

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs



No 4, Autumn 1990

GreenBrook Association

WHY BOTHER ?

The GreenBrook Association is committed to conserving and enhancing the remaining natural areas along Kedron Brook. Several people have asked me recently - why ? Can't the bush look after itself ?

There are 2 points relevant here. The first is that invariably we do not value something until it is almost gone. Within Brisbane only 23% of our original bushlands remain, and of this 63% lies on private property.

If anyone doubts that privately owned bushlands will go, look at the current proposal by Keperra Country Golf Club to sell off some of it's land for housing - and one would have thought that this was fairly safe.

Second, bushlands in the suburbs are changing. Their soil nutrient levels are rising due to runoff from streets and gardens.

Foreign plants are being introduced by birds, dumped rubbish, and even good-natured "helpers". For most sites this process is still in train, but where it is heading can be gauged from other places - pure stands of Chinese Elm at Kalinga Park, almost continuous Camphor Laurel along Enoggera Ck at the Gap, and dense Privot forests along the foot of the Toowoomba Range.

Everywhere the tendency is for one or a few species to dominate.

There is really now so little good bush left, that we ought to preserve it in something like its original condition. If we don't there could well be absolutely nothing left in another generation.

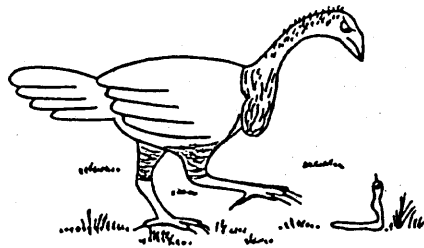
Frank Box

SCRUB TURKEYS

Scrub Turkeys are one of our largest birds, and their distribution provides clues as to how well wildlife can survive in Brisbane. This article, the first of two, discusses one successful bird.

For Scrub Turkeys the nest is actually an incubation mound. In this case the mound is about 3 metres across, over a metre high, and is the dominant object in the front yard of Glenys and Jack DeLange.

"Scrub Turkeys have been around the area for years", said Glenys, "but we were singled out for special treatment about 7 months ago".



The construction of the mound is a purely male affair, and a more tireless worker than he would be hard to find. In this case the land slopes down to the street, with the mound positioned on an elevated terrace. The pine bark comes from up to 4 properties away, along the footpath, up the concrete driveway (and quite steep it is too), and finally onto the terrace.

Similarly the courtyard between the backyard and the front is no obstacle - the sticks and leaves just whiz across the paving.

For the human owners, what started as a highly interesting and entertaining event is now losing its appeal. Says Glenys - "we used to have lots of pot plants, but he just

loves them. They all ended up in the heap".

"We want to shift the mound, but the chicks never stop coming out. They have been hatching at one every 2-3 days for months now, and they just keep on coming. "

Unfortunately very few of the chicks can have survived. The mound is now well known: daily the crows line up on the overhead wires, and the neighbourhood dogs and cats regularly circle it. Only the remains of the young testify to their continuing birth.

While this story may seem to emphasise conflict between wildlife and suburbia, this would not be entirely accurate. Glenys has a "bush" garden. As well as up to 6 turkeys, their average-sized allotment in Dorrington also supports a goanna, a family of Tawny Frogmouths, and of course a possum or six.

She asks only that the Turkey move up to the back garden, an issue on which there is about to be a real battle of wills.

NESTBOX PROBLEMS

Introduced bees have now taken over a second parrot box in Grange Forest Park.

This is a serious problem, as it has previously been thought that Starlings and Sparrows provided the most serious competition for hollow-breeding native animals.

This latest nest had been used regularly by a Ringtail possum. The fate of the possum is not known.

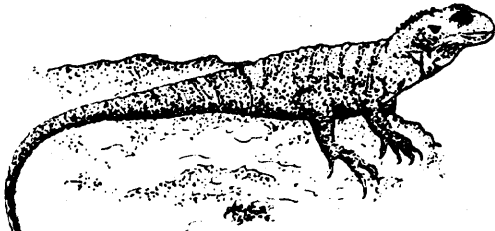
While previously not reported using nestboxes, I have seen many examples of bees using tree hollows on the Darling Downs.

Does anyone want some bees ?

THE EASTERN WATER DRAGON

In the last few months you may have been lucky enough to meet one of the many lizards that live along Kedron Brook.

A very handsome fellow indeed is the Eastern Water Dragon. He grows to almost a metre in length, and has a crest of triangular spines along the back of the neck which continues down to the tip of the tail. The tail is huge - over twice as long as the body. Dark markings appear on the cheeks and down the centre of the back. Adult males may have bright red throats and bellies.



Whereas most Dragons inhabit arid areas, the Water Dragon has adapted to streams and waterways. The nostrils are positioned high on the head and the tail is compressed like a fish to aid in swimming. It can stay submerged for up to half an hour.

Common along Kedron Brook, Water Dragons can often be seen sunbaking in clearings. Brisbane Aboriginies called the lizard Moggill, whence comes the suburb name Moggill.

Marty Moles

WEEDS OF THE BUSH

The introduced Prickly Pear achieved infamy in the 1920's because of the total devastation it caused.

It is not exaggerating to say that other introduced plants are now changing our remaining natural areas just as totally, and that most of these plants have escaped from gardens.

One such plant is the Chinese Elm. Few gardens would not have this plant regularly come up as a weed. Where left unchecked it will quickly grow to a tree of huge proportions. The birds love the seeds, and are responsible for its spread.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

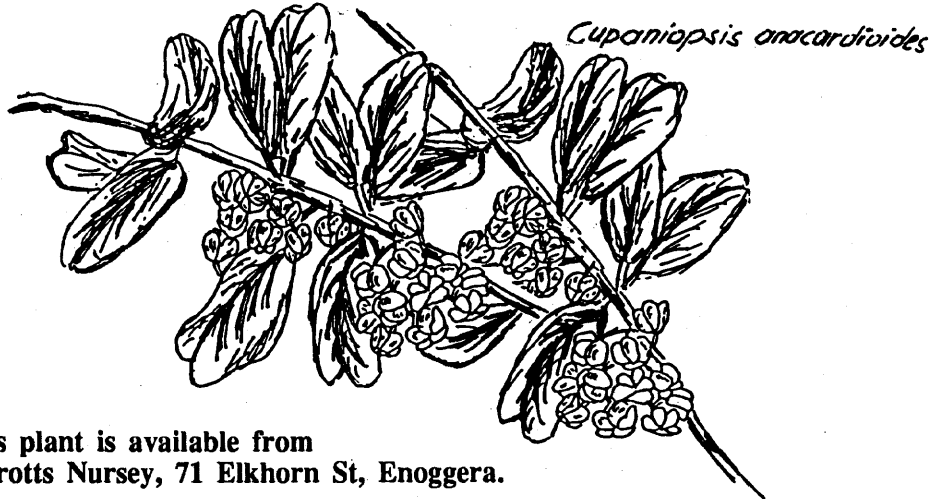
Cupaniopsis anacardioides (Cupania Tree)

If you want to impress someone, just mention *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*.

The tree also is impressive. It is a native of SE Qld, with large specimens growing in Burleigh National Park where they are fully exposed to the salt spray.

This is probably the best footpath tree for use under power lines. It has large leaves, and can easily be trained to grow with a clean trunk and spreading branches. The canopy is dense, and bright orange fruit follow the flowers.

It seems not to worry too much about soil, and even seems to tolerate growing out of bitumen. Good specimens can be seen along Enoggera Rd just north of the Newmarket Shopping Centre.



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

CAN YOU HELP US ?

Situated on the Grange side of Kedron Brook, just upstream from Webster Rd, Grange Forest Park is the eastern-most remnant of bushland along Kedron Brook. It is the start of a wildlife corridor which links to Sparkes Hill and then along the Brook to the ranges beyond.

Our work in the park involves tree planting and removal of weeds in order to assist the growth of native seedlings.

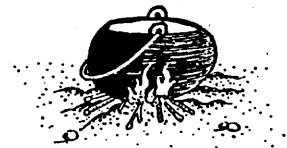
The next working bees will be held on -

. 8 April . 20 May . 8 July

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

Bob Devine

COOKHOUSE CORNER



Bush Pumpkin Broth

You need -

- . 1/2 pumpkin (diced)
- . 2 cups water
- . 1 chicken stock cube
- . pinch nutmeg
- . salt & pepper

Directions: Boil all ingredients till pumpkin soft, then mash all ingredients. Serve and garnish with a dollop of cream or sour cream.

Easter Sunday Luncheon

Traditional Easter Sunday Buffet at Kedron Sporting Club. Fresh Prawns and excellent Buffet Luncheon with great Gourmet Salads and Sweets. Only \$15 per head, children \$10.

Book now and have Easter Sunday free Kedron Sporting Club End 6th Ave, Kedron Ph 857 1101 All Welcome