

Tool Topics.

Scrap Metal

Looking for some scrap metal? We have recovered this metal from Echo Valley South Park.



If you are looking for a rustic dog house, bird bath, feed troughs or tubes, we have them available for collection free of charge currently located near the entrance gate at the southern end of Ramsay Street.

Euan McLean (FEP)

Aussie Humour.

A motorist was driving quietly along the road when, suddenly, his eyes goggled as, believe it or not, he spied a three-legged chook running beside him. It suddenly made a right hand turn, heading up a side track towards a nearby farm house.

Intrigued, the motorist decided to follow the chook. At the end of the track, he met a farmer leaning on a gate.

The motorist said, *"You probably won't believe this, but I reckon I saw a three-legged chook running this way."*

The farmer was nonchalant in response. *"Yep, we breed them here."*

"But why?" asked the motorist.

"Well, you see, I like a leg, my wife likes a leg, and me son likes a leg."

"And what do they taste like?"

"Dunno," replied the farmer, *"no one can catch the little buggers."*

www.upfromaustralia.com/aninout.html

Parkcare Groups.

Parkcare groups are volunteers doing bushland rehabilitation on these days.

Would you like to get involved?

Prince Henry Heights (3rd Sunday)

This group is carrying out bush rehabilitation activities along Prince Henry Drive on the 3rd Sunday of each month. (February to November)

Echo Valley South Park (Ramsay St) (Saturday & Monday mornings each week)

These groups are active on both Saturday and Monday each week from 9am - 12. (Look for parked cars near the container or near the bottom gate.)

Rehabilitation may include weed removal, propagating and planting native species as well as monitoring plants and wildlife.

For more information on Parkcare groups or to confirm details, please contact –

Kristie Jenkinson (TRC)

4688 6514 or 0408 714 215

kristie.jenkinson@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au
www.toowoombarc.qld.gov.au

Participating.

Friends of the Escarpment Parks Toowoomba carry out bush regeneration activities each Saturday and Monday morning (weather pending) at Echo Valley South Park, Ramsay Street (next to Echo Valley Race Track). These activities include weed removal using hand tools to help repair the natural bushland environment.

We have a range of different tasks as well as techniques to suit the interest and ability of individuals and/or groups.

Sun smart clothing including wide brim hat, long sleeved shirt, long pants and covered foot wear are required to provide the appropriate protection. Gardening gloves are also worn and can be provided if required.

**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**

Jan – Feb 2011

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FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands

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Australian Native Bees.

Stingless Native Bees (Sugar bag)

We have been keeping *Trigona Carbonaria* for about 20 years in portable miniature boxes. We have found that they are ideal for pollination of all native plants and tropical fruits.

We feel that many people do not know about these bees and it is important that Australians are able to identify and save these native bees where possible.

There are also many advantages to owning a hive (or two).

1. Native bees are available and housed in boxes or hollow logs.
2. They are simple to keep and maintain.
3. The native bees **do not sting**.
4. Native bees are great pollinators.
5. The honey is extremely good for health.
7. It is easy to increase population by a simple splitting process.
8. More native bee hives provide greater opportunities to re-establish nests back into areas where they once existed.
9. Established hives have no major predators.
10. Hives can be kept in suburbia, in close proximity to humans and animals.

The native bees are available in attractive portable miniature boxes and can be sent via post to all parts of Australia.



A bee drinking. (Credit: Image courtesy of Monash University)

Native Bee Rescue Service

(South East Queensland only)

Due to the reducing population of the Native Bees (Black Bush Bees), we are making our contribution to help increase their numbers. One of the ways we are able to do this is by rescuing endangered hives from almost any situation. If you do locate a nest of Native Bees under threat, cut 2 foot (600mm) either side of the entrance, stand up the log vertically as if it were in the tree and place a cover over the top of the hollow. *If you have sawn through the nest with a chainsaw, do not worry! Simply stand up the pieces back together.*

If possible, bring the nest back to your home or depot when the hive has settled down (evening is the best time). Close the entrance with some tissue before moving.

Please Note - A nest left lying on the ground WILL die out. The bees will NOT move on as some people think. Normally ants will destroy the entire nest. It is better to **contact us so that we can save the hive**. We are able to collect them from your home, depot or from the bush if required. We would also love to hear from you if you ever come across them.

Russell & Janine Zabel

Mobile 0404 892139

Web Site www.zabel.com.au

Wildlife Nesting Hollows.

Have you ever wondered why you do not find Kookaburras in all parts of town?

Hollows are Homes

Many native bird and mammal species rely on hollows in trees for shelter and for breeding. These hollows are formed when the centres of tree limbs rot away due to fungal or termite action. Hollows take many years to form and so are only present in aged trees (at least 60 years old).

It has been common practice to remove old trees from urban parks for aesthetic and safety reasons, unfortunately reducing the nesting opportunities of native birds. These birds include Eastern Rosellas, Crimson Rosellas, Laughing Kookaburras, Galahs and rainbow Lorikeets. Mammals also use hollows including possums.

Nest Boxes for Native Birds and Animals

Materials for Building a Nest Box

Timber is best because of its insulating properties. Cedar, Ordinary Building (O.B.) timber, or Cyprus Pine are suitable. Marine Ply is also waterproof and durable.

(Note: Chemically treated pine is TOXIC and chipboard tends to warp when wet.)



Examples of nest boxes

www.carrickfergusinbloom.org/wild.htm

www.easybackyardbirding.com

Stainless steel, galvanised or nickel plated screws or nails should be used to join all parts. The nest box should be weather-proofed using cedar or timber requiring lacquer, water based paint or linseed oil, while the inside of the box should not be painted or coated.

Ideally, the lid should be hinged and slope down from the back to the front of the box.

The lid should also overhang the front and sides of the box by at least 25 mm.

Hammer in fence staples inside the front wall to act as a ladder before the construction stage. This will enable the young to climb out.

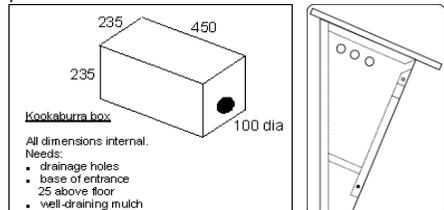
Drill three drainage holes (about 12mm) in the floor towards the front of the box.

Ensure the box is wind and rainproof.

A couple of handfuls of coarse bark or wood chip should cover the floor.

Placement of Nest Boxes

Different species prefer nest boxes at different heights. Nest boxes should be placed where people, cats, foxes or dogs will not disturb them. Nest boxes should also be sheltered from the prevailing wind and the hot sun. Some birds (kookaburras) prefer the nest box to be horizontal.



www.ozbox.net.au/kook.htm

md.fpamad.com/p3/construction_plans.htm

Attachment of the Nest Box

Nest boxes can be attached in various ways. Make sure that they are firmly positioned and stable, with a slight forward lean to assist the young to exit and to help with drainage. Place a strong piece of wire through an old garden hose and hang from a fork in a tree so that the nest box rests against the trunk. **Do not tighten the wire around the tree as this will damage the tree.** Fix a mounting strip to blocks attached to the back of the box. Use 100mm galvanised nails to nail the box to the tree.

Introduced birds such as Sparrows, Starlings and Indian Mynahs may nest in the box, and may even take over the nest box from native birds. The nesting materials of these introduced species should be removed if found as their presence has reduced the availability of nesting sites for native species.

www.lochsport.com/environment/nestboxes.html

Species Watch.

Eastern Brown Snake

Pseudonaja textilis



Eastern Brown Snake
Photograph by Angus Emmott

Identification: The Eastern Brown Snake may be any shade of brown but can also be grey or black. Some individuals are banded. **The belly is typically cream with pink or orange spots.** Juveniles may be plain or banded and have distinctive head markings consisting of a black blotch on the crown and a dark neck band. This species grows to 2 metres. Midbody scale rows 17; ventrals 185–235; anal divided; subcaudals divided 45–75.



Characteristic head & neck markings of a juvenile Eastern Brown Snake.

Habitat: Found in all habitats except rainforest. It has adapted well to farmed, grazed and semi-urban lands. In South-eastern Queensland, this species is particularly common around Beenleigh and Ipswich.

Habits: This species is active by day, although young Eastern Brown Snakes are often encountered at night.

Danger: Eastern Brown Snakes can be pugnacious when provoked and rear up in distinctive "S" shape ready to strike.

This species is dangerously venomous and has been responsible for many human deaths. The venom is strongly neurotoxic. If bitten, apply first aid and seek urgent medical attention. Refer to first aid procedure for snakebites from the [Australian Venom Research Unit](#).



An Eastern Brown Snake in characteristic defensive posture
Note the distinctive spotting on its belly
Photograph by Richard Jackson

Distribution: Found over most of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It also occurs in southern South Australia and there are isolated populations in the Northern Territory. This species is also present in southern Papua New Guinea.

Breeding: Mating occurs in spring and early summer. **Up to 28 eggs are laid.** Hatchlings are around 19 cm from the tip of the snout to the base of the tail (snout-vent length).

www.qm.qld.gov.au/Find+out+about/Animals+of+Queensland/Reptiles/Snakes/Common+and+dangerous+species/Eastern+Brown+Snake

Diet: This species feeds mostly on small mammals, particularly rodents. It has developed a preference for introduced rats and mice. Such habits regularly bring the species in contact with humans and its bad temper and toxic venom may lead to potentially dangerous conflicts.

They perform a very useful function by controlling the numbers of introduced rodent pests and despite its reputation, they will usually avoid conflict.

At the end of last year during a rainy week we found a dead 1m Eastern Brown in Range Street Toowoomba outside a house opposite some bushland.

Compiled by **Greg Lukes (FEP)**