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NEWS



LETTER

ISSUE 18 for MAY 2003.

Contact Bill with items for inclusion at gempark@netspace.net.au or send to PO Box 91 Emerald before 24th of each month.

View them on our web site www.emeraldlakepark.com.au
Click on the frog logo!

EDITORIAL.

The sound of chain saws have been buzzing on the outskirts of the park for over a week now. Clearing an area for a new home in our mature Messmate forest is quite a task. It is a shame and a great loss but necessary if we are to allow any development in our woods. It does however highlight the protected value of the parks Eastern Messmate Forrest area. Here the trees include many specimens of considerable age and size. Environmentally one good tree like this is worth ten of the typical specimen found in Wright forrest and the wooded areas right through to Bunyip State Forrest and beyond. Last weekend a trip though there revealed very little Messmate to match that in our park.

Of course Nobelius completely cleared most of our park around the turn of last century. The creek flora and the Messmate forest being the exceptions. Since Nobelius's death in 1921 the central area including the two lake surrounds has been planted with stock from the Nobelius legacy of ornamentals. These originated from all parts of the globe and are a comprehensive and valuable resource for seeds. Today this display provides the unique balance that we all love and wish to preserve. Most trees are mature now and the space a little crowded in places. We do lose some from time to time but trust that replacements will preserve this balance.



LITTLE JOHNNY

The pastor was talking to a group of young children about being good and going to heaven. At the end of his talk, he asked, "Children, where do you want to go?"
"Heaven!" Suzy cried out.
"And what do you have to be to get there?" asked the preacher.
"Good Kids" says Suzy. "Dead!" yelled Little Johnny.

WHY IS IT SO

The most stiking aspect of this time of year are the morning fogs especially over lake Treganowan. Why is it so? I hear the old professor say. Well every damp surface above zero centigrade emits water vapor as a gas. You can easily prove this to yourself by placing your warm hand on a cool glass tabletop. On removal you will see evidence of the vapor as a fog handprint that then quickly evaporates. Before sunrise, in the cool early mornings of May, the sharply cooler air descends as a layer over the lake. The lake, still warm from the Autumn sun emits warm vapor that rises to meet it. Just like the cool table top and vapor from your warm moist hand, fog forms as condensate in the intermingling of warm and cool. Of course, unlike the table, it would seem that the cool air layer does not have a surface on which the condensate can form. Contained in the air however are tiny submicroscopic dust particles that are never completely removed by rain or gravity. These numerous particles provide a cool surface on which the vapor condenses, and we see this as fog.



FUNGI IN THE PARK

A great show of fungi beginning late April is now comming to an end. Some points of interest from an article by Hilliary Weatherhead, follows. Fungi are essential to life on our planet. In all their myriad forms they are recycling agents for dead plant material. The humus that results returns nutrients to the soil. Many of our native plants especially those related to the eucalypts would become extinct were it not for the fungi that live on their roots. Important in the diet of some small native animals and for humans where they are used in the manufacture of many foods, beverages and antibiotics.

The visible, fruiting bodies are just a small part of the fungi life cycle, that mostly occurs below ground. Here a mass of fine rootlike threads called *hyphae* radiate fom a germinating spore. Unlike plants that use photosynthesis for energy, Fungi get this from breaking down plant material and in doing so hasten the rotting process. Fungi include mildew, rusts, smuts, slime moulds, microscopic bacteria and the higher mushroom type species. The latter many thousands of which fall into two great classes the Basidiomycetae and the Ascomycetae. The largest family of the Basidiomycetae class is the Agaricaceae family to which the

Mushroom and Toadstool belong. The underside of these have vertical radiating gills on which the spores are born. Fungi produce huge numbers of short lived spores often in the billions. Before they perish they must find a suitable growth site.

These sites are rare as most are usually occupied by other fungal species competing for nutrients.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE PARK

New Signs

A number of signs have been installed, the most visible being the emergency area signs. These are very large and bright red and would be visible for miles if it weren't for the obstruction of the trees. On the other hand we have a new road crossing sign for the ducks, to make drivers aware of our wildlife. Signs warning of the dangers of swimming in the lake and prohibiting jumping from the bridge are again installed. More visitor value sign are planned, these are signs that assist our visitors to find facilities, each other, and help them enjoy their stay in our park.

More Plants

Park Officers Jamie and Richard joined forces on Wednesday last and went shopping for shrubs to help fill the newly cleared garden beds. This will add nicely to those already planted by the friends. It is surprising how many it takes to reasonably cover each garden area. We can all look forward to the growth of these young natives and greater coverage should soon become evident.

Mallard Ducks

This non Native species continue to appear on our lake. Recently two more arrived from nowhere and are mingling with our native birds. Their source remains of a mystery.

More Autumn Colors

While some trees seem unphazed by the different yearly weather patterns others seem confused this year. The liquid amber above Boatshed Shelter still has not coloured much at all. Normally by this time it is dropping multicoloured leaves like many others in the park. Other slow ones are the Japanese maples on your right as you enter the park these now have a mixture of red and green leaves. They are very striking late in the day with the sunset highlighting them to produce an orange glow.



Our rain forest, dense with treeferns.

PLANTINGS IN MAY

Shrubs purchased by FELP and planted in the Model Railway garden. We were fortunate to have rain to follow this with a total of 57.8 mm for the month.

- 2 Correa Cream.
- 3 Dwarf Melaleuca Mauve. (Thymifolia)
- 1 Hibertia Yellow.
- 2 Dampiera Blue.
- 2 Grevillia Mt. Tambouritha.
- 5 Varigated small shrubs.
- 3 Crowea. 3 Correa Dusky Bells.

WORKING BEES 2003.

This month, May, we had another great turnout for the working bees. Thanks to, Peggy Stonehouse, Carl Nagel, Leo Stauber and Liam, James Gibson, Kevin Teasdale, Noel Gross and Heather and Bill Whitbourn for a total of 28 working hours, a great effort.



Currently we are working with the Park Officers, who have a winter program planned. The months work included planting many new shrubs in the Model Railway garden, then we began clearing weed species from the creek area near Lake Tribulation. Tools required are saws, secateurs and larger cutting tools, Gloves as there are plenty of Blackberry, rakes etc.

WORKING BEE DATES - 2hours only.

June. 2003 Saturday 7th. 9.00am Sunday 15th. 9.00am Thursday 19th. 1.30pm	September. 2003 Saturday 6th. 9.00am Sunday 14th. 9.00am Thursday 18th. 1.30pm
July. Saturday 5th. 9.00am Sunday 13th. 9.00am Thursday 17th. 1.30pm	October. Saturday 4th. 9.00am Sunday 12th. 9.00am Thursday 16th. 1.30pm
August. Saturday 2nd. 9.00am Sunday 10th. 9.00am Thursday 21st. 1.30pm	November. Saturday 1st. 9.00am Sunday 9th. 9.00am Thursday 20th. 1.30pm

THE NEXT FELP MEETING.

The next FELP meeting, will be held on Sunday 15th June at 11.15am in the Environment Center or nearby open air after the Working Bee.