



# BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 19 Summer 93/94

GreenBrook Association

## EDITORIAL

In one corner of Grange Forest Park lies a large gully. Urban development has steepened the sides, and stormwater drains have added moisture. This microclimate was too much for the original vegetation, which had been replaced by Lantana by the time we started. We have slowly been revegetating it as a rainforest.

In the absence of any suitable rainforest communities along Kedron Brook to copy (were there ever any?), we decided to choose local plants that would be particularly attractive to butterflies.

Such plantings are vital if butterflies are going to survive in any numbers. Already the numbers have declined greatly since I was a child, and that decline is due mainly to loss of habitat.

This may seem surprising. There can be no doubt that Brisbane is now greener, and possesses more plant diversity, than it ever did in the past.

And yet many of our butterflies occur only in Australia, and can only live on Australian plants. So many of the introduced plants are of limited benefit.

As well as this, most of the natives that have become popular are not good butterfly plants. For example, none of the *Callistamons* (bottle brushes), only one

*Melaleuca* (paperbark), and only a handful of eucalypts are food plants for butterfly larvae. As well, the *Grevilleas* and *Banksias* are very poor hosts.

Those plants that are good include the wattles, the grasses and rainforest plants. Not only are many of these not particularly suitable for gardens, but they require a mix of bushland plant communities to be reserved in order to maintain what diversity is left.



At the present time, both Sparkes Hill and Grange Forest Park have at least the potential to offer all three habitats to butterflies.

Frank Box

## ABOUT BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies need two things in order to survive: a food plant on which the larvae can grow, and nectar to sustain life as a butterfly.

Food plants are the most important by far, and every butterfly has specialised on one, or a few, types

of plant. The Editorial mentioned some of the popular types.

By contrast, butterflies are not at all fussy about the source of their nectar. The sugars and water that they obtain from nectar must provide the energy for egg production, and nourish them for the remainder of their life.

Contrary to general belief, the life of a butterfly is not limited to just a few days. There are many examples of butterfly life spans of one month, and one species is known to live for 6 months.

In fact, butterflies are deceptively robust animals. They are capable of flying when their wings are quite tattered, and even when they have lost up to a third of their wing area.

Although difficult to notice in an urban area where spaces are relatively confined, butterfly migrations are still common. The most spectacular example is the Wanderer. The migration of this butterfly across the Pacific from North America has been well documented, and is generally accepted to have not been assisted by humans, except for the introduction of its food plant, the Milkweed, to islands along the way.

The best publication available for casual observers is the fold-up poster called *Australian Butterflies*, which contains 250 coloured sketches and text.

## KEDRON BROOK

Kedron Brook was the wellspring for the early development of the district. Ample water, good farming land and plentiful timber for building and fuel attracted the early settlers.

A reliable water supply was essential. A survey by Edgar Huxtable in 1864 showed over twenty waterholes marked out along Kedron Brook and the streams that flowed into it.

Early descriptions of Kedron Brook tell of a sand and gravel bottomed stream with crystal clear waters. Freshwater mullet, eels, catfish and tortoises were abundant. Adjacent to the creek were stands of blue and spotted gum along with bloodwood, stringy-bark, oak and wattle.



Photographs taken in the 1880's of the area adjacent to Kedron Brook on Shaw Road show that this was once a lagoon of a size suitable for boating. In the 1950's it was filled with rubbish and levelled. Today it is parkland and sporting fields.

Growth in the 1880's saw the beginnings of the tanning industry. The decline of Kedron Brook can be dated from this period. Untreated effluent from the tanneries poured directly into the creeks well into the 1920's.

Long term resident Norm Boast first moved into the district in 1928. As a boy in the 1930's he remembers that the creek was still



full of mullet, eels and lobbies. However the creek banks were lined with lantana and there were some large stands of bamboo. One particular stand, near where Grange Thistle grounds are today, stood 10 metres wide.

Today Kedron Brook is re-emerging as a living creek. Small mullet and eels can easily be seen at Kalinga Park and this year catfish built a nest in the Grange Forest Park reach. Tortoises are often seen there as well.

A variety of waterbirds have been sighted regularly along the creek banks. Including herons, egrets, spoonbills, waterfowl and ducks. A pair of black bitterns have a favourite perch on a rocky outcrop or sometimes they are seen foraging along the creek edges.

Colleen

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### CAN YOU HELP US ?

1993 has been another productive year for GreenBrook Association. Our working bees concentrated on planting, weeding and removing rubbish from the gully.

Volunteers are always needed to continue this work. 1994 will be our tenth year of work in Grange Forest Park. Can you join us?

Our next working bees are:

6 Feb  
6 March  
17 April

Meet at the Blandford Street entrance at 8.30 am.  
Bob Devine

### PLANT OF THE MONTH

***Pseuderanthemum variable***  
**"Love Flower"**

This is a food plant for the larvae of the Australian Leafwing, Blue-banded Eggfly, Common Eggfly, Danaid Eggfly and the Blue Argus butterflies.

It is a local rainforest understorey plant to 25cm. It flowers prolifically in the shade (white/blue), and for long periods. Extremely tough. Thoroughly recommended.



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