

Castlemaine Naturalist

5

NEW ORCHID FOUND AT HARCOURT by Mrs R. Mills.

SHARP-LEAF GREENHOOD (*Pterostylus robusta*)
Flowering time: April-August

Recorded (Willis) at Clydesdale, Wedderburn
Bealiba and the Bendigo district.

It is more common in the northern and western
districts, extending into the more arid areas.
P. robusta has now been recorded at Harcourt,
as far as is known, for the first time.

The broadly ovate radical leaves are absent at
flowering, and there are 4 to 7 broadly lanc-
eolate stemclaspings leaves which increase in
size up the stem to about 5 cm in length. The
single flower is fairly large with greenish
white and darker green longitudinal stripes.

The tip of the "hood" is short and almost blunt,
the two lower sepals extend far beyond the hood
in filiform (threadlike) points.

P. robusta prefers shelter, but can be found in
the open. It sometimes overlaps with *P. alata*,
with which it can be confused, on the goldfields.

MEET THE BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN by R. Wallace

The Grey-backed Silvereye (Number 2 of a series)

The Grey-backed Silvereye and the Grey-breasted silvereye
are now considered conspecific and are collectively known
now as the Eastern Silvereye. I prefer the old classification reg-
arding them as two species. Our bird, the Grey-backed Silvereye, is
equally at home in gardens with exotic shrubbery as he is in native
gardens. They are most partial to soft ripe fruit, but more than
repay this by the vast amount of insects they consume.

Olive-green on the upper parts with a dark grey back, underneath a
warm buff tinge. In the cooler months from May onwards observe your
Silvereyes closely and you will find among the birds which are with
you all the year some strangers with dark f
rufous flanks. These are winter visitors from
Tasmania and are the Tasmanian form of our
Grey-backed Silver-eye. I am sure
I am sure that most people will recognise the
little bird by the ring of white feathers



cont.



around the eyes and their petulant buzzing -tseer-tseer, although in the breeding season the males have quite a pretty little warbling song. In my garden the Silvereyes are present in flocks of up to 30 until the coming of spring when the flocks split up into breeding pairs and build their tiny delicate little cupped nest made of fine grasses, animal hair and other soft materials fastened with cobweb, a thing of beauty to behold when it contains the two or three unmarked tiny greenish-blue eggs which consist a normal clutch. Its an unusual spring in my garden if at least one pair doesn't suspend their nest in one of the melaleuca bushes. Just to show they are notparochial in their tastes a pair regularly nest in a neighbours plum tree.

Common and ubiquitous, full of life, even the aggressive White-plumed Honeyeaters and the House Sparrows can't bully this little fellow away when he is intently feeding on the nectar of a Callistemon blossom or delousing the growing tips of an Acacia of aphid or, should we say it, puncturing ripe grapes with his sharp stout bill. An amusing useful little sprite, Silvereye has an air of scholarly anxiety with his white spectactles and never ending motion. They are particularly attractive around dusk, just before the close of day.

(Reprinted from Bendigo Region SGAP bulletin. Mr Wallace is speaker at the August meeting)

Plants of the Castlemaine District Number 5 of a series.

THE SHRUB VIOLET *Hybanthus floribundus*

(W.A., S.A., Vic, N.S.W.) by G. Sitch.

In Victoria Shrub Violet is more frequently observed in the northern Grampians, Little and Big Deserts and the mallee sandhills of the north-west, but does occur in the Bendigo box-ironbark forests. The closest occurrence to Castlemaine that I know of is in the Maldon forest.

It is a small shrub to about 2 ft belonging to the violet family (Violaceae). Flowering in winter-early spring, it is unusual because of its flower colour, a kind of grey-blue, and by the fact that the lowest petal is twice as large as the other four. Flowers are produced copiously in small axillary clusters. A look into the flower can be rewarding, as the throat is marked beautifully with yellow and violet.

Leaves are linear (1-3cm long), smooth and end with small recurved mucros.

Fruiting capsules open into 3 stiff, boat shaped valves.



Recurved mucro

5 sepals

4 petals to form tube

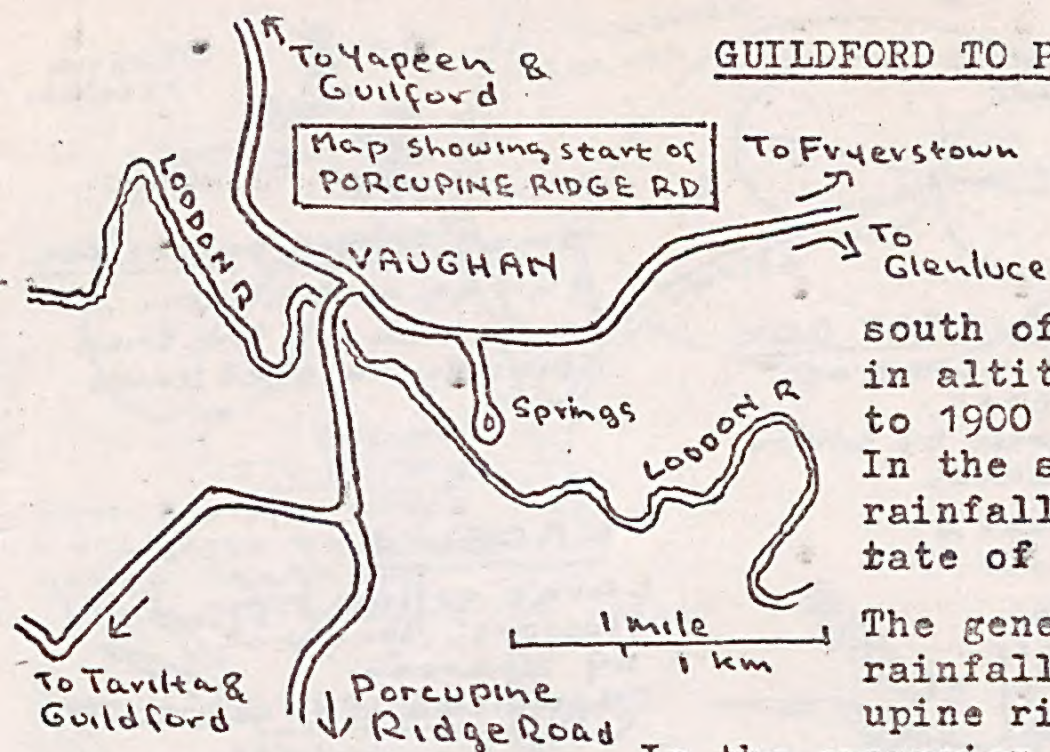
1 enlarged petals

x natural size

Hybanthus floribundus

(Shrub violet)

GUILDFORD TO PORCUPINE RIDGE EXCURSION



From the Loddon River valley at Guildford, there is a general upwards slope to the south of about 1° , with a change in altitude from about 800 ft to 1900 ft in 9 miles. In the same distance, the average rainfall also increases at the rate of about 1 inch per mile.

The general trend of altitude and rainfall continues past the Porcupine ridge to Trentham.

In the excursion area we have the meeting of the drier Castlemaine/Muckleford area plants with those from the much moister Trentham/Daylesford area. This results in a varied and interesting range of plants.

Guildford - Tarilta Turnoff

The road follows the Loddon River valley, over recent river sediments. Most of the country is cleared, but some river red-gum still grow along the river and creeks.

The Guildford Plateau and other basalt plateaux can be seen. Lava from volcanoes to the south (e.g. Mt Franklin) flowed down the old river valleys. Since then the new creeks have cut well below the basalt level, leaving the resistant basalt.

Tarilta Road

The streams buried by the basalt were often gold-bearing. Extensive tunnelling has taken place and the very disturbed gravels can be seen in several spots.

Evidence of a once much larger population can be seen.

The road climbs Table Hill, where the cutting shows the basalt capping over the older rock.

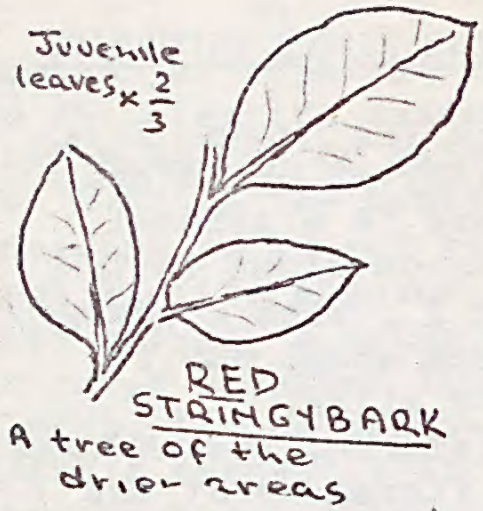
From Table Hill, Mt Franklin can be seen slightly to the right, and the cleared patch slightly to the left of Mt Franklin is the N-S ridge of basalt known as Porcupine Ridge, and our destination. From here too are extensive views of the timbered Ordovician Hills.

Tarilta - Porcupine Ridge Road

The road begins to rise from Tarilta. The Yellow gum is typical of the dry gravelly goldfields hillsides.

On the Porcupine Ridge Road proper, is the typical mixed box/stringybark forest of the goldfields. As we progress less drought resistant plants begin to appear.

The Porcupine Ridge is of basalt, and largely clear.



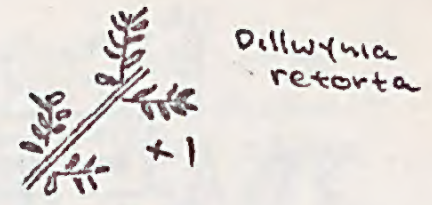
Juvenile leaves x $\frac{2}{3}$

RED STRINGYBARK
A tree of the drier areas



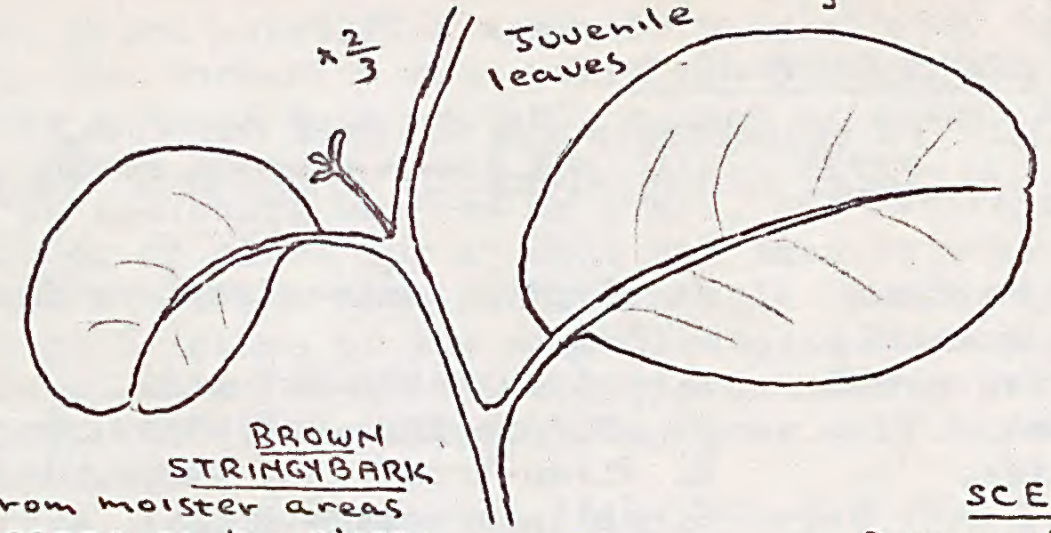
Juvenile leaves x $\frac{1}{4}$

LONG-LEAF BOX
A wide range of habitats. Recognise by silvery juv. leaves



Dillwynia retorta

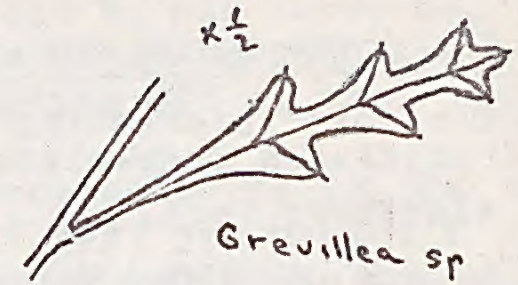
Small leaved parrot pea
An egg and bacon. Recognise by the small spirally twisted leaves



x $\frac{2}{3}$

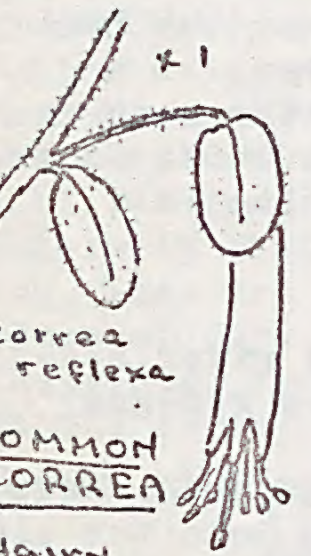
Juvenile leaves

BROWN STRINGYBARK
From moister areas. Recognise by glossy green leathery juvenile leaves



x $\frac{1}{2}$

PROSTRATE UNAMED GREVILLEA
leaves rather variable



x 1

Correa reflexa

COMMON CORREA

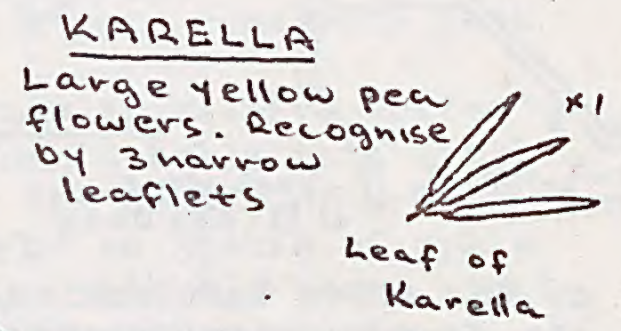
Hairy leaves. Local plants have green flowers



x 1

Epacris impressa

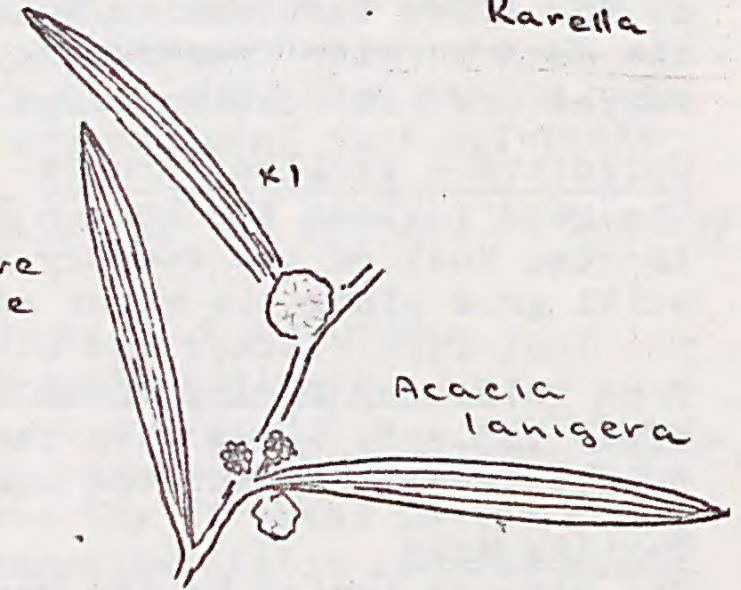
COMMON HEATH
Bells in this area are mainly white



x 1

Leaf of Kareella

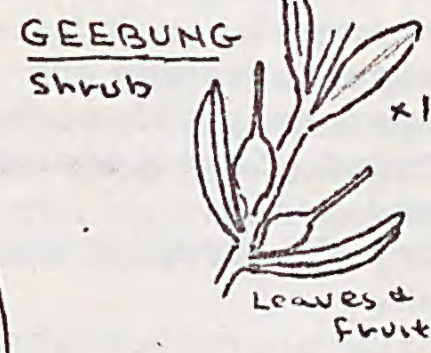
KARELLA
Large yellow pea flowers. Recognise by 3 narrow leaflets



x 1

Acacia lanigera

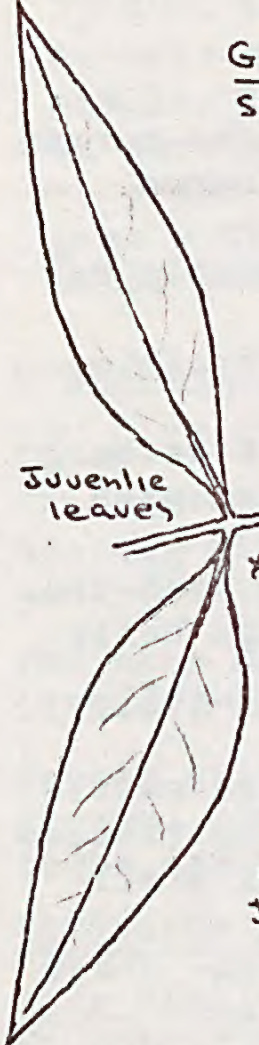
WOOLLY WATTLE
Flowers in winter. Two forms occur here - one with bright yellow flowers, the other is much paler



x 1

GEEBUNG
Shrub

Leaves & fruit



Juvenile leaves

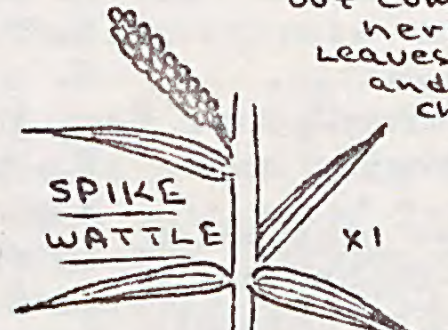
x $\frac{1}{2}$

BROAD-LEAF PEPPER-MINT

Recognise by bluish opposite juvenile leaves



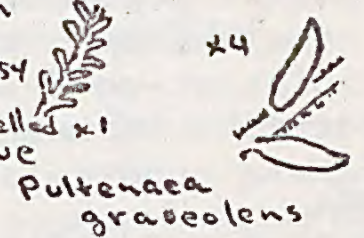
Fruit x 1



x 1

SPIKE WATTLE

Flowers are in spikes, not balls.

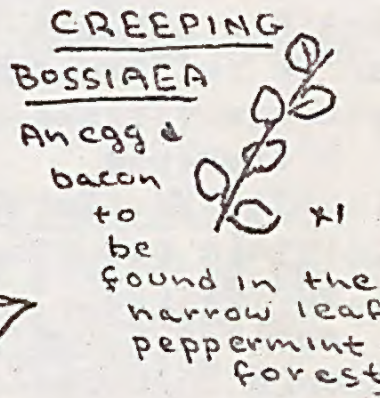


x 4

Pultenaea graveolens

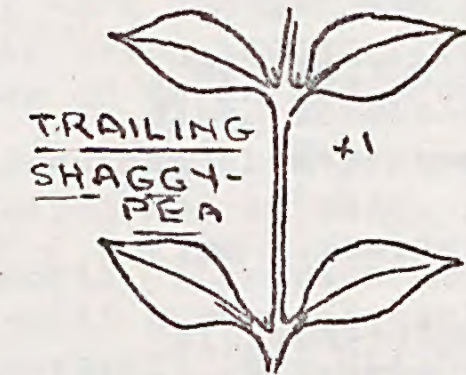
SCENTED BUSH PEA

A rare plant but common here. Leaves glossy and channelled above



x 1

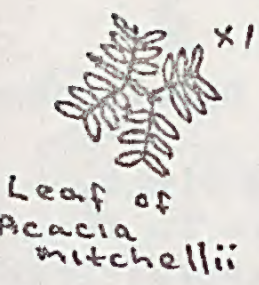
CREeping BOSSIAEA
An egg & bacon to be found in the narrow leaf peppermint forest



x 1

TRAILING SHAGGY-PEA

Oxylobium procumbens
An egg, bacon

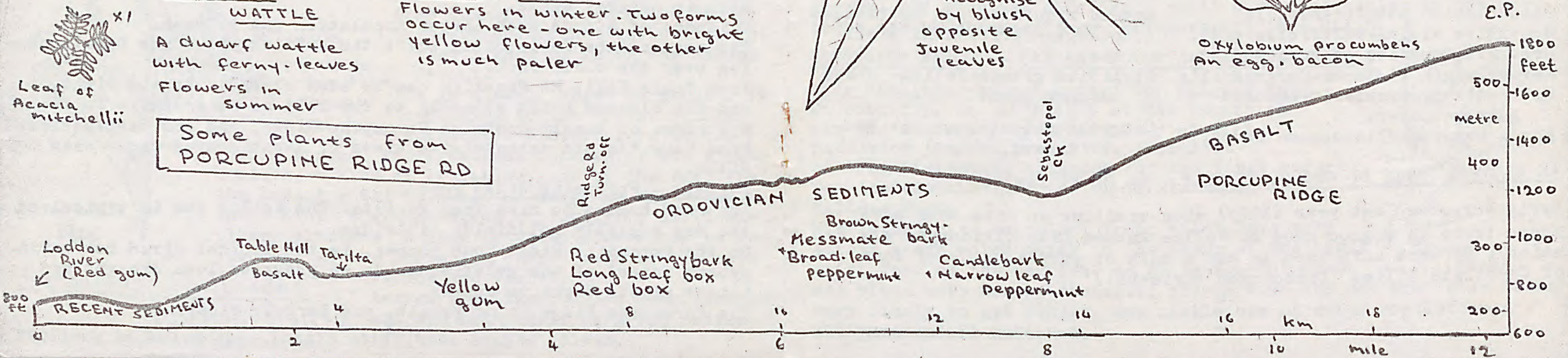


x 1

Leaf of *Acacia mitchellii*

MITCHELL'S WATTLE
A dwarf wattle with ferny-leaves. Flowers in summer

Some plants from PORCUPINE RIDGE RD



PORCUPINE RIDGE ROAD - SHORT PLANT LIST

The most interesting plant is undoubtedly the Scented Bush-pea, (*Pultenaea graveolens*). Although common along the 'Ridge Road it is elsewhere rare.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Acacia dealbata</i> -Silver wattle. | <i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i> -Long-leaf box. |
| <i>A. mitchellii</i> -Mitchell's wattle. | <i>E. polyanthemos</i> -red box. |
| <i>A. genistifolia</i> -spreading wattle. | <i>E. macrorhyncha</i> -red stringybark |
| <i>A. oxycedrus</i> -spike wattle. | <i>E. dives</i> -broad-leaf peppermint |
| <i>A. lanigera</i> -woolly wattle. | <i>E. obliqua</i> -messmate |
| <i>A. aspera</i> -rough wattle | <i>E. baxteri</i> -brown stringybark |
| <i>A. gunnii</i> -ploughshare wattle | <i>E. rubida</i> -candlebark |
| <i>A. armata</i> -Thorn wattle | <i>E. radiata</i> -narrow-leaf peppermint |
| <i>A. acinacea</i> -gold-dust wattle. | <i>E. viminalis</i> -manna gum |
| <i>Acrotriche serrulata</i> -Honey-pots | <i>Leptospernum phyllicoides</i> -burgan |
| <i>Bossiaea prostrata</i> -creeping bossiaea. | <i>Leucopogon virgatus</i> -common beard-heath. |
| <i>Brunonia australis</i> -Blue pincushion | <i>Lomandra filiformis</i> -wattle mat rush. |
| <i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i> -daphne heath | <i>Oxylobium procumbens</i> -trailing shaggy-pea. |
| <i>Cassinia arcuata</i> -Drooping cassinia | <i>Persoonia rigida</i> -Stiff geebung. |
| <i>Correa reflexa</i> -common correa | <i>Pultenaea graveolens</i> -scented bush-pea. |
| <i>Daviesia virgata</i> -narrow-leaf bitter-pea | <i>P. pedunculata</i> -matted bush-pea. |
| <i>Dianella revoluta</i> -Flax lily | <i>Tetratheca ciliata</i> -pink bells. |
| <i>Dillwynia retorta</i> -small leaf parrot-pea | <i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i> -yellow box. |
| <i>D. sericea</i> -showy parrot-pea | <i>Acacia pycnantha</i> -golden wattle |
| <i>Epacris impressa</i> -common heath | <i>Amyema miquellii</i> -box mistletoe. |
| <i>Eriostemon verrucosus</i> -Bendigo wax-flower. | <i>A. pendula</i> -narrow-leaf mistletoe. |
| <i>Exocarpus cupressiformis</i> -native cherry. | <i>Stylidium graminifolium</i> -grass trigger plant. |
| <i>Gompholobium huegii</i> -Karella | <i>Cassytha melantha</i> -coarse dodder laurel. |
| <i>Grevillea alpina</i> -Goldfields grev. | |
| <i>Grevillea species</i> -an un-named sp. | |
| <i>Hardenbergia violacea</i> -Sarsaparilla | |
| <i>Hibbertia fascicularis</i> -bundled guinea-flower. | |
| <i>Hovea heterophylla</i> -common hovea. | |

AN UNUSUAL PATCH OF CHOCOLATE LILY by Mr F. Taylor

Early November last year (1975) when visiting an area when some years there is a good show of Yellow Autumn Lily (*Tricoryne elatior*), we were surprised to see a mass of purple, a dwarf form of Chocolate lilies (*Dichopogon strictus*).

Mr Allen identified a specimen as similar to one he had forwarded to the Herbarium some years previously, and had been advised it was a dwarf form probably caused by annual burning off of the railway reserve where the plants grew.

The following weekend Mr Smart, and camera accompanied us to the area. He stood for a while and then remarked "Well you wouldn't believe it." Each plant a single robust stem 12" tall; the top 4 to 6 inches of the stem clustered flowers; smaller than the usual chocolate lily, conspicuous fringe and a deep purple colour. 0.01% were albino. They grew only in water not than 1" deep.

Area Length 220 yards, width varied from 6 ft to 30 ft - average was 19 ft (10 samples). The average number of plants per square yard was 78 (10 samples). The approximate number of plants was 23 000.

An area of ½ acre (guessed) grew near Elphinstone. These were similar to the Walmer plants in every respect.

In each area the land had been cultivated years ago and reverted to grass with the exception of the depression where the lilies grew - the depression was otherwise bare. Obviously the water had covered the ground for the whole of winter and spring.

Book Review

THE CARE OF SICK, INJURED AND ORPHANED NATIVE BIRDS AND ANIMALS

This excellent book is written by Jack Wheeler and published by the Geelong Field Naturalists Club, is being issued free because of the generous financial aid of a number of firms and individuals.

The book details care, housing, feeding, treatment of injuries and illness, and release, of native birds and animals.

Copies will be distributed to schools, libraries and natural history groups. Our club has obtained a small number of copies in advance; these can be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs Mills.

EXCURSION REPORT - KALIMNA POINT AND KALIMNA PARK

Wiry Mistletoe- A new record for Kalimna Park

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the excursion was the discovery by Mr Broadway of Wiry Mistletoe (*Amyema preissii*), parasitic on Grey Mistletoe. Although not the first record for the district, it is the first record for Kalimna Park.

Mistletoes have succulent fruit which have very sticky seeds which stick to the beaks of the birds which feed on the berries. As a result, the seeds are wiped onto nearby branches; once a tree has one mistletoe it is very likely to get others, and mistletoes on other mistletoes are not particularly uncommon.



CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB - PROGRAM

Aug Meeting Wed Aug 18th

Speaker: Mr R. Wallace

Subject: Honeyeaters.

September meeting Wed Sept 15th

Speaker: Mr G. Broadway

Subject: Canadian Parks

October meeting Wed Oct 20th

Forests Commission - Films

November meeting Wed Nov 17

Speaker: Mr J. Wheeler

Subject: Setting up a nature reserve; rearing sea birds.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Half subscriptions apply from

July 1st. These are

Family: \$2.50

Single: \$1.50

Student/junior: 50 ¢

ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE

Meeting Nights Meetings are at present on the 3rd Wednesday.

A survey of members at the coming meeting will be made to see if the another evening would be more suitable

Car Stickers Grass-tree car stickers have been ordered, for retail to club members at cost - 30 ¢

Financial Credit balance: \$67.92.

Magazines received

CSIRO Rural Research

Maryborough FNC newsletter.

COMMITTEE

Pres: Mr R. Bradfield

Sec: Mrs R. Mills

Treas: Mr L Bransgrove

V. Pres: Mr G. Broadway, Mr G. Sitch

Committee: Mr & Mrs M Winterbottom,

Miss J. Chapman, Mr F. Meyer &

Mr E. Perkins (news-sheet)

Committee meets on the first

Thursday, at Education Centre.

Excursions

Saturday Aug 21 Muckleford.

Leave Castlemaine Education

Centre at 2.00 p.m. sharp.

See the Shrub-violet and also wattles in bloom.

Leader: Mr Sitch.

Sunday Sept 12 Elphinstone Ridge, Muckleford and Maldon.

Joint excursion with Geelong, Bendigo and Shepparton Society for Growing Australian Plants.

Meet at 10.30 a.m at Taradale (Opp Mechanics Institute Hall)

Leader: Mr Sitch

Saturday September 18 Unknown

Miner's Grave Gully. Meet at

118 Blakeley Road (the house with the Cannon) at 2.00 p.m.

This is a walking excursion - distance will be about 5 mile.

Leader: Mrs Mills.

Sunday Oct 10 Tarnagulla

The Historical Society plans a bus trip, and have invited our members. Enough passengers will be needed - estimated cost-\$2.

Sunday October 17 Bells Swamp &

Drummond Bush. This will be a

joint excursion with the Maryborough Field Naturalists Club.

Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the club's sessions.

AUGUST MEETING

The Guest speaker is Mr Ray Wallace; his subject is Honeyeaters. Mr Wallace was a member of the group that recently discovered the Grey Phalarope - the first sighting of this bird in Australia.