

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

Summer 1989/90

GreenBrook Association

EDITORIAL

Summer is the season for bushfires.

It has long been known that bushfires have both good and bad effects. It is well documented that complete removal of fire can in time completely change the vegetation of an area. Locally the beautiful purple-flowered *Hovea* would probably disappear if the bush was not burned.

Certainly fires stimulate seed germination, and if seed is present then regeneration after fire can be massive indeed. On the other hand too frequent burning can kill all of the regrowth before it can establish. In parts of Grange Forest Park there are almost no trees between 5 and 20 years old - a sure sign of overburning.

Originally the Aborigines used fire to manage the landscape for their own needs. How often they burned can be gauged from the landscape they created - described by Oxley as "fine open grazing country".

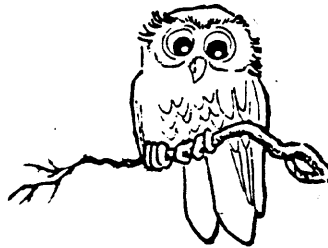
This description of grass and scattered trees is still accurate today in some areas. What has changed however is that the grasses are no longer delicate wiry native grasses, but horticultural monsters introduced to feed cows - and each one a bonfire when exposed to flame.

Clearly the future of our bushlands depends on the removal of these exotic grasses. In the interim - no bushfires this summer please.

Frank Box

RECENT SIGHTINGS

Last month I was invited to Evelyn St, Grange, to see a Boobook Owl. It was roosting about 1m above the ground in a very open Brisbane Wattle - obviously flirting with death at the hands of the local cat population.



This was my first encounter with a Boobook since the summer of 1986, when one roosted in our garden every day for 5 months. This bird appears to be fairly common along Kedron Brook.

A pair of Whipbirds have taken up residence at Grange Forest Park during 1989. The number and intensity of their calls over the past few months suggests that they have nested.

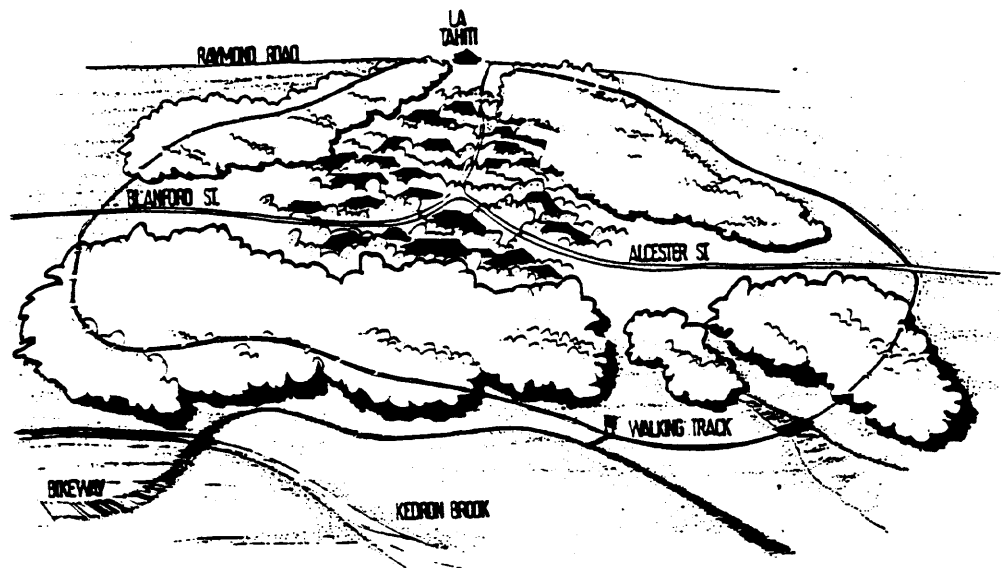
Whipbirds forage for insects in leaf-litter on the forest floor, and there are many areas in the park that should suit them. The birds look very similar to the Willy Wagtail, and probably came down Kedron Brook from Keperra, where a small colony has survived since settlement.

BIKEWAY

The recent extension of the Kedron Brook bikeway has now completed the planned recreation facilities for Grange Forest Park.

Work on a walking track through the park commenced at the start of the project in 1985. The track was extended to form a 2km circuit walk in 1987, and signage to mark the track was installed in 1988.

The bikeway and the circuit walk come together just west of the new bridge, so that cyclists can leave their bikes and do the bushwalk. A large map of the circuit is planned for this location.



NESTBOXES

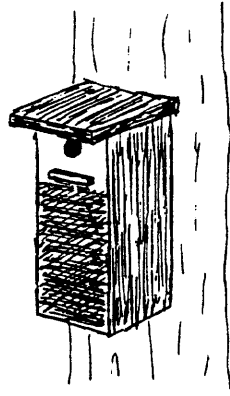
By any measure our trial of artificial nestboxes last spring was highly successful.

Of 4 Kookaburra nests erected, 2 were used by Kookaburras, one was used by a pair of Nankeen Kestrels, and one was adopted by a Ringtail Possum.

9 nests designed for Parrots were installed, of which 5 were used by Pale-headed Rosellas, and the remainder taken over by Ringtails.

Also a pair of Galahs reared 2 young in a box designed especially for them.

Doxiadis



CALL FOR INFORMATION

Clearly Scrub Turkeys have survived in some locations along Kedron Brook. I would be interested in hearing from people with sightings/anecdotes on these animals for a future article.

Frank Box (857 1086)

CAN YOU HELP US ?

The GreenBrook Association is really a self-help cooperative. Its members are civic-minded people who like to see trees of the bush included in the scenery of their local area. Most of the work undertaken involves protecting and extending natural habitats for the benefit of wildlife.

The next working bees will be held on -

- . 4 February
- . 11 March
- . 8 April

Start time is 8.30am (until about noon). Meet at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

BEWARE THE FERAL PLANT

The following is extracted from a new publication, "Beware the Feral Plant", published by the NSW Dept of Agriculture and Fisheries.

"Many plant species introduced into gardens often become too vigorous, especially in coastal areas."

"Though attractive when small, many of these species either quickly outgrow their space - needing constant care and pruning - or produce large quantities of berries or seeds. They spread uncontrolled into neighbouring land - often by birds or wind - where the plants quickly re-establish at the expense of existing vegetation."

"These plants ... are not declared noxious but should be kept under strict control and completely removed if possible."

"Gardeners should avoid these species when establishing new gardens."

Asparagus Fern

This plant is classified in the above publication as a feral plant.

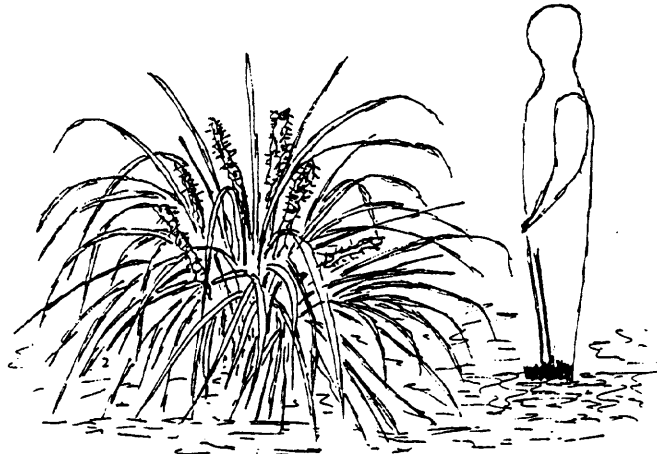
With its bright green foliage, red berries and tuberous roots, it has long been a favorite for hanging baskets and as garden edges.

Unfortunately it spreads easily, and is now common through much of our bushlands. Sparkes Hill Reserve in particular is very heavily infested.

Lomandra longifolia

This is a local plant which can still be found along Kedron Brook, and is a preferable alternative to Asparagus Fern. It has a clumping grass-like growth to 1.5m high x 2m, with strap-like leaves.

The scale of the plant makes it ideal for courtyards, or for low screens giving an illusion of privacy with no loss of light or space.



It tolerates both sun and shade, but will not grow in really dry conditions.

This plant is available from Perrotts Nursery, 71 Elkhorn St, Enoggera.