

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 13, Winter 1992

GreenBrook Association

EDITORIAL

Large cities and their accompanying urban sprawl determine the way we allocate our natural resources.

As a city grows a multitude of systems are needed, like sewerage and transport, for it to function. Often these systems solve one problem only to create another.

Despite these problems our urban lifestyle is one of the things ordinary Australians enjoy most. The pressure on the environment that our cities create needs to be alleviated if we wish to continue.

One small way to more efficiently conserve our resources is by growing some of our food and developing our backyards to their full potential.

Using backyards to grow food was once very common - I can recall that after the war many families relied on home-grown vegetables and eggs to supplement their income.

To encourage more people to develop backyard gardens we have introduced a new aspect to our "Plant of the Month" series: plants that provide food. To qualify for the series a plant must be able to be grown locally without use of poisons. Another criteria is that it must not become an invasive weed in the bush.

Colleen Crosthwaite

FLYING FOXES

The final in the series on flying foxes. This issue refers to the migratory patterns of flying foxes.

Flying foxes are migratory and in south east Queensland the ranges of two main species overlap; black flying-foxes from the tropics and grey flying-foxes from the south. Large numbers of both species fly into south east Queensland to give birth to their young during October and November each year. They leave again for their smaller winter colonies around May.

In our local colony at Sparkes Hill there have been both black and grey-headed flying-foxes. It is important for young flying-foxes to build muscle and stamina quickly since their migration in May could take them as far as north Queensland.

Flying-foxes rely primarily on the food produced by large stands of mature native trees. They fly many kilometres each night feeding on native blossom and pollinating the trees in return. As their habitat has been destroyed flying-foxes have declined in number and, when hungry, they raid exotic fruit trees.

The interdependence between flying-foxes and native vegetation is crucial, particularly along their migratory routes. Although flying-foxes are impressive fliers the clearing of their food habitat may make the hop between one

food stop and the next too long. When this happens they become trapped in an area.



Much work still needs to be done to understand how flying-foxes communicate about the imminent flowering of food sources often hundred of kilometres away. Perhaps most importantly for the Australian ecosystem is that we don't yet understand the relationship between fly-foxes as night pollinators and the long-term reproduction of Australia's unique hardwood forests.

For further information, or for assistance with injured or orphaned flying-foxes:

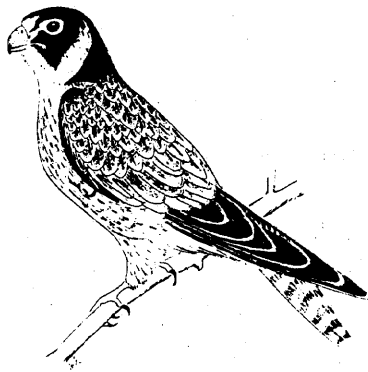
Janey O'Shea
352 5634

RECENT SIGHTINGS

A **Little Falcon** was recently seen in Woolloowin. It is a distinctive bird. The head is dark although the forehead, throat and collar at the sides of the neck are pale rufous.

Although the little falcon is found Australia wide it is not all that common. It prefers open wooded country. In cities it is usually found around parks and in suburbs which have plenty of trees.

Falcons are magnificent aerialists and are among the most exciting of all birds to watch.



Artwork by Bob Devine

Described as a fierce and dashing hunter the little falcon is the terror of small birds which are their prey. They often hunt insects in the early evening and it is occasionally seen hunting bats.

CAN YOU HELP US

The next working bees will be held on -

12 July

9 August

6 September

Meet at 8.30 am at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

THE CLAYFLATS

It is curious that the bombing of Pearl Harbour should have direct repercussions for the Grange. When the Americans entered the war effort they were quick to seize upon the strategic importance of Australia and the building of airfields was a high priority.

Suitable fill for the construction of the Eagle Farm airport had to be found and in 1942 wide-eyed locals of the Grange and Wavell Heights witnessed bulldozers in operation for the first time. In an around-the-clock operation these mechanical monsters completely levelled a knoll which reputedly was nearly as high as that on which the Grange sits now.

Apparently parts of the old cement causeway which the trucks used to cross the Brook can still be seen. This area is known today as the "clayflats", and is found in the middle of Grange Forest Park. The effects of this operation are still clearly visible some 50 years later as vegetation slowly struggles for a foothold on this barren area.

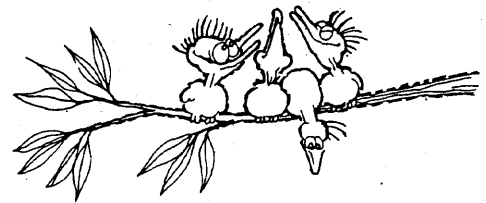
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Curiously enough the Americans returned to the area after the war. At the end of Hayward Street, where the SEQEB depot is now, a large gully was completely filled with war-surplus materials and bulldozed flat.

The history of the "clayflats" serve as a reminder of the activities which shaped the landscape in the past and have influenced the character of the park as we see it today.

David Walters



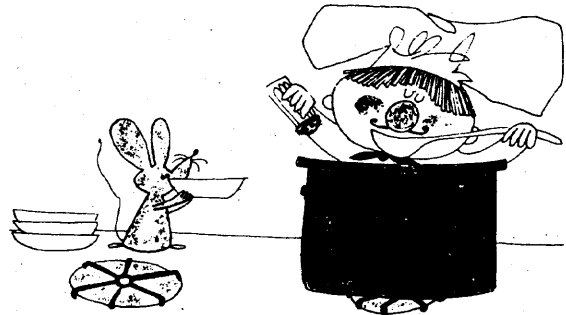
PLANT OF THE MONTH

The Bay Tree (*Lauris nobilis*)

This is the Laurel from which the wreaths of ancient Rome were made. It can grow to a large tree, but is very slow and hence ideal as a tub plant. It does well in Brisbane, requiring full sun and good drainage.

Its leaves are used to flavour soups, casseroles, and boiled meats such as bacon and corned beef. Like most ingredients, cooking with fresh leaves is much better than with dried leaves.

Try growing one near your back door.



Available from Perrotts Nursery
Elkhorn St, Enoggera