

Damper Creek Doings

September 2017



The newsletter of
FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.
Reg No. A0029531G
<http://www.friendsofdampercreek.org.au>

P.O. Box 2063 Mount Waverley 3149
Email: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

September Working Bee: meet at mushroom rock, at the Alice Street bridge. Roger asks for weeding near the fern gully tributary



A. pycnantha ^

A. verticillata >



A. paradoxa

'Tis the Season for Wattles

Our national floral emblem is the Golden Wattle. Can you find one in Damper Creek?

Certainly there are many examples, the accompanying example was photographed at the rear of Warren Court.

The Golden Wattle (botanical name *Acacia pycnantha*) is one of many different wattles in Damper Creek Reserve. There are around 900 wattle species in Australia and they range from tiny prostrate plants to forest giants. The Golden Wattle is a modest sized tree, growing up to about 10 metres. The flowers are among the brightest of the wattles, whilst others range from bright yellow to cream.

Another wattle which is common in Damper Creek is known as "Prickly Moses" (botanical name *Acacia verticillata*). Note how different the flowers and foliage are compared with the Golden Wattle. Prickly Moses is a medium sized shrub, growing to about 2 metres. Its prickly foliage is an excellent habitat for birds and you might find it an uncomfortable addition to your garden, just keep it away from your paths.

Wattles sometimes have a reputation for being short-lived and this one is susceptible to insect attack (but more food for the birds). So if you want to take advantage of the properties of this plant, be prepared to replant after a few years.

Another prickly wattle is the "Hedge Wattle" (botanical name *Acacia paradoxa*). In the early days of Australian settlement this was sometimes planted as a barrier to save the cost of fencing. It is seriously spiny and, as a shrub, is spindly and not particularly attractive. However, when in flower it has the brightest yellow of all the local wattles. By all means, plant it for its brilliant flowers and its value as a refuge for small birds. Like many Australian natives it will benefit from pruning to keep a compact habit and to improve its value as a refuge (and cat repellent). **Doug Scott**



I suspect that attendance at working bees would be much greater if weeding was not such a big part of the "Friends" efforts to maintain Damper Creek as a bushland reserve. Weeds come in all shapes and sizes and with different degrees of difficulty of removal. The plant illustrated here is not difficult to remove and its elimination would greatly improve Damper Creek.

Fumitory: This scrambling plant has the capacity to climb over and smother other plants. The leaves are similar to those of a carrot and the tiny pink flowers appear at the growing tips. Individual plants are easy to remove if you carefully trace the plant back to its roots. Even very large infestations can be traced back to a thin stem with an easily removed root system. There are many weeds in Damper Creek Reserve, this is just one of them!

If you want to learn more about identifying weeds that should be eliminated from the reserve and your own garden, come to the next working bee where I will have a display prepared.

August Working Bee

An intrepid group braved the weather to complete infill planting in Park Road opposite the playground. Aided by bushcrew member Chris, several hundred plants found new homes between the road and the creek.

The September working bee will be held at the Alice Street bridge and will involve weeding both upstream and downstream from that point. **Doug Scott**



PLEASE NOTE THAT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW OVER-DUE.



Helen, Mick and Kevin at the August working bee, during a sunny break between showers.

For Your Diary

- Wednesday 27 September, 7.30 pm: Admin meeting at Alvie Hall
- Sunday 1 October, 10 am to 12.30 pm: Working bee. The billy boils at 11.00
- Thursday 12 October, 9.30 am: Water Watch testing of Damper Creek. Alvie Hall
- Wednesday 25 October, 7.30 pm: General meeting at Alvie Hall

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Contributions to *Damper Creek Doings* are welcomed by the Editor. Please submit content by email to the secretary: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com



There are two king parrots in Damper Creek at present - an adult seen here feeding on our back veranda and a juvenile that has green feathers on its head (see next page).

Park Road Changes

The City of Monash proposes to install three speed humps between Quaintance Street and Norman Court. These will help to control excessive speeding which has been recorded along this stretch and improve the safety of the playground. The traffic flow next to the playground has become problematic due to visitors taking their children to the playground parking in Park Rd rather than using the off-road car park directly opposite the playground. At our meeting with the mayor we suggested that signage may be necessary to inform visitors that there is a car park behind the vegetation.

AGM and Committee Members

After our AGM, the meeting was addressed by the Mayor, Rebecca Patterson, who outlined the council's intention to increase the canopy cover within the City of Monash. This is a response to the loss of vegetation resulting from blocks being "moon-scaped" prior to redevelopment. The mayor also discussed progress with the State Planning Minister over potential conflicts between Monash's C125 amendments and "Plan Melbourne".

The new committee comprises Doug Scott (President), Frank Carder (Vice President), Jenny Scholes (Treasurer), Campbell Miles (Secretary) and other members of the committee for the year are Helen Clements, John Clements and Kevin Ryland. The meeting passed a motion that the Membership Manager will in future be a member of the Management Committee. Our Membership Manager is Joan Wolf.

Resignation of Robert Yates

The meeting was saddened to be informed by our long-standing and enthusiastic member, Robert Yates that he has retired from the Post Office and that he will be selling his Mount Waverley home and moving to Victor Harbour, SA. Rob has served on the Management Committee for many years and was a FoDCR Vice President. His enthusiasm for Damper Creek will be missed along with his culinary and catering skills and his considerable floral and faunal knowledge. Rob tells us that he has already found two Friends Groups in Victor Harbour that he hopes to join. We will greatly miss Rob both at our meetings and our working bees but also his helpful smile and welcome at the Hamilton Place Post Office. Rob expects to have more time to indulge in his love of painting. Buying stamps will not be the same, Rob.



Juvenile King Parrot

As with a number of members of the parrot family, the juveniles birds have green feathers on their head and neck before they develop their spectacular adult plumage. Presumably this adds to their camouflage while they adapt to the threats in the wild.



Seen in the Reserve

On the road from Norman Court to the bush crew's hut there is a bushy yate - *Eucalyptus lehmannii*, named after Dr Lehman (1792-1860), Professor of Botany in Hamburg.

Two weeks ago the road under the tree, which is on the right as you walk to the compound, was littered with the seed pods that had been cut from the tree and torn open to access the seeds.

The pods are robust (picture on the left) and it would need a bird with a very powerful beak, probably a member



of the parrot family such as the white-tailed cockatoo, to tear these open.

Yates have a typical finger-like or elf's hat operculum (on the right) that falls to reveal numerous, impressive, pale yellow-green stamens 2-3 cm long. The flowers are prolific nectar producers. We have one in our garden and when in flower it attracts the usual nectar eaters - wattle birds (both species), rainbow lorikeets and noisy miners.

Campbell Miles