

TREE DEATHS CONTINUE; NO GOVERNMENT ACTION IN SIGHT

By Marjorie Apthorpe and Marilyn Zakrevsky

The effects of herbicide spraying by a contractor continue to be seen in the deaths of thousands of trees and shrubs in the City of Joondalup. Since the spraying in May-June 2006, migration of the herbicide in groundwater has continued to slowly kill trees some distance from the sprayed drainage sumps. One of the bushland areas affected is Craigie Open Space bushland, on Whitfords Avenue in the northern suburb of Craigie. A large sump in the southwestern part of the reserve was sprayed, and all the immediately surrounding trees and banksias had died by winter 2007. By August 2008, migration of the herbicide in the groundwater had killed trees some distance away in a zone to the west of the sump (see photos).



Photo by John Chester

The City of Joondalup has refused to say what legal action, if any, will be taken against the herbicide contractor. The city's lawyers and administration have refused to release any information on the conditions governing the herbicide spraying contract, or whether any recompense will be sought from the contractor. The costs of dead tree and shrub removal over the past 18 months have been many tens of thousands of dollars, borne entirely by ratepayers, and there has been no attempt to estimate the costs of replacing and restoring native vegetation in bushland or planted around sumps. The loss of iconic old tuart trees

and banksias has been of particular concern to bushland groups.

This environmental disaster was entirely preventable, as the tree-killing effects of the herbicide used (hexazinone) were known to all. The product information on the commercially available version of hexazinone, Velpar L made by Dupont, states that "*Velpar L is the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective way to clear unwanted timber and scrub.*" The technical information on the chemical states: "Protection of Crops, Native and other Non-Target Plants:



Photo by John Chester

"DO NOT apply on or near desirable trees or other plants, or on areas where their roots may extend. As guidance this is two times their height, or more depending on the species and other conditions. DO NOT apply in areas where a surface flow of water could wash the chemical into areas where the roots of desirable trees or plants may extend. "Protection of Wildlife, Fish, Crustacea and Environment: "DO NOT contaminate ponds, waterways and drains with the product or used containers."

In spite of the clear warnings given on the effects of this chemical on trees and native vegetation, the W.A. Department of Health that regulates herbicide use has turned a blind eye to the miss-use of this herbicide. In a report from

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Editorial

The fact that the practice of clearing bushland areas in and around Perth has not yet been relegated to history clearly shows the state of Western Australia had little to boast of in terms of its protection of our magnificent natural heritage. But we also need to evaluate how well we are managing those increasingly valuable areas that have been given at least some level of reserve protection.

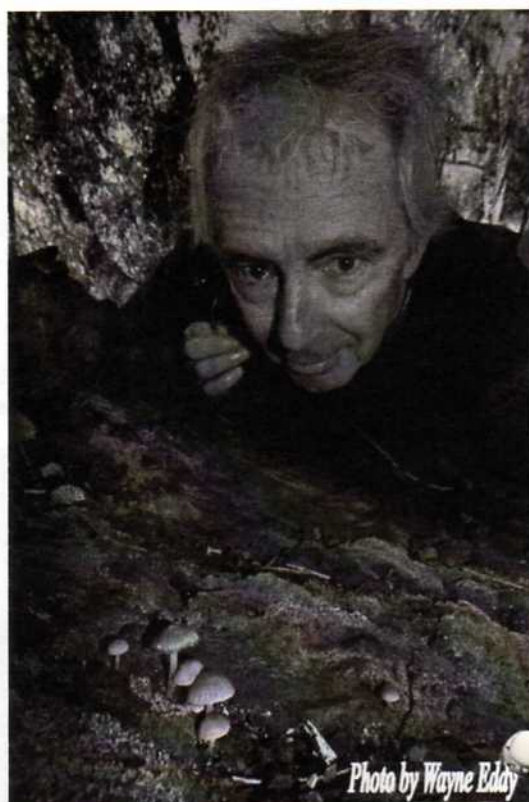
The truth is that many of our Bush Forever sites receive almost no environmental management as such at all. They are not fenced and they can be accessed by off-road and other vehicles at whim. This brings heightened risks of problems such as rubbish dumping – often including garden waste, the spread of dieback, and arson. Many of these sites also receive no weed management. And even some of the most high profile and apparently well-managed sites have very limited dieback hygiene protocols.

While protecting bushland from bulldozers is the number one priority, too many land managers are not putting sufficient planning and resources into maintaining – let alone improving – areas that have been granted some level of security as bushland reserves. The intrusion of public relations agendas and image marketing into natural area management, as in most other areas of environmental topicality, often clouds the issues and frustrates those genuinely concerned about practical outcomes. “Planting days” for school children seem frequently to be organized more around generating photo opportunities than achieving worthwhile results with inappropriate planting times, poorly supervised work, planting sites chosen for the convenience of the organizers alone, and no particular dieback hygiene practices observed.

One-off events like public weeding days can present similar problems if not properly planned and organized but creating a perception that “something is being done” often appears to take priority over allocating the resources needed to address issues seriously. A local government ranger’s work is done if he has erected a sign saying “Dogs on leads only.” Anything more than that would be beyond all expectations. Readily identifiable repeat-offender rubbish dumpers can consider themselves persecuted if a ranger puts a note in the letterbox.

Too much of the hard and time-consuming work is left to dedicated volunteers and the range of environmental abuses suffered by a great many bushland sites really raises the issue of whether they should be securely fenced and made accessible only to those who have a valid reason of being on site and who have registered with the land manager. This proposition flies in the face of worthy notions of public amenity and building local environmental awareness but most if not all remnant sites in the metropolitan area are highly susceptible to dieback and a range of other environmental pressures that are diminishing their environmental potential. It may well be that bushland reserves will have to become areas of very restricted public access to make their protection and management more successful in the longer term.

PUBF 2009



From PUBF Team
Neale Bougher, Roz Hart, Sarah de Bueger
& Brett Glossop

We are pleased to announce that the PUBF Project will be continuing next year, with fungi surveys concentrating on the Perth Hills area. Lotterywest have kindly allocated a grant to the WA Naturalists’ Club to fund PUBF activities in 2009.

The PUBF team has finished compiling data from the 2008 season and the four fungi reports for the surveys at Augusta, Lake Gwelup, Wongan Hills and Wungong will soon appear on our website.

The Perth Fungi Field Book will be re-worked over summer to improve its functionality, and a significant number of new species will be added in time for the 2009 season. Keep checking our website at www.fungiperth.org.au for updates.

Some interesting numbers from the 2008 season are

- 15 Fungi leaders assisted PUBF in 2008, 4 of whom were new trainees
- 8 of these leaders have been assisting PUBF through the whole project, since 2004. The project is always happy to hear from people who would like to train as fungi leaders. When possible we like to take on a small number of trainees each year.
- a total of 208 people participated
- PUBF recorded 412 fungi, of which
- 73 were vouchered into the WA Herbarium fungi collection.
- 35 of the fungi species recorded were new to PUBF in 2008.

We look forward to the valuable support and participation of members of the Urban Bushland Council and the WA Naturalists’ Club next year.

Local Communities Invited to Help Plan for Biodiversity Protection

Renata Zelinova, Perth Biodiversity Project

Five local governments are inviting their communities to consider local biodiversity protection actions proposed in Draft Local Biodiversity Strategies.

By endorsing the Draft Local Biodiversity Strategies for public comment, five new local governments will make significant progress in the biodiversity conservation planning process as outlined in the *Local Government Biodiversity Planning Guidelines for the Perth Metropolitan Region* (Del Marco et al, 2004).

The Collective Local Biodiversity Strategy was first endorsed by the City of Belmont in August, followed by the Town of Bassendean and the City of Bayswater. The three local governments worked together to identify biodiversity related issues and actions that were specific to their local area, focusing on the protection and effective management of natural areas directly managed by the three local governments. The collective approach enables the consideration of ecological linkages within a broad landscape beyond administrative boundaries.

The Shire of Chittering is the first local government working with the Perth Biodiversity Project outside the Perth Metropolitan Region to endorse a Draft Local Biodiversity Strategy. It is open for public comment till 21 January 2009.

Just over 32% of the pre-European vegetation extent remains within the Shire of Chittering. However, only 1% of the original extent of the vegetation is protected for conservation. This is significantly less than any other local government area within the adjoining Perth Region.

The Draft Strategy identifies the Shire's biodiversity assets, natural resource protection and retention targets, actions needed to manage natural areas, key threats and opportunities for biodiversity conservation. Regional and local ecological linkages have been identified by the Perth Biodiversity Project Ecologist based at the Department of Environment and Conservation. Analysis by the Project Ecologist has shown that most of the Shire's natural areas are currently well connected. Retaining this connectivity will be a key measure of effective biodiversity conservation.

One of the fastest growing local governments in Australia, the City of Wanneroo, endorsed its Draft Local Biodiversity Strategy in October. The City encompasses areas of high biodiversity value and natural beauty. However, the development pressure could result in clearing of over 10,000 hectares of native vegetation in the City. With the additional threat from alteration to hydrology and increased pressure from human use of natural areas, a strategic plan is needed to minimize the effects of these threats on the biodiversity assets of the City.

The aim of the Draft Local Biodiversity Strategy is to discuss with the community and other stakeholders the manner in which the City proposes to plan for its expected growth, reduce loss of natural areas and improve natural area protection and management. Some of the mechanisms to improve biodiversity protection in the City include an increase in the protection of the natural areas, increasing reservation of natural areas in public open spaces, the development of various Planning Policies, improving management of existing nature reserves, encouragement of innovative subdivision design, development of a private landholder incentives strategy and some new programs. The Draft document is open for public comment till 22 December.

The Draft Local Biodiversity Strategies can be downloaded from websites of individual local governments. All of the above mentioned Strategies were partially funded by the Perth Biodiversity Project through the Perth Region NRM and supported by the Australian and the State Governments.

The Perth Biodiversity Project is working with ten local governments on developing and implementing a strategic approach to protecting biodiversity in urban landscapes. Local governments at various stages of development are facing different challenges when planning for biodiversity protection and more effective management.

The two most progressed local governments, the Town of Kwinana and the Shire of Kalamunda are finalising their draft Local Biodiversity Strategies after community consultation earlier this year.

It is expected that in the near future, another two local governments will consider a draft Local Biodiversity Strategy or similar at their Council Meeting. The Shire of Mundaring is finalising their Local Biodiversity Strategy that will inform the Shire's new Local Planning Strategy. The City of Rockingham is reviewing the effectiveness of their current Strategies and Planning Policies and will be considering recommendations for reviews.

The latest local government to start developing a Local Biodiversity Strategy is the City of Armadale that is planning to produce the draft document before the end of June 2009.

The Perth Biodiversity Project has also provided some funding and technical assistance to the City of Joondalup and the Town of Cambridge that are developing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan to improve biodiversity conservation within their municipalities.

For more information about Local Biodiversity Strategies and other projects supported by the Perth Biodiversity Project contact the Project Manager, Renata Zelinova on 9213 2047 or email to rzelinova@walgga.asn.au.



Photos by M Owen

Bassendean Preservation Group Inc call 2008 a "Great Year". The year 2008 saw renewed vigour in Bassendean Preservation Group (BPG) activities. The "2008 Trees in 2008" promotion for the sale of trees and Christmas cards in late 2007 was a huge success. More importantly, the people who purchased the trees now feel "ownership" and involvement with trees planted in the Town of Bassendean reserves.



Bungendore Park Management Committee, in conjunction with the City of Armadale, held its *Djilba Spring Walk* in the park on 21st September. It was a bleak day, but still some 55 intrepid people took part before the heavy rains about 10 am which meant the tea/coffee provided by the Armadale Lions Club was a warm welcome. There were some very wet people who went home that day!



The ever-popular *Bungendore Bush Breakfast* was held in the park bushland on 9th November. Organised in conjunction with the Armadale Wildflower Society, over 70 people enjoyed the breakfast cooked by Armadale Lions Club members.

There was a lot of interest in the Bushland Weeds display where over 50 named species that threaten our natural bushland were on display (see photo below). A lot of people are unaware that eastern states wattles and eucalypts are "weeds" in our bushland.



We have been successful in obtaining a grant from Swan Alcoa Landcare Program so that next year we can continue our revegetation and feral honeybee and dieback control work in the park along with some interpretive signage.

Planning is underway for the next *Pancakes in the Park* on the mornings of 28th and 29th March 2009 as part of the Hills Heartbeat Festival conducted over that weekend.

Kim Sarti

The majority of trees and shrubs planted were propagated by BPG members resulting in more than 2300 native species being planted out at Ashfield Flats, Bindaring Park and Broadway Arboretum. In addition, 89 dieback-resistant jarrah trees supplied by Alcoa were planted at Broadway Arboretum and their condition will be monitored over time. In August, a group of 50 Year 3 students from Eden Hill Primary School thoroughly enjoyed a planting day at Bindaring Park, and they have plans to propagate their own plants next year.



Planting at Bindaring Park, July 2008.

Barbecues and morning teas held after the planting days were very much appreciated and engendered a spirit of camaraderie among BPG members.

The popularity of the BPG website continues to grow, with the number of hits and pages downloaded increasing every month. The website contains information on current issues and some fun and intriguing competitions.

During 2008, BPG members achieved some great outcomes for the environment of Bassendean and they have created an important asset for future generations.

Claire Hall

Armada Wildflower Society members went to Boyagin Rock area (near Brookton) recently for a day excursion. Many of the flowers were past their peak, but in the protected areas there were many orchids still in bloom. It's great to see garden plants growing in their natural habitat including the brilliant red flowers of *Kunzea pulchella* that grows solder-like along the fault lines of the granite rock.

Members assisted at the Bungendore Bush Breakfast by leading four short walks in the bushland after the breakfast.

Over the next few weeks, members will be collecting seed from within Bungendore Park for propagating the seedlings used as part of the long-term revegetation programme of the park.

Kim Sarti

Joondalup Community Coast Care Forum (JCCCF) There are currently three active Friends Groups under the JCCCF umbrella undertaking long term projects within the coastal reserve of the City of Joondalup.

At the Sorrento Dunes (south) Mike Norman coordinates work on a high profile 800m stretch of dunes from the Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club north to the Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club. During 2008, work has progressed with help from Conservation Volunteers Australia, sponsored by the Woodside Petroleum. Woodside employees themselves have attended on-site and considerably assisted the community volunteers in hand weeding and planting of native coastal species using local provenance seedlings provided by the City of Joondalup. The biggest event was held on the 12th of August 2008 when the entire HR Division of Woodside, 50 employees, attended for 3 hours to "blitz" a very degraded area just south of the Sorrento SLC, removing 80 bags of weeds, bottles and other rubbish. Parts of the Sorrento Beach (south) site are now looking very good, with excellent natural regeneration occurring in conjunction with a very high survival rate of all the seedlings planted to date (see photos below showing the Ross Ave area in 2003, then in 2008).



Photo by Mike Norman

Parts weeds infested of Sorrento Dunes in 2003.



Photo by Mike Norman

The same area of Sorrento Dunes in September 2008

In all, so far in 2008, a total of 372 volunteer hours have been expended on the Sorrento Beach (south) site. Recently there has been some additional help via financial assistance from Coastwest to pay for a couple of days of contractor hand weeding. The City of Joondalup staff have sprayed along the edge of the very busy shared path, to control weed invasion from the eastern side.

In the Iluka/ Ocean Reef area, Dr Marjorie Apthorpe is the Coordinator. Envirofund Project funding has been spent planting and intensively weeding two badly degraded but rich floral areas of Cottesloe Central and South vegetation complex in the coastal reserve. Most of the grant money has been used to pay a bush regenerator contractor to do hand weeding in the northern area, as the City of Joondalup does not permit the use of herbicides. The southern area, which is steeply sloping and in poorer condition, has been mostly tackled using volunteers, with some additional financial assistance from Coastwest to pay for contractor hand weeding. The work done in yet another nearby area, previously funded by Envirofund, has been continued using a City of Joondalup Community Grant of \$2500 and some on-ground help from CVA. The Friends Group has held 11 community work sessions this year, and a faithful core of eight to nine people support watering and weeding days, with up to eighteen volunteers on planting days. So far this year, a total of 307 volunteer hours has been involved and over 500 bags of weeds removed.

In the Mullaloo area, Marie MacDonald and Marilyn Zakrevsky have coordinated weeding and planting activities using local volunteers, with some much needed additional help from CVA. Planting of nearly 500 plants in the West View Boulevard and Korella Beach path/ Oceanside Promenade area occurred in July, and monitoring and weeding is on-going since. Some fencing has been installed this year, but 40 metres of it was stolen shortly after installation! A Coastcare grant of \$13,800 has been received to spend on fencing, sand trapping, signage and seedlings for work in 2009 from the Korella Beach path to Key West Drive car park path.

In October, two committee members of JCCCF attended the National Landcare Awards in Canberra, having won the state award (in the Coastcare category) in 2007. We

did not win the national award, but it was a good opportunity to mix with volunteers and professionals from around the country doing some fantastic on-ground work.

JCCCF is one of 34 participants in the Community Reference Group for the Ocean Reef Marina redevelopment project, which, depending on the size of the new marina to be built, could involve the clearing of a major part of the coastal Bush Forever site adjacent to the marina. JCCCF has independently surveyed the flora of the proposed site in Ocean Reef (having originally looked at it in 2004), and believe there are some rare ecological communities there, which are still mostly in very good to excellent condition. JCCCF will be examining the City's Draft Structure Plan for the site when it is released, and submitting our views as part of the formal community consultation process.

Apart from more on-ground work at our existing sites, the next big challenge for JCCCF in 2009 will be getting a comprehensive website together, as a means of spreading the message and attracting more volunteers. Dr Marjorie Apthorpe has recently started work on that task.

Mike Norman

Friends of Porteous Park was formed in 2002 and since then has been successively weeding out the bushland sections of Porteous Park in Sorrento. During 2008, the Friends Group has put in a big effort to achieve "zero tolerance" of Carnation Weed, Fumaria, Pelargonium and perennial Veldt Grass. Getting all the Veldt Grass out before seed shed has been quite a challenge, even given it was sprayed by the City of Joondalup staff in June. Some more planting has been done in 2008 in degraded spots around the edge using local provenance seedlings supplied by the City of Joondalup, but the vegetation in Porteous Park is so diverse, with 105 native plant species recorded so far in the two and half hectares of bushland, that we are mainly trying to promote natural regeneration. Over 300 volunteer hours have been expended this year, including some visits by CVA, a Church Group and a school group, always in conjunction with some Friends Group members to ensure the work is done carefully and properly.



Photo by Mike Norman

Volunteers from the Friends of Porteous Park and CVA weeding in October 2008.

In April 2008, the bushland areas of Porteous Park were fenced off by the City of Joondalup to close all but one of the informal paths, and reduce the incidence of lawn clippings being dumped. An isolated piece of bushland was fenced into the whole, and the City sprayed the gap of turf between them ready for planting in 2009. The community as a whole have supported this initiative, except for the closure of the north-east track, which caused some opposition from the community and will therefore be re-opened with a turnstile type gate at each end.

On November the 4th, the DEC arranged a story in the local community newspaper that a previously unknown population of the rare "Graceful Sunmoth" had been found at Porteous Park. The article commented; "The new population surprised researchers by its occurrence in coastal heath vegetation, where it has not been previously located".

A lot of time has been spent in the last two years taking an enormous number of high quality photographs of all the biodiversity within the bushland of Porteous Park. More species are still being discovered. It is an initiative of Friends Group member Shiela Rowlands, who started it because she wanted to know what existed in the bushland which is located directly opposite her home. Information has also been sourced on the history of the park, and the conservation efforts taken to improve it so far. We have received a photo from a resident of the bushland in February 1980, which shows the northern side in a degraded condition following a burn. Fortunately today, it appears to be in much better condition. See the website at www.porteouspark.org.au. It is hoped that the website will increase the local interest in the park, and get more volunteer help to preserve the biodiversity right down to the smallest native plants, including the orchids that occur there.

Mike Norman

Eastern Hills Branch of the Wildflower Society WA

Whew! I can say with relief that our branch's contribution to the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Wildflower Society of WA is over. And what a success it was, thanks to the hard work of so many of our members. Arthur Blundell, who has been doing flora surveys in the Morangup Reserve for a number of years, suggested a walk in the Reserve, and when Janet Atkins, Anne Pilgrim and I went for a walk there back in June, we agreed that it is an amazing place for the sheer number of wildflowers. In September, the number of things flowering was even greater. Sadly, I was unable to take part in the walk, having a bad knee, but those who did were overwhelmed by the diversity of the flowers. For penance, I took on the task of making the salad roll lunches (with beautiful fresh bread rolls supplied by the Gidgegannup Bakery), and morning tea was provided by committee and other branch members.

The weather was against us, with light showers during the morning, turning into a heavy and sustained shower during lunch. Nevertheless, the stalwarts of the Society (who of course insisted that we need the rain anyway, so no problem), plus some bemused members of the public, stayed for lunch - including a cuppa and cakes and fruit, and many of them took part in another walk after lunch, during which time the rain actually stopped and the sun came out. Thanks must go to Vice President Anne and Alan Pilgrim for all their help and organisation in setting up the walk, not to mention the other committee and general members who provided the necessities (tables, tea-making facilities, and - essential - a tarpaulin cover!), not to mention leading small groups to help identify the wildflowers.

Thanks must also go to Paul Tholen from DEC Mundaring, who happened to be driving his motorbike past the Reserve track in June and, when he saw our cars, turned around to see what we might have been up to - while we wondered about the bikie turning up and hoping he wasn't going to try to do wheelies in the Reserve! He proved invaluable in helping us to get permission to set up and park inside the Reserve, not to mention obtaining us a free toilet, to save us from having to "go behind a bush" - with over 70 people booking to come on the walk, we decided that would not have been an ideal situation!

Thanks also to everyone who attended, and braved the weather to see the incredible number and variety of wildflowers. As I was making the lunches, the rain was so heavy at times in Gidgegannup that I honestly thought that there wouldn't be anyone left out there by lunch time, but I was surprised and pleased to see all the cars there when I arrived, as no doubt everyone was pleased to see the lunch arriving!! The Reserve is stunning, and I would recommend anyone wanting to see glorious WA wildflowers to take a trip out to Morangup and walk through the Reserve to see for themselves.

Jan Pittman

Friends of Rockingham Lakes Regional Park are seeking volunteers to assist with regular weeding at Lake Walyungup. The Friends Groups is meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8.30 am and are working for about 2 hours. For more information contact Doug Holmes on enviropatch@bigpond.com or call 0400 904 016.

Doug Holmes

Friends of Yellagonga have made the most of the wet winter and cool spring weather. There have been a number of well attended workdays, and plenty of planting and weeding carried out. But it's not all hard slog - workdays provide an opportunity for socializing, and always end with coffee, chat and a little nourishment. The organization depends heavily on the nursery manager and our eight site managers, whose energy and commitment are outstanding. We also acknowledge the assistance provided by students from local high schools who have worked in the park un-



der our supervision as part of their community service programs.

We have been pleased to welcome several active new members, but on the downside we greatly miss our long-serving volunteer coordinator Jennifer Hawkes. Jennifer found it necessary to cease active involvement with the Friends Group due to pressure of other responsibilities.

There was some concern about the risk of injury, snakebite or other hazards to volunteers, and next month site managers and other key people will undertake a course of first aid training conducted by St John Ambulance. The Friends of Yellagonga was formed with the aim of providing practical efforts to promote the conservation, rehabilitation and protection of Yellagonga Regional Park, to ensure long-term environmental sustainability and compatible human use.

Graham Sinclair

The **Friends of Queens Park Bushland Inc** is a small group which was formed with the intention of preserving and restoring two areas of bushland bounded by Station Street, Welshpool Road, Luyer Avenue, Maniana Road and Wharf St in East Cannington/Maniana. The bush areas contain good stands of banksia and marri trees and numerous wildflowers, and is home to a range of native birds.

The group was instrumental in bringing together the City of Canning and the Water Corporation to convert the existing open drain into the Black Creek Wetland, and assisted in planting of native species around the wetland. A similar artificial wetland is planned for the Maniana section of the bushland. In conjunction with the City of Canning we have successfully applied for grants for fencing the areas to restrict vehicle access and dumping of rubbish.

The Group holds regular workdays (the last Sunday of each month), and recent activities have included rubbish collection, weeding, a bird watching walk and planting of native species.

We enjoy a very good working relationship with the City of Canning, which assists by spraying weeds, providing and helping to plant seedlings, and rubbish removal.

Mike Slingsby

Friends of Hollywood Reserve

It is over 12 years since the Friends of Hollywood Reserve was incorporated and commenced work in the bush. It was formed to save the land from Karrakatta cemetery - the

horror of abolishing a lovely piece of bush to replace it with granite and sand galvanised people from far and wide to support the Friends group.

Over the years we have weeded out mountains of lupins, lupins so high and thick that small children were able to lose themselves in them. We have battled numerous South African bulbs, and as the Reserve was originally a Dairy farm, the various planted foreign grasses. During World War II, the soldiers in the nearby Hollywood Hospital were told to go and cut down large trees as part of their therapy, rehabilitation. The felled trees lie there still.

Each year we plant about 800 - 1000 plants, assisted by Hollywood Primary school. The real enthusiasm of the children is heartening. Many students from the Universities have used the bush for their studies.

We have a regular group of volunteers who turn out on the second Sunday of the month to plant, weed, water, and pick up the rubbish from the cemetery, and do all the chores required to keep the bush viable.

The Friends now break for Christmas, recommencing work in April, though fortnightly watering will commence when the weather warrants it.

Trish Hewson

(Continued from page 1)

the Department of Health meeting of Pesticides Advisory Committee on 10th August 2007, the liaison officer stated that "The contractors have been warned. No legal action would be taken against the contractors as Hexazinone application was based on interpretation of the label". The technical information given above makes it clear that the herbicide is intended to kill trees, and that no "interpretation of the label" is required to produce that certain outcome.

It appears that the Australian government has also failed to act to protect the environment. The Australian Pesticides Veterinary Medicine Authority has taken refuge behind a legal loophole that if the herbicide was used "off-label" (ie. contrary to label instructions), then no label change or further action is warranted. No Federal action will be taken against the perpetrator because the Department of Health of W.A. has "the responsibility for the control of use issues in that state". It is left up to the state government to decide whether to act. The Department of Health regards the issue of Hexazinone use as solely one of whether any traces of the chemical remain in drinking water bores, tested 15 months after the chemical was sprayed, and no detectable levels have been found in the tested bores (locations unspecified). The issue of the deaths of trees is not one that the Health Department is concerned about, that being an item being investigated by the Department of the Environment. Two years after the spraying, more than eighteen months after tree deaths were raised with local governments as an issue of great concern, and fifteen months after DEC began investigating this issue, there is still no action from government at any level.

And the tree deaths continue to spread. Is it any wonder that people are disillusioned with bureaucracy and government in this state?

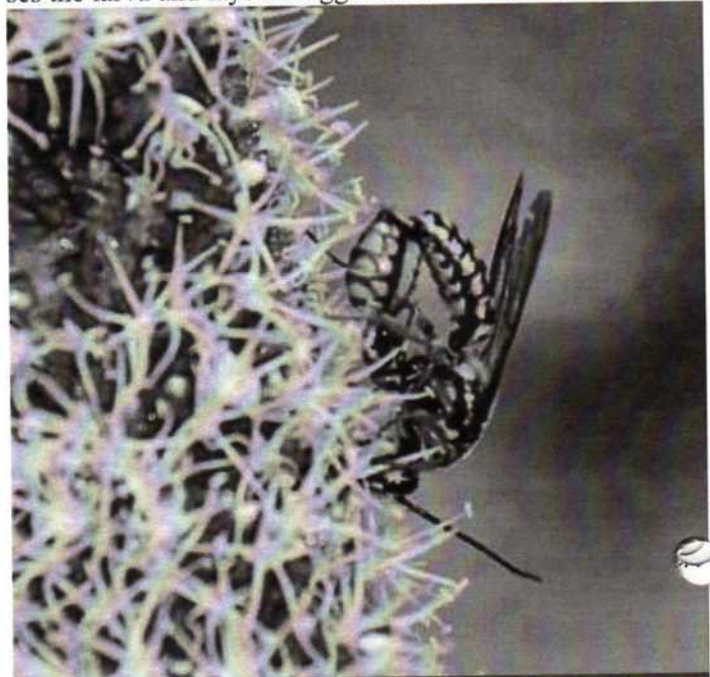
Wasps on grass tree flowering spikes in Underwood Avenue Bushland.

The air of eager anticipation eddies around me as I anticipate seeing some of the many species of insects which come to the flowering spikes of the grass trees.

In Australia there are 750 species of flower wasps and the females of many of these species are wingless.

The female positions herself on a plant where she is evident to a flying male wasp. The large male picks her up and they attach to each other in flight, copulating. On the grass tree spike the male, with female attached and rolled into a ball, walks over the flowers gathering the nectar. The female then unrolls under the male, underside to underside and he feeds her the gathered nectar. She then rolls herself up again as he continues harvesting.

I read that the fertilised female is then dropped. She searches the soil for an insect larva within the soil and with her strong fossorial legs she digs into the soil, paralyses the larva and lays her egg into it.



The sun reflected off the abdomen of this gorgeous little female spider (picture right), making it look like mercury or a dazzling drop of dew. Its common name is dew-drop spider. I have often seen dew-drop spiders in the webs of giant golden



orb-weaving spiders but this is the first time I had seen one in a 'garden' orb weaver's web.

These spiders are one of the food stealers, living in and taking prey from the webs of others. After an enquiry to the ant expert, (who replied from San Francisco), the prey in the web is an ant, possibly an Papyrius queen.

Ant-mimicking spider

That was no ant. Although it looked like an ant its behaviour was most un-ant like. It went step, step, jump behind a leaf. Then it went jump and presented its backside, jump and presented its head side, jump, its backside again.

I was able to see that it had eight legs rather than six and I could see its palps. Then it disappeared somewhere on the acacia. So what was it? It was an ant-mimicking spider.

I read later that jumping spiders have eight eyes which give 360 degree vision. The spiders can move their eyes outwards or inwards for focusing and they use the eye muscles for scanning the object in order to recognise if it is eatable or not. Usually, I read, the behaviour of ant-mimicking spiders is indistinguishable from the behaviour of ants and ants are eaten by the ant-mimicking spiders. However, I had disturbed the spider so that its behaviour had changed.



How lucky to see this baby western bearded dragon in Underwood Avenue bushland on a Swan River Myrtle (pictured left).



Because western bearded dragons are well camouflaged I thought that the baby would stay there, relying on its camouflage. And it did. I read that a male dragon when looking to mate approaches a female waving his arm, changing colour, extending his throat, bobbing his head and lashing his tail. The female signifies her assent by arm waving and head bobbing. From a web-site "Esperance Blog" I read that this family of dragons has descended from the very first branch of the lizard evolutionary tree so they have a very ancient lineage dating back to Gondwanaland.

Text and photos by Margaret Owen

◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇

GVEHO 2008-2009

Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations to assist with funding of administrative expenses.

For more information go to:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/about/programs/gveho/application-08-09.html>
 Or call (02) 6274 2422

**Applications close 5 pm Friday
 28 November 2008**

Fun-loving, hard-working volunteers of the
MEN of The TREES Rockingham/Kwinana Nursery

published their **2009 Calendar** to raise awareness of MOTT and as a fund-raiser.

This colourful calendar, full of cheeky, humorous photos of volunteers working in the nursery will be a great present. To help the cause you can purchase the 2009 Calendar for **only \$15.**

Ph 9527 3142
 Fax 9528 2090
 Email: treemen@three.com.au



Support the Urban Bushland Council

Join or renew your membership

Groups:

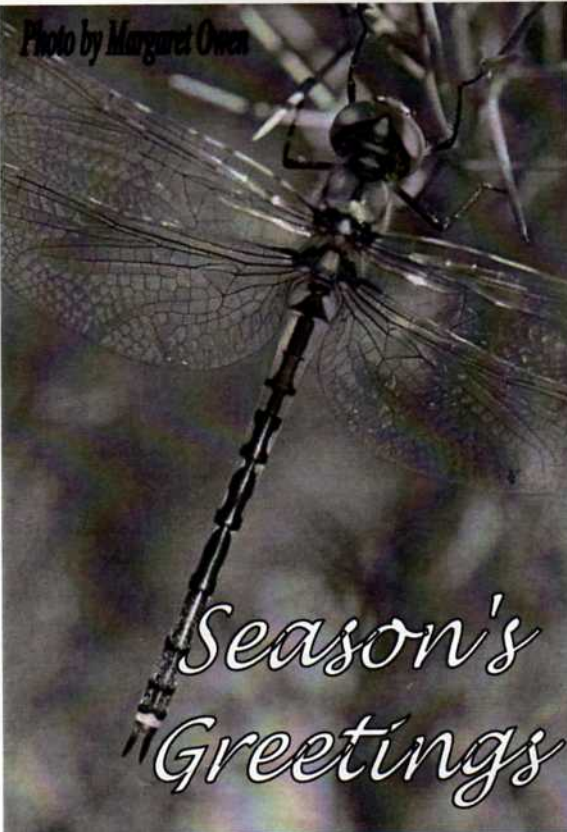
Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$30 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$20 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

Send your name, address and cheque or postal order to:

Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872



URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA EVENTS 2009

3 March 2009

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth
Start at 7 pm, followed by light refreshments

UBC PUBLICATIONS

Wetlands to Wastelands? - proceedings of a seminar about the future of bushland at Perth Airport (2004)

Available at UBC's website

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/html/infosheets.htm>

Burning Issues—proceedings of a workshop about fire management in urban bushland. (2002)

Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

Building Partnerships between Community Groups and Local Government for Our Bushland—proceedings of a seminar (2000). Available from the UBC for \$5.50, postage included

Managing our Bushland - proceedings of a conference about the protection and management of urban bushland (1998). Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

Burning our Bushland - proceedings of a conference about fire and urban bushland (1995). Out of print; available in libraries.

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

The Editor, Urban Bushland Council

PO Box 326 West Perth WA 6872

or fax (08) 9420 7208, email ubc@iinet.net.au

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Office:

URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA Inc

Lotteries House

2 Delhi Street West Perth WA 6872

Ph 9420 7207 Fax 9420 7208

E-mail: ubc@iinet.net.au

Web site:

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/>