



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 114 November 2015

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Park Working Bees
First Sunday of month
10am, Main Gate,
Hallett Road
Stonyfell

Park Working Bee
Dates 2016

3 January
7 February
6 March
3 April
1 May
5 June
3 July
7 August
4 September
2 October
6 November
4 December

NOTE

Christmas get-together

At Doug and Judi's house on 6th

December 2015 at 12.30pm.(after the working bee). Please bring a plate to share.

REMINDER

AGM Monday 8 February 2016 at 6.30 pm at Martin and Wendy's home. Put this date in your diary.

Working Bees Update

August - November 2015

In September and October members devoted many hours to hand-weeding the Hallett Road Triangle. The main targets for removal were Sparaxis, Cape Tulip and Plantain. The bulb species were in flower so were easy to spot as we methodically weeded the site from east to west.

In November we did another weeding of our five areas where Pentaschistis occurs. Three sites either had no plants or less than five. The other two yielded more plants, especially Site 5 near the Ferguson Creek bridge. This is the most recent site to be discovered and most plants removed would have been non-flowering at the previous weeding. Without flowerheads, Pentaschistis can be difficult to distinguish from the indigenous *Rytidosperma bipartitum*. The weeding has been very effective, so well done to everyone for your persistence in trying to eradicate this very persistent weed species!

While we tend to concentrate on weeds, it should be recorded that the park had a 'good season' for native orchids this year, especially King Spider Orchid (*Caladenia tentaculata*) and Sun-orchids (*Thelymitra* spp.). The lack of rain meant a short flowering period and the park dried off very quickly during October. The regenerating patch of Native Apricot (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) in the north-west corner of the park is doing well, thanks to the periodic watering that Doug has been giving them. These are the only Pittosporums in the park but would once have been common in the Native Pine belt along the Adelaide foothills. There are some remnant plants in a small reserve at Magill.

Native Apricot

The regular watering of the thirty plus seedlings of Native Apricot (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) during the last summer, which had continued the very dry conditions of the previous years, proved to be advantageous. When the watering was commenced in October 2014 the seedlings were 10cm (4") tall whereas now they are 40-45cm (6") tall and doing well.

The plant site is in the north-west corner of FCP near the new St Peters College Girls School Early Learning Centre (ELC) on Hallett Road. Now there are a further 12 plus seedlings that have arisen this past winter. More watering! This site, containing the original and only Native Apricot tree in the Park, was damaged by machinery during the building of the ELC and erection of the fence so it is positive and interesting to see this regeneration.

Doug Nicholas

Extra items of interest

The not-so-tasty Native Apricot

Despite its name the Native Apricot (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) is not edible! It occurs on a range of soils and is a widespread species found across most of inland Australia in mallee communities, on alluvial flats, ridges, as well as in dry woodland.



Native Apricot (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) – one growing in front of a Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and one behind, in the north-west corner of Ferguson CP, adjacent Hallett Road

It is usually found as scattered trees but can also form small thickets in more protected areas. Often a parent plant may be surrounded by large numbers of juveniles, which appears to be the case at Ferguson.

Native Apricot is a very hardy and drought resistant species. The foliage is eaten by stock and provides reasonable nutrition. The timber can be used for wood turning and has been used to make small articles such as tool handles. Aborigines are said to have prepared an infusion of the leaves, seeds or wood for use in the relief of internal pains and cramp. There are also records that the seeds were pounded into a flour by aborigines for use as a food.

(The above information was sourced from Cunningham, GM et al (1992). *Plants of Western New South Wales*, and from Wikipedia.)

Olive control – how effective are you being?

An interesting article concerning olive control appeared in the Spring 2015 edition of "Small Talk", published by Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges.

David Hughes, North Para District Officer, asks if methods being used are effective and at what cost? He suggests alternative approaches should be investigated. The commonly used 'drill and fill' method may be effective in killing trees but it is costly taking into account both time and chemical used.

He has been investigating the effectiveness of another control method, namely, basal bark treatment with chemicals. He has been using the method with great success since 2007. This year he conducted a trial to determine and compare the overall cost of treating mature olive trees using two different techniques, viz. (1) basal bark treatment and (2) drill and fill.

The trial treated 14 trees approximately 3m high with each method. The basal treatment used Triclopyr 30 ml/L bio oil applied by knapsack sprayer to fully cover the stem from basal lignotuber to branching height. The drill and fill used Glyphosate 360 ml/L at 30% in water + 1 ml enviro dye/1000ml chemical mixture. The trees were drilled (12 mm bit) around the lignotuber at <20 mm intervals, around the trunk and immediately filled with chemical.

The results showed a number of advantages of using the basal treatment method:

- No need to clear the ground around trees of debris, remove lower branches (for access), saving time
- The reach of the spray wand eliminates the need to trim branches for access
- Work is mainly from a standing position, rather than crouching or kneeling.

The saving in time to treat each tree is evident.

Both methods used two operators and the cost of treating 14 trees by basal treatment was \$356 and for drill and fill was \$2,913. The main saving was in time – 3.5 hrs vs 44.5 hrs. The amount of chemical used was 30 litres and 45 litres, respectively, and the cost of chemicals was \$130.50 and \$135.

The results are yet to be reported but based on previous work, the basal treatment method is as effective as the drill and fill method in killing olive trees.

Geoffrey Bishop