

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 16, Autumn 1993

GreenBrook Association

EDITORIAL

At Bush News we are eager to learn of events that have shaped the course of the Kedron Brook and surrounding district. Our purpose is to collect and share local knowledge that otherwise might be lost. We would love to hear from anybody who has any information.

Knowing the history of an area can colour the way we perceive it. A good illustration of this is the area now known as the clayflats in Grange Forest Park. As previously featured in Bush News this denuded area, prior to World War 11, was quite a sizeable hill - reputedly the same size as Sparkes Hill. During the war the hill was systematically demolished and carted to Eagle Farm to be used as fill at the airport.

Most people when they see this area for the first time are horrified and want to see it reforested. However, once its background is known the stunted shrubs and grasses that have struggled with rock and compacted clay for the last 50 years become something to wonder at.

Knowing this history links the past with the present and brings to life the events that shaped our landscape. If you have any information about our local history please contact us.

Colleen Crosthwaite

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSLANDS

While on a recent trip to England I took part in a working bee with a group of volunteers at Ufton Fields Nature Reserve in the English Midlands.

It was a mild autumn Sunday morning and our job for the day was to clear Hawthorne and other woody shrubs and trees from around a small lake.



The lake was overlooked by a bird hide and the clearing being done was to maintain the view from the hide. Also by "opening up" the lake it would be more attractive to ducks and other waterfowl which prefer a clear flightpath.

The ranger, who took me on a guided tour explained to me their strategy for rehabilitating the area. This was not simply planting trees. Although trees were being planted in some areas, in others they were being cleared. This was to

maintain and expand a particular type of grassland which had largely disappeared from areas outside the reserve. These grasslands are an important source of food and shelter for many native birds and animals.

Grasslands would be equally important in South East Queensland. Quails, finches, grass-skipper butterflies and many small animals all depend on grasslands for food and shelter.

Therefore, it may not always be appropriate to establish or maintain a dense tree cover if it is at the expense of a healthy sward of native grasses.

It is also worth considering using native grasses in the garden to provide food and shelter for smaller birds and animals. Wallaby grass, Kangaroo grass, Pademelon grass and Swamp Foxtail are all suitable species for this purpose.



David Barnes

TURQUOISE?

In 1894 reports were made of the presence of the gemstone turquoise from a road cutting in Adelaide Street in the city.

For those unfamiliar with it turquoise is a pretty blue stone (in fact a copper stained aluminium phosphate) whose colour has made it a sought after semi-precious stone through the ages.

The finest deposits were in north eastern Persia and its passage through Turkey to the West has left it with the Old French name for Turkey. It also featured widely in the jewellery of Tibet.



In 1928 the government geologist recorded findings of turquoise and an associated mineral called Wavellite on Sparkes Hill.

These findings were confirmed in 1939 when a sample taken from the newly excavated site for the Sparkes Hill Reservoir was analysed and at the time was said to be turquoise.

However it was not until 1968 that a paper was published in the Queensland Mining Journal that dispelled the notion of turquoise deposits in the district. After detailed analysis of specimens

taken from Wilston, Alderley and Sparkes Hill, it was shown that the mineral was not turquoise but a closely related mineral called variscite.

The main difference between the two is an absence of copper and generally speaking variscite is a greenish coloured mineral as opposed to the blue of turquoise.

For those who are keen rockhounds it should be noted that even when it was believed to be turquoise the samples found in Brisbane were never of gem quality.

David Walters

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

There have been a number of reports over the last 2 years of foxes along the Brook. We would like to hear of sightings, sounds, reduction in ground-dwelling birds such as curlews, quails etc. Please refer to the Editor.

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CAN YOU HELP US?

Everyday numerous people use Grange Forest Park; at any given time there is always somebody to be seen on or around the tracks. Involvement in regenerating the park is very rewarding. New volunteers are always welcomed.

Next working bee dates are:

.4 April
.16 May

Meet at the Blandford Street entrance at 8.30 am.

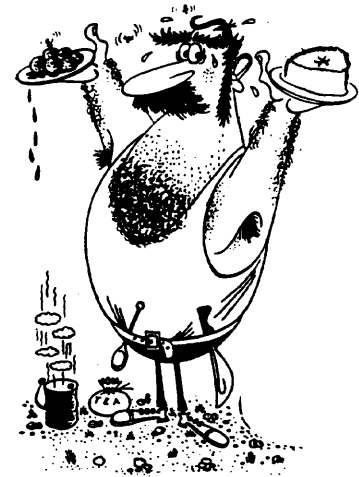
Bob Devine

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Mulberry

We often tend to ignore those things which are 'common', and surely the Mulberry falls into this category. However it is one of the most prolific of fruit trees, and one of the least susceptible to pests.

It requires well-drained soil, with ample fertiliser and moisture in spring. Severe pruning will ensure good berry production, as well as controlling the size of the tree. The berries can be eaten fresh, or cooked as jams or sweet pies.



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