

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

President: Carol Bonny 9712 0648, C/- Post Office, Kangaroo Ground, Vic, 3097 - Editor, John McCallum 9712 0319

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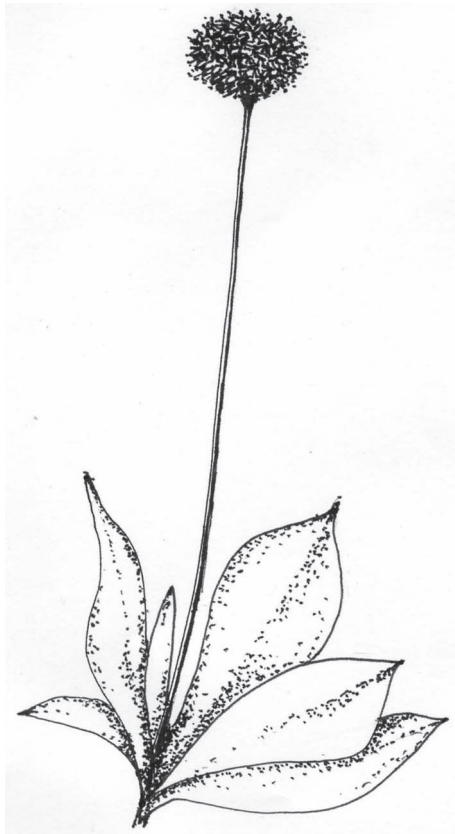
WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Brunonia australis*

Common name: Blue Pincushion

Family: Brunoniaceae

Flowering period: November to January



Brunoniaceae is an Australian endemic family, with only one genus and a single species, *Brunonia australis*. It is a hardy, annual or perennial herb, found in a variety of habitats in many states. In the Bend of Islands it is common in the dry and valley sclerophyll forests

The grey green, silky hairy leaves are 3 – 7 cm long, and form a rosette at the base where the root and shoot join. The leaves are spatulate, i.e. the apex of the leaf is broad and tapers to a stalk at the base. In early Summer, each rosette sends up slender, tall, erect stems, 15 -30 cm high, terminating in a tight cluster of many brilliant blue flowers, forming a button-like head 2 - 3 cm across. Each flower has four tiny pointed petals with a separate calyx. Stamens and arched styles protrude from the flowers giving it the appearance of a “pincushion”.

Prefers moist, well drained soils and dappled shade, though tolerates full sun and dry soils.

The nectar from the flowers provides an important source of food for butterflies and moths.

CRIC HENRY

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the Bend we don't have a white Christmas but we certainly had a white autumn. The blossom of the Red box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*) was just stunning, the best I have seen. Next came the starry white flowers of the Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) with the slopes of Mount lofty looking almost snow-like. To top it off just in time to welcome summer and looking absolutely glorious, our Victoria Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*) put on a fanstastic show.

In 2005 the Bend of Islands was the usual busy and interesting place to live with the BICA Calendar providing activities throughout the year. The Pub Walk, Trivia Night, Field Days General Meetings with speakers and the regular gatherings for Bird Walks and Flora Surveys filling in the time between Café Benders and Landcare working bees. Also Saturday Night at the Movies was introduced and we will continue this event in 2006. For the young at heart in the area the Woiwods initiated and organized the Benders Elders Group with monthly bus trips and if that wasn't enough there was also yoga, meditation and karate available.

Thanks to the BICA committees and all who were involved in the organization and also to those who participated.

Thanks also to Nillumbik Shire Council for their support with the printing of our Newsletter. This will provide a major saving for our treasurer.

The highlight of the year for me was the official declaration of the Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve at the end of Gongflers by Minister Thwaites. The culmination of two years efforts.

Have a Merry one and see you 'round

CAROL BONNY

RE : Amendment C25 Nillumbik Planning Scheme-Bend of Islands- Special Use Zone; Schedule 2(SUZ2)

As residents and landowners you may have received a letter dated 6 December 2005 from Nillumbik Shire Council regarding changes to the Planning Scheme.

The changes outlined are NOT AS AGREED BY BICA. They contain errors and omissions.

The BICA Planning Subcommittee is currently having discussions with the Shire regarding the most appropriate way to revise the amendment to reflect agreed changes. BICA does not support the Amendment as issued but expect that NSC will reissue a revision.

We will advise if any action by members and residents is recommended prior to the closing date for submissions, Thursday 19 January 2006.

Janet Mattiske (Vice President BICA)

TOUR DE DAM '05

Tom Fisher

Nouvelles des Amis de la Pédale (a bilingual report)

On 12 November, a Coalition of the Willing, including Norm Parris, Ross Henry, John Devling, Pierre Noirjean, and Tom Fisher gathered at the Christmas Hills CB South Station to take on the challenge of a Tour de Dam. (Your correspondent is pleased to report that, invitations notwithstanding, there were no takers for the less challenging Coalition of the Unwilling ride). In what bystanders would see only as a blur of colour and dust, the *peloton* proceeded north on Skyline Road up hill and down dale to Ashmore Road, then continued along Skyline Road (much more hill and dale!), turned west on Muir Road, and concluded in an all-out (and mercifully downhill) sprint to the Christmas Hills Hall along Ridge Road. At the Christmas Hills Sports Complex, the triathlon continued *à la mode française* with no-holds-barred *tennis* (a game invented by the French and immortalised by the Tennis Court Oath, of which our Leyton is a leading exponent) and *pétanque* (a fierce French sport played with heavy balls). A support team led by Caroline Kardachi provided encouragement and (inspired, no doubt, by Marie Antoinette's famous injunction) cake, and friends and relatives materialised by less strenuous modes of transport to join in the competition and partake of the subsequent barbeque.



NEIL DOUGLAS LAND AT POINT SMYTHE

We have received a letter from Rowan Douglas about the last property owned by Neil Douglas. The 10 acre property is being disposed of and is currently with an agent. Rowan has proposed that a co-operative could be considered to purchase the property to ensure Neil's efforts to protect the land continue. Rowan wants to be personally and financially involved in the project and he invites anyone interested to contact him to discuss the possibilities. If you would like to read the letter containing a description of the property it is available from BICA Secretary Alan Bonny.

Contact :Rowan Douglas 59671257 Mobile 0422 149966 or Alan Bonny 9712 0648.

LANDCARE 2005

Peter Gurney

This is a brief summary of another successful year in Landcare. We have conducted monthly working bees each month of the year, and have had quite a bit of other work done by grant-funded contractors. Some 80 pine trees have been removed, cut up for fire wood and the trimmings burnt. A further 40 pines have been poisoned and left to rot away. Weeding of an emerging major weed, Agapanthus has been conducted on properties in Oxley Rd, Gongflers Drive and Ironbark Rd. Weeds at Oxley Bridge have been removed and the continuing improvement of the planted and naturally occurring indigenous vegetation in that precinct has been noted with joy. Weeding and planting has also been conducted at a property in Henley Rd. There is always more than enough work to do and to those people who came along in 2005 and pitched in I extend the community's, and my own thanks. Over the summer working bees will be at 9.30 am on each third Sunday, and in the non-daylight saving months at 2.00 pm. Everyone is welcome. My thanks to Jasper Eames, and Wolfgang and Marie Krause who helped to run working bees whenever I was unavailable.

BICA Landcare is particularly pleased that DSE has now taken over much of the Melbourne Water land in the Bend of Islands and looks forward to working with DSE to improve vegetation and habitat on that land.

WORKS AND YOU

Any construction or earthworks carried out in the Environmental Living Zone requires a council permit. The Special Use Zone 2 planning scheme states:

Buildings and Works

A permit is required to:-

Construct a building or construct or carry out works.

Undertake earthworks including dam construction, land forming, laser grading, levee banks, lanes, tracks, surface and sub-surface drains and associated structures

Contact the council before you start any works to establish the planning scheme requirements so you don't incur an embarrassing penalty.

THE BICA DOZEN 2005

The BICA dozen has been selected and tickets for the raffle are enclosed with this mail-out. If you want to have a chance and support our only BICA fundraiser you will need to return ticket butts and monies to our treasurer NOW. The draw will be conducted at the Café Benders Xmas evening on Saturday 17th December.

ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Peter Gurney

Roadside Vegetation Management, by Peter Gurney

In September and early October 2005 Nillumbik Shire Council carried out sensitive and sensible vegetation removal and trimming along Catani Blvd, Ironbark Rd, Gongflers Dve and Oxley Rd. Prior to the works getting underway members of BICA's Flora and Fauna committee walked the roads and marked any particularly rare or special plants for the contractors to leave. These plants were generally small herbaceous shrubs that did not generally impact on road use and it was wise to endeavour to preserve them if possible. The work was subsequently carried out with a great deal of due consideration by Council's works management team and the contractors.

In 2004 similar work was carried out on the vegetation along Henley Rd and Skyline Rd. Unfortunately on that occasion the trimming was a little too lightly done and vegetation is once again starting to impinge on the road space. This is a road safety issue, especially for large vehicles such as fire trucks, the school bus, garbage trucks and other tall vehicles visiting the Bend of Islands. Within the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade's strategic plan for its brigade area Henley Rd and Skyline Rd have been declared priority 1 roads with vegetation along these roads to be maintained to Council's normal 4m box clearance standard. In effect, this means that vegetation from the centre of the road to 2m either side and 4m tall on either side is removed so that high vehicles can safely keep as much to the left as possible. This is to enhance road safety for all users and is the vegetation management standard on other roads in Nillumbik Shire.

Delegates from CHRFB and the BICA Committee have recently discussed the issues and driven the roads and have agreed that the 4m box standard is required on Henley and Skyline roads and roadside vegetation should be maintained at that standard. The fire brigade has subsequently requested that these works be carried out as soon as possible. This is not likely to be before Nillumbik Council's 2006 works program. Vegetation along other local roads will continue to be very sensitively maintained.

BICA is also seeking Council's assistance to improve the standard of the edge of the tarmac along Henley Rd.

CAFE BENDERS

Support your fire brigade and have some fun at The Christmas Café Benders at the Catani Boulevard fire station. Saturday Evening. December 17th starting at 6:30 pm. BBQ sausages and veggie burgers will be for sale. Bring BYO drinks and a salad to share with chairs tables etc to make yourself comfortable. Musicians and entertainers please come prepared to do your thing.

SANCTUARY FOR DUGGO

Carol Bonny

After almost two years the Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve was officially handed over at a ceremony co-hosted by Melbourne Water and BICA. It was attended by representatives from State and Local Government, Melbourne Water, Department of Sustainability and Environment, and guests including Douglas family member, Rowan.

The group was addressed by Doug Tipping from Melbourne Water, Minister John Thwaites, Member for Yan Yean Danielle Green, and for BICA, Frank Pierce and Carol Bonny who complimented and thanked all involved in the creation of the reserve.

A plaited ribbon of cumbungi and native flowers was cut by the Minister to officially open the Reserve followed by a walk down to the river before partaking in the culinary delights whipped up by our very own master chef Janet Mattiske.

The reserve is crown land and BICA has indicated an interest in the creation of a management plan and an appropriate plaque will be erected to commemorate the reserve dedication

With the imminent decision on the fate of the balance of the MW land in and around the Bend of Islands, the thirty year long debate regarding their fate will be resolved. Originally acquired for the Yarra Brae Dam most of the lands will now be added to the Kinglake N.P. - Warrandyte S.P. corridor. We anticipate an appropriate celebration for the Bend and Friends so watch this space.

Reserving this piece of the Bend of Islands for the flora and fauna is a fitting memorial to Neil Douglas and I feel sure Neil would have approved.

I am delighted with the result.

GENERAL MEETING, 28 AUGUST '05

Tom Fisher

A presentation by Australian Bush Heritage Fund.

Conservation Programs Unit Manager Paul Foreman and Bequest Co-ordinator Marilyn Julian spoke about Bush Heritage's outstanding efforts to ensure the long-term protection of Australia's fragile natural environment.

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund is a national, independent non-profit organisation that acquires and manages land and water of outstanding conservation significance. Focusing on minimally disturbed land in private ownership, Bush Heritage aims to protect Australia's unique biodiversity through the establishment of reserves that are managed in perpetuity.

Bush Heritage is Australia's most widely supported organisation of this type. Over 12,000 Australians now support Bush Heritage's work to protect our threatened ecosystems, as donors, volunteers or conservation partners. Founded in 1990 by Bob Brown, Bush Heritage now protects and manages over 373,000 ha of land in 20 reserves throughout Australia. Over 133 vegetation communities, 92 plant species and 51 bird and animal species of high conservation significance are represented. Using PowerPoint slides, Paul and Marilyn provided snapshots of some of the properties currently under Bush Heritage management. Current holdings include: the tiny 6.8 hectare South Esk Pine Reserve in Tassie, which protects that last stand of this endangered tree; the 68,6000 hectare Charles Darwin Reserve in the south-western corner of Western Australia, which was acquired through the generosity of the great scientist's descendants and contains 11 regional ecosystems with rare and threatened populations of birds, mammals, and plants; and the most recent acquisition at Euardy WA, which is renowned for its wildflowers and other plants, five species of which are currently threatened or endangered and an additional 29 that are in need of protection.

Support in the form of donations, bequests, and volunteer labour (both in the office and for on-site working bees) is vital, as Bush Heritage seeks not only to purchase strategically placed land but to manage it in ways that both protect and enhance its biodiversity value. The national office recently moved from Tasmania to Melbourne. Its website is www.bushheritage.org.

WEED ACTION

Peter Gurney

Those commuting from the Bend will have seen the new WEED ACTION sign advising a weed problem that needs addressing. Please check your property and roadside to ensure you are not part of the problem. If you need advice or help in identifying these weeds, or any weeds or plants, please don't hesitate to contact our committee or Landcare members. If you want to gain some expertise in weed management or plant identification then join the Landcare working bees or the Flora Surveys. See your calendar for dates and times.

BABY BENDERS

Welcome to Wren, brother for Ollie and second son to Rob Appleton and Melissa McClelland

To Shelly & George Kyritsis a little sister for their son. Congratulations to all.

YOUR BICA CONTACTS FOR 2006

Here is the newly elected committee for the forthcoming year

President	Carol Bonny	9712 0648
Vice President	Janet Mattiske	9712 0237
Treasurer	Neil Harvey	9712 0462
Secretary	Alan Bonny	9712 0648
Committee Members	Tom Fisher	9712 0451
	Cric Henry	9712 0547
	Val Himmelreich	9712 0029
	Michael Pelling	9712 0286
	Graham Peterson	9712 0071
	Jenny Taylor	9712 0614
	Barb Whiter	9712 0532
	Melanie Keely	9712 0878

Thanks to Sue Whitten for her participation in 2005 and welcome new committee

ELZ ANNUAL BIRD RECORDER

Frank Pierce

The ELZ Annual Bird Record is included with this Newsletter. This sheet facilitates the keeping of monthly records of bird sightings on your property or in the general area. It is also useful for those who are keen to become familiar with the local birds. By marking the birds on this list in your field guide you can concentrate on these and avoid confusion with the other 500 odd birds in the field guide. Page numbers refer to The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds.

KEEP IN TOUCH

To ensure efficient delivery of your BICA Newsletters and Newsheets please advise any changes or corrections of your contact details so that our Data Base is up to date. E mail provides a quick and efficient contact if an urgent or important issue arises or just to keep up to date. If you would like to be on the BICA email list please register your E address with Alan Bonny phone 9712 0648 or Email bica@rabbit.com.au

ARE YOU PAID UP?

BICA membership provides support for the Environmental Living Zone/Special Use Zone 2 and the protection of the environmental values for the Bend of Islands.

When BICA makes submissions to council or other authorities we introduce ourselves as representing residents and owners in the area. There are 131 house sites in the ELZ of which 108 are occupied. BICA membership includes approximately 70% of the owners and 70% of the residents. Your membership and support is important.

The BICA Membership year ends before the Annual General Meeting. If you are financial for 2006 please ignore this notice. If you are not sure of your financial status please contact treasurer Neil Harvey 9712 0462. If you want to renew your membership OR join BICA please use the form.

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Enclosed subscription*	\$

*Current annual subscription rates are: Individual membership \$20.00, Family membership \$30.00, Concession \$10.00

LOVE FROM SHEIL

After being locked up in various hospitals and having my toe lopped orf I came home a bit worse for wear. But no, help was at hand and Mr. Rabbit, AKA Alan Bonney got to work on the computer. A lovely roster took place and soon there were all these ladies and gentlemen turning up to do 'useful things' . I've had the computer updated, the garden dug, a new clothes line, wood brought in and many other kindnesses. Thank you all, you made such a difference. When I told people in the burbs what had happened some of them said , "We don't even know neighbours 2 doors away". Well there you go.

With Mick's help I have started putting my ABC stories into book form. It seemed a waste not to gather them together. Though why I started this at the age of 77 I'll never know. Never mind, it might ward off the brain disfunction.

Love to you all, Sheil