

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

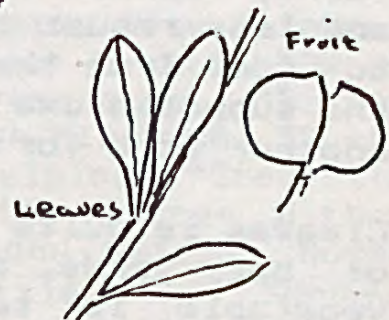
OCTOBER 1989 #150



NEW BURSARIA FOR DISTRICT

Bursaria is a fairly common shrub in the district and is scattered through the local bushland. It is easy to recognise. It usually has spiny branches, and often has spines scattered over the plant. The leaves are about 1 cm long and slightly broader above the middle. It has white flowers around mid-summer, and the fruits are "purse-shaped". The fruit usually stay on the plant for over the year, and help to identify the plant even when not in flower.

Near Castlemaine, Bursaria grows to be a medium to large straggling shrub. Where the rainfall is better, for example on Mt Beckwith, it can grow to a moderately large tree, with a trunk about 30 cm. in diameter.



Common names for Bursaria are "Sweet Bursaria" or, because of its flowering time, "Christmas Bush", and the scientific name is Bursaria spinosa. The first part of this name refers to the purse-like shape of the fruit, and the second part to the spines.

Another distinguishing feature of Bursaria spinosa is the smooth green leaves, with both sides of the leaves being smooth and hairless.

In an eroded gully at Norwood Hill I found a group of bursaria with the undersurface of the leaves densely hairy. This then is a different species of bursaria, and is Bursaria lasiophylla. The name of this species refers to the hairy leaves.

The general appearance of the plant is like that of the usual bursaria, but it is less prickly.

The location is just north of the Technical school. The gully crosses Etty street near the corner of Wheeler Street, and the plants are close to the road.

CLEAVERS (*Galium aparine*)

Cleavers is a trailing plant with the leaves arranged in rings of 6 - 8 leaves. The leaves and the seed pods covered with hooked hairs. This feature is responsible for some of the other common names, such as "huggy-me-close", "sticky Willie", and "clinging sweethearts".



Cleavers is reputed to make a good vegetable. The hooked hairs melt away when cooked, and so the young leaves and stems can be boiled and eaten as a vegetable. The seeds may be roasted and ground, to make a coffee substitute.

In some countries, the bristly stems have been used to filter milk.

It is a member of the woodruff family. Native species are fairly common in the local bush. They are much smaller and less robust than cleavers. The name 'Galium' is said to come from the Greek word 'gala', meaning milk - from the supposed use of Cleavers to curdle milk. 'Aparine' is another word for bedstraw.

Cleaves is quite common in waste places, such as corners of back yards, or weed-infested roadsides. Its use as a vegetable is to be encouraged, as this might lead to over-collection, and hence its disappearance from some of its haunts.

ADEKATE CAMP DETAILS

Location: Dean-Creswick Road, 2 km from Dean

Sleeping: 2 bunkhouses in sections. Each section with two single beds and one double decker bunk. Foam mattresses.

Linen & Blankets: Bring own blankets, sheets, pillows, slips, towel, sleeping bags.

Amenities: Toilets, showers, plenty of hot water.

Dining Hall: Fully catered. Friday evening dinner and supper; Saturday breakfast, cut lunch, dinner; Sunday breakfast and lunch.

Cost: \$5 per person per night, plus meals.

Meal costs: \$30 for all meals; \$6 single meals - must be booked.

Host Club: Creswick F.N.C.

Booking sheets from E. Perkins or B. Maund.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON WATTLE FLAT WALK

Four of us set off with Rita on the Wattle Flat walk, and we saw plenty of wattle as we walked along the track. After we left the track we came across Nodding Greenhoods and Mosquito Orchids, which Robyn photographed.

Further on Rita found a Red Spider Orchid, and although Robyn thought she had finished her film, she decided to give it a try, hoping that she might be lucky - she was.

After this we made our way back to the cars via the rocky ridge where the large patch of Dusty Miller was in full flower, for afternoon tea, which we enjoyed very much as it had got rather chilly.

We had a quick look at a very pretty gully nearby, but, as it was getting late by then, and colder, we decided to leave exploring there for another time.

Mary Willis

List of plants in flower for Kalimna and Wattle Flat excursions:
(° = Kalimna only, * = Wattle Flat only)

Nodding Greenhoods, °Golden Moths, Pink Fingers, Blue Caledonia, Leopard Orchids, Tall Greenhoods, *Red Spider Orchid, *Dwarf Greenhoods, *Mosquito Orchids, *Blunt Greenhoods, °Bitter Cryptandra, Fairy Wax, °Fringe Myrtle, °Rough Mintbush, *Dusty Miller (*Spyridium parvifolium*), *Grevillia alpina*, **Grevillia dryophylla*, °*Karralla* (*Gompholobium huegii*), Gorse Bitter Pea, *Showy Parrot-pea, Rough Wattle, Golden Wattle, Hedge Wattle, °Ploughshare Wattle, Gold-dust Wattle, Tall Sundew, °Climbing Sundew, Creamy Stackhousia (Candles), Sweet Marianth, Yam Daisy, Billy Buttons, Slender Riceflower, *Early Nancies*, "Native Pansy",

Bird List -

(code as above)

Choughs, Magpies, °Weebill, °Silvereyes, °Redbrowed Firetails, Striated Thornbills, °Scarlet Robin, °Grey Fantails, °White-faced Heron, °Blackbird, Crimson Rosellas, White-throated Tree-creeper, °Eastern Rosellas, °Superb Blue Wrens, °Spotted Pardelote, *Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

BIRDING AT KOALA PARK

I decided to take my daily(?) walk up at the new Koala Park at the beginning of the school holidays, and how rewarding it turned out to be. I saw only one koala, but I also saw the wallaby, the kangaroos, an echidna, and lots of birds including two pair of Speckled Warblers.

List for the afternoon was, Spotted Pardelote, Striated Pardelote, White-eared Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Blue Wren, Striated Thornbill, Bufftailed Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, Speckled Warbler, Scarlet Robin, Grey Currawong, Australian Raven, Kookaburra, White Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Whistler.

WHERE ARE THE WILDFLOWERS?

A count of the number of records in the Club's plant list (Edition 6.1) gives these areas as the top 10, for the number of native plants to be found.

Porcupine Ridge (south of Vaughan)	225
Fryers Ridge (west of ridge rd)	214
Fryers Ridge (east of ridge road)	209
Smiths Reef (north of Maldon Road)	204
Kalimna (excluding planted species)	200
Muckleford Forest	195
Barkers Creek/Moonlight Flat	191
Chewton (Wattle Gully/Eureka/Spring Gully)	164
Wombat Forest/Shepherds Flat	152
Mt Alexander	139

The weediest areas, with % weed species (of the total number of species) are

Mt Franklin	48%
Nuggetty	41%
Mt Alexander	40%
Emberton	34%
Smiths Reef	28%
Mt Tarrangower	28%
Porcupine Flat	28%
Sandon Forest	26%
Barkers Ck	24%
Fraraday E.A.	24%

The least weedy areas are given below. (* very small number of samples)

Big Hill*	0%
Welshmans Reef*	0%
Eppalock *	2%
Pilchers Bridge	2%
Sedgewick *	5%
Fryers Ridge South	7%
Walmer (south block)	9%
Lauriston	10%
Upper Loddon forest	10%
Taradale (east block)	10%

The Club also keeps grid records. The figures in each box gives Grid number, native species, introduced species, and total species.

M46	159 nat 85 intro 244 total	M47	121 nat 46 intro 167 total	M48	90 nat 19 intro 109 total
N1	270 nat 114 intro 384 total	N2	392 nat 219 intro 611 total	N3	294 nat 128 intro 422 total
N10	211 nat 57 intro 268 total	N11	260 nat 49 intro 309 total	N12	144 nat 25 intro 169 total

The figures perhaps give an indication of the number of visits to each area - our central area has by far the greatest number of records.

Lists are kept for some other areas. For the Castlemaine township, there are 182 wild species recorded. 74% of these are introduced.

From the "Wirrakee", April 1989

If you see any Silvereyes bearing coloured bands, please record the locality, date and colour of bands. Send this information to Tom Burton, B.C.A.E., P.O. Box 199, Bendigo, 3550, or telephone 40 3477 (work) or 42 5518 (A.H.)

ST ARNAUD WILDFLOWER TOUR

St Arnaud F.N.C. is holding a wildflower bus tour on Sunday 15th October. Meet behind the St Arnaud Town Hall at 1.30 p.m.

MUCKLEFORD BIRD WATCH

At a ten minute stop in the south-east corner of Muckleford forest (at the start of Box Track) on 13/9/89, 12 species of birds were seen.

At the edge of the forest, Welcome Swallows and Fairy Martins were hawking. Apart from the conspicuous white rump, the flight of the martins is quite different to the flight of the swallows.

Dusky Wood-swallows were also plentiful. Ten of them could be seen at one stage, sitting on fence lines. One came and perched on a tree trunk, only a few yards from the car. Wood-swallows are not brightly coloured, but like many such birds is quite beautiful.

Other birds seen included a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Magpie, Yellow Robin, Willy Wag-tail, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Magpie Lark, Crimson Rosella and Grey Thrush. .rm57

ANTICLINE AT NORWOOD HILL

In the Club's Geology booklet the locations of about 30 anticlines and synclines are given. Another anticline has now been added to the list of local folds.

The anticline is exposed on a more or less horizontal surface, and so it is not obvious at first whether this is an anticline or syncline. However, close examination of the strata show that the folds dip away on either side so that it can be seen that the fold points upwards.

To reach the anticline, turn south into the bushland along the track almost opposite the Technical College main entrance in Etty Street. An electric power line follows the track. About 100 metres from Etty Street an eroded gully leads off at about 30 degrees to the left. Follow the gully for 100-150 metres to the anticline.

As with the other Castlemaine anticlines, it is in rock of Ordovician age, about 450 million years old.

SATURDAY MORNING KALIMNA WALK

For those of us who chose to walk the hills behind the Castlemaine High School with Ian Higgins and Rita Mills, the threatened rain held off, for which we were duely grateful. Instead we battled a southerly gale!

But once in the shelter of bush the wattles, newly out, heartened us all. By and large the west side of the hills favoured a majority of Rough Wattles, while the east flank held a larger number of Golden Wattles.

With both Rita and Ian foraging ahead for the latest flowering plants, we came across several patches of Tall Greenhoods, those strange elfin plants.

I don't think that I have ever seen such large "bud complexes of the Chocolate Lilies, one especially appeared to be well over three inches across. One wonders what the bush would look like after, say, ten years of such winter rains.

For a while we skirted the bulldozed gutter, and it was here that we found our first Golden Moths, closely followed by the white Bitter Cryptandra, and the first flowers of the Mint Bush with its "face-like" blue flowers.

The going had been steep, but the greatest difficulty was in trying not to tread on some poor plant doing its best to grow, and every time the sun came out you could almost hear them do just that.

Eventually we reached the ridge, and thankfully sat by the side of the road for a spell for descending down the eastern flank into banks of Golden Wattle, and so down to Moonlight Flat.

Here the creek and flat land were desecrated by the Asparagus Creeper (Smilax), smothering all in its path; banks of thorned Blackberries and Gorse, as well as the odd Pinus radiata abounded. The first settlers must have found it a beautiful valley, and now I suppose those living there now have just got used to it as it is.

The one interesting thing here was the discovery of a young Kurrajong tree - or was it? Well, it was an interesting discussion, anyway.

Here Ian led some of our party back by the shorter route while the rest of us followed Rita to the Unknown Miners Grave, and, as we left Moonlight Flat behind us the birds sang, the sun shone and once again we resumed the Field Nats' Slow Waltz - six steps forward, stop, one step back, bend down, look around, then six steps forward.....!

All too soon were back at the High School again, ravenously hungry, a little footsore, wind blown and happy.

Thanks Ian and Rita.

Marg. Dunne

NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

MONOTOCA SCOPARIA. Monotoca scoparia is a prickly, shrubby member of the heath family. It is rather uncommon, and has been recorded in this district for Fryers Ridge, Porcupine Ridge, and for the Shepherds Flat (Daylesford) area. David Albrecht, of the National Herbarium, is making a survey of variation in the species. Any sightings, particularly of plants with fruit are of interest. The fruit is orange or yellow when ripe. Any records to E. Perkins, please.

PLANT LIST ADDITIONS (All for the Mandurang Forest)
Variable Sword-sedge, Tall Greenhood, Wattle Mat-rush, White Marianth, Heath Tea-tree, Common Hovea, Goldfield's Grevillea (G. dryophylla), Cat's Claws, Leopard Orchid, Rosy Heath-myrtle, Common beard-heath, Stiff Geebung, Hardenbergia, Tall Sundew, Pale Sundew, Scented Sundew, Early Nancy, Small Pennywort, Small Wrinklewort, Slender Rice-flower and Blunt-leaf Bitter-pea..

WILDFLOWERS OF THE CASTLEMAINE GOLDFIELDS. The second edition of the Club's booklet has now been printed. Some spelling mistakes have been corrected, the names altered where name changes have been known to occur, and Brown Stringybark has been added to the plants included. Cost is still 30 cents.

GALAHS NESTING. Rita Mills reports that last year, Galahs were seen trying to make a hole in a Yellow Gum. The project was successful, and Galahs are now nesting in the new hole.

A FIELD NATURALISTS LOGO?

Dick Southcombe, of Geelong F.N.C., is co-ordinating a plan to make prepare a logo for Australian Field Naturalists. It could be used on car stickers, and on badges to adorn the entrances to towns. Suggestions for a motif include the traditional grass tree, a Willy Wagtail or Peewee, a kangaroo or koala, an echidna, or a sand goanna.

The grass tree has been used in Victoria. It has the advantage of being easily recognised, and occurring (in one species or another), in all states. However, there are many sections of Australia from which it is absent.

The Willy Wagtail and Peewee are Australia wide, but perhaps would not make a sufficiently interesting motif.

Koalas and kangaroos perhaps suffer from over-exposure as a motif. The Echidna is Australia wide, and could make a good choice.

The Sand Goanna is the most widely distributed of the reptiles, but is absent from southern Victoria and Tasmania. What do you think?

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Fri 13 Oct. THE LAST SHANGRI-LAH (LADAKH). Speaker is John Zwar, of Mt Martha F.N.C. High School at 8.00 p.m.

Sat 14 Oct. SANDON. Joint excursion, led by Ballarat F.N.C. Meet 27 Doveton St at 10.00 a.m. sharp, or Black Duck hotel at 10.30 a.m. Take lunch. Birds and plants.

Sun 15 Oct. FRYERSTOWN AND FRYERSTOWN GREVILLEA. Bendigo F.N.C. excursion. Leader is Ian Evans, Bendigo Native Plant Group. 10.30 a.m. at Market Car Park.

Oct 21-23. CRESWICK CAMPOUT. W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Creswick. Stay at Adekate Camp, Dean. Booking sheets from E. Perkins or B. Maund.

Fri 8.00 pm. Mr Ray Draper of Ballarat Wildlife Park

Sat 9.00 am. Depart from Adekate for Mt Beckwith

Sat 6.30 pm. WVFNCA annual meeting.

Sat 8.00 pm. Mr John Clements of Ballarat CF&L - to tell of highlights of his work.

Sun 9.00 am Leave Adekate for Creswick State Forest.

Thurs 26 Oct. BUSINESS MEETING. 7.30 at 38 Campbell St.

Fri 10 Nov. BORNEO with Gretna Weste. High School at 8 pm.

Fri 8 Dec. MEMBERS AND VISITORS NIGHT.

Fri 9 Feb. GUNBARREL HIGHWAY with Nicolette Hooper.

Sun Mar 18. MOUNTAIN PEPPER on Mt Alexander. Excursion with Bendigo F.N.C. to look for Mountain Pepper.

No meetings during January.

Castlemaine F.N.C. Inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450
Committee: George Broadway (Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec),
Maggie Oliver (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Kaye Turner
(Prog Sec), Ern Perkins (Treas), Margaret Dunne, Elma
Kelly, Ian Higgins, Lesley Perkins.

Subscriptions for 1989. Pensioner/student: \$3
Single: \$5 Family: \$8 Supporting: \$12
Newsletter posted: membership subscription plus \$5

Supper Roster:

Oct 13: M & R Holden Nov 10: B Maund, E Duffin, M Downie