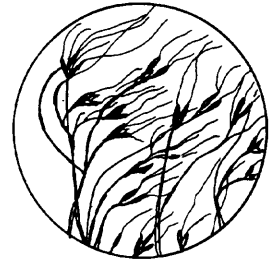


# BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs



No 26, Spring 1995

GreenBrook Association

## GRINSTEAD PARK - WILDLIFE PARK

New information suggests that Grinstead Park, especially the western portion which is threatened by a road, is much more environmentally significant than had previously been thought.

One of the features of Grinstead Park is its big gums, many of which obviously pre-date European settlement.

Exactly how old these are is difficult to tell, but one way of getting a feel for this is by the number of hollows they contain.

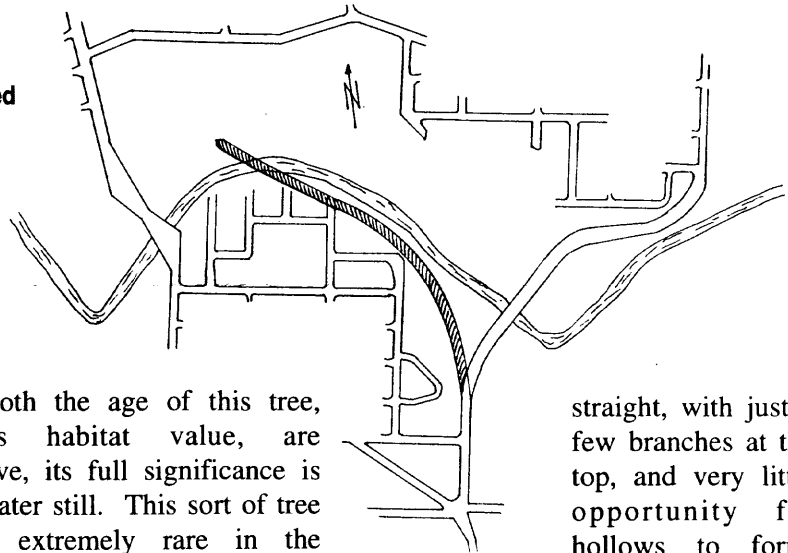
The tendency of old eucalypts to develop hollows, which are then used by many animals, was discussed in *Bush News* 24.

The oldest tree in the western portion of the park contains, at the time of writing, between 30 and 40 pairs of breeding parrots. This includes sulphur-crested cockatoos, galahs, rainbow lorikeets and scaly-breasted lorikeets, with little corellas waiting in the queue.

By any accounts, this is an amazing number of hollows. In one study in West Australia, admittedly on different species of eucalypt, the youngest eucalypt used by cockatoos was about 450 years.

A tree closely related to this one, the river red gum, is thought to live to 1000 years, so an age for this tree of about 500 years is quite possible.

The proposed road



While both the age of this tree, and its habitat value, are impressive, its full significance is even greater still. This sort of tree is now extremely rare in the northern part of Brisbane.

The original vegetation of this area consisted of two main structural types: grassy floodplains with scattered trees, and forested ridges.

The grassed plains were the dominant type. Colonial Botanist Fraser, when he climbed Mt Cootha in 1828, and looked out over the northern suburbs, described the scene as "an immense, thinly wooded plain ... clothed with luxuriant grass".

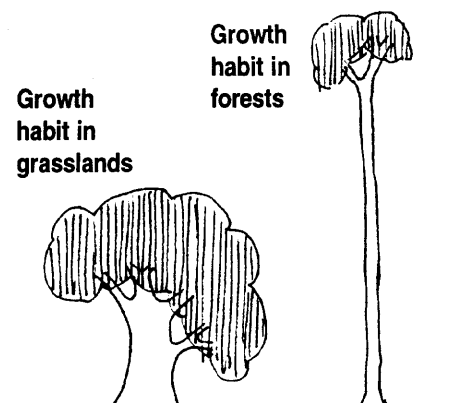
The trees that grew on the floodplains, like any tree grown in the open, tended to be low and spreading, as shown in the sketch. The many branches provided ample opportunity for hollows to form.

This form of vegetation was the result of frequent burning by the natives. The ridges, on the other hand, were relatively spared, and grew thick with trees. Competition for light was intense, and the trees grew tall and

straight, with just a few branches at the top, and very little opportunity for hollows to form.

This sort of tree is common on Mt Cootha now, and hollows are almost non-existent.

If this argument is true, then the old trees of Grinstead Park, Shaw Park, Kalinga Park, etc, numbering a few dozen at most, are more significant to the parrot population of Brisbane than vast areas of Brisbane Forest Park.



Would we demolish a 500 year old building, especially one whose usefulness was increasing every year, just to build a road?

Frank Box

## WILDLIFE NEWS

In June, a **Brahminy Kite** was seen hunting above the hills at Alderley. Common in coastal suburbs, these birds of prey occasionally follow watercourses inland.

August saw a young **Scrub Turkey** killed on Shand St. This was a male that had recently moved into Sparkes Hill. He had built a nest mound on private property adjoining the park, and was perhaps trying to find a mate when killed. These are solitary birds, and the chance of two of opposite sex moving into the area at the same time (and surviving) is remote.



A pair of **White-throated Treecreepers** has been sighted in Sparkes Hill. Although not uncommon in the outer suburbs of Brisbane, this is the first reported sighting from this area.

Also from Alderley is the amazing report of a large owl taking a possum from a suburban roof. This was most likely a **Powerful Owl**, the largest and most impressive of our owls. These are rare in south east Queensland, with a pair requiring about 800 hectares of forest in order to survive and reproduce. Nevertheless, a pair are known to live in Toohey Forest and they also live on Mt Cootha.

And finally there is the story of the **Kookaburras** who excavated a nest in a termite mound in a Silky Oak tree. This is very common among the smaller kingfishers, but Kookaburras often destroy the nest

entirely when they try it. Anyway, this pair succeeded, although the cavity did have two entrances. After a solid day's work, they came back the next morning to find that a ringtail had moved in overnight, evidenced by the leaves and twigs hanging from both entrances.

## WATERWATCH

The Dept of Primary Industries has recently sponsored a program to monitor the health of waterways throughout Queensland.

Kedron Brook was tested at Kalinga Park by a local school. This was a crude test based on the type of macro invertebrates, such as dragonfly nymphs, living in the creek.

On a scale of 'excellent/good/fair/poor', Kedron Brook rated 'good'.

The program is being improved and extended, and groups and schools are encouraged to become involved. Contact Waterwatch on 3896 9387.

Doxiadis

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## INTERESTED IN HELPING?

Spring will (hopefully) bring rain, and is therefore the season for planting. After several years concentration on removing exotic grasses and shrubs, a start is to be made on filling in the gaps and developing an understory and ground cover.

Newcomers are always welcome. Working bees are held on Sunday mornings from 8.30 until 12, with tea and damper at half time. The next are:

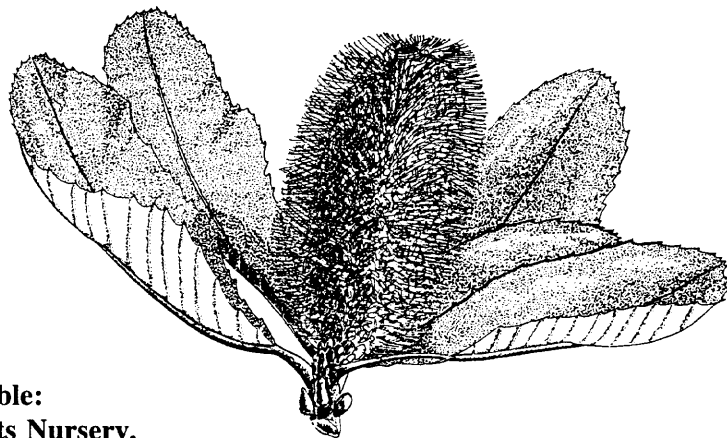
- 8 October
- 5 November
- 3 December

Meet at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

**Banksia robur**



**Available:  
Perrotts Nursery,  
Elkhorn St, Enoggera**

Banksias are great for feeding the parrots. This one is a shrub to 1½m, with broad leaves and huge bottle-flowers. The flowers form a deep velvet blue-green colour and then turn yellow. It is a plant of the moist swamps, but is tolerant of most conditions.