

Future of Our Native Plants 4.

**For the Future. What are we doing?
What can we do?**

Think globally, act locally. The Friends of the Escarpment Parks already has considerable activity of this type to its credit. Further actions to consider are:

1. Encourage positive moves which encourage or impose initiatives aimed at supporting the long-term good over the interests of individuals and anti-environmental pressure groups. Organise and encourage organisation. The government has a hard time getting voters' support for positive moves. Locally, I would include the Crows Nest Community Nursery and Peacehaven Botanic Park among initiatives that could use support. (They are also a good source of local native plants.)
2. Reserves. Note that, to the credit of Australian governments of the past, 12% of Australia is already protected in National parks. We need to agitate for good management and maintenance of these reserves and support creation of others.
3. Plant, plant, plant. Support restoration, but push for use of plants of **local provenance**. (see 1 above for plants)
4. Educate, both about clearing and about planting. Help people learn that "native trees" is not a subject that begins and ends with eucalypts and large rainforest trees. Plenty of local dry rainforest species are suitable for small gardens, and, as we see west of Toowoomba, can be more drought hardy than the local eucalypts.
5. Occasionally, hug a tree or just sit on a log in the bush. Pause to enjoy what we have achieved so far.

(Part 4) **Trish Gardner**
gardner14@bigpond.com

(This is the last of the interesting series of articles.)
Thanks Trish

Parkcare Groups.

Parkcare groups are volunteers doing bush rehabilitation in bushland parks.

Would you like to get involved?

Redwood Park (Each Monday 8:30am)
(Plus 2nd & 4th Saturday each month)
(Warrego Highway below the saddle)

This group is active on Monday & every second Saturday from 8:30am. Access to the park is through the bottom car park on the down section of the Toowoomba range crossing, on the left just after the 100km sign.

(Contact Hugh Krenske info@fep.org.au)
(or call Hugh 0418 748 282 or 07 4635 1758)

Hartmann Bushland Reserve
(Alderley St near Rowbotham St)
(Wednesday from 7:30am each week)

This new group is active Wednesday mornings each week from 7:30am – 11am.

(Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077)

Panorama Crescent Park
(1st Saturday each month now from 4pm)

We would like to get more Prince Henry Heights residents active carrying out bush rehabilitation activities each month.

Pedestrian access is down the laneway between 4 & 8 Panorama Cr, Prince Henry Heights.

(Kathy Gouldson 4613 0195 or 0437920936)

Nielsen Park (Tarlington St off Ramsay St)
(1st Saturday each month from 9am – 12)
(Plus 3rd Sunday of the month from 2pm)

(Contact Rob Brodribb 0407 124 863)
(rwbrodribb@ozemail.com.au)

Echo Valley South Park (Ramsay St)
(2nd to 5th Saturday from 9am each month)

This group is active on most Saturdays each week from 9am – 12. (Greg Lukes)

Hartmann Bushland Reserve.

Hartmann's Reserve is part of the Carl Hartmann 40 acre estate purchased in 1863. The 10 acre block was sold to the State in 1973 for \$1 by Percival Hartmann. The public reserve is located on the corner of Alderley & Rowbotham Streets, Toowoomba. If your Wednesday mornings are quiet, you would be welcome to join us.

Friends of the Escarpment Parks
Toowoomba Inc.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lukes
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Would you like to support FEP? Membership is only \$5 per year (\$10/Family)



The
**Escarpment
Park Friend**

Mar – Apr 2013

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www.fep.org.au

FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands

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Hello Parks Week.

You are invited to join Hello Parks Week, a celebration of the important role that our parks play in contributing to the health of our communities. A range of formal and informal events will take place across Australia and New Zealand this week - there will be something for everyone.

Parks Week aims to:

- Highlight and celebrate the important role parks play - across people, communities, and the natural environment;
- Encourage greater use of parks;
- Celebrate the contribution that volunteers make to parks;
- Promote the healthy parks, healthy people message;
- Promote park management agencies and the work they do.

FEP Bushland Parks Open Day

Redwood Park

Saturday morning

9th March 2013

Early bird tour from 7am

Other info and tours from 8:30am

(Warrego Highway Range Crossing)

(Down section below the saddle)

Access is through the car park below the saddle on the left just after the 100km sign

& Saturday evening 9th March

Wildlife Spotlighting in Nielsen Park

Spotlighting tour starts 7pm

(Eastern end of Tarlington St, off Ramsay St)

Peacehaven.

Peacehaven Botanic Park is located at 56 Kuhl's Road, Highfields (650m from Cawdor Road).

Delight and indulge your senses with a visit to one of the most outstanding botanic gardens on the Darling Downs. The park is set on 4.7 hectares with a diverse range of native flora, fauna, exotic plants, remnant bushland, lake and formal gardens.

There is also a specialist native plant nursery within the park being developed by the Friends of Peacehaven. Some of the plants are rarely, if ever, available in ordinary nurseries. **The nursery is open Thursday and Saturday mornings, 8.30 am to 12 noon.**

The Friends of Peacehaven have begun the task of keeping computer records of the park's plants. They have also established a herbarium which contains specimens of most of the plants in the park, plus some natives from elsewhere on the Downs. They offer tours of the park to visitors (by arrangement), and have a nursery whose aim is (eventually) for people to be able to acquire species that grow in the park, to plant at home.

Peacehaven also offers breathtaking **views of the Bunya Mountains** and an overall rewarding experience that only nature can provide.

Admission to the park is free so spoil yourself and take a trip to Highfields to rediscover peace and tranquillity at Peacehaven Botanic Park.

**Friends of Peacehaven Botanic Park
Highfields**

friendsofpeacehaven.blogspot.com.au

Dumping Solutions.

Bushland parks are not intended to be used as local dump sites. Introduced or dumped vegetation and even grass clippings can spread unwanted invasive seeds or plants into our native habitats.

Recently (in the last two or three years) four rubbish bins of vegetation waste have been dumped into Echo Valley South Park along the road way. Unfortunately the waste consisted of Madeira vine tubers that were not identified until this lush vine had grown and started covering a number of trees in the area. We are now left to clear up the resulting mess which includes a 7m tall green wattle tree that had been bent over to the ground as a result of the vine smothering it. Once identified, we removed the vine from tree and managed to prop the tree back up to an upright position. Hopefully it will continue to grow without much evidence of its horrific ordeal.

We are pleased that the TRC have now introduced a policy of **no fees for domestic customers** taking waste to the tip. From 1st October 2012, 'NIL gate fee' applies for domestic customers (rural and residential alike) who 'self haul' general household waste or green waste to any staffed Toowoomba Regional Council waste facility.

www.toowoombarc.qld.gov.au/environment-and-waste/waste-and-recycling/rubbish-dumps

The Toowoomba Waste Facility is located at Bedford Street, Cranley (access is via Bridge and Boundary Sts). It operates Mon to Fri 7am to 5pm, Sat & Sun 8am to 5pm.

There is also an extensive array of recycling facilities for suitable clean reusable items in Toowoomba including St Vincent de Paul Society at 693 Ruthven Street (Cnr Long Street) (no electrical goods), Lifeline at the Toowoomba Waste Facility or for car bodies and other metal recycling Action Metal Recyclers 519 Boundary Road Wiltonton (cash for scrap or after hours drop off bin).

With all these facilities now available hopefully we will see a reduction in dumping activities in our parks.

Root Blade.

This is one of the effective sturdy tools that we are often using to control weeds.

The Root Blade was designed by Toowoomba resident (and FEP member) Euan McLean. This shovel was developed specifically to cut through shallow rooted woody weeds to sever the main tap root or to reach under the centre of other large weeds, such as lantana and privet.



Root Blade

The blade is robust and effective at cutting the roots of problem weeds including lantana (any size) and privet (up to 150mm dia. stem) from soil that does not contain many large rocks. The narrow reinforced concave tip allows the operator to locate the root line in the soil and position the cutting edge precisely centred to direct the majority of the cutting force directly to the root system.

Larger plants may require approaches from different sides to sever the root systems. Once directly under the main stem, bearing down on the handle lifts the plant out of the ground exposing any remaining roots so they can then easily be severed with the blade or loppers.

Once the crown of the root system has been removed the severed roots left in the ground will die and eventually compost away helping to improve the condition of the soil.

In a bushland environment (with only minimal pedestrian access required), any removed branching plant material on the surface can be cut using the blade or loppers to a height that can easily be stepped over and left on the surface. This ground cover helps to retain moisture in the soil enabling native plants to re-establish from the existing seed stock in the area. It also reduces the likelihood of other problem weeds that like to grow on exposed soil from establishing.

(The Root Blade was featured on the ABC TV New Inventors show in 2005 and later on Chanel 7 Better Homes and Gardens 2007.)

For more information on Root Blades please contact Euan. naued@netspace.net.au

Species Watch.

Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps*

Sugar gliders are small gliding possums that love to eat nectar and flowers. They are omnivores and also eat insects.

Sugar gliders can be found throughout the northern and eastern parts of mainland Australia, Tasmania, Papua New Guinea and several associated isles. There are 5 known subspecies. The Queensland subspecies is called *Petaurus breviceps longicaudatus*. Gliders live in forests where there is a suitable food supply but most are commonly found in forests with eucalyptus trees. Being nocturnal, they sleep in their nests in trees during the day and are active at night. During the night they hunt insects and small vertebrates as well as feed on the sweet sap of certain species of eucalyptus, acacia and gum trees.



Sugar Glider feeding on nectar

Photo © Nature Connect Pty Ltd - Steve Parish

The sugar glider's fur is a blue-grey to brown grey above with a dark stripe that extends from the middle of the head to the mid-back region.

The gliding patagium (or membrane) extends from little finger to ankle. The glider is about the size of a rat, tail is about the thickness of a human thumb. At night a call similar to "YIP-YIP-YIP" can be heard.



Sugar gliders can glide for distances well over 50 metres between trees.

They live in large groups during winter to conserve energy and these groups disband during the summer months. The sugar glider is also one of the largest marsupials that have been confirmed to enter torpor (similar to hibernating where the body temperature lowers but in a daily cycle). They can enter torpor daily for 13 hours at a time on days that would require large amounts of energy to maintain body temperature - these days include rainy days where the food sources are likely to be washed away and severe cold events.

Check out the terrific Wildlife Queensland site below for more information and to hear the sound of a sugar glider.

Wildlife Queensland

www.wildlife.org.au/wildlife/speciesprofile/mammals/gliders/sugar_glider.html
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar_glider

We recently spotted a sugar glider at night in Toowoomba's Nielsen Park. **Saturday 9th March** could provide an opportunity to see another one as part of Hello Parks Week guided spotlighting tour **starting at 7pm**.

We recommend a head torch to pick up eye shine and a spotlight to help see our wildlife. Binoculars and cameras are also optional. (No lights? Not a problem. You will still have plenty of great opportunities as part of a group to see a range of different animals in the bush.)