

# BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 15 Summer 1992

GreenBrook Association

## EDITORIAL

The recent dry spell highlighted how much water is used and time spent keeping the garden alive during droughts. As we all know Australia can suffer droughts during which water can be scarce for years on end.

In the past our cities have paid little attention to water conservation. However the price of water is destined to rise as authorities are forced to pass on to the consumer the real cost of water. Saving water will become a necessity for most of us.

For gardeners there are many practical steps available to cut down on water usage. The first and most important step to be taken is to design the garden to be water efficient. The size of the lawn should be carefully considered. Many gardens seem to have too much lawn for the needs of the family. By reducing the size of the lawn great water savings can be made.

Lawns soak up water because grasses have shallow roots that dry out quickly in hot weather. On the other hand gardens planted with shrubs and trees, not only have deeper roots but also have another distinct advantage over lawns in that they can be spread with a water retaining mulch.

Colleen Crosthwaite

## FIRE AND THE BUSH

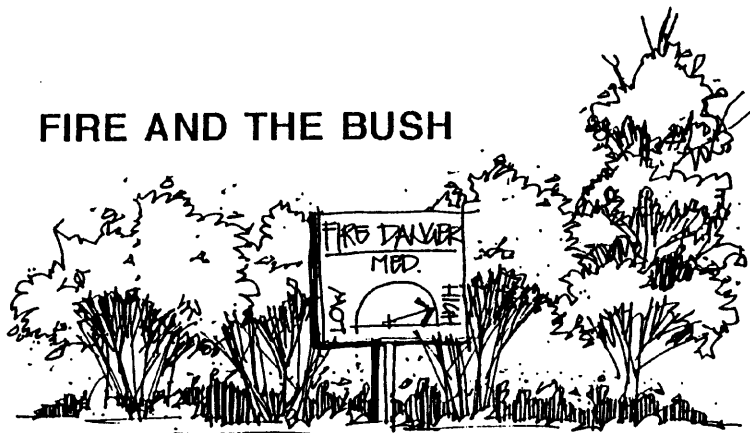
With the onset of summer the bushfire danger rises with the temperature. Brisbane is lucky to enjoy wet and humid summers and does not have the extreme bushfires of the other states (which are fuelled by high temperatures and tinder-dry bushland). Nonetheless there is still a threat and we do have to understand the effects of fire and how it can be best controlled and used.

Historically fires have been started

management of fire has never been practiced. Frequently it is burnt too much, either by accident or on purpose. The result of this is a weed infested bush, due to the fact that young tree seedlings are burnt before they have a chance to grow and grass weeds take over.

However the bush can suffer from too little fire. Some plants depend of fire to set seed and after a few years the dead leaves and branches of the large trees build up on the

## FIRE AND THE BUSH



either by electrical storms or, in the last 60 000 years, by Aborigines. The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and other State Government Departments have very definite fire management techniques. That's why some sections of Moreton Island can sometimes be seen on fire.

Most urban bushland is small and close to built-up areas, and

ground and become a fire risk. A lot of the bushland around Brisbane is now at this stage.

Brisbane City Council, up until now, have not used fire in Bushland Management, but I understand they are now trialing it at Downfall Creek. Despite the problems involved, planned burns will probably be a good thing.

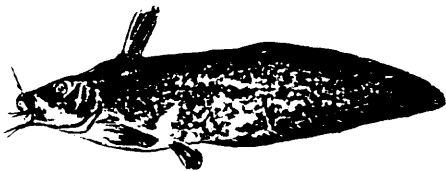
Peter Devine

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

In October some local boys playing in Kedron Brook watched a **Freshwater Catfish** building a nest.

During their breeding season of spring and summer, catfish build a circular nest out of small stones and gravel. The nest usually has a diameter of about 100 to 150 cm. After spawning the eggs settle among the stones to hatch.

Catfish have the distinguishing feature of four pairs of barbels around the mouth that are reminiscent of a cat's whiskers. They are a large fish that can grow to 90cm and have an eel-like tail.



**Freshwater  
Catfish**

Australia has a very small number of native freshwater fish. Surprisingly the 1981 wildlife survey showed that a total of 21 native freshwater species were recorded in the Moreton Region.

However while there was a good variety of fish there was not many of each species. The lack of abundance of fish in the creeks was probably due to the presence of exotic aquarium fish. These introduced fish prey on the eggs of native fish and reduce their numbers.

## AUSSIE PLUMS

It has often been said that the only native plant that produces food in commercial quantities is the

Macadamia Nut. Consider, however, the recent performance of a local Davidson's Plum, about 7 years old, and in its second year of harvest.

The tree is about 5 metres high, and bore fruit about the size of a large plum over a 4 month period. The fruit was collected twice daily after it had fallen to the ground, and typically filled about half a bucket.

The fruit collected during this period made over 40 jars of jam and about 4 x 2 litre containers of stewed fruit. I can personally vouch for the quality of the jam: delicious, and equal to any traditional plum jam.

The fruit is too acidic to eat raw, but then this is a very slender tree, and occupies little space in a garden.

Frank Box

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## CAN YOU HELP US

1993 will be our 9th year of work in Grange Forest Park. Can you recall when there was not even a track - only rank grasses? Despite the obvious progress, there is still heaps to do, and so few to do it with. Please join us.

Meet at 8.30 am at the Blandford St entrance. Next dates are:

- 7 February
- 7 March
- 4 April

Bob Devine

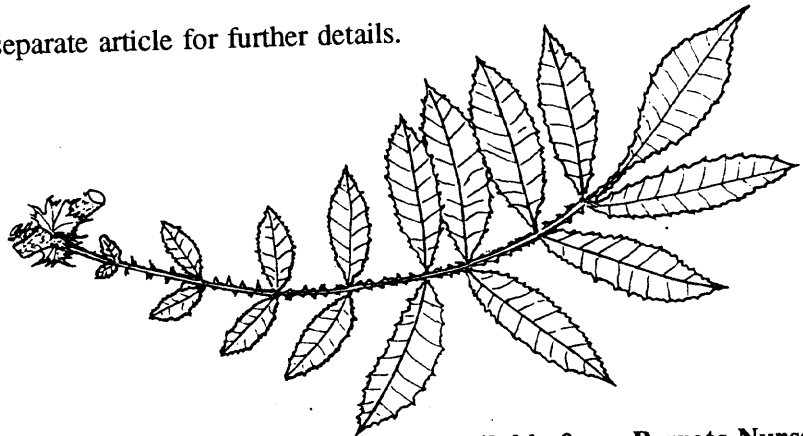
## PLANT OF THE MONTH

**Davidsonia pruriens  
(Davidson's Plum)**

This is a local rainforest plant which grows as a slender tree to 6 m, frequently with just a single trunk and no branches. The leaves are large - almost a metre long, and very attractive.

Will grow in most soils, but needs good drainage.

See separate article for further details.



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