



## Wombat Forestcare celebratory picnic: December 16

Since December 2005, a number of friends and members have been participating in a research project that involves fortnightly excursions out into the Wombat Forest. These trips have been part of the Wombat Community Biodiversity Research Project, a project that seeks to find out more about the fauna of the Wombat Forest and the habitats these animals prefer.

We have had 30 sites to visit, and there is only one left! With this in mind, we have decided to launch the incorporation of our group as Wombat Forestcare, and celebrate this mammoth volunteer effort by holding a picnic directly after we complete the floral assessment of our last site.

We will print a detailed article about the project next newsletter, and will present our results so far at the picnic. I hope to see you there!

Picnic only: 12:30 –2:30pm: follow the balloons on Kangaroo Rd, south of Wheatsheaf, to where our cars are parked. Site 26 is a couple of hundred metres in. BYO lunch and chairs. A short flora identification walk will occur on site! All warmly welcome, whether you have been on ten, one or no assessments!

Assessment of site 26: involving 6 or 7 volunteers looking at ground flora and measuring trees: meet at site at Kangaroo Rd at 11am.

Email Tanya at [pollen@netconnect.com.au](mailto:pollen@netconnect.com.au) for more information, and to register for insurance purposes.

*Tanya McLean*

### About Wombat Forestcare...

Wombat Forestcare is a community group dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural ecosystems of the Wombat Forest and surrounding areas.

The Wombat Forest contains a diverse range of native plants and animals, including a number that are listed as rare or threatened, such as Powerful Owl and the Wombat Bush Pea. As well as these natural values, the Wombat is a significant water catchment area, giving rise to five rivers.

Wombat Forestcare engages in a range of activities. These have a strong focus on community involvement and education, and include undertaking flora and fauna surveys, forest regeneration, and seed collection days.

We also enjoy the social aspect of a forest group, with picnics and bushwalks for people who love being in the bush. See the back page for more on Wombat Forestcare, and membership.

*Murray Ralph*

Memberships and further information: Gayle Osborne 5348 7558 [gayle.osborne@bigpond.com](mailto:gayle.osborne@bigpond.com)

Newsletter articles are most welcome! : Tanya McLean 53482778 [pollen@netconnect.com.au](mailto:pollen@netconnect.com.au)

## Stewarts Creek pine plantation renewal

Our project at Stewarts Creek began with the proposal for the manual removal of pine seedlings and quickly developed into a lesson in native plant survival.

Stewarts Creek is in the Wombat Reservoir Catchment and was part of a water monitoring project developed in the 1960's. This 17 hectare section was cleared and planted with *Pinus radiata* in 1970 and harvested in January 2004.

The pine residue was then burnt and the area seeded with eucalyptus species by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, (DSE). The seed had been collected from the Wombat Forest. A large amount of *Ghania sieberiana*, a large rush-like plant which grows in damp areas was well established within entire the plantation. This was of considerable interest as it is not abundant in the adjoining forest.

In January 2005, we held a picnic at which Murray Ralph ran a seed collection and plant identification workshop. We were excited to identify 25 native species on the recently burnt site, including *Acacia verticulata* (Prickly Moses) which was so wide spread over the site that we believe that the seed must have been in the ground for over 30 years. *Derwentia derwentiana*, commonly known as Derwent Speedwell was found in the wetter areas. We have not found this plant close to the site.

The most fascinating find was a beautiful white everlasting daisy which has yet to be identified and emerged in absolute abundance on the western slopes. It is definitely rare in the Wombat.

In September 2005 we met on the site to hand pull the pine seedlings and plant the Musk Daisy and Blackwood seedlings which had been raised from our seed collection workshop. The pines were easy to pull at this stage and there was a great sense of satisfaction. One couple were so into it that they went a few days early and pulled over 400 wildlings!

We have returned this year to hunt down the escapees and estimate that we have removed some thousands of pine wildlings. During the visit this October we found small circular clearings, about 15cm in diameter with small deep holes on the centre. These were located in boggy ground and fit with descriptions of bandicoots or potoroos digging for fungi or invertebrate larvae.

Thank you to all those who came and a special thanks to Ron Thorpe for providing the BBQ and his constant reminders that we all need to get out into the bush.

Gayle Osborne



*Stewart's Creek 2005:  
After spending an hour or two with the rest of the volunteers removing pine wildlings, Deanne and Paul prepare the ground to plant Musk Daisy seedlings. Gayle raised The Musk Daisies from seed collected on the last visit to Stewarts Creek.  
Thanks to Tibor Hegedis for the Photo!*

## Flora of the Wombat Forest: the Wombat Bush Pea



Apart from one other location in Victoria, the Wombat Bush Pea, *Pultenaea reflexifolia*, only occurs in the Wombat Forest. Because of its limited distribution, the species is listed as rare and threatened, however it is quite common in the higher rainfall areas of the Wombat Forest.

The plant is a low shrub that can grow to about one metre in height, but is normally not more than 30cm tall. It has narrow leaves that point backwards (hence the scientific name 'reflexifolia') and a yellow pea flower about 12mm wide with a dark red centre. Plants usually flower in November. Seeds are contained in a small hairy, oval pod, but plants don't appear to set seed all that often.

## Fauna of the Wombat Forest: the Greater Glider

The Greater Glider is aptly named, as it can glide distances of up to 100m, and change direction mid-glide with the help of its tail, which is almost twice the length of its body. Its Latin name *Petauroides volans* means 'flying rope-walker'!

The Greater Glider's habitat in the Wombat forest is in tall wet messmate/peppermint/candlebark associations. Spotlighting by the Arthur Rylah Institute, and other studies in the past have identified that Greater Gliders occur in the Spargo Creek / Korweinguboorra area, and north in the gum dominated sections of the Spring Hill/Wheatsheaf area of the Wombat Forest. The Gliders occur only where mature examples of forest persist, as hollows are absolutely essential for this species. The Greater Glider is the only other mammal besides the Koala to subsist exclusively on Eucalyptus leaves. Like the Koala, fresh young leaves are preferred.

Although the Greater Glider is noted in the Midland Forest Management plan as being vulnerable to the continued loss of large hollow bearing trees currently occurring throughout its range, the species is not listed as rare or threatened.

The best way to see a Greater Glider is by spotlighting. They are readily identified by the huge size, fluffy fur, large ears and enormously long tail. They may be light or dark in colour. Their eyeshine in the spotlight is bright and distinctive, described as 'glowing jewel-like orbs' in the book "Possums: the brushtails, ringtails, and greater glider" " by Anne Kerle. Greater Gliders are unlike other glider species in that they do not call.



*Greater Glider, by John Gould 1863*

Tanya McLean

## Wombat Forestcare membership

**Wombat Forestcare Inc** is dedicated to preserving the biodiversity and amenity of the Wombat State Forest by utilising the skills and resources of the community. It will monitor activities affecting the forest and will work with government departments and their officers to improve or correct procedures which may impact on it. By becoming a member you will have input to our activities and give needed support.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF WOMBAT FORESTCARE INC

I (We).....  
(Name(s))

of.....  
(Address)

hereby apply to become a member of Wombat Forestcare Inc.

In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association.

(Available upon request)

.....  
(Signature of the Applicant) (Date)

(.....).  
(Telephone Number)

.....  
(Email)

Please list skills which may assist the group or any areas of interest :

.....

Please return this form with enclosed payment to:

**Wombat Forestcare Inc**  
**c/- Gayle Osborne**  
**RMB 3538, GLENLYON 3461**

Membership from October 2006 to June 2007 :\$10 Single, \$15 Family



If undelivered please return to:

**Wombat Forestcare Inc**  
**c/- Gayle Osborne**  
**RMB 3538, GLENLYON 3461**