

The Fort Bushland Reserve

September 2010 Notes – by John Lahey

At last I can see light at the end of the tunnel in the battle to eradicate *Rivina humilis* (Coral Berry). After working for three and a half years on an area that was once covered by these weeds it seems that the seedbank is now almost exhausted. For the first year or two, every time it rained the seedlings germinated at the rate of about 10,000 per sq metre. Now, finally after 3½ years, only a handful of seedlings appear after rain which is a real relief as I was starting to think that the seedbank was inexhaustible. What this does show though is that to get rid of this weed we must diligently weed an infested area for about 4 years to ensure that no plants reach maturity to provide seeds to replenish the seedbank.



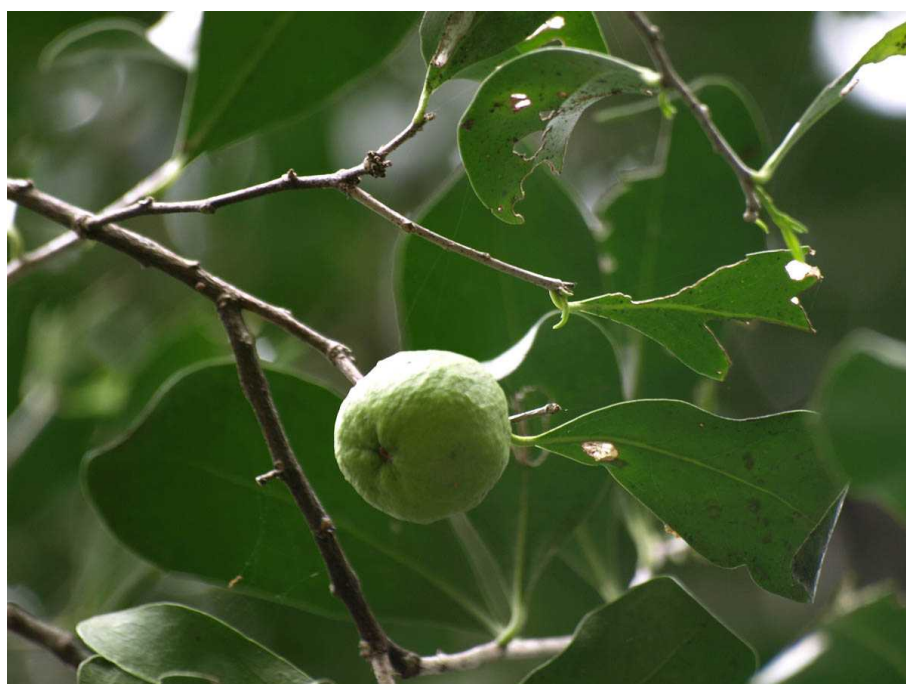
Arytera foveolata (Pitted Coogera) (Refer January 2009 and September 2007 Notes)

This is a relatively common tree in the Reserve and some of the larger trees have been covered in flowers this month.

Siphonodon australis (Ivorywood)

Refer November 2007 Notes

This tree is quite uncommon in the Reserve. There is one growing at the base of the *Argyrodendron trifoliolatum* and a group of three just to the north of the southern firetrail in about the middle of the Reserve. This is the first time I have seen any fruit although I did see a few flowers a couple of years ago. The fruit grows up to 50 mm in diameter and turns yellow when ripe. It is quite hard and can contain up to 10 seeds.



Trophis scandens (Burnie Vine) Refer November 2008 Notes

This species is very common in the Reserve. It is a very strong and vigorous climber growing to the top of some of the tall trees and covering quite large areas where it forms dense thickets. Many of these plants have flowered extremely well this year. This species is dioecious, and the ratio of male to female plants seems to be approximately equal. The male flowers shown in the photo below right are much more conspicuous than the female flowers, below left. The fruit is bright red and shiny and I'm hoping that we get a really good crop this year. The fruit is edible and many fruit eating birds are attracted to it. The plant spreads with long thin horizontal canes and care needs to be taken when walking past them to ensure that they don't rub against exposed skin because they can cause rather painful "burns" – hence the common name.



Pittosporum revolutum (Rough-fruited Pittosporum or Hairy Pittosporum) Refer May 2010 and September 2007 Notes

In my May notes I hypothesized that the plants of this species that have apparently perfect flowers (bisexual with pistils and stamens) do not set any fruit. The fruit is only borne on plants that have flowers that lack stamens and pollen. To test my theory I marked all the plants that had apparently perfect flowers with blue ribbons and all the plants with flowers that lacked stamens with pink ribbons. The results are now in and I can confirm that most of the plants with the pink ribbons are



setting fruit but none of the plants with the blue ribbons have set any fruit. I am now fairly confident that this species is actually dioecious but can find no reference to this in any literature. It is interesting that the flowers on the male plants still have the female parts (although not functioning) suggesting that the species is still evolving. While checking the plants I found the colourful beetle shown above busily eating one of the *Pittosporum revolutum* flowers (male). One final observation is that the male plants seem to carry more flowers on each flowering head than the female plants.



***Pittosporum multiflorum* (Orange Thorn)**
(Syn. *Citriobatus pauciflorus*, *C. multiflorus*)

Refer July 2008 and August 2007 Notes

This understorey shrub is very common in the Reserve and it is now really thriving in the restoration areas. Following the recent good seasons the plants are flush with new growth and covered in flowers. This species grows to about 2 metres and is extremely prickly with long thin thorns arising from the leaf axils.

After observing the different male and female flowers on *Pittosporum revolutum* I wondered if the same would apply to *P. multiflorum*. When I checked a number of plants in a clump I discovered they all had perfect bisexual flowers so assumed that this was the norm for this species.

However about a week later when I went to photograph a plant (which incidentally was in a different area), I noticed that all these flowers lacked stamens and pollen. I then checked about 50 other plants in that clump and to my surprise could not find one plant with flowers that had pollen. I then checked about 20 plants in another

clump and again could not find one plant with flowers that had stamens and pollen. By this time I was starting to doubt my initial observations. I went back to the area where I had looked at the flowers originally and confirmed that those flowers did in fact have both male and female parts. What I find really surprising and cannot explain is that all the plants in a clump seem to be of the same type – ie all bisexual or all female. I've put blue ribbons on the plants with bisexual flowers to see if any set fruit. The photos below show the two different types of flowers. In the photo on the left, developing fruit can be seen on the underside of the branch to the left of the photo. I didn't see any fruit-set on the plants with the bisexual flowers but it may be too early to say for sure that they do not set fruit.

The bright orange fruit is edible and attracts fruit eating birds.



I was fascinated by the long thin filaments arising from small scale insects attached to the underside of a *Drypetes deplanchei* leaf. I can only assume that the filaments are for protection and provide a deterrent to predators.



Euoplos sp. (Golden Trapdoor Spider) Refer May 2010 Notes

Since May this year, we have found two more Trapdoor spider burrows. One is on flat ground and quite similar to the one we found in May. The other is at the top of the steep erosion gully and the trapdoor is almost vertical.



The next Bushcare working bee is on Sunday 3rd October at 8am.