



## Grasstree monitoring with VNPA Naturewatch

**In October we joined the VNPA Naturewatch volunteers as part of the Grass tree and Dieback Community Monitoring Project.**

After meeting at the Anakie depot, we drove in convoy to Kangaroo Track towards the northern section of the park (with a slight detour as Jude headed down wrong track yet again!) We were met by the Naturewatch coordinator, Ada Nano, who explained in detail how to assess the quadrants; measure the X and Y coordinates of a grass tree, assess the health and crown radius of grass tree, take photo points and to collect soil samples. Of great importance was the boots and tools hygiene; constant spraying with 70% methylated spirits, ie clean on entry and clean on exit of quadrant.

*Please keep in mind at all times when walking in the park; clean on entry and clean on exit. A small brush and spray bottle filled with 70% metho diluted with water is all you need; the brush to remove any soil or plant material from base of boot followed by a dense covering of metho mixture to disinfect the sole of boot.*

The day was very pleasantly spent monitoring 8 quadrants, 4 quadrant with healthy grasstrees and 4 with infected grasstrees. Once the monitoring was complete a decision had to be made whether to move to another site near Old Thomson's track or go for a leisurely stroll down Kangaroo track and wallaby track – it was unanimous that we go for the walk as the day was sunny and ideal for orchid hunting. Orchids seen included masses of blue *Glossodia major* (Wax-lip Orchid), *Pterostylis* sp (masses of leaves which could not identify), *Acianthus caudatus* (Mayfly orchid), *Cryptostylis reniformis* (Small Gnat orchid) and *Caladenia cucullata* (Hooded Caladenia).

And I would like to welcome Sher Swindon who is a new member and this was her first time with us on our monthly activity. Sher is studying Conservation and Land Management and hopefully she will find the time to join us in future activities as her skills and knowledge will be very much valued. Great to see you Sher!

### HISTORY OF PROJECT

The Brisbane Ranges Dieback Community Monitoring Project commemorates the work of Dr Gretna Weste, who carried out highly valuable research on *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, a disease that attacks plant roots, causing 'dieback' and often leading to the death of many native plants. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (previously called Cinnamon Fungus) is a microscopic, soil borne pathogen that attacks and destroys plant root systems causing plants to die through lack of water and nutrients.

This pathogen has had serious impacts in the Brisbane Ranges and many other dry eucalypt forests within most states of Australia. The grass tree is highly susceptible to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and once infected, quickly develops distinct signs of dieback. The leaves will start to yellow and die resulting in the grass tree gradually losing its crown and leaving a rotted trunk.

This monitoring project is run by the VNPA NatureWatch program with ongoing support and input from Parks Victoria, Professor David Cahill with Deakin University School of Life and Environmental Sciences and our group, Friends of Brisbane Ranges. VNPA Naturewatch volunteers and the Friends of Brisbane Ranges involvement is to monitor the health of the Grass Trees within quadrant sites previously set up throughout the park.



See page 2.

NOVEMBER 2010

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## Upcoming Events

### Sunday 7 November

**WaterWatch** Meet 10am at Anakie Community depot and travel to Steiglitz.

### Sunday 14 November

Meet 10am at Anakie Community depot  
We will travel to Reids Road, north BRNP for walk with **Bird enthusiast Ruth Woodrow**, a Birds Australia member.

Bring: lunch, water, smiles and enthusiasm

More events and details see page 2.

Friends of Brisbane Ranges inc  
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Ph: 5366 0000

Email: [cazbarth@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cazbarth@yahoo.com.au)

Website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/>

## Grasstree monitoring continued

I hope all enjoyed the day out in the bush while partaking in a very important ongoing research project into the spread, effects and management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

## Help is needed— for ongoing monitoring in the Brisbane Ranges.

The VNPA Naturewatch program needs volunteers to help with this long-term *Phytophthora cinnamomi* project in the Brisbane Ranges. If anyone has some spare time (yeh I know there's no such time!) please contact Ada Nano [adan@vnpa.org.au](mailto:adan@vnpa.org.au) or phone her on (03) 9347-5188. and see flyer [right] at <http://vnpa.org.au/admin/library/attachments/NatureWatch/Dieback%20flyer-5march2010.pdf>

Judy Locke

**Victorian National Parks Association**  
Dieback Community Monitoring Project: Brisbane Ranges National Park

### Help contribute to Dieback research in the Brisbane Ranges National Park

**What is NatureWatch?**  
NatureWatch gets people like you involved in monitoring the health of the natural environment by bringing together community volunteers, land managers, scientists and other experts to develop projects that contribute to nature conservation in a meaningful way.

**Why monitor?**  
Monitoring the natural environment is crucial to understanding how to best manage Victoria's natural areas for conservation.

**Information collected by NatureWatch volunteers is given to park and land managers, scientists and the broader community to help improve our understanding of conservation issues and develop better strategies for managing natural areas.**

**Brisbane Ranges Dieback monitoring project**  
This project commences the week of 12 Green Weeks, which carried out highly valuable research on *Phytophthora* strains, a disease that attacks plant roots, causing dieback and other leading to the death of native plants. *Phytophthora* can range from a pest to a pathogen. It is a serious pest in the Brisbane Ranges and other national parks.

**What do volunteers do?**  
Volunteers look at the long-term impact of dieback on *Phytophthora*. How common is Green Weevil? The project will run over several years. Help us gather information on dieback the summer monitoring season!

**How can I contribute to nature conservation?**  
Project results will be used to evaluate and refine the management strategies used to manage *Phytophthora* common in the Brisbane Ranges National Park. They will also contribute to ongoing research into the spread, effects and management of *Phytophthora* common.

**Monitoring is carried out with high standards of hygiene to prevent the spread of *Phytophthora* common on the boots of volunteers.**

**How to get involved**  
Telephone or email us to register and attend on any of the following dates. Please note, you need to wear a helmet on all occasions.  
Email: [vnpa@vnpa.org.au](mailto:vnpa@vnpa.org.au), Phone: (03) 9347 5188. We will send you a list of dates to bring and where to meet.

**Monitoring dates**  
Sat 12-13: Early morning or late afternoon (Sat 12-13)  
Sat 19-20: Early morning or late afternoon (Sat 19-20)

**Location**  
Brisbane Ranges National Park, Queensland

**More information**  
To find out more about this and other VNPA programs please visit our website - [www.vnpa.org.au](http://www.vnpa.org.au). You can also phone us on 03 9347 5188.

**Looks like just lots of fun** but judging by the trays of seeds in the hothouse it must have been a most productive day - as well as fun that is.



Beverley Phillips and Judy Locke spent a day at the Anakie depot nursery propagating Brisbane Ranges plants. We are truly indebted to Beverley as she donated a substantial amount of seed of varying species which she collected last year from her Brisbane Ranges property, surrounding area and national park. Beverley collected under DSE permit granted to FoBR for "Taking of Protected Flora from Public Land".

It was a great day "playing in the dirt" all very relaxing chatting, cups of coffee and cake! And as a result we now have quite a few trays of seed. **There will more days like this** .... either more seed propagation, pricking out into tubes and/or cleaning and organising the nursery area.

A request for volunteers will be sent out soon by email - even if you only have a few hours to spare, that's fine we certainly could use your

help. Or if you would like to be personally notified of a propagating day, please email Judy at [jlocke@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:jlocke@parks.vic.gov.au)

## Is your FoBR membership current?

FoBR membership fees are due in February each year so we will now be deleting anyone who has not paid their membership fees for the year.

Fees are only \$11 for single and \$20 for family. We realise it is very easy to forget to renew so we are looking at ways to make it easier for you.

If you are unsure whether your FoBR membership is up to date please email Helena at [helenal@pacific.net.au](mailto:helenal@pacific.net.au) as soon as you get this newsletter. We can check our records for you.

## An 'orchid' we don't want!

Watch out for the South African Weed Orchid, *Disa bracteata*, an exotic orchid with underground tubers. It can be identified about now and needs action before flowers and sets seed. It out-competes native orchids and other small understory plants and is not easy to control. All the tubers need to be dug up and disposed of to prevent reshooting next spring. Gently bend the stem into a plastic bag, ensuring all seeds only fall into the bag. Using a screwdriver or similar tool lever up the tubers. Bag and destroy tubers and flowers. See DPI for [more photos and info](#).



## For your diary!

Upcoming FoBR events ... and others which may interest you

**Sunday 7 November 10 - 3pm**  
**WaterWatch survey of Sutherlands Creek Steiglitz** Meet at Anakie Depot at 10am please contact Judy on 0427 218 520 or Colin at [Colin.Cook@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:Colin.Cook@dpi.vic.gov.au)

**Sunday 14 November**  
FoBR event - meet at Anakie Depot at 10am then travel to Reids Road, north BRNP. Bird enthusiast Ruth Woodrow, Birds Australia member, will join us for the walk.

**Saturday 11 December** -(evening)  
FoBR end of year BBQ and night walk at Mt Rothwell

**Sunday 13 February 2011**  
first FoBR event for 2011 - details to come

**Sunday 13 March 2011**  
AGM and Koala research with Janine Duffy

**Sunday 9 October 2011**  
**Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show**

### More events

• **Thursday 18 November 9:30 – 4pm**  
**Free Volunteer Monitor Training**  
**Do you want to know what's happening in your local waterway?**

Healthy Waterways *Waterwatch* regularly conducts free training sessions that prepare 'citizen scientists' to monitor the health of our waterways.

**Location:** Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre, Victoria University, St Albans  
**Bookings Essential:** contact Sam Harrison - 0438 314 931.  
[sam.harrison@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:sam.harrison@melbournewater.com.au)

• **Sunday 28 November 7:30pm**  
**Frog Night**  
Find out about how to record frogs calling in your local waterway including Identification of frogs by their call, how to attract frogs to your garden, creating frog-friendly habitat and more.  
**Where:** Meet at the end of Bayview St, Williamstown. Melway 55 K10.  
**Please Bring:** Weather appropriate clothing, sturdy shoes, long pants, torch and if available, recording equipment such as digital voice recorder, mobile phone, etc.  
Please contact Laura Murphy (Hobsons Bay City Council) [ranger@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:ranger@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au) or Phone 9932 1282 to book your place.

## Cathy's Column

Road hunting is an acquired skill, one I learned while pheasant hunting in South Dakota. You drive along very slowly, looking out the side window hoping to see the subject of your search. You never do this on a road with any other traffic and usually don't look at the road very often even the driver (Make you want to live in rural South Dakota?)

Anyway, last evening Ron & I took a walk in some grassy areas of the Ranges. It was a sight to behold.



Some of the plants we found in just this small area were:



*Gonocarpus tetragynus* (Common Raspwort)  
*Bulbine bulbosa* (Bulbine Lily)  
*Lissanthe strigosa* ssp. *subulata* (Peach Heath)

The road hunting took place a bit later along one of the less travelled gravel roads and what a lot of fun. We found many, many orchids in full bloom.

By the way, once you spot something, you pull over and get out for a look. In one spot we found a colony of about 50 *Arachnorchis clavigera* (Plain-lip Spider Orchid) right next to some *Stegostyla transitoria* (Small Caladenia). The latter is a species of orchid that I have only found in the Bert Boardman picnic ground area.

By and far the find of the month was the beautiful spider orchids.



Last month I reported on the second *Arachnorchis concolor*. On further investigation, it may well be *Arachnorchis clavescens* because one of the features of *A. clavescens* is the drooping petals. The other indicator is the different colour forms. They are otherwise very similar. Regardless, the multiple plants found were unknown to us so the find was noteworthy.



And of course, many insects are out and about. Besides the mosquitos, there were swarming bees and pollinators. Imagine the confusion between these two. Until next month -



*Platylobium obtusangulum* *Diuris orientis*  
Happy (careful) road hunting.  
Cathy Powers

## Letter to the Editor

I'm the great grand-daughter of P.C. Grosser, who owned one of the main printing firms in Melbourne in the early 1900's. They mainly printed labels and later posters to advertise the new train service. Recently when I did a search on the internet, I found that the company had printed the first version of the maps of Melbourne which later developed into the Melway maps of the city which we know and use today. Apparently they were drawn up by a very enthusiastic man in a Morris Minor.

This may explain why I learnt from my Dad (grand-son of P.C. Grosser) that maps are interesting ..... I can be found looking at them for hours!

So, I was delighted to receive the new Brisbane Ranges National Park map at a recent FoBR event. In fact we gave it an airing straight away when we lost our way to the meeting point for the grass tree monitoring with the VNPA group!

Then the following week I had my young cousin and his partner (they live in Melbourne) join me in the Park for a walk. It was a beautiful Spring day, and we did the Ted Errey Nature Walk. It took us ages as we were very distracted by the fantastic wild flowers: orchids, lilies, peas, and more. So we got lost and I pulled out the map. After the usual debate based on the differing angles of the three of us looking at the map, we found our place again and continued happily on our way (as Winnie the Pooh would say)!

I am more familiar with the tracks in the Park than I was when I first went there about 3 years ago, but the map is very reassuring, and encourages me to go to areas which I haven't walked in before.

Thanks to everyone who was part of designing it.

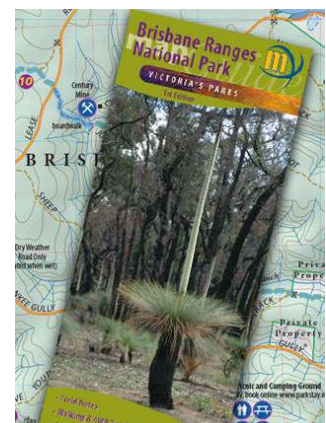
From a very happy FoBR member -

Vicky Grosser

Ed -

**You can get your copy of the new map from FoBR** at the Parks Victoria Bacchus Marsh office or contact Judy Locke on 0427 218 520 or [jlocke@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:jlocke@parks.vic.gov.au) \$9.95.

The **Brisbane Ranges Wildflower** book is also available for purchase.



## A warm welcome to our newest Friends

- Judith Bailey of Clarendon
- Rebecca Renshaw and Lee Hunt of Staughton Vale
- Jane Renshaw and Bill McCubbery of Parkville.

New FoBR members are welcome please see our [website](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~foblr/membership.html) - <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~foblr/membership.html> for all the details.

## Meet a Friend -

We would like to include a short introduction to one of our FoBR Members in each newsletter. The aim is to get to know each other better - particularly useful for new members and those who may not be able to attend our monthly activities as often as they wish.

We want to include profiles of our life members, executive and new members. We can include a photo if you like and a bit of info about you or one of your family so please email [cazbarth@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cazbarth@yahoo.com.au).

Next newsletter - can we include YOU ?