

HFNC Excursion to Ararat Regional Park – 22 September 2018

Diane Luhrs & Rod Bird

Present: Rod Bird, Glenys Cayley, Peter Hocking, Diane Luhrs, Dave & Lyn Munro, Anne Patterson, Sarah Patterson, Ros Slater, Janeen Samuel, Mick Sanders, Hilary Turner, Kay Aldridge and (from Ararat) Anne Galway, Joan & Nick Pitaro.

This was a great day to be out in the bush, mild temperature, no wind and sunny most of the time. The excursion began from the Hamilton Visitor Information Centre, departing around 9 am as a convoy through Dunkeld and Willaura before arriving at the Ararat Town Hall to meet our guides for the day at 10.30 am.

Our guides led the convoy north out of Ararat to the former Dunworthy State Forest where we spent more than an hour looking for orchids and other plants in flower and also recording birds present.

The trees in this woodland/forest are Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*), Long-leaved Box (*E. goniocalyx*) with some Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*). The mid-story is dominated by Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), flowering profusely at this time. Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*) occurs in a few places and Red Stringybark (*E. macrorrhyncha*) may be found on drier ridges (as at MacDonald Park).



Track in the Dunworthy Forest block



A giant *E. leucoxylon* casualty of a planned burn

The ground looked quite dry, but there were still flowers to see, including the prostrate Thin-leaf Wattle (*Acacia aculeatissima*). We were shown two very different sections of bush – the first had no recent fires and the second where a fire had burned through earlier in the year. In the first section, new and dense growth of acacias had sprung up in the spaces left by the large trees fallen in previous fires.

Our guides were quite distressed that a large, old Yellow Gum habitat tree with many hollows had been allowed to burn down for want of attention before and during a prescribed burn. This is a major problem with prescribed burns that seems to receive little attention. One result here is the growth of a thick stand of *Acacia pycnantha* – crowding out other less aggressive plants. The main negative impact, however, has been the loss of nesting/roosting places for many species of birds, mammals and other fauna.



Acacia pycnantha

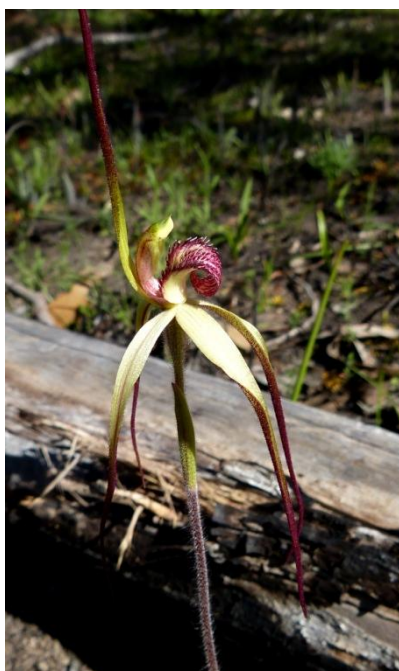


Acacia aculeatissima

In the most recently burned section we were shown the special Tawny Spider-orchids (*Caladenia fulva*) and Plain-lipped Spider-orchids (*C. clavigera*). Our guides were very cautious to warn us of where these orchids were and, in the recently burnt region, 'exclusion zones' around these specimens were indicated by branches. There were variations in the appearance of these orchids and perhaps one, at least, was of another species. Golden Moth orchids (*Diuris chryseopsis*) were found in many places.



Caladenia fulva



Caladenia clavigera



Diuris chryseopsis



Caladenia pusilla



Pterostylis nutans



Corybas incurvus

A few small clumps of Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*) and two large clumps of Slaty Helmet orchids (*Corybas incurvus*) were found, the latter with only a few flowers still present and past their best appearance.

Other showy plants seen included Cats Claws (*Grevillea alpina*), Peach Heath (*Lissanthe strigosa*), Pink Bells (*Tetratheca ciliata*) and Love Creeper (*Comesperma volubile*).



Comesperma volubile



Grevillea alpina



Lissanthe strigosa



Tetratheca ciliata

After returning to Ararat for a short stop we continued SW to have lunch at a picnic site in the forest at MacDonald Park. Once there was a substantial shelter here but only the chimney and planted Spotted Gums (*Corymbia* sp.) After lunch we explored the bush nearby. Highlights included finding several beautiful Bluebeard Caladenia (*Pheladenia deformis*) and Tall Greenhood (*Pterostylis melagramma*). Other flora included Dagger Hakea (*Hakea teretifolia*) and Grampians Thryptomene (*Thryptomene calycina*) but the latter plant seems to be outside its recognised range and may have been planted.



Pheladenia deformis



Hakea teretifolia

To finish our excursion we were led up to the One-tree Hill Lookout for marvellous views both east (towards Ararat) and west (towards the Grampians). Most of the group travelled back to Hamilton via Halls Gap and Dunkeld.



Thryptomene calycina



Pterostylis melagramma



Pterostylis melagramma



Birds seen:	
Long-billed Corella	Scarlet Robin
Sulphur Crested Cockatoo	Grey Shrike Thrush
Galah	Superb Fairy Wren
Fantail Cuckoo	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Weebill	White-throated Treecreeper
New Holland Honeyeater	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Spotted Pardalote	Striated Pardalote
Little Raven	Grey Currawong
Australian Magpie	Wedge-tailed Eagle

View to Mt. Ararat from One Tree Hill

Plants in flower

<u>Dunworthy Forest</u>	
<i>Acacia aculeatissima</i>	Thin-leaf Wattle
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle
<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Cranberry Heath
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers
<i>Caladenia clavigera</i>	Plain-lip Spider-orchid
<i>Caladenia fulva</i>	Tawny Spider-orchid
<i>Caladenia pusilla</i>	Tiny Caladenia
<i>Chaemaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Squills
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Common Correa
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy-buttons
<i>Diuris chryseopsis</i>	Golden Moths
<i>Diuris sp.</i>	Diuris
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	Pale Sundew
<i>Drosera macrantha</i>	Climbing Sundew
<i>Glossodia major</i>	Waxlip
<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	Erect Guinea-flower
<i>Hypoxis vaginata</i>	Yellow Star

<i>Hypoxis glabella</i>	Tiny Star
<i>Leucopogon spp. x 2</i>	Beard-heaths
<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i>	Peach Heath
<i>Microceris sp.</i>	Yam Daisy
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	Nodding Greenhood
<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Thryptomene calycina</i>	Thryptomene
<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<u>MacDonald Park</u>	
<i>Caladenia clavigera</i>	Plain-lipped Spider-orchid
<i>Comesperma volubile</i>	Love Creeper
<i>Corybas incurvus</i>	Slaty Helmet Orchid
<i>Drosera aberrans</i>	Scented Sundew
<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	Cats Claws
<i>Hakea teretifolia</i>	Dagger Hakea
<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland Wood-sorrel
<i>Pterostylis melagramma</i>	Tall Greenhood
<i>Pheladenia deformis</i>	Bluebeard Orchid