



O.F.F. NEWS



Since 1955

Published by
**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA
CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.**

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

On line at <http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 10/11

Oct/Nov 2011

PREHISTORIC FLORA

Our Grevillea, Banksia and Waratah are members of the very large proteaceae family, named after Proteus, a minor god in Greek mythology. Protea were present when dinosaurs ruled the earth. They were separated with the breakup of the continents Gondwanaland. Major classes are found in South Africa, Australia and South America. 800 species are in Australia, 550 found in the south west. <http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>



OATLEY PARK IN SPRING

Wildflower species blooming in Oatley Park during the September-November period include:

- Eggs and Bacon (*Dillwynia retorta*)
- Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpus pinifolia*)>
- Shiny Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia nitida*)
- Blue Dampiera (*Dampiera stricta*)
- Fuchsia Heath (*Epacris longiflora*)
- Rough Wax-flower (*Philothea scabra*)
- Green Spider Flower (*Grevillea mucronulata*)
- Pink Spider Flower (*G. sericea*)
- Red Bean (*Kennedia rubicunda*) [Alan Fairley's list]



BIRDS IN OATLEY PARK

The Park provides a sanctuary for many species of birds, some of which nest within its boundaries. Others simply use the park and its tidal boundaries as part of their wider search for food and shelter, returning regularly to the park, but nesting elsewhere. It is difficult to say exactly how many bird species can be found within the park at any one time; numbers vary depending on the season and availability of food. A hundred and forty five species are currently listed on the OFF website.



LOGGING FORESTS

The Wilderness Society and conservation colleagues in Tasmania have released a damning report showing continuing logging in important native forests supposedly protected under the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. www.wilderness.org.au/

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has confirmed further logging breaches on the State's far south coast. *Forests New South Wales* has been notified after inspections in the Badja State Forest, west of Moruya, and the Bodalla State Forest. The anti-logging group *South East Forest Rescue* made 17 allegations, and two breaches were found in relation to the logging of rocky outcrops and hollow bearing trees. www.abc.net.au/news/

CAMPHOR LAUREL: A PEST TREE

It was introduced to Australia as an ornamental species about 1822 and established in the Sydney Botanic Gardens in 1854. Its value as an ornamental tree was actively promoted in municipal parks, gardens and school grounds. 10 years ago, OFF News noted that this tree was a pest, invading natural habitats all along the coast, with its root system damaging pipes, fences, foundations, and preventing the growth of other species. It reported that Kew Gardens in U.K. found the roots of camphor laurels to be covered with tiny oil exudation glands that seasonally pump toxins into the soil and water courses, and impact on native wildlife. Surprisingly still well regarded by some, camphor laurel is now a declared noxious weed, but not in all local government areas. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/

LANDCARE AWARD: GEORGES RIVER HEALTH

The *Community River Health Program* of Georges River Combined Councils' Committee received the top prize in the Urban Landcare category of the biennial Landcare Awards. The river health program was celebrated as one of "thirteen of the state's most impressive environmental achievements" of the year by the NSW Landcare organisation. The ceremony was held in Parkes on 6th Sept, at the NSW Landcare and Catchment Management Forum.

Some of our members have been involved in sampling in areas of the Georges River in the last two years. Program coordinator Carl Tippler will be speaking to us on Nov 26th on his research on the health and quality of the aquatic ecosystem www.georgesriver.org.au/

LAND USE AND FOOD

The Sydney Food Fairness Alliance is organising a gathering in Penrith as part of Crave Sydney International Food Festival to discuss sustainable land-use issues. As Western Sydney faces rapid urbanisation over the next 30 years, equitably priced fresh produce for the region and for Greater Sydney will be threatened. Wed, 26th Oct 7 – 9 pm, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, 597 High St, Penrith. RSVP <mailto:info@sydneyfoodfairness.org> <http://sydneyfoodfairness.org.au/>

THE LEURA GARDENS FESTIVAL

The Festival from 1st to 9th Oct was a great success, despite the torrential rain on some days. There were magnificent displays of azaleas, rhododendrons, dogwoods, and camellias. The photo gallery can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.leuragardensfestival.com/photo-gallery>

PROTECT OUR NATIVE ANIMALS IN THE BUSH

- ✚ Stay on walking tracks in bushland.
- ✚ Admire wild flowers and plants – do not pick them.
- ✚ Leave natural features such as fallen timber on the ground.
- ✚ Leave yabbies, tadpoles, and water bugs in the creeks.
- ✚ Remove all your rubbish from the bush.
- ✚ Use your compost bin for garden green waste.
- ✚ Walk, rather than ride a trail bike.
- ✚ Keep equipment and boots clean. Spray with 70/30 mix of metho & water to stop spreading the fungal disease, *Phytophthora*.
- ✚ Keep pets at home, particularly cats, and especially at night.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.
Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Oct 24th (Monday): 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Phillip Moore** speaking on his **Trip to the Great Victoria Desert (WA)**. Philip is co-author of *Native Plants of the Sydney Region*, and author of the excellent handbook *A Guide to the Plants of Inland Australia* (2005) with photos of plants and desert communities seldom seen, including Lake Eyre in flood visited on the way to WA.

Oct 29-30th (Field Weekend): **Gardens of Stone National Park** - Lithgow. Allow 2½ hours from Oatley to Lithgow, if going up on Saturday, and note the need for an E tag on the M7. Meet at 9.30 am at the car park of the Lithgow Valley Plaza, Bent St, near the large pine trees. Cars can be left there for the day when transferring to 4WD vehicles. [More below] **Leaders: Keith Muir and John Watters** [mob 0419 471 038].

Nov 18th (Friday) OFF Annual Dinner South Hurstville R.S.L. [Details below].

Nov 26th (Saturday): Field day **Wolli Creek - Two Valleys Walk**. This is a Bird Walk, combining with the Menai Wildflower Group. Meet at Bexley Nth railway station at 8am and walk to Tempe station along the valley to see where the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has been remediating degraded bushland. See many birds, and possibly climb Nanny Goat Hill, Turrella. Expected to finish about 1pm; bring morning tea and lunch. **Leaders: Jason Cockayne and Sharon Pearson**.

Nov 28th (Monday): 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting and social supper with **Carl Tippler**, Georges River Health Coordinator, speaking on **Macro Invertebrates of the Georges River and Tributaries**. [See note above]

Dec 12th (Monday afternoon): **OFF Christmas Picnic**. [Details next OFF News]

THE VALUE OF OFF MEMBERSHIP

Before electronics, all OFF members were posted copies of our newsletter as one benefit of membership. Today many people, members or not, have access to the internet and can read the newsletter at any time. Of course the worth of OFF membership extends beyond the newsletter, however important it may be in communicating events and ideas. Certainly our field days and meeting nights offer interest, learning and good friendship; and these events are open to visitors, who are warmly welcomed.

The core of our membership is not what we get out of our society but what we give to it. We give commitment, both active and passive, to our values and ideas:-

- o Interest in Australian flora and fauna
- o Protection for the natural environment
- o Understanding of the need to conserve our environment and resources
- o Cooperation with similar groups to achieve these aims at all levels.

Our Society can have no influence on local or global affairs without our strong commitment, made stronger by a wide and identifiable membership. The value of OFF membership then lies less in what you receive by becoming and remaining a member than what you offer. It means the continuing success and influence of our society as a whole: a good example of the sum of us being greater than the individual parts. [Julian Sheen, President]

GARDENS OF STONE WEEKEND OCT 29-30th

We will be touring the area in 4WD vehicles. You need to arrange your own accommodation for the Saturday night; some may like to book in on Friday night as meeting time is 9.30am on Saturday. Maps and further information will be available at the October meeting, and look at www.tourism.lithgow.com/. Bring the makings for lunches and tea breaks each day. All are welcome to dinner on Saturday night at the Secret Creek Restaurant at modest cost and BYO. At 6pm, prior to the dinner, we will have an inspection of the sanctuary at a reduced fee of \$10 pp.

KARLOO POOL WALK - 9th Oct

7 met at Heathcote and walked the 7km loop to Karloo Pool via Bottle Forest Management Track. Wildflowers made the bush a picture - including waratahs, gymeas, Patersonia (Purple Flag), pea flowers and grevilleas. The track gave beautiful views of Kangaroo Creek, rocky rapids, wide, still pools, and glimpses of wildlife. We saw skinks, water dragons and a very large fresh-water crayfish. After lunch beside the creek, a short stop at Karloo Pool (with 20 or so others), we were back at Heathcote by 2.30pm. [Jan Douglas]

DHARAWAL NATIONAL PARK

The Premier has announced that 98.7% of the area previously gazetted as a state conservation area will be

absorbed into the DNP. It sounds like good news in that there will be no undermining of the national park, but SMH reports [17th Oct] that an area in the middle of the park can still be mined in a compromise agreement with BHP Billiton.

OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL, SAT 15th OCT

Once the threatening rain clouds passed over, the Oatley Memorial Park was a hive of activity. OFF stall was popular as usual with people obtaining information, buying native plants, renewing acquaintances and being told about the activities of the Society. Thanks to all those who helped set up and demolish the marquee and staff the stall from 8am to 3pm. The Festival is always a positive promotion for OFF and a reminder of our role and presence in the community.

[Report by Alan Fairley]

The 2011 Annual Dinner is on Friday 18th November, 7 pm at South Hurstville R.S.L., 72 Connells Point Rd, South Hurstville in the South Lounge. Cost is \$35 per person. There will be platters of finger food for appetizers followed by a buffet with hot and cold food, dessert served with ice cream, and coffee and tea to finish.

Please indicate if there is a requirement for gluten free. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. Singers are expected. Prior booking is essential. **Alison Gilroy and Sue Howard** will be taking bookings and payment at the October meetings. Alison can be contacted on 9580 5557, and Sue on 9579 1718.

Each guest is asked to wear a (loud or zany/frivolous) shirt.

The donation of suitable raffle items would be warmly welcomed.

Briefly

Georges River "Photo Contest" Submit your photos (no larger than 5MB) to info@georgesriver.org.au by 27 Oct with "Georges River Photo Contest" in the subject line. Photos may be past or present. All entries must have a caption indicating the place photo was taken, and name of photographer. More at www.georgesriver.org.au

Food scraps Kogarah Council is examining means of collecting food scraps to provide plant nutriment.

Sydney's Cumberland Plains: To find out what is happening there go to the website of Western Sydney Conservation Alliance at www.wsca.org.au



OFF Hon. Secretary: Liz Cameron, P.O. Box 52 Mortdale 2223 Ph.: 9580 6621 mailto:oatleyff@gmail.com
Hon. Editor: John Davoren