushlands (GFVB) is native to Australia? (There may be more than one)
a. Sweet Pittosporum, b. Sweet Vernal (grass), c. Sweet Briar, d. Sallow Wattle, e. Boneseed
2. Who is the "illustrious and tireless" president of Friends of GFVB?
3. What time is the informative (and delicious!) morning tea at our working bees? (1 point)
4. In relation to GFVB, what does CUAD stand for?
5. On which track is the new seat at GFVB?
6. Are dogs allowed at GFVB?
7. What colour are the flowers of Boneseed?
8. What is the ideal number of people at a working bee?
9. There are more than five varieties of Eucalypt at GFVB – true or false? (1 point)
10. In relation to GFVB, what does "riparian" mean?

(1 point each)

(1 point)

(2 points)

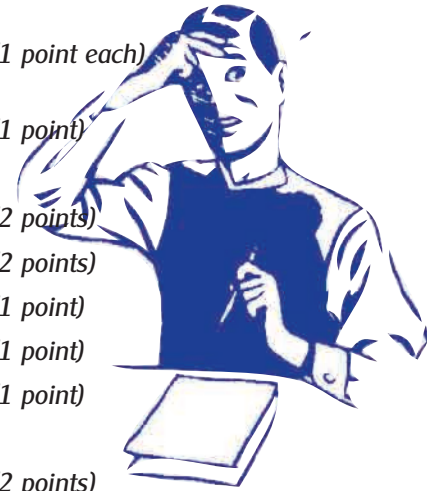
(2 points)

(1 point)

(1 point)

(1 point)

(2 points)



Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum aviculare*)



Solanum spp. are often colonising plants of disturbed areas and tracks. There are 5 species that are vegetatively similar. Range covers the eastern states across various habitats and even in New Zealand. It is an important coloniser after fires, regenerating from seed or underground stems.

Suitable habitat varies from Red Gum Woodland to valley, damp and wet sclerophyll forests to grassy low open forest e.g. GFVB upper slopes, where there are a few examples along New Track.

It is a decorative fast growing shrub, 1.5–2.5 m tall, gets straggly with age but responds well to pruning. It likes well-drained soil.

Flowers are pale mauve with five fused petals and yellow centres and appear from September to March.

The fleshy berries were eaten by aborigines, but only when very ripe. They have a sickly sweet taste. The fruit are succulent egg-shaped, green changing to orange-red to scarlet when ripe. They are carried on long drooping stalks and are poisonous when green, in *S. laciniatum*.

S. aviculare is cultivated, along with the Large Kangaroo Apple (*S. laciniatum*) for solasodine, which is used to make corticosteroids for medical purposes.

Images: I. Rainbow



MANY THANKS TO SHIRE COUNCILLOR NOEL CLIFF FOR HIS KIND DONATION

This will be put towards new equipment, such as a walkie talkie set for quick communication in the park to help ensure safety and better organisation on event days



New Park Seat on Fire Truck Track

A recent innovation in Glen Fern is to install some seats for the comfort of walkers wanting a break to contemplate the scenery or picnic. This is the first, designed, constructed and painted by Richard Homersham and installed in a patch of Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) under two lovely Black Wattles (*Acacia meamsii*) where Fire Truck Track meets New Track.

We would like to put more of these around the reserve and at around \$30 for materials we would welcome donations for specific seats.

They could even have a plaque with the donors name if you want! Contact Ian on 9754 8425 or irainbow@bigpond.net.au if you would like to contribute.

What's been happening around Upwey and Tecoma??

✿ Michael and Sharon protected a baby magpie at night for several days. Adults were around during the day. They were also swooped by butcherbird in November. Not had this experience before!

✿ Jackie and Son found a young Powerful Owl in the driveway at night transfixed by the headlights. They moved it and were swooped by the adult!

✿ In November David reported many very loud cicadas that were being eaten by a large flock of ravens as well as a few other birds.

✿ December saw a tremendous show of flowering by Victorian Christmas Bush and Sweet Bursaria

Activity Reports

Five members attended a thoroughly enjoyable 7-week course in Plant Identification provided by the Shire of Yarra Ranges and NMIT. Our Plant ID skills received a tremendous boost and networking with other Friends and the evening nibbles were a delight. Excursions to Kangaroo Ground and

Royal Botanic gardens at Cranbourne were wonderful.

Since the last newsletter there have been several working bees, the main one being **Community Discovery and Weedbusting Day** on October 21st 2007. An enjoyable day for our 38 attendees with planting activities, a talk on Drought resistant gardening by Serg Zaccaria and guided bird watching tours with Laurie Living and weed identification with Armin Korschan.

In December we enjoyed a pleasant twilight picnic in the park to celebrate the years successes, and see off some rogue 4WD-ers! The picnic was so enjoyable it will be an annual event. On another day we planted 100 Manna Gums, propagated, with help from Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery, from seed collected in Glen Fern, in two patches along Ferny Creek. Most of these have survived the heat of summer so far.

The new year has already seen two working bees in February; First to survey Riparian zone plants along Creek Track and weed the corner at New Road, filling 17 bags of weeds; and a second one to weed along Creek Track to bring this area of great natural regeneration much closer to being weed free.



Successful weeders with trophies at New Road!



A well-earned break in the Riparian Zone!

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WORKING BEE DIARY for 2008

- * Sunday 17th February
- * Sunday 2nd March –
CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY
- * Saturday 15th March
- * Sunday 20th April
- * Saturday 17th or 24th May
NATIONAL TREE DAY
- * Sunday 15th June
- * Saturday 19th July
- * Sunday 17th August
- * Saturday 20th September
- * Thursday 9th October – AGM
- * Sunday 19th October –
COMMUNITY & WEEDBUSTERS DAY
- * Saturday 15th November
9:30 – 12:30 am
Central car park
Glenfern Road, Upwey
Melways 74 G10

Answers to Quiz:

1. Sweet Pittosporum and Sallow Wattle; 2. Ian Rainbow; 3. 11.00 a.m. Don't miss it! 4. Clean Up Australia Day (Sunday March 2nd); 5. Fire Truck Track; 6. Yes, provided they're kept on leash; 7. Yellow; 8. Heaps! So please come to share the load and enjoy the company of like-minded people; 9. True (Yellow Box, Long Leaf Box, Narrow Leaf Peppermint, Manna Gum, Mountain Grey Gum, Messmate Stringybark, Swamp Gum); 10. Relates to the land, and its flora, that directly adjoins and influences Ferny Creek on GFVB northern boundary.

Scores:

- 6 or less Room for improvement. Come along, it's amazing what you learn!
- 7-10 Pretty good. See you again soon..
- 11 or more Brilliant! Your knowledge is wasted if you are not in our committee.

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Coffee vouchers to working bee participants from:

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As a business you can sponsor our newsletter for as little as \$50 per edition (2-3 per year). Newsletter distribution is about 200 local homes. Let us know if we can help you publicize your business.

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