

Healthy Bush Activities

FEP offer healthy group activities in bushland parks. (See Parkcare Groups) ⇔

Regular activity days are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday each week.

The advantage of visiting and working with the different groups in a range of locations is that each bushland habitat has its own **character, challenges and achievements**.

Even if you can only visit one new reserve each year, you should enjoy the experience.

What is a Weed?

A weed is any plant that colonises and persists in an ecosystem in which it did not previously exist.

Weeds may affect the economy, the environment, human health and amenity. Many of the plants introduced into Australia in the last 200 years are now weeds.

Plants that are weeds have a number of common characteristics. They could be a succulent or produce large numbers of seeds. They are often excellent at surviving and reproducing in disturbed environments. They can usually thrive in a variety of conditions.

A weed can be an exotic species from overseas or an Australian native species brought in from a different area.

Weeds can invade bushland, particularly where there has been some disturbance to the natural processes in that environment and can out compete indigenous native plants.

Throughout Australia, weeds are spreading faster than they can be controlled and management of them is consuming an enormous amount of resources.

Some weeds are of particular concern and have been listed for priority management in legislation. Not all of Australia's weeds have come from other countries. Australian native plants can become weeds. This usually occurs when species are moved into areas where they have a competitive advantage over indigenous plants. Examples of native plants establishing outside their natural range include the Cootamundra Wattle *Acacia baileyana* & the Cadagi *Corymbia torelliana*.

www.aabr.org.au/learn/what-is-a-weed

One way to quickly identify native plants is to talk to a coordinator or join a parkcare group to obtain a good understanding of what belongs in bushland areas, what should be removed and how to remove it effectively.

Parkcare Groups

Parkcare groups are volunteers carrying out bush rehabilitation in our local bushland parks.



Would you like to get involved?

Nielsen Park (Colman Drv off Mackenzie St)
(1st Saturday each month from 9am - 12)
(Plus 3rd Sunday of the month from 2pm)
(Contact Rob Brodribb 0407 124 863)
(rwbrodribb@ozemail.com.au)

Jubilee Park (Coventry Court)
(Northern end of Mackenzie Street, Mt Lofty)
(1st Sunday of the month 8 - 9am)
(Contact Geoff Sharp 0427 038 055)

Redwood Park (Each Mon & Thu 8:30am)
(Plus 2nd & 4th Saturday each month)
(Warrego Highway below the saddle)

Access to the park is through the bottom car park on the down section of the Toowoomba range crossing, on the left just after the first 100km speed sign.



(Contact Hugh Krenske info@fep.org.au)
(or call Hugh 0418 748 282 or 07 4635 1758)

Duggan Park
(Each Thursday & 3rd Saturday from 8:30am)
(Leslie & Collier Streets, Rangeville)
(Contact Max Henderson 0427 866 091)

Hartmann Bushland Reserve
(Cnr Alderley St & Rowbotham St)
(Wednesday from 8am each week)
(Plus 3rd Saturday each month from 9am)
(Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077)
(glukes@bigpond.com)

Panorama Crescent Park
(1st & 3rd Saturday each month from 3pm)

Local residents are actively carrying out bush rehabilitation activities each month.

Pedestrian access is down the laneway between 4 & 8 Panorama Cr, Prince Henry Heights.
(Kathy Gouldson kathygouldson@bigpond.com)

Echo Valley South Park (Ramsay St)
(2nd, 4th & 5th Saturday each month from 9am)

This small group is active 2 or 3 Saturdays each month from 9am – 12 noon.

(Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077)
(glukes@bigpond.com)

Friends of the Escarpment Parks Toowoomba Inc.

Newsletter Editor **Greg Lukes**
newsletters@fep.org.au
0428 288 077



Would you like to support FEP? Membership is \$10/Family per year



The
**Escarpment
Park Friend**

Mar – Apr 2015

Hugh Krenske 4635 1758

info@fep.org.au

www.fep.org.au

FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands

In this issue-

- **Nielsen Park Tour Report**
- **Forest Identification Workshop**
- **Butterfly Invasion**
- **Looking for Native Plants**
- **Species Watch – Four-bar Swordtail**
- **Environmental Students from Thailand**
- **Weed Watch – Easter Cassia**
- **Healthy Bush Activities**
- **What is a Weed?**
- **Parkcare Groups**

Nielsen Park Tour Report

The tour Day/Night Park Tour of Nielsen Park held Sunday 15th Feb from 5pm till 8pm was a great success attracting over 40 participants. It was good to catch up with many of the local residents and to see whole families from the surrounding streets checking out their local bushland reserve and some of the nocturnal wildlife.

Animals found during the tours included brush tail possums, ring tail possums and even sugar gliders which are possums that can glide from tree to tree. A number of spiders could be found especially the garden orb spiders which had built their impressive webs. Birds included kookaburras and bush turkeys. A number of bats were seen flying over the park. Red neck wallabies were spotted. A brown tree locust or striped raspy cricket was also spotted.

The BBQ was successful and we had an opportunity to sample raw Bunya pine nuts freshly husked.



Forest Identification Workshop

On Sunday 22nd Feb, Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club (TFN) and Friends of the Escarpment Parks held a workshop on the use of a USB based rainforest identification key that was produced by Gwen Harden, Hugh Nicholson, Bill McDonald, Nan Nicholson, Terry Tame and John Williams. The contents are based around their books "Rainforest Trees and Shrubs" and "Rainforest Climbing Plants" and contain references to 1139 species together with fact sheets, line drawings and over 12000 images.



Bill McDonald in Boyce Gardens

The workshop concluded with a walk and talk with Bill McDonald and Gwen Harden in the rainforest section of the Boyce Gardens which is located at the corner Mackenzie and Range Streets, Mount Lofty. Boyce Gardens is owned by Queensland University. The property is open to the public 7 days a week and contains one of the last remnants of rainforest within Toowoomba. 1944-57, Mr Leslie Boyce was the General Manager of the Toowoomba Foundry where the iconic Southern Cross windmills were being built.

Butterfly Invasion

In January and February there were thousands of butterflies flitting about in Redwood, as they were in Toowoomba, especially the Blue Tigers. Other butterflies include Caper Whites, Orchard Swallowtails, Blue Triangles, Dinky Swallowtails, Monarchs and Common Crows.

However, unlike Toowoomba, Redwood Park also had the Pale Green Triangle and numerous Four-bar Swordtail butterflies flitting through the rainforest with the females laying eggs on the native zig-zag vine *Melodorum leichhardtii* which is prolific in the area.

Hugh Krenske (FEP)

Looking for Native Plants

Native plants are available at Crows Nest Community Nursery. Opening hours are Thursdays 9am-1pm (Phone 4698 2990). Most plants are in tubes, selling for \$2.50.

The nursery participates in the TRC's annual plant giveaway. *Those who would rather get two environmentally friendly local native species free in exchange for their Council voucher, might like to make the trip out to Crows Nest any Thursday morning in March.*

TRC's environmental nursery is the place to buy (or pick up) indigenous plants. It specialises in plants of **local provenance** to the TRC area. The new season's seeds are being planted as fast as the volunteers can manage, seedlings are coming on and new plants are going on the shelves every week.

The Crows Nest Community Nursery is located at the end of **Depot Road, Crows Nest Industrial Estate.**

If coming from the south on the New England Highway, turn right, into the Industrial Estate before you get to Crows Nest town proper. (If you cross the creek at Bullocky's Rest, you've gone too far.) Follow Industrial Ave (the road parallel to the highway) then turn right into Timber St. then turn right again into Depot Road. The nursery is at the end of the road.

For enquiries or a listing of plants, contact **Trish Gardner** gardner14@bigpond.com.

For larger orders contact the nursery manager, Richard Colclough by email richard.colclough@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au or you can phone Richard via the TRC Call Centre on 131 872 (131TRC).

toowoombaplants2008.blogspot.com.au

Species Watch

Four-bar Swordtail Butterfly

Protographium leosthenes

If you are a Toowoomba resident living near the eastern escarpment, you could get a visit from this beautiful butterfly as they search for nectar in the flowers of your garden.

Currently they are flying in the dry rainforest of Redwood Park. Their flight is rapid if disturbed, but you may get the opportunity to see them or take a photograph as they feed on flowers growing in the garden or as they rest on bushes between feeding. The sexes are similar in appearance with the females generally being bigger than the males.



Four-bar Swordtail
Image by Trish Gardner

Their wings are white with brown-black markings. The common name describes the four brown-black bars on the upper side of the forewing and the sword-like extensions to the rear wings. The female four-bar swordtail lays one or two small, cream, spherical eggs on the underside of soft new leaves. The green larva caterpillar develops into a yellowish-green pupa. **The pupal stage may last a couple of weeks to a year or more.**

Zig-zag vine (*Melodorum leichhardtii*) is the only local host plant for the butterfly's larvae. While the plant grows as a vine scrambling over the branches in its natural rain forest habitat, it can also be grown as a shrub.

The interesting tuber shaped pale green to yellow fruit ripens to orange from January to March. It has a pleasant acidic taste.

Seeds are fairly easy to grow. Leaves are dark green, wavy edged, fragrant when crushed and alternate. The plant takes its common name from the zigzag of the stems.

Hugh Krenske (FEP)

Environmental Students

Friends of the Escarpment Parks recently hosted five students from Thailand for a day visit to Redwood Park.

The students were led by Dr Chantinee Boonchai from Prince of Songkla University (Thailand) who interpreted where necessary. Bob Beeton from the University of Queensland, Gatton Campus was also instrumental in the program to bring the students to Queensland.

Don Sands spoke to the group with a focus on the value of invertebrates in our environment. The Richmond Birdwing Butterfly and its specific problems with inbreeding depression and climate change were mentioned. The Richmond Birdwing recovery program to date has been a success story for the butterfly and for conservation in south east Queensland. The work for this recovery still goes on with a massive vine planting program in areas near the coast and the development of strong corridors through which the insect can move and breed to avoid the problems associated with the isolation of butterfly populations into small pockets.



Hugh showing the students from Thailand around Redwood Park

FEP members took our guests through the dry rainforest. Here we explained the various strategies which we used to remove specific exotic plants and the effect they had on the native plants and the forest canopy. We were asked about the structure of our organization and how we engaged the community. We outlined our relationship with the Toowoomba Regional Council and how funds were obtained from the various levels of government.

The students returned to Thailand where it is hoped that they will become leaders and develop similar programs within their own country.

Weed Watch

Easter Cassia

Senna pendula var. *glabrata*

This weed was a very common garden plant in many gardens and now can be found throughout South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. It is often seen in the bush along creek banks & roadsides.



Easter cassia

Easter cassia grows as a shrub up to 5 meters tall but more often seen to 3-4 meters. Its compound leaves grow in an alternate pattern with 3-6 pairs of leaflets with a yellow/gold trim around the leaf edge arranged opposite each other.

Easter Cassias can be easily seen around Easter time when they produce masses of bright yellow flowers.

Unfortunately flowering is followed by hundreds of slender brown seed pods up to 13cm long. Each seed pod contains 5-10 seeds which are carried by wind and water.

This weed can be controlled by the hand pulling of small plants, taking care to remove all the roots. Larger plants can be removed with the use of digging tools such as a shovel or mattock.

Native look alike

Brush Senna and Brigalow Senna.

Also **Coffee bush**
(*Breynia oblongifolia*).

Coffee bush has alternating leaves along the stem and red berries when fruiting.



Coffee bush