

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

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Crimson Sun-orchid



OBSERVATIONS FOR OCTOBER

Golden Moths. Masses of Golden Moths have been seen at Sandon, all a normal size. (SS). They been seen at North Castlemaine, but are small in size this year. (RM)

Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters. Many Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters have been in the garden trees at Campbell St. (KT) They have also been abundant in the orchard at Sandon. (SS)

Fryerstown birds. A Rufous Whistler was seen at Fryerstown, as well as dozens of Fuscous Honeyeaters just after rain. Four Brown-headed Honeyeaters are often seen among the lucerne trees along the road; they have always been in the company of the Fuscous Honeyeaters. Three Olive-backed Orioles were seen in the one tree. (KD)

100-200 Indian Mynahs had been seen near Taradale, but now large numbers of Kookaburras have moved in and the Indian Mynahs have disappeared. (AVG)

Crimson Rosella and Eastern Rosella pairing. A Crimson Rosella and Eastern Rosella have paired, and are searching for a nest. (NC, Heathcote)

Shining Bronze-cuckoo. A shining Bronze-cuckoo was seen on an ash tree in Stewart St and at Campbell St. (BB, KT)

Silvereyes have been cavorting in the bird bath at Kennedy St. As the aphid season has just started, the birds are very welcome. (BM)

Wildflowers on the Monk have been prolific this season, following the control burn. Billy Buttons and Bulbine Lily have been particularly abundant. (EP)

SANDON BIRD LIST FOR AUGUST 1995

Australian Wood Duck	Jacky Winter	Yellow Thornbill
Pacific Black Duck	Scarlet Robin	Striated Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Golden Whistler	Weebill
Brown Goshawk	Rufous Whistler	Red Wattlebird
Brown Falcon	Grey Shrike-thrush	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Masked Lapwing (n)	Blue Wren	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Galah	Restless Flycatcher	Spotted Pardalote
Long-billed Corella	Grey Fantail	Striated Pardalote
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Varied Sittella	Silvereye
Crimson Rosella	White-throated Treecreeper	Magpie Lark
Eastern Rosella	Brown Treecreeper	White-winged Chough
Red-rumped Parrot	Speckled Warbler	Magpie
Kookaburra	Brown Thornbill	Grey Currawong
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Australian Raven
Welcome Swallow	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	

Brown Goshawk, sighted 26/8/95, is a new record for the block.

ORCHIDS AT SANDON - 10th SEPTEMBER.

Blue Caladenia (*Caladenia caerulea*)

Pink Fingers (*C. carnea*)

Golden Moths (*Diuris lanceolata*)

Broad-lip Diuris (*D. palachila*)

Leopard Orchid (*D. pardina*)

Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*)

Swan Greenhood (*P. cyanocephala*)

Nodding Greenhood (*P. nutans*)

There are many more Blue Caladenias than usual, and also a good show of Golden Moths in forest and grassland.

S. Starr

BIRDS SEEN AT THE GOWER SCHOOL

Birds seen on the afternoon of 9/9/1995 were

Brown Falcon

Galah

Eastern Rosella

White-browed Babbler

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Willie Wagtail

Golden Whistler

Grey Shrike-thrush

Superb Fairy Wren

Brown Treecreeper

Noisy Miner

Red Wattlebird

Black-chinned Honeyeater

Brown-headed Honeyeater

Fuscous Honeyeater

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

Spotted Pardalote

Grey Currawong

Magpie Lark

Magpie

Phillip West



FOR IDENTIFICATION.

Miners' Lettuce

A sample of the plant illustrated was found at Newstead.

It is a distinctive species, in that the stalk passes centrally through the leaves. It has small white flowers.

The plant is Miners' Lettuce, *Claytonia perfoliata*.

Perfoliata refers to the leaves; a perfoliate leaf has the stalk passing through the centre of the leaf.

The plant was formerly known as *Montia perfoliata*, and some English wildflower books refer to it as "Spring Beauty".

It was reputed to have been used by the Californian miners as a salad vegetable, and it is supposed that it was introduced to Victoria from California by the miners.

Miners' Lettuce is scattered through the Castlemaine district, particularly in the Castlemaine North area e.g. along Burnett Rd, west of the botanic gardens and near the pony club. This year appears to be a good year for Miners Lettuce - this is the second sample given for identification this season. It is in the purslane family, and native to North America.

Small-flowered Onion Grass

The specimen was collected from the Chewton bushland, south of the railway line. It is a new record for area C in the plant list.

Two Onion Grass species are common in the district. The more common, and showier species, is Onion Grass, *Romulea rosea*. It has bright pink flowers, and is a very common weed, supposed to be the most prevalent weed in Victoria, and is abundant on native grasslands, pasture, lawns and nature strips. It is introduced. It has a corm at the base which is much to the liking of cockatoos and corellas, and it is a common sight to see these birds at work, digging up the onion grass. The sharp-pointed petals are a distinguishing feature.

Small-flowered Onion-grass, *Romulea minutiflora*, is similar in appearance, but has a much smaller, paler flower, and the petals are blunt. It is less common than its relative, but is moderately common in the district. My nature strip has both species.

Examination of the specimen from Chewton showed that the petals appeared to be pointed, not blunt. However, closer inspection showed that the petals had curled up, giving the appearance of being pointed; on flattening, they had the typical look of the smaller flower.

Romulea, is after Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome. Although called 'onion-grass', it is neither in the grass or onion families, but a member of the iris family.

Leopard Orchid

During the recent walk with Maldon Landcare in the Smith's Reef Forest, my attention was drawn to a small colony of orchids, the colour of which resembled that of Swamp Diuris. I was not familiar with Swamp Diuris, so next day went to have a closer look at the specimens.

Swamp Diuris has thread-like leaves, much narrower than that of Leopard Orchid. The column is also differently shaped. Both the leaves and column of the orchids being examined agreed with those of a typical Leopard Orchid, and the habitat seemed to be that of a Leopard Orchid. So regrettably I had to conclude that we did not have a new species for Smiths Reef. Picture books, and particularly those with coloured photographs, are not the most useful books to identify plants. Line drawings, showing critical identification features are much better.

Gold-dust Wattle.

What is the name of the wattle planted along the highway at Ravenswood? It has arching branches, and from the road appears to be a mass of flowers?

The wattle is Gold-dust Wattle, *Acacia acinacea*. This species is abundant in the Castlemaine bushland, and here it seldom grows to more than 50 cm, and is often less. The specimens at Ravenswood are about 2 metres high, and, unlike the bushland plants, have flowered profusely this year. Along the Murray River at Echuca, the Gold-dust Wattles are similarly tall, so tall wattles of this species are not unusual.

A hairy caterpillar

The caterpillar was found feeding on a Camelia, was tabled at the September meeting.

It was identified at the outing with FNCV as being a member of the Tussock Moth family, so called because of the "tussock" of hairs on the caterpillar. The adult is known the Painted Acacia Moth. The main food is acacia leaves; they feed on both the fern-leaved acacias and phyllodinous acacias as well as a wide range of other plants. The male moth is small in size, and very handsome (compared with some other moths). The female is much larger (about 4 cm) and duller.

Crimson Rosellas in juvenile plumage..

There are many Crimson Rosellas in juvenile (i.e. green) plumage. Have these recently been hatched? How long do Crimson Rosellas keep their juvenile plumage?

According to *Birds of the High Country*, the young Crimson Rosellas leave the nest after 5 weeks. During the winter red patches appear on the head, rump and under parts, and the adult plumage is acquired when approximately 16 months old.

Spider Orchids.

What is the current name for the red spider orchid found in the district?

The new Flora of Victoria is not much help, as it says that the spider orchid from Central Victoria is not yet clearly named. According to FNCV members, it is now *Caladenia concolor*. The labellum is a uniform deep red colour. The long sepals and petals are much paler and brownish.

E.P.

OLD NAMES FOR NEW

In August four ecologists launched a campaign to change the names of the 55 remaining species of native rodents from those given by European settlers, to their original aboriginal names. It is hoped that this will improve their image by removing the association with mice and rats. Aboriginal groups welcome the idea as it will preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. Some examples of the changes are

rakali - water rat	paloora - plains rat
mootit - bush rat	wilkinti - dusky hopping mouse
walyodji - western mouse	

[Extracted from New Scientist Aug 12, 1995; Brenda Envall]

LATIN NAMES OF PLANTS

A knowledge of some of the common endings of scientific names of plants can help to make the names less forbidding. It is well worth learning some of them.

A plant named after a person may end in "ii", "ae" or "ana"

-iae indicates that a plant was named in honour of a female e.g. *Acacia kettewelliae*, from the sub-alpine areas of Victoria was named in honour of Mrs A. Kettlewell, who was one of the founders of the Wattle Day League in 1909.

-i or *-ii* indicates that the plant was named after a male e.g. *Acacia beckleri* was named in honour of the German born Dr Hermann Beckler, and *Acacia williamsonii* after Herbert Williamson, a teacher and botanist. Usually, (but not always), an *i* or *ii* ending means that the person named was the first to find the plant.

-ana indicates that the plant was named in honour of someone other than the finder. For example, *Acacia baileyana* was named in honour of F. M. Bailey, a prominent Queensland botanist. Sometimes the *-ana* ending is used after a place name e.g. *Eucalyptus papuana*, the Ghost Gum of central Australia.

-ensis indicates a native of the area named e.g. *Eucalyptus delegatensis* - from the town of Delegate in SE NSW. Note that *australis* means southern, and *australiensis* means inhabiting the south.

-oides means resembling e.g. *Eucalyptus botryoides*, meaning grape-like.

-cola indicates native of e.g. *Westringia crassifolia* is an inhabitant of rocky places.

-escens means becoming e.g. *Acacia glaucescens* - becoming glaucous (powdery-white)

-ella diminutive e.g. *Dianella* - the diminutive of Diana.

-osus indicates abounding in, for example *Thysanotus tuberosus* is abounding in tubers.

-folia refers to leaves e.g. *Dodonaea angustifolia* has narrow leaves; *Acacia calamifolia* has reed-like leaves.

-issima. means very e.g. *Acacia aculeatissima*, is a very prickly acacia; *Stipa elegantissima* is very elegant..

-ata indicates a little e.g. *Eucalyptus crenulata* has leaves a little-bit crenulate (toothed); *Prostanthera denticulata* - with little teeth.

So next time you see a name like *Eucalyptus balladoniensis*, you will know it is named after a locality. There must be a town or district called Balladon. And a name such as *Eucalyptus brockwayi* was named after a Mr Brockway. One of the plants in the local bushland is *Galium gaudichaudii*, so there must have been a Mr Gaudichaud. Simple, isn't it.

E.P.

FRYERSTOWN BIRD LIST

The bird list is for the month of August.

White-faced Heron	Blue Wren	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Little Pied Cormorant	Blackbird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Pacific Black Duck	Grey Shrike-thrush	White-eared Honeyeater
Wood Duck	Restless Flycatcher	New Holland Honeyeater
Brown Falcon	Willie Wagtail	Eastern Spinebill
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Grey Fantail	Spotted Pardalote
Southern Boobook	White-browed Scrub-wren	Silvereye
Galah	Speckled Warbler	Red-browed Firetail
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Varied Sittella	Goldfinch
Long-billed Corella	White-throated T/creeper	Sparrow
Crimson Rosella	Brown Treecreeper	Starling
Eastern Rosella	Yellow-rump Thornbill	Olive-backed Oriole
Masked Lapwing	Striated Thornbill	Dusky Woodswallow
Common Bronzewing	Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Woodswallow
Kookaburra	Yellow Thornbill	White-winged Chough
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Weebill	Magpie Lark
Welcome Swallow	Red Wattlebird	Grey Currawong
Scarlet Robin	White-plumed Honeyeater	Magpie
Eastern Yellow Robin	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Little Raven
Jacky Winter	Fuscous Honeyeater	Australian Raven

Ken and Maureen Dredge

ROADSIDE CONSERVATION - SURVEY OF NEWSTEAD ROADS.

Over the past few years, the roadsides in the former municipalities of Castlemaine, Newstead and Maldon were surveyed, and conservation values were assigned. Over the next few months, it is planned to survey the roads of the former Shire of Newstead. When this is complete, all of the roads in the new Shire of Mt Alexander will have been surveyed.

We need teams to undertake the task. A suggested size of each team is 3 people. The team would be made up of a driver, a recorder, and a person to assess the roadside. Ability to identify the major tree species is needed for the assessor.

The roadside assessment sheets have been simplified, and recording is now concise. All of the sections (up to 12) of most roads will now be able to be recorded on the one side of a sheet. Although the information will be recorded in a more compact form, the scoring method has not been changed.

If you are able to form a team, or would like to assist, or would like a copy of the training manual, or a copy of an assessment sheet, please let me know. The first session will be on Monday 16 October, when teams meet at 27 Doveton St at 8.30 am for a training session, to be followed by the first assessment.

October (with Spring wildflowers) to summer (with native grasses in flower) are the ideal times to make roadside surveys.

E. Perkins.

Book Reviews

AUSTRALIAN BRACHYSCOMES

Australian Brachyscomes, Australian Daisy Study Group. 271 pages. Paperback. Price: about \$30.

The book is by a team of authors -Esma Salkin, Gloria Thomlinson, Beth Armstrong, Bev Courtney, Natalie Peate and Maureen Schaunann.

Brachyscomes are showy native daisy species. This large book has sections on propagation, use in gardens and containers, suggested plants for a variety of localities, a description of each species (with line drawings), tables comparing brachyscome species, and a chart showing the fruit of each species.

I tried to identify a brachyscome from near Wedderburn using the book. It proved a difficult task; the fault is with the great variability of brachyscomes. This is a beautiful book, and well worth owning. The book is A4 size, so a fair-sized bookshelf is needed.

E.P.

CASTLEMAINE GOLDFIELD - CASTLEMAINE-CHEWTON, FRYERS CREEK.

Geological Survey Report 106. Castlemaine Goldfield Castlemaine-Chewton, Fryerstown 1: 10 000 Geological Report. C.E. Willman. Energy & Minerals Victoria.

The two large scale maps are essential items for those interested in the geology and mining history of the Castlemaine-Chewton and Fryerstown areas. The maps show details such as mine sites, with names, base geology, anticlinal folds, and much more.

The book amplifies the material in the maps. Unfortunately, it is not always easy for a non-geologist e.g. "The Castlemaine SUPERGROUP is considered to be a deep water facies based on the rarity of burrowing and the general absence of reworking and swaley and HCS lamination." and "In this zone, pelites have developed large subhedral to euhedral cordierite porphyroblasts rimmed by muscovite flakes. Andalusite occurs rarely as idioblastic porphyroblasts."

Despite this, the book is very interesting, and many aspects of the local geology are now much clearer to me.

Price is about \$45. An index of localities can also be purchased at Stonemans Bookroom for about \$2.

Uncommon plants of the Castlemaine District

A series

WYALONG WATTLE.

The Wyalong Wattle is also sometimes called Mystery Wattle. It resembles an erect, dull-leaved golden wattle. A distinguishing feature is the faint second vein, more or less parallel to the main vein, and the dull green 'leaves'. It is one of the least showy of all wattles. The flowers are a dull greenish-yellow, so that the plant is inconspicuous even in full flower. It seldom sets seed (in Victoria at least), and appears to propagate by suckering. As a result, it usually grows in clumps.

It is fairly abundant in central NSW, and was first recognized as a Victorian Species about 30 years ago, when found growing near Thoona (near the Warby Ranges). Since then it has been recognized in many localities, such as Devenish, the Whipstick, Reef Hills, and the Castlemaine District.

Clumps can be found in the un-named road leading from the Maldon Rd to Muckleford Forest, a little west of the Muckleford Creek, on Mt Gaspard Rd (near highest point), at

Clydesdale on the road to Sandon on west side of Rise and Shine, and in the Strathlea Forest.

The scientific name is *Acacia difformis*. *Difformis* means deformed, of unusual or irregular shape, particularly in relation to other members of the genus. The local specimens are certainly not deformed. But it is an unusual wattle.

EP.

CAMPOUT AT MT MARTHA

The Mt Martha Field Naturalists Club Inc, invite members of the Castlemaine Club to register for the March 1996 campout.

Venue. Portsea Camp (formerly Lord mayor's). Melway Map 156 G2.

Dates Friday March 8th to Monday 11th, 1996.

Cost Anticipated costs will be dormitory accommodation \$121; rooms with en suite \$128; registration \$3.

Catering. All meals provided from breakfast Sat morning to lunch Monday. Tea and coffee facilities are available.

Accommodation. En suite rooms, bunk style sleeping 3,4 and 6 persons/unit and dormitory accommodation available. Blankets and pillows provided. Members need to bring bed linen and towels.

Environment. Portsea Camp overlooks Port Phillip Bay. It is adjacent to the beach. It boasts spacious gardens and is close to many places of environmental and historical significance.

Excursions. Excursions include trips to the revegetation area of Hill View Quarry, Bushrangers Bay and Cape Schank lighthouse, Pt Nepean National Park, Green's Bush, Fossil Beach, Sorrento Cliff walk, the Briars and a guided geological field trip. Guest speakers will include local naturalists Les Wiseman, Winty Calder and Ted Davis.

Bookings. Bookings are now being accepted. A booking fee of \$20 per person will secure a place. Full payment required by Friday 9th February 1996. Cheques should be made payable to VFNCA and posted to VFNCA, 63 Dominion Rd, Mount Martha 3934.

Enquiries. Peter Grinlington, ph 059 88 4444 and to Esme Kent ph 059 74 1617.

Committee. C Morris (Pres), G Broadway (VP), M Willis (Sec), B Envall (Treas), K Turner (Prog), R Mills (Public Officer & Newsletter), E Perkins, M Oliver, S Parnaby, S Bruton, and B Maund.

This Newsletter. Prepared by E. Perkins.

Subscriptions 1995

Ordinary membership: Single \$14; Family \$20

Pensioner/student: Single \$10; Family \$16.

Supporting membership: \$25.

Newsletter posted: Subscription plus \$6.00

New members

Welcome to Kathy Maddern, Barbara Browne, Patrick Kavanagh and Megan Bellinger.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc, P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine Vic 3450.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Wed 11 Oct. Naturalist Ramble. Spring wildflowers. Meet Continuing Education Car Park at 4.00 pm sharp. Length will be about 1.5 hours.

Fri 13 Oct. Albatrosses and Flora of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Speaker is Dr Phillip Moors. 8.00 pm at Continuing Education, Templeton St. Not to be missed.

Sat 14 Oct. Muckleford Forest.. Spring Wildflowers. A walk in the bushland south of the Red White and Blue Mine, with members of the Maryborough Field Naturalists Club. Meet 27 Doveton St, Castlemaine at 11.00 am or Green Gully Bridge, Pyrenees Hwy at 11.30 am. Leader is E. Perkins. Take lunch, afternoon tea and walking boots.

Mon 16 Oct. Roadside Assessment. 8.30 am at 27 Doveton St. Training session for roadside teams, and beginning of the assessment. Take lunch.

Wed 18 Oct. Cape Broom Pull. Met at Cr Froomes Rd and Mary St at 9.00 am, to pull seedling Broom. We hope to remove all seedlings before seed is set, where Broom has previously been removed from the Eltham Copper Butterfly area. Bring gloves. A large number of helpers will make the job easy.

Wed 18 Oct. Naturalist Ramble. Spring wildflowers. Meet Continuing Education Car Park at 4.00 pm.

Thurs 19 Oct. Bird Watching. Meet Continuing Education carpark at 9.30 am. With Castlemaine U3A members. Location to be decided.

Wed 25 Oct. Naturalist Ramble. Spring wildflowers. Meet Continuing Education Car Park at 4.00 pm.

Thurs 26 Oct. Business Meeting. 38 Campbell St at 7.30 pm. All members are invited.

Fri 3 Nov. Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture. Ballarat F.N.C. invites members to the address by Ms Jane Williams of Stawell. The topic is "Rehabilitation of Gold Mine Sites". 7.30 pm at St Cuthberts Hall, Elliott St, Ballarat. RSVP 23 Oct to 052 861 509.

Sat 4 Nov. Kalimna Walk. Part of the Castlemaine Festival of Gardens. Meet at the Circuit Track, Kalimna Tourist Road (about 1.5 km north of Lyttleton St) at 10.00 am. Leader. E Perkins.

Fri 10 Nov. Pond Life. Speaker is Alan Reid. 8.00 pm at Continuing Education, Lyttleton St.

Sat 11 Nov. Bell's Swamp. Looking at pond wildlife, pond plants, and birds. Leave CHIRP, 13 Mostyn St at 1.30 pm. Leader is Chris Morris.

Fri 8 Dec. Members and Visitors Night. This is the final meeting for the year. members are asked to contribute a short segment for the meeting. Bring a plate for supper.

Sat 9 Dec. North British Mine and west side of Mt Tarrengower. Met at CHIRP, 13 Mostyn St. Leader is M Oliver. Time to be decided at the Friday meeting, it will depending on weather conditions.

Fri 12 Feb. Annual Meeting and 20th Birthday. Speakers will be 4 foundation members; George Broadway, Rita Mills, Geoff Sitch and Ern Perkins. Supper.

Sat 13 Feb. Birthday Lunch in the Botanic Gardens. Meet at the rose garden for a BYO lunch.

Sun 14 Feb. Dawn Breakfast at Kalimna Point. Our birthday continued. Time to be announced but it will be very very early. Leader: M Oliver.

March 8-11th. VFNCA campout at Mt Portsea. See article page 7.