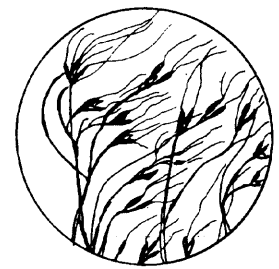


BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs



No 31, Summer 1996/97

GreenBrook Association

SOLVED - THE RIDDLE OF THE ROSELLAS

Pale-headed rosellas are very quick at colonising new nestboxes in parks, frequently using them within a year of installation. Despite more than 10 years of trying, however, I have never been successful at having them breed at home. This article tells the story of why this was so, and the pleasures of final success.

4 August Pair of rosellas inspecting a box in the front yard; in and out of it several times. This year footpath trees provide a better screen between the box and road traffic than before. Looks promising.

10 August Visited a large works depot in a Brisbane suburb. One of the staff had erected a nestbox on a huge steel pole with security lights on top; contains a rosella sitting on 4 eggs. The pole sits on a traffic island in the middle of the yard, with constant movement and noise all day. Appears that it can not have been activity that stopped them from breeding at home!

23 September Rosellas are pathetic to watch. They have been here every day for 7 weeks now, sometimes for hours at a time, but no eggs. Erected another, larger box to see if that makes any difference.

25 September One egg already in the new box, after only 48 hours! Seems that, while some rosellas

will use the smaller box, others balk at it.

9 October She has been sitting for quite some time now. He comes and calls her several times each day. She can keep him waiting for up to 20 minutes, but they always fly off together in the end. Saw him feeding her in the park yesterday morning (1/2 km away).

19 October
2 chicks
in the box,
probably only
1 day old,
and 2 eggs
still unhatched.



20 October Definite change to their feeding routine. Today she kept him waiting so long that he went to the box and fed her at the entrance.

22 October She seems to not leave the box at all now; he goes right into the box to feed her.

28 October He has become very secretive. His calls to her are scarcely audible, and he is very watchful when entering the box.

2 November 4 chicks, now on their own during the day. Climbed up and took some photos; chicks make a loud rasping sound

when disturbed.

16 November, 10am Came home mid-morning. One chick sitting in the entrance, gripping the rim - a real scrawny specimen. It takes off as we watch it, through the trees and out over the road in an exact replica of the parents usual flight path. One of the parents falls in behind in perfect formation. Magnificent.

16 November, 1pm A second chick, this time on the ground in the front yard. It can fly a few metres only. Crawls up into some vine where it cannot be seen.

16 November, 3pm A third chick sitting in the entrance.

16 November, dusk Parents have visited several times this afternoon, calling to the young, but not coming down or to the nest. A hot day - how do the chicks survive without moisture?

17 November, dawn The one from the box now on the ground under our bedroom window; pick it up and place it on a branch. Parents come and the second chick flies off with them, after only the tiniest of meals. Once they know that the chicks can fly, the parents seem to want to take them away immediately.

19 November, dawn The last chick finally leaves this morning. Checked the nestbox - empty.

Frank Box

GOVERNMENT APATHY ABOUT GRINSTEAD PARK ROAD

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads recently declined to meet with representatives of the community to discuss the proposed road through Grinstead Park West. This park is important to both residents and wildlife, and will be destroyed by the road. He referred the request, instead, to the Department of Main Roads.

To appreciate the significance of this, one needs to understand the roles of the Minister's two departments.

The Transport Dept is responsible for long-term planning. Projects identified as being required within the next 5 years are automatically placed on a Roads Implementation Program, and transferred to the Main Roads Dept for action.

Following the Minister's referral, the MRD advised that "there is no project on the Main Roads' current five year Roads Implementation Program", adding that "an extensive study including community consultation will take place" when a decision to proceed is made.

The fact that the road is not imminent allows time for other options to be investigated. This is the role of the Transport Dept.

Now perhaps the Minister is not aware of the respective roles of his two departments, or simply made a mistake by referring the letter to the wrong department.

On the other hand, perhaps there are no alternatives being investigated, in which case it is inevitable that a road will one day become the only option. One can imagine the usefulness of 'consultation' at that late stage.

Doesn't the public deserve better from its servants?

FISHKILL IN KEDRON BROOK

Most would have been aware of the loss of hundreds of fish, eels, turtles and birds from the brook in mid October.

The final result of the investigation by the Dept of Environment is that the animals were poisoned by Chlorifos, a chemical common in pesticides used in homes (lawn grub control, cockroaches, etc).

The source has been traced to a residential area of Enoggera, suggesting that a member of the public, rather than a business, was responsible.

The belief is that the incident was caused by someone cleaning up at home and disposing of unwanted chemicals by tipping them down the drain. The effect is rarely immediate; only when it next rains are the chemicals finally flushed to the creek.

The only solution is for us all to be vigilant and report dumping.

MILESTONES
Consultants for:
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Contact: Jeni Neary
Ph-3856 4772 Fax-3856 4702

ENJOY YOUR PARK

Many people still don't seem to know about the walking track through Grange Forest Park.

It is almost exactly 2km long but has only 3 road crossings. It offers heaps of variety, including mown parkland, dry eucalypt forest, open grassland, brushbox forest and occasional views of Kedron Brook.

For a more in-depth look at the park, why not help us to maintain it? Meet at the Blandford St entrance to the park at 8.30 am.

Next working bees are on:

- 19 January
- 16 February
- 16 March

Bob Devine

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Hibiscus geranioides

This is a lovely plant, no higher than 1/2m, with a single vertical stem. The flowers are a delicate pink, about the size of an egg-cup, and produced throughout the year. It self-seeds readily to form clumps, but is never invasive. It is also extremely hardy.

Available from
Perrotts Nursery,
Elkhorn St, Enoggera

