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President:
5122 3137

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – February 2004

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>

A0016319X

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Welcome also to new members, the Mansfield's of Boolarra. I have been sending newsletters to Lorie ever since Ken was invited to their property a year or so ago for a flora survey, and particularly to check out their crop of Horned Orchids. 'Tis great to have you on board.

Included with this newsletter is our revised calendar, which takes into account our application to provide a display, possibly in conjunction with other nearby Friends Groups and Parks Victoria, at the Churchill Festival. This will be held on Saturday, May 15, the day before our normally scheduled activity, so we have moved our May activity back a day and shifted the tree guard removals back to April, where we had planned an unspecified exploratory walk. There has already been one planning meeting for the festival, which Cathy was not able to get to, but she has been in touch with the organisers and will be kept informed of events.

Also included with this issue is an index for the 2003 newsletters, compiled by Ken Harris. Ken will be steadily compiling a full index of newsletters for the web site, as time permits, and this is the first year hot off the press. Thanks Ken.

February Activity

This month we are scheduled for our annual Weir Walk and weed removal session. Ranger Rob has already located a few willows that will need dealing with, and I'm sure there will be plenty of other mongrel varmints to cope with as well, teasel, thistles, ragwort, tutsan, nightshade, etc. Hopefully, even though I really like this cool, damp weather, it will be a few degrees warmer to make the plunge into the creek a little less traumatic. We will meet at the Braniff's Road gate at 10am on Sunday, February 15, armed with lunch and refreshments, and suitable clothing and footwear for walking through prickly, thorny scrub and the creek.



Seedlings and Seed Searching

It was trying to rain again as we sped through the partially open gate, tore up the gravel road, slid around the corners and came to a grinding halt at the end of the queue lined up along the side of the shed. We weren't particularly late, but were just about the last there. Rob, Wendy, Reg, and John were all getting organised for the session ahead, while Ken and Dorothy were there, but weren't staying due to other commitments. Peter pulled up behind us a short time later, and Denis, Jane and Aaron were last to arrive, no doubt operating on baby time.

We chatted for a little while as we waited for the potting mix to soak, Rob trying to find a home for some agapanthus he had pulled out along the Brewster's Road boundary, but to my native plant nut delight, he found no takers. Dorothy had brought along a photo album which included some historical shots of the Billy Creek area, so we all had a look at these to pass the time. An hour later, the potting mix still hadn't lost it's hydrophobia, so we had to use a bit of creativity and a couple of rubbish bins to mix water into the soil. Making mud pies was never as much fun! Once we had some suitably damp soil to work with, we soon got into our rhythm. Reg and co. produced the mix and filled the tubes, while the rest of us got to work pricking out the seedlings and potting them up. Only the Blue Gums were ready for potting up and boy were they ready! The tray was completely covered with seedlings, reminiscent of the best laid lawn. I reckon there were at least three thousand seedlings there. A pity we only need about 500 this year.

Before too long we had completed our quota of 12 trays (480 plants) of Blue Gums. Having eaten our lunch, and with the afternoon still young, general consensus was that we should go and look for some seed. Into the 4WD's we jumped and headed for the Lodge Track, where we hoped to find some Hazel Pomaderris, Varnish Wattle and Prickly Currant Bush. At the first stop, no luck at all. Our normally productive Hazel near the Lodge site was bare and none of the nearby Wattles had any pods at all. The second stop was no better, no wattle seed or currants there either. Our third stop at the junction of the Lodge and Clematis Tracks proved much more fruitful (excuse the pun), as some of the Currant Bushes were absolutely loaded with fruit. An hour or so of painful extraction followed, they aren't called Prickly Currant Bush for nothing. Once we had had enough of the pain, we continued right to the top of the Lodge Track to the Moran's Road gate. There we found some really nice, juicy, purple currants that were just right for eating, rather than for seeds. We also managed to find a few wattle pods, although they were few and far between. On the way back down, Rob took us out onto the ridge just outside the park boundary, overlooking Junction Road, where we enjoyed the stunning panorama of the Latrobe Valley from Boolarra right around to Traralgon on our far right. A good way to finish the day.

A fortnight later, on Sunday, February 1, a group of us made another appearance at the propagation shed to pot up the rest of the seedlings that weren't ready previously. Ken, Wendy, Reg and myself presented at 10am, while Denis, Jane and Aaron arrived just before 11am. We were much more efficient this time, getting the potting mix straight into the bins for hydration. Once the initial mix was ready, Reg took over the mixing while Ken and I potted up the seedlings and Wendy went through the Blue Gums of January and replaced the dead ones. By the time Denis and Jane arrived, we were already halfway through our quota and it only took another hour to finish the lot. We filled 15 trays of tubes (600 plants) to make a total of 1080 trees for planting out later in the year. In all, we have 12 trays of Blue Gum (480), 3 trays (120) each of Messmate, Blackwood, Varnish Wattle and Prickly Moses, 2 trays (80) of Mountain Grey Gum and 1 tray (40) of But But. Thank you to all who lent a hand, hopefully there will be a good success rate, both before and after we get them in the ground.

Newsletter Index for 2003

All old newsletters are accessible on the Morwell National Web Site:
http://morwellnp.pangaean.net/browser/newsletter_archive.html

Activity Reports	How to Fall Off Hillsides and other Tree Planting Tales	Mike Beamish	Aug
	Hunting for Orchid Hunters	Jane Sultana	Oct
	Operation Tree Guard	Danny Barclay	Apr
	Party, Party (seed sorting and collecting)	Mike Beamish	Jan
	Removal of Tree Guards	Jane Sultana	Apr
	Seed Collecting in the Sun	Mike Beamish	Feb
	The Weir Walk	Cathy Beamish	Mar
	Tree Dis-guarding	Mike Beamish	Jun
	Tree Planting 2003	Mike Beamish	Jul
	Tree Planting No.3	Wendy Steenbergen	Sep
	Walking on the Wild Side	Mike Beamish	Jun
AGM	President's Report		Sep
	Ranger's Report		Sep
	Report		Sep
Animals	Brown Goshawk in Fosters Gully	Danny Barclay	Jan
	McCoys Skink by Billys Creek		Jul
	Nankeen Night Heron by Billys Creek	Ken Harris	Mar
	Native Snail and Slug	Ken Harris	Nov
Articles	International Access to our Web Site	Ken Harris	Jul
	Items of Interest	Mike Beamish	Jan
	News and Views		Jun, Jul
	Postscript	Mike Beamish	Feb
	There's a Home for Everyone	Danny Barclay	May
	What's Been Going On	Mike Beamish	Mar
Committee Meeting	Report		Jun, Sep
History	Brief History of Billys Creek	Hilmar Batza	Dec
	Gold Mine in Fosters Gully	Eulalie Brewster	Mar
Koala Counting	Counting Koala's a month too late	Mike Beamish	Dec
	Koala Count	Wendy Steenbergen	Nov
	Not Counting Koalas	Ken Harris	Nov
Plants	A New Plant for Morwell National Park	Ken Harris	Dec
	The Great Orchid Hunt	Mike Beamish	Oct
	Unusual weeds removed	Mike Beamish	Jan
Puzzles	Marsupials	Danny Barclay	Apr

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Activities Calendar 2004

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Activities are scheduled for the third Sunday of each month, with extra days scheduled as required.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Venue and Time:</u>
January 18	Seed Collecting	Braniff's Road, 10.00am
February 15	Weir Walk Weed Removal	Braniff's Road, 10.00am
March 21	Clayball Spreading	Junction Road, 10.00am
April 18	Tree Guard Removal	To be advised, 10.00am
May 15 (Saturday)	Churchill Festival	Glendonald Park 10.00am
June 20	Tree Planting	To be advised, 10.00am
July 18	Tree Planting	To be advised, 10.00am
August 1	AGM	To be advised, 1.30pm
August 15	Tree Planting	To be advised, 10.00am
September 9	RBG Cranbourne Presentation	APS LV Meeting, 7.30pm
September 19	RBG Cranbourne Excursion	To be advised, 10.00am
October 17	Koala Count	Foster's Gully, 1.30pm
November 21	Butterfly Orchid Survey Weed Removal	Foster's Gully, 10.00am
December 19	Odd Jobs, Christmas Function	Foster's Gully, 1.30pm

For all activities, it is BYO food, drinks, suitable clothing and footwear, and other personal items. Up to date details of each forthcoming activity are provided in the monthly newsletter.