banksia bulletin

autumn 2022

Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

From the Mayor

It is my pleasure to introduce the Autumn edition of *Banksia Bulletin*, which is filled once again with stories and photos from our volunteers that showcase Bayside's nature environment, and other environment focused items of interest.

On Saturday 2 April the Bayside Community Nursery will open to the public with a special Gala Day to celebrate the start of the season.

After the disruption caused by Covid over the past two years to our nursery being able to open, this is very exciting. Our volunteers and staff have been working hard to propagate indigenous plants for sale to the public and for planting in our reserves, heathlands, parks and gardens. The nursery is open until October.

Recently, I had the pleasure of presenting our Australia Day awards to some very special residents. Bayside's Environment Award for an Individual was presented to Sue Raverty who is a regular contributor to this magazine. Sue has been a long-term affiliate of many Friends groups in Bayside and we thank her for the work she has contributed to protecting our natural environment over many decades, and for sharing her Covid lockdown videos to keep us connected to our local reserves and open spaces.

I would like to thank all our readers who helped inform our Urban Forest Strategy, which was adopted at Council's February meeting.

We look forward to implementing this significant strategy, which will include working with our community to increase tree and vegetation canopy cover, improve the biodiversity functions of our urban forest, and combatting climate change.

During the community consultation, people living Bayside told us loud and clear that our leafy, green nature is highly valued, and I couldn't agree more. While trees provide us with shade and beauty in our parks, streets, and gardens we have a responsibility to protect them from extreme heat, drought, ageing and population growth. That is why we are going to grow our tree canopy cover from 16% to 25% by 2030.

I would encourage you all to read more about our four year Urban Forest Strategy and how you can contribute to protecting our trees.

Cr Alex del Porto
Mayor

"I am honoured to receive this award. Thank you, Bayside Council, for recognising the work we do for the environment and your continuing support for the work we will need to do in the future…In 1997, my Mum, Joan Palmer, decided that I should join the Beaumaris Conservation Society, so I did. Mum was already a BCS member and a Friend of Watkins Bay. This was the beginning of my involvement in trying to save the environment."

Sue Raverty, excerpt from speech on receiving the Australia Day Environment Award for an Individual.

Tricoryne elatior by Pauline Reynolds

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Plants of Bayside

Words and photo by Aaron Hurrell, Citywide Bushland Crew

Selliera radicans

The Shiny Swamp-mat (*Selliera radicans*), or Swampweed as it is also known, is a fast-growing perennial herb.

Lying prostrate, and matting against the ground, it spreads up to 1.5m wide and produces roots at its nodes.

Selliera radicans has bright green spoon-shaped succulent leaves that grow up to 110mm long and up to 35mm wide along the prostrate stem in alternate positions or in tufts.

Its mauve to white, fan-shaped, flowers stretch up to 12mm in length with a reddish-brown colouring on the outside of the petals, which appear between October and April.

A hardy plant, *Selliera radicans* tolerates salt, likes moist soil and grows in both full sun and full shade.

It is propagated by cutting the prostrate stems and using roots at the nodes to create cuttings. Another way to propagate *Selliera radicans* is by dividing the main plant into smaller parts.

This herb's hardy, fast growing, matting nature makes it very useful as a soil or sand binder and is perfect for erosion control.

It grows well around ponds and wet-soak areas and looks attractive when flowering en masse and can tolerate both wet and dry periods.

Source: Bull, Marilyn (1991) *Flora of Melbourne: A guide to the indigenous plants of the greater Melbourne area* Carlton Vic: Hyland House Publishing

Action Plan For Australian Birds 2020

An overview of the 2020 status of all Australian birds, and the actions needed for conservation.

e-Book now available from CSIRO Publishing.

The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2020 is the most comprehensive review of the status of Australia's avifauna ever attempted.

The latest in a series of action plans for Australian birds that have been produced every decade since 1992, it is also the largest.

The accounts in this plan have been authored by more than 300 of the most knowledgeable bird experts in the country and feature far more detail than any of the earlier plans.

This volume also includes accounts of over 60 taxa that are no longer considered threatened, mainly thanks to sustained conservation action over many decades.

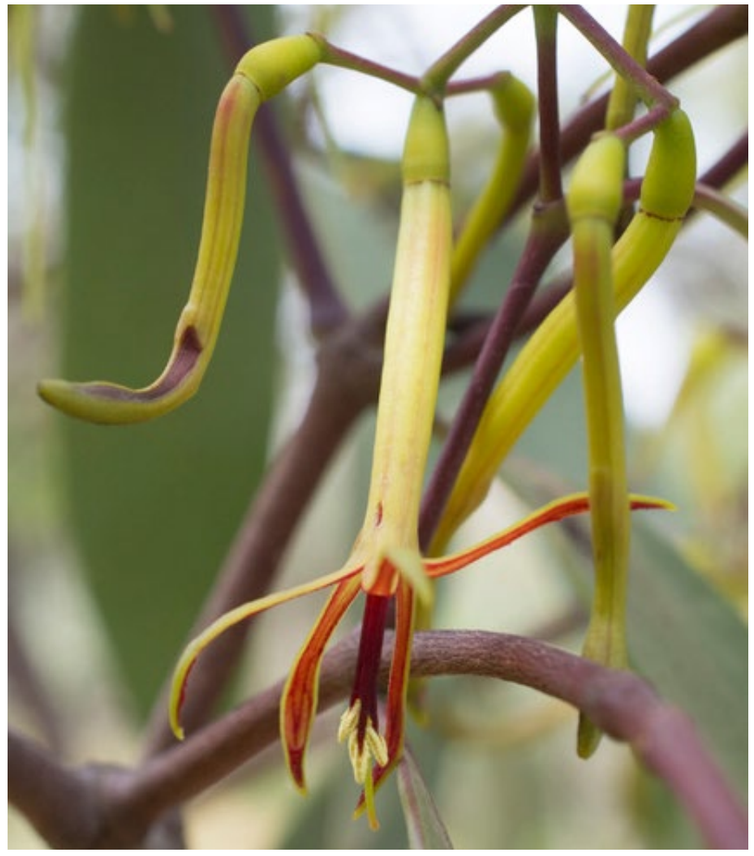
Have you seen a Mistletoe?

Bayside City Council is keen to hear from residents about where Mistletoe is growing in our municipality.

Look out for Creeping or Drooping Mistletoe growing in nature strips, parks or reserves and let us know by taking a photo and sending it, along with the location, to banksia@bayside.vic.gov.au

We are also look for interested Friends Group volunteers who might like to learn to propagate Mistletoe. Please drop us a line at banksia@bayside.vic.gov.au for more information or to register your interest.

Creeping Mistletoe (right top and bottom) is more commonly spotted in Bayside than the Drooping Mistletoe (below), which was once more common but now hard to find. These images of the Drooping Mistletoe were taken by Pauline Reynolds in the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens - keep an eye out!



Cassinia longifolia: A detective story

After the 2006 wildfire at George Street Reserve, one plant, identified as Common Dogwood (*Cassinia aculeata*), grew in the smaller burn site along with many examples of Drooping Cassinia, now called *Cassinia sifton*.

That plant has since been recognised as originating in north-west Victoria but has spread widely because of human disturbance, so is really not indigenous to Bayside.

The single plant of the Common Dogwood that appeared subsequently died after some cuttings were made, which also did not survive.

It is highly likely that it was *Cassinia aculeata* but unless it appears again we'll never be sure.

All this time there was a single plant, and then perhaps an offspring, in Balcombe Park, which are both very old plants now.

Bayside Nursery Coordinator Julie Valentine managed to persuade one of the plants to produce a small amount of healthy enough growth to be able to take a few cuttings, which she propagated. One of the plants was planted in my garden as a mother stock. It is thriving after a couple of years, thought to be *Cassinia aculeata*, well by some of us anyway. It was ready to harvest some cuttings last month.

While the cuttings were being prepared at the nursery, it was noticed that the plant is strongly aromatic and extremely sticky to handle so my curiosity was aroused.

I thought that it could be *Cassinia longifolia*. Identifications Botanist at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) Val Stajsic and Bayside's Environmentalist of the Year John Eichler knew the ID of this plant all along.

I even took it to RBGV Cranbourne, without all that prior knowledge, and found a *Cassinia aculeata* with which to compare.

I did enjoy all my detective work though, even if I missed the sensible step of asking the experts in the beginning.

The most interesting outcome I think is that we haven't had any *Cassinia aculeata* known to be growing in Bayside. The two original *Cassinia longifolia* are only just hanging on but we have managed to propagate and grow another generation from them. It is a very attractive medium-sized shrub which flowers for months and could make a lovely hedge in a suburban garden; a home for small birds with any luck.

Visit this link for more information

Thank you, **Ken Rendell**

Long-serving volunteer and inaugural member of the Bayside Community Nursery Steering Committee, Ken Rendell, is stepping down from the role he has held for 21 years.

By Pauline Reynolds

Ken came to live in Beaumaris in the 1950s after looking for somewhere close to Melbourne with some surviving bush. He found his block which fitted the bill, and designed and built a beautiful house for himself, his wife Jill and their children, where he still lives.

Bayside Community Nursery started operating in 1978, initiated by volunteers because they couldn't source indigenous plants with the correct provenance from any existing nursery to plant back into the foreshore and the inland reserves.

Ken first heard about the nursery through an advertisement in the local paper calling for volunteers. He offered and was asked to join the group, and eventually when the steering committee was formed was asked to be part of that too. The first meeting was on 26 June 1997 and Ken was an inaugural member.

He was pleased to help whereever he could and says that he gained his considerable knowledge from the work and from watching things grow. He also learned from planting in his own garden around the remnant vegetation saved during the building of the house, some of which still exists.

Ken has worked at the nursery nearly every Saturday morning since he joined the volunteer group, both propagating the plants and selling to the public, where he was able to share his expert knowledge about local plants and how to grow them successfully in residential gardens. He thought it was important to educate people about the advantages of growing indigenous plants.

Apart from his work at the nursery he is also the current convenor of the Friends of Gramatan Avenue and Table Rock groups. Ken was one of the first volunteers to recognise the importance remnant vegetation found in Long Hollow Heathland in Beaumaris and is still an active member of that Friends group too.

Ken's wisdom, experience and enthusiasm have been invaluable both practically and as an integral contributor to the Nursery Steering Committee for nearly 21 years. Of course, he's not retiring from any activities other than the steering committee, which he considers timely to hand over to someone else.

Ken's contribution has been, and will continue to be, outstanding and all the volunteers in Bayside thank him very much.

Knobbled Orbweaver

A wildlife-friendly garden at night

Warm, still summer evenings are perfect for learning about fauna and their habitats in Bayside suburbs. For spotting and recording, all you need is a good torch or spotlight and cameras with macro and/or zoom lenses, depending on whether you are looking for insects, arthropods and reptiles, or birds, bats and possums.

Brown House Spider with gumnut retreat

Common Garden Katydid

Lucilia sp. fly

Story and photos by Sue Forster

Since purchasing a good spotlighting head torch (a Ledlenser MH10) with an interchangeable infrared lens and rechargeable battery, I've discovered a whole new world of night-time activity. Combined with this light source, I've been using a small TG5 Olympus camera with a great macro lens and a flash diffuser to take invertebrate photos in my garden and local street.

I've also been lucky to have had naturalist John Eichler as a mentor on a few night surveys at Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary. As a late starter who migrated to Australia as an adult, I have much to learn about Australian invertebrates, not least because of their extraordinary diversity and the lack of scientific data about some groups.

I spend a lot of time comparing my own photos with those recorded locally by experienced photographers, such as John, on the iNaturalist Australia website. This gives me an overall picture of the species moving around Bayside at different times of the year. Good reference books are also essential for learning the key identifying features of any species, genus or family. This is also important for taking photos from relevant angles.

Old weatherboard houses like mine are spider havens. Most spiders find a suitable gap between boards, roof eaves, door jambs and window frames for a daytime retreat. A Black House Spider (*Badumna insignis*) retreat is easily identified by a short tunnel woven into a web. We have scores of them.

When night falls, Black House Spiders, Brown House Spiders (*B. longinqua*) and Daddy-long-legs (*Pholcus phalangioides*) are on the hunt, the former hiding and pouncing from their retreat; the last passively dangling beside their web. On my neighbour's garage door there are vigilant White-tailed Spiders (*Lampona* sp.). Although their bite was once rumoured to produce necrosis in humans, spider gurus Robert Whyte and Greg Anderson say this claim is scientifically baseless (*A Field Guide to Spiders of Australia*, p. 137). They argue that White-tailed Spiders have domestic benefits because they eat Black House Spiders, which do inflict painful sores on humans through their bite.

In the summer months, Leaf-curling Spider (*Phonognatha graeffei*) webs create a maze-like entanglement between plants.


Noctuid moth (family Noctuidae), possibly *Neumichtis* sp.


Native Drone Fly


Leaf-curling Spider viewed from underside


Victorian Huntsman


Palpita sp. moth


Black House Spider


Leaf-curling Spider upper body


White-tailed Spider

The dead curled leaf in the centre of each web is, of course, a spider retreat, but eggs are also laid in silk-lined curled leaves strung up near retreats. Although this species is day-active, the spiders in my garden mostly venture out at night when resident Little Wattlebirds are safely asleep.

The large hollow gumnuts on our dwarf *Corymbia* also provide a wonderful retreat for Brown House Spiders, which combine bed and breakfast by lining and encircling the nuts with their silk, trapping small passing flies.

My favourite spider is a fascinating Knobbled or Garden Orbweaver (*Eriophora pustulosa*) that builds a new web on my washing line each night. It is small but distinctive, likely to be female at around 15 mm (males are smaller), hairy with bright orange-red 'thighs', has a number of knobbly spines on its abdomen and two large upper eyes positioned to look laterally above its other six. As it dangles in the centre of its web, one of three Victorian Huntsman (*Isopedella victorialis*) can usually be found in a watchful pose on the opposite fence. Another just disappeared into the back of our car and hasn't been seen since.

Spiders may be the most obvious invertebrates out at night, but a three-night mid-February survey of our block also produced two fly species, six moth species, a Common Garden Katydid (*Caedicia simplex*) and native Shining Cockroaches (*Drymaplaneta* sp.). Three Marbled Geckos (*Christinus marmoratus*) were checking out the spiders on weatherboards and bushes; a Common Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) was eating our Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) after munching its way through our Silver Banksia (*B. marginata*); and a Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) was surveying the lot from a high cable.

I am used to listening out for possums and frogmouths, but these were eerily silent in my presence and only discovered with the spotlight. I am still missing the once common sound of flying foxes, which seem to have disappeared altogether since several Morton Bay Figs were removed in my area, but I sometimes hear Green Grocer cicadas (*Cyclochila australasiae* – also seen on several occasions during the day) and sounds of soft chirruping. I have not seen crickets recently, so I suspect these chirrupers were katydids.

I was somewhat surprised by the passivity of the flies and a few moths that appeared to be asleep on leaves. On one hot night a Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*) bush turned into a fly hotel, with a *Lucilia* sp. lying prone on top of every leaf. Several stunning striped and spotted Native Drone Flies (*Eristalinus punctulatus*) were found under the leaves of our Coastal Wattle; one slept a little too long and was later found wrapped in a web.

Many of the moths that I've photographed are hard to identify so I am thinking of investing in *Moths of Victoria*, currently a series of nine books by multiple authors. According to CSIRO, Australia has around 22,000 species of Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). Less than half have been named and only 400 are butterflies!

I can tell you that I have been visited by shimmering white Pearl Moths (*Palpita* sp.), probably because I have jasmine – a larval food plant – growing over my pergola, and semi-transparent Passion Vine Hoppers (*Scolypopa australis*), which turned out to be a pest. There have also been numerous Geometrid moths such as Sinister Moth (*Pholodes sinistraria*) and a possible Loop-line Bark Moth (*Ectropis bispinaria*), which are well-camouflaged against bark, but easily seen against a painted surface or on leaves. Identification of the rest is a work in progress.

The species mentioned in this article only represent a small portion of the fauna recorded in my garden throughout the last year. Its vegetation is not exclusively native or locally indigenous, but I do have a good mix of upper-storey, mid-storey and ground-level plants that are well-mulched with leaf litter. This provides habitat for both small and larger birds as well as geckos and invertebrates, and my 100-year-old house has long been inhabited by many more spiders than people.

Narrow-leaf Wilsonia (*Wilsonia backhousei*), Ricketts Point.

PLEASE, DON'T STEP ON ME!

Round-leaf Wilsonia (*Wilsonia rotundifolia*), Ricketts Point. These plants are now extinct in Brighton.

Story and photos by Pauline Reynolds

Dotted throughout Bayside's foreshore are beautiful, small, rare salty plants that cling to the edge of the coast.

Many of these plants have evolved to be inundated by high tides and buffeted by salty winds, and they are all part of the vulnerable biodiversity of the foreshore.

Sadly, these rare salty plants are in grave danger of becoming extinct in Bayside, and elsewhere, because of the pressures from trampling.

They are small and may look insignificant, but if you take the time to observe, you will notice their beauty and understand the important role they play.

Thick-head Glasswort (*Salicornia blackiana*), clinging to cliffs at Sandringham.

Beaded Glasswort (*Salicornia pergranulata*), found by the walking track near Bay Street, Brighton.

Wiry Centrolepis (*Centrolepis polygyna*), grows on the cliffs at Quiet Corner. This tiny annual is very rare in Melbourne and was presumed extinct in Bayside.

Wiry Centrolepis (*Centrolepis polygyna*) together with Hairy Centrolepis (*Centrolepis strigose*) on either side and *Crassula decumbens* (the little pink plant), which is an indigenous annual that grows widely in Bayside's bushlands.

Trailing Jointweed (*Hemichroa pentrandra*), growing on the reef at Ricketts Point.

Ground water monitoring at Long Hollow

The soil profile, the core of material removed to dig the bore, in the northern part of Long Hollow. On the left is the topsoil from near the surface – dark and full of organic material. In the middle, the subsoil is lighter coloured and sandy. At the far right, almost one metre down, is a thin layer of clay. The clay layer prevents much of the surface water from seeping away into the deep sands below, creating the vital 'perched water table' that allows wet heath species to thrive north of the boardwalk.

Story and photos by Rob Saunders
Convenor Friends of Long Hollow

In a pilot study funded by Bayside City Council and undertaken by environment specialists from Arcadis, three permanent ground water sampling bores were installed at Long Hollow in 2020.

The bore installed beside the Long Hollow fence near the Beaumaris Secondary College (BSC) Wetland reached a thin impervious clay layer at roughly 1m down.

This is the base of a perched water table and is underlain by much deeper sands. The thin clay layer is likely to be the floor of an earlier wetland, part of a complex of connected swamps and water courses (the 'Long Hollow') that once stretched between what are now Balcombe Park and Beaumaris Reserve.

This perched water table is vital, as it stops surface flows from seeping deep down into the sandy soil, away from the roots of smaller plants. It is vulnerable to penetration by earthworks such as holes for fenceposts, so it is very useful to know its depth.

Subsurface water was found in the bore nearest the BSC Wetland at about 50cm deep. This is great news. For the last couple of decades, low-lying parts of Long Hollow have been unusually dry, partly due to the Millennium Drought, but also because of larger storm water drains installed in Reserve and Balcombe roads to reduce the risk of flooding in the south of Beaumaris.

Unfortunately, those two very dry decades saw Long Hollow lose some locally rare species such as Screw Fern (*Lindsaea linearis*), which is now only found at Balcombe Park.

It looks like the construction of the school wetland has restored some of the original hydrology of the area. This is important for the long-term health of the wet heath species, and also for some of our more unusual indigenous trees such as Swamp Gum (Eucalyptus ovata) and Golden Spray (*Viminaria juncea*).

The aim of the pilot study was to assess the feasibility of monitoring sub-surface water quantity and quality at Long Hollow. Water collected from the bores was tested in detail by Arcadis. One concern had been about chemicals (e.g. fertilisers and herbicides) that potentially could seep from the intensively managed ovals at BSC, and impact on plants in the reserve.

Results to date have been reassuring, with very low levels of nutrients found and no detectable herbicides.

This is an exciting project and results so far are looking positive.

Artificial intelligence develops an ear for nature calls

A great deal of information about biodiversity can be gained by listening. Increasingly, ecologists are using audio recorders to unobtrusively eavesdrop on the croaks, whistles and grunts that animals produce. The resulting audio recordings can create valuable snapshots of how animal communities respond to changes in their environment. However, to avoid spending many human lifetimes decoding the audio files, researchers are relying on artificial intelligence.

Recently, ARI's Dr Peter Griffioen and Lachlan Francis used recordings from a network of automatic sound recording collected over three years by Katie Howard and Louise Durkin to train a deep learning artificial intelligence model. The model was able to automatically identify 14 frog species found in the Murray River and associated floodplains with very high single species accuracy. The project was recently presented as part of ARI's Seminar Series. For an example of the the model in action see the ARI website.

The work will be extended to birds to help bring the Eastern Bristlebird back from the brink following the bushfires in 2019-20, and to bats to monitor changes in response to interventions being implemented in north-western Victoria. Artificial intelligence will enable a computer to pick out bristlebird and bat calls from all other sounds. This information can be used to create a map of where bristlebirds currently live in the post-fire environment, or how bat communities change over time.

It is hoped that models like this can be further improved, and applied to more species, to better understand how policies and management interventions affect entire animal populations.

Credit: Arthur Rylah Institute Terrestrial Quarterly Update (March 2022)

Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*), image by G Heard

Large brown tree frog (*Litoria littlejohni*; Image L Durkin)

Spotted Grass Frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis)*, image by G Heard

Peron's Tree Frog (*Litoria peronii*), image by G Heard

Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera)*, image by G Heard

VICTORIA State Government | Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Arthur Rylah Institute for environmental research

Redrumpuary

Why are tree hollows so important?

Many of Australia's beautiful bird species rely on tree hollows for breeding and shelter. But in cities and towns, native tree hollows can be in short supply.

To make sure native parrots like red-rumps can survive in cities, we need a better idea of what makes a hollow a good home. Does it have to be a gum tree? Or will an exotic street tree do? Maybe they prefer dead trees? Honestly, we're not sure… yet. That's where you come in.

How can you help?

Throughout the month of February, now officially 'Redrumpuary', tell us where you've seen red-rumped parrots using tree hollows in your area. We're looking for information on:

- Sightings of red-rumps using tree hollows
- Whether the hollow was in a native or exotic tree (or something else entirely!)
- Other information about the tree hollow

Any records, no matter how old, will be valuable. So if you saw a red-rumped parrot nesting in your backyard in nineteen-tickety-boo, be sure to let us know!

You can report your observations using the link below.

Report a red-rump hollow

What are we hoping to achieve?

By getting a better understanding of what kind of hollow makes a good home, Redrumpuary aims to inform future conservation work and habitat restoration to better support this beautiful and charismatic parrot. This work is part of my Masters research, so if you'd like more information or to talk with us about the project, contact Robert Ashworth rashworth@student.unimelb.edu.au.

About the Red-rumped Parrot

Red-rumped Parrots are found throughout southern-eastern Australia. They prefer open grasslands and open forests, particularly along watercourses. Mating for life they are usually seen in breeding pairs or in small flocks of 6-10 with larger flocks sometimes seen in winter. They forage for seeds and leaves of grasses and herbs on the ground but will sometimes take fruits and flowers in trees.

What they look like

Red-rumped Parrots are small birds about the size of a budgie.

Adult males are brightly coloured with blue-green bodies, yellow shoulder and belly, and a distinctive red rump. Females are a duller olive-green, often lacking a red rump with a pale-yellow belly.

Young individuals of both sexes are dull in colour.

Often difficult to spot amongst the grass they are feeding on but will fly up to nearby trees, calling loudly when disturbed.

About Red-rump Parrots

Red-rump Parrots are small granivorous birds that can be found throughout parks and urban green spaces of Melbourne and many other urban areas throughout south-eastern Australia. These beautiful birds are often assumed to do poorly in urban areas due to over competition from more aggressive species like Lorikeets and Mynas, and a lack of native hollow bearing trees.

About the research

Rob Ashworth is a Master of Environment student at the University of Melbourne in the school of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences. He is currently studying Red-rump Parrots in urban areas and has created a citizen science project to help collect data. He is using this outreach program to better understand what makes a good home for a Red-rump Parrot. Do they only use tree hollows in native trees, or will any tree do the job?

Follow the research via Twitter @robdashworth or email rashworth@student.unimelb.edu.au for more information.

Source: redrumpparrots.wordpress.com
***Illustration by @aunaikou [Instagram]**

No smoke without fire

Cameron Arden
Citywide Bushland Crew

Fire is a fundamental element to the bushlands of Bayside, a tool used for thousands of years by the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation to care for Country. However, smoke is a component of burning which is under appreciated for the success and succession of bushlands.

The majority of what makes up smoke are molecules such as carbon dioxide/monoxide and water. A smaller component of smoke are Karrikins – a hidden power of smoke that awaken long-stored seeds within the seed bank. They are a plant growth regulator and when they come into contact with seeds can kick-start the germination process.

Applying fire to bushland is deceptively simple. With the smoke clearing from a burn, the Karrikins are left behind either attached to the soil, surrounding logs or on the leaves of trees. When it then rains, these compounds are soaked deep into the soil and are then captured by the interconnected web of mycelium, bacteria and minerals in the soil. The outcome of the Donald MacDonald Reserve burn showed successful regeneration of more than 50 species of native flora.

Smoke alerts both predator and prey that the landscape is changing. Dragonflies and Spider Wasps can be seen flying through the smoke catching moths, beetles and spiders. Birds can be heard alerting, darting around and inspecting the burns for scuttling skinks. In larger landscapes mammals such as kangaroos, emus and echidnas respond to smoke in order to seek safety. Furthermore, the interactions smoke and fire have with fungi and bacteria is closely connected, as flushes of fruiting bodies can appear only days after a burn.

Nowadays smoke is seen as a hazard for our health and for good reason. Fires are burning hotter and larger than ever, whether wild or controlled. Compounds like Karrikins decompose in the infernos which dramatically hinders the process of seed germination. This can prime areas devastated by bushfire to cycles of weed domination.

Bayside is fortunate to not only have protected areas dedicated to conservation but to also be able to continue the practice of fire on Country, strengthening bushland for the future.

Tree finds new purpose

A large Tasmanian Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globus*) that lived on the corner of Oak and Gibbs streets, Beaumaris, since the 1960s has a new home at Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve (EPNR).

The magnificent mature tree was an imposing figure that took up the entire nature strip but unfortunately, like many trees in the urban environment, it was subject to bouts of root and canopy pruning.

In 2019, the tree started to show signs that it was in decline, forcing Council to come to a decision in 2021 that it was no longer viable as a street tree.

We are pleased to see this Tasmanian Blue Gum ecologically repurposed, providing a grand entry to the Meeting Place at EPNR.

Protect yourself from Buruli ulcer

Around 10-20 cases of Buruli ulcer – a bacterial skin and soft tissue infection – are detected in Bayside each year.

To help reduce the spread of infections, Bayside City Council has joined the *Beating Buruli Project*, led by the Doherty Institute and the University of Melbourne. The project is jointly sponsored by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Victorian Department of Health to better understand the infection.

Results so far confirm Common Ringtail and Brushtail possums are wildlife reservoirs of the bacteria that causes Buruli ulcer (also known as Bairnsdale ulcer) and that possums also suffer from this disease.

It also appears that mosquitoes are the likely major vector, spreading infection from possums to humans.

Research efforts are now focussed on testing strategies to reduce mosquito numbers and observing if that strategy reduces the number of Buruli ulcer cases in humans.

Since possums shed the Buruli ulcer bacterium in their faecal material (scat), possum scat surveys are also underway as a means to see how widespread Buruli ulcer is in possums around Melbourne, including Bayside suburbs.

Visit this link for more information

The lesion usually starts off resembling a mosquito bite before progressing to a skin lesion. (Supplied: Anthony Fleming)

What is Buruli ulcer?

Buruli ulcer is an infection of skin and soft tissue caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium ulcerans*. The toxin made by the bacteria attacks fat cells under the skin, which leads to localised redness and swelling or the formation of a nodule (lump) and then an ulcer. Although Buruli ulcer is not fatal, the infection requires prolonged antibiotic treatment and often surgery to remove damaged tissue and/or to repair scarring and can often leave patients with significant cosmetic and sometimes functional damage to limbs.

Where is Buruli ulcer found?

Buruli ulcer has been reported in 33 countries around the world including rural West Africa, Central Africa, New Guinea, Latin America and tropical regions of Asia. In Australia, Buruli ulcer most commonly occurs in localised coastal areas of Victoria. The disease emerged dramatically on the Mornington Peninsula in the mid-2000s, beginning with a handful of cases near Sorrento and increasing to between 200-340 cases per year since 2017. The disease occurs at a low level in Bayside, with 10-20 cases reported each year.

How to protect yourself

- Wear gardening gloves, long-sleeved shirts and trousers when gardening or working outdoors.
- Avoid insect bites by using suitable insect repellents and long clothing, especially during the warmer months.
- Protect cuts or abrasions with sticking plasters (Band-Aid).
- Promptly wash and cover any scratches or cuts you receive while working outdoors.
- See your doctor if you have a skin lesion and mention the possibility of Buruli ulcer.

Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration

On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March – the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 – as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants. The UNGA resolution also designated the CITES Secretariat as the facilitator for the global observance of this special day for wildlife on the UN calendar. World Wildlife Day has now become the most important global annual event dedicated to wildlife.

This year, World Wildlife Day (WWD) has been celebrated under the theme **"Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration"**.
The celebrations sought to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and to drive discussions towards imagining and implementing solutions to conserve them. All conversations have been inspired by and sought to inform efforts towards the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals 1 (*No Poverty*), 2 (*Zero hunger*) 12 (*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*), 13 (*Climate Action*) 14 (*Life Below Water*) and 15 (*Life on Land*).

According to data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, over 8,400 species of wild fauna and flora are critically endangered, while close to 30,000 more are understood to be endangered or vulnerable. Based on these estimates, it is suggested that over a million species are threatened with extinction.

Continued loss of species, habitats and ecosystems also threatens all life on earth, including us. People everywhere rely on wildlife and biodiversity-based resources to meet all our needs, from food, to fuel, medicines, housing, and clothing. Millions of people also rely on nature as the source of their livelihoods and economic opportunities.

In 2022, World Wildlife Day has therefore driven the debate towards the imperative need to reverse the fate of the most critically endangered species, to support the restoration of their habitats and ecosystems and to promote their sustainable use by humanity.

Ivonne Higuero
Secretary-General of Cites
Source: wildlifeday.org

Volunteer Groups

Friends Groups

Friends of Balcombe Park
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Friends of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary
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Friends of Beaumaris Reserve
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Friends of Brighton Dunes
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Friends of Cheltenham Park
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Friends of Donald MacDonald Reserve
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Friends of Elster Creek
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Secretary: Anubhooti Jaiswal
Email: friendsofelstercreek@gmail.com
Meeting point: Elwood Canal, Glen Huntly Road Bridge

Friends of George Street Reserve
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Friends of Gramatan Avenue Heathland
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Friends of Long Hollow Heathland
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Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.
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Marine Care Ricketts Point Inc
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School Groups

St Leonard's College Conservation Group
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Phone: (03) 9909 9300 **Email:** simon.daniels@stleonards.vic.edu.au

City Nature Challenge 2022

Held over four days in two parts, this global bioblitz encourages cities to see what can be accomplished when everyone works towards a common goal while gathering the most observations of nature, finding the most species, and engaging the most people in the event.

From 29 April – 2 May take pictures of wild plants and animals, and from **3-8 May** identify what was found.

Find out more and sign up to participate.

Do you want to know more about Bayside and the Banksia Bulletin?

Please refer to our website

www.bayside.vic.gov.au

Bayside City Council

banksia bulletin

Editorial Policy
The purpose of publishing the Banksia Bulletin is to circulate information, report on events, and to profile relevant environmental issues important to our community.
The Bulletin is also published to support the network of people involved in enjoying and protecting our local environment.

Bayside City Council encourages people from our local community groups to submit articles of interest, share experiences and news about any upcoming events. All articles are reviewed prior to publication and Council reserves the right to omit or edit submissions.

Acknowledgements
Thank you to all the people who have contributed to this issue of Banksia Bulletin.

Disclaimer
The views expressed in the Banksia Bulletin are not necessarily those of Bayside City Council nor its representatives.

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If you would like to be added to the Banksia Bulletin mailing list, please contact Bayside City Council on 9599 4444 or email: banksia@bayside.vic.gov.au
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Bayside CITY COUNCIL

New Sugar Gum tenant at Elsternwick Park (Oval 2)
By Nick Nibaldi
Citywide Bayside Trees - Crew Leader