



# FoCC Incorporated

# Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor  
October 2021 Issue Number 82

## Wildflower walk attracts 1250 friends.

### Spikey News features

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### 1. Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail walk an outstanding success.

Over 1250 friends experienced the wildflower walk along the Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail in Woookarung Regional Park between Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October and Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> of October.



5-year-old Jake intently spotting the wildflowers from the guide. 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021.

Thirty-seven different wildflowers, shrubs and trees were highlighted with pop up signs along the walk. Walkers were able to pick up the recently released “**Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat**” wildflower guide at the start of the trail. Over 700 guides were distributed.

High light of the week were three Koalas being spotted along the trail on Sunday afternoon. Two together in the one tree at the Fairy Wren site and the other near the east end of trail. For more images see the FoCC Facebook and Koala spotting section on page 4 later in this news.

## Wildflower Guide Launch

2. **Launch of a “Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat” at the Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail entrance.**



Andrea Mason from the Community Bank Buninyong, with three of the guides authors, Bob, Joel and Bianca on Thursday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2021. Not present are authors Jenny and John.

Copies of the guide may be obtained from:

- Community Bank at Buninyong (Bendigo Bank).
- Buninyong Information Centre
- Leigh Catchment Group
- Friends of Canadian Corridor

# Learn about wildflowers

BY HAYLEY EG

IF YOU have ever wanted to learn more about how to spot wildflowers in the bush, this self-guided trail walk is for you.

Developed by the Friends of Canadian Corridor, the Leigh Catchment Group and the Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat, the pop-up self-guided walk will be hosted through a central part of the Woowookarung Regional Park from Sunday.

The walk has been set up from a starting point at the car park from the Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail on Key Route Road and follows gentle uphill and downhill inclines for one kilometre.

Signs identify the start of the path with wildflower information signs signposting and describing the diversity of the dozens of wildflowers which can be found along the trail.

While the wildflower walk has been hosted in various forms during the past few years, this year a special brochure has been prepared including information about



**LEARNING TOOL:** Bob Hartmann, Joell Ellis and Bianca Farnsworth with the Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat Wildflower brochure they helped produce. **Photo: Luke Heiser**

more than 120 indigenous trees, shrubs, wildflowers, groundcover and climbing plants, herbs, grasses, ferns and carnivorous plants that can be spotted along the trail and wider Southern Ballarat.

The five brochures - which will be on a stand at the start of the trail - were prepared by Bob Hartmann, Bianca Farnsworth, Joell Ellis, John Gerstle and Jenny Sedgwick.

Secretary of the Friends of the Canadian Corridor, Joell



**NATURE:** Joell Rootes, Bob Hartmann, Joell Ellis, Jo Kelly, Bianca Farnsworth, Andrea Mason and Rob Lovelace at the Woowookarung Wildflower Walk. **Photo: Luke Heiser**

for the community to learn more about the "exquisite wildflowers" on their doorstep and could be used as a learning resource for children or to guide walks for interested adults.

"It's a way of reconnecting people with how intriguing nature is," Mr Rootes said. "It's a great way for people to learn about all the little wildflowers that are out there. It's quite amazing how much is out there and how many varieties there are in the park. At this time of the year the bush is full of wildflowers."

Mr Rootes added that hosting this year's walk along the Dementia Trail would

bring the community to the area and encourage people to think about visiting natural places in a safe and inclusive way.

People are asked to maintain social distancing, wear masks and maintain hand hygiene when visited the trail. The brochure was funded by \$5000 from the Healdie Community Bank branch at Buninyong for the printing of the brochures along with \$1200 from Metro Trains.

It will be available from 10am on Sunday, October 17 until Sunday October 24.

For more information about wildflowers visit www.focc.asn.au/fofn

Article: Courtesy of Ballarat Courier 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Spotting species in all shapes and sizes

AN informative and updated brochure of local native plants has been produced by three environmental groups.

Friends of the Canadian Corridor, the Leigh Catchment Group, and the Field Naturalist's Club of Ballarat have all input in the new *Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat* catalogue.

Joel Ellis said the pocket-sized guide is practical, well fact-checked, and full of colour photos, so people can identify or look out for specific species when they're exploring the area's "native vegetation communities."

A member of FOCC and the Leigh Catchment Group, Mr Ellis is one of the project's editors that he said showcases the "beauty and diversity of plant life."

"Our team of five co-editors made up the selection panel for the flora species that would feature in the brochure, and the images that best represented each plant," he said.

"It features 121 species: trees, shrubs, groundcovers and climbers, wildflowers, herbs and grasses, and fern, parasitic and carnivorous plants.

"This edition is, respectfully, a new and improved version of the 2010 edition. Improvements include 24 more featured species, updated common names and scientific names, and higher quality images."

The booklet has information on plants ranging from the Yarra gum, to the iconic golden wattle and common heath, seasonal orchids, and "functionally diverse flora" like parasitic and carnivorous varieties.



**121 varieties:** Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat can be picked up at Woowookarung's Dementia Trail. **Photo: EDWINA WILLIAMS**

Mr Ellis said the co-editors hope to inspire exploration, the participation in citizen science data collection, and landowners to plant natives in their own gardens to increase habitat and food for native wildlife.

"No matter your local patch, immersing yourself in the natural environment is very therapeutic with its many mental health benefits, and if we connect and relate to the ecological communities on a deeper level, we're likely to be more inclined to living more sustainably," he said.

Production has been a big team effort. He put together draft templates, and Colourfield Design's Paul McKenna did the final designs.

Renowned plant author and illustrator Leon Costermans supplied tree illustrations, while 10 local photographers donated captures of featured species.

The publication was launched at Woowookarung Regional Park's Dementia-Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail earlier this month.

This project was supported by a \$1500 grant from Metro Trains, and printed with a \$5000 from the Community Bank Buninyong.

Copies of *Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat* are free and accessible from a pouch at the Dementia Trail entrance by Katy Ryans Road.

Article: Courtesy of Ballarat Times 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021

The guide is proudly sponsored by the Community Bank Buninyong and Metro Trains Melbourne.



## Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat



Leigh Catchment Group



Friends of Canadian Corridor



The "Indigenous Plants of Southern Ballarat" Guide.

### 3. 55 Recreation Road to be in Council Hands

The triangle of land at 55 Recreation Road is now almost in Council hands.

The purchase of the land by the Council is in the process of being completed and the land will become officially Council land from November 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.

#### How it came about:

- October 30 2019. The FoCC became aware of a forthcoming auction of the former Victoria School Building Authority Land.



The For Sale sign that started it all. October 30<sup>th</sup> 2019

- The FoCC asks Michaela Settle MP for assistance to pause the sale, pending community interest and the possibility of a community use proposal.
- The FoCC supported by ten community organisations develops a case for a "Bunny Trail" through the land, connecting Woowookarung Regional Park with Recreation Rd and the Mt Clear Sports and Schools area.



The proposed link between Woovookarung Regional Park and Recreation Road across 55 Recreation Rd. Map from FoCC "Bunny" trail submission, April 2020.

After many meetings with Michaela Settle MP, Councillors Hudson, Taylor, Rinaldi and later Councillor Hargreaves, Council staff, local community leaders and groups, Parks Victoria, the Bendigo Bank as a possible sponsor and local residents, the plan for a trail across the land as part of the "Bunny Trail" is now on its way to realisation.

**4. Koala spotting**

Spotted in the Park north east of the Pax Hill back gate on Long St, Canadian.



Hard to see Koala 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Maggie



Mt Buninyong 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Coral



On the GDT trail Hastie St Buninyong 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Jenny.



Koala in Union Jack Reserve 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Peter.



Two Koalas near Wrens Nest on the Dementia Trail, 4.30pm Sunday 17th October. Image courtesy of Stephanie.



The third Koala further along the Dementia Trail, around 5.35pm 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Barb



Koala on north side of Recreation Rd Mt Clear, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Tracie.

And a big Koala observed by Joan in Timbertop Drive on Thursday October 28<sup>th</sup> 2021.

If you see or hear a Koala, please send the information containing the when where and how to: [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com). Images are gold!

#### 5. **Koala Monitoring second round**

The Koala monitoring program ran from January to October this year and Louise Jury from Uni of Melbourne will post preliminary results soon. The research requires a second round of monitoring and it is likely scat searching will begin mid to late November. More information as it comes to hand.

#### 6. **Bird on the Month**

#### **Superb Fairywren (*Malurus cyaneus*)**

This month's Bird of the Month (BotM) was coincidentally recently voted BirdLife Australia's Bird of the Year for 2021, to go with its equally prestigious FoCC BotM honours for October!

Well-known among birders, Superb Fairywrens are leading candidates for the world's most promiscuous bird. In fact, it's common for most eggs per clutch of 3-4 to belong to different fathers, given individual females may field 13 different males' courtship displays! This is theorised to increase genetic fitness/diversity, and improve reproductive success.

Superb Fairywrens, like many Australian birds, are 'co-operative breeders', which means they enlist a number of 'helpers' to stay and help the parents provide food (i.e. insects) and predator surveillance for the new brood.



Breeding male (left), and adult female (right). Image credit: Rob Loveband.

Younger males have breeding and non-breeding plumages. Male's breeding plumage – vivid blue head, dark blue throat – is partly seasonal (breeding season: June—Feb). Males who moult into their breeding plumage earliest and retain it longest, are preferentially selected as mates. Older males (e.g., 5 years old) retain their breeding plumage all-year round, which gives them a breeding advantage. Non-breeding males look like females and juveniles, given all are mouse brown above, and white/buff below, but differ in their navy-blue tail, and black bill. Adult females can be distinguished by their reddish-brown bill, lores, and eye-ringing, and bluish tail. Juveniles are alike adult females, but have brown tails.

Remembering 'brood parasitism', and that cuckoos lay eggs in other species' nest; interestingly, Superb Fairywrens have developed a 'secret password' for determining whether the young is theirs or a cuckoos. This involves parents singing to the unhatched eggs, and when they hatch, only fairywren hatchlings can replicate that song when begging for food.

Once among the most commonly-recorded birds throughout the south-east Australia's gardens and parks, recent years have seen Superb Fairywren reports in cities halved.

Next time you stroll through Woookarung RP or other local patch of dense bracken and grassy clearings, don't forget to look for the charismatic Superb Fairywren. And perhaps reflect on its ways of life as an exercise in non-judgment!

*Author note: A FoCC Committee member and co-admin of FoCC's Facebook and webpage, Joel Ellis is the resident bird nerd, amateur Powerful Owl researcher, and editor of FoCC's (co-funded) flora and fauna twin brochures. Joel has studied birds up to Honours degree level, interns as an ecological consultant (ornithologist), and is a member of BirdLife Australia (Ballarat branch).*

### 7. Back yard Bird Count

The Great Australian Backyard Bird Count was held between 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October. The results show a large increase in reports and birds identified. Well done Ballarat!

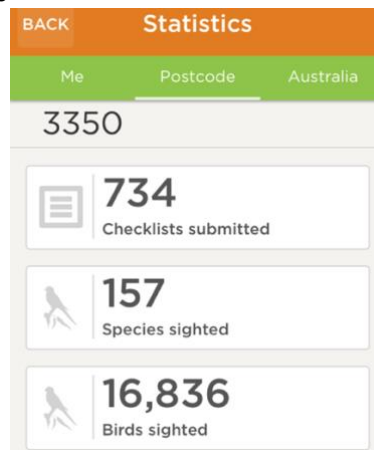
### 2021 Results

#### Postcode Statistics

3350|

Checklists submitted	802
Species sighted	170
Birds sighted	22,019

### 2020 results



### 8. Hollow Tree

While doing a Bird Week bird survey at one of the recommended sites in WRP, I noticed a White-throated Treecreeper with a beak full of insects. It seemed to be wanting to venture in my direction, so I moved away and watched. The bird alighted on the very small broken-off tree-trunk in the photo. I watched for several minutes, then assumed I had missed the bird flying out the back and to another tree. Imagine my surprise when it flew out of this little one, which is not quite my height, and not much thicker than my upper arm. It is open at the top, and has a side entrance, as shown in the photo. I didn't stay long enough to investigate the depth, or the contents. This small nest-site just goes to show what wildlife can use. Everything is of value to something



The hollow tree 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021. Image and comments courtesy of Roger

### 9. Kangaroos off Bakers Rd

The Park has several mobs of Kangaroos in and around it. The kangaroos below were grazing on private property off Bakers Rd. At times this mob can number over 40. Another mob can be found around the Sparrow Ground, Pax Hill and the open grassy properties of Canadian. A third mob can be found between Olympic Avenue and Recreation Rd areas in Mt Clear. The grassy parts of the ex-plantation land and open grassy paddocks on private land are proving to be ideal kangaroo and wallaby habitat.



Kangaroos off Bakers Rd Mt Clear 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of George

The Park is host to one Kangaroo species and one Wallaby species.

The Eastern grey kangaroo, *Macropus giganteus* usually form the large mobs.



Image: Courtesy of Peter.

Also in the Park in much smaller numbers are Black Wallabies, *Wallabia bicolor*

Black wallabies are quite solitary are often only observed as a single animal moving away from people.



Image courtesy of Ballarat Courier.

### 10. Park works

#### Gorse removal

The eco blade weed removal machine was at work in the Park near the south end of Lavery Avenue Mt Clear. The gorse was well established in the former pine and blue gum plantation area.



Eco Blade at work on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Image courtesy of Rex.

#### Map



Gorse removal area. Map courtesy of Parks Victoria.

**Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail works**

Contractors have completed the surfacing of the loop trail with granite sand topping and the construction of the elevated walkways.



The wheelchair friendly walkways and granite sand topped path on the trail. Image 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

The trail is now almost complete and will soon be open for public use.

**11. Another Classic Car #10**

Just when it was thought all the classic cars in the Park had been found, another FJ Holden turned up in the block east of Mt Clear College.



The remains of an FJ Holden on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**12. Rubbish dumpers, thieves and vandals**

The FoCC encourages Park friends to report track vandals, rubbish dumpers, wood thieves and other suspicious activity to Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or email:

[woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au)

In emergency situations please call 000

If an offender is spotted, please note vehicle registration details as vehicle identification is most helpful, plus location and details.

**13. Membership**

Membership runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year.

Membership forms are available online at or email

[focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)

Current members will receive a membership reminder after the annual meeting.

**14. FoCC facebook and webpage**

Joel at is now overseeing the FoCC Facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/)

Rob is overseeing the webpage [webmaster@focc.asn.au](http://webmaster@focc.asn.au)

The FoCC has ~~824~~ 841 friends following us on facebook and growing. Welcome to all new friends. Feel free to pass on to other friends and press the like button.

Nov 17 <sup>th</sup>	FoCC annual meeting – Notice and venue to be notified soon.
Late November	Koala monitoring expected to begin
Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Drinks at the Lookout

The FoCC Spikey News is published on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated, Registered No A0097535B.

The purpose of “Spikey News” is to link the community to Woovookarung Regional Park and the Canadian Corridor.

The FoCC is a registered Landcare Group with Landcare Victoria Inc and a member of the Leigh Catchment Group. Circulation this issue is ~~793~~ 810. Welcome to all new friends.

The update is generally published monthly. Friends wishing to add articles to the FoCC update may do so by emailing [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)

Feel free to circulate widely including doctor’s waiting rooms, work offices, friends and neighbours.

We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.

Any opinions expressed in the publications are those of the editors and do not officially represent Parks Victoria or the FoCC.

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