

The Fort Bushland Reserve

May 2010 Notes – by John Lahey

In April, Council contractors sprayed the weeds in the bushland below the Passionist Fathers' property and along the edge of the picnic area where it borders the forest. The area along the forest edge was then mulched with a thick layer of woodchips. This will provide an extremely useful weed barrier between the picnic area and the forest reserve. It will also facilitate the work of the mowing contractors as well as providing a clear definition of the edge of the forest area that our bushcare group is restoring.



Edge of Picnic Area with bordering layer of mulch

After several months of focussed effort by the bushcare group, the area just below the picnic ground is now relatively weed free and looking in excellent condition with a good cover of grasses and other low growing plants. After one or two more weeding passes this area should be able to be placed on care and maintenance with minimal ongoing weeding required.



Area at the top of the Northern firetrail just below the picnic ground



Flindersia xanthoxyla (Yellow-wood, Long Jack)
Refer December 2006 and January 2007 Notes

This large tree is common and widespread in the reserve. It grows to about 45 metres and bears masses of small yellow flowers in summer. Even though I haven't seen many seedpods on the trees, there are lots of seedlings appearing in the restoration areas. The long thin spiky seedpods consist of five segments containing flat seeds, winged at both ends.

The three other species of this genus that can be found in the Reserve are *F. australis*, *F. schottiana* and *F. bennettiana*. A fifth species, *F. collina*, was recorded as growing here when the environmental impact study was done for the potential land subdivision. However I have been unable to find this plant on the Reserve and I have now removed it from our native plant list. The leaves of *F. collina* have a winged rachis and I suspect that it may have been misidentified with a young *Owenia venosa*. If anyone has seen *F. collina* growing in the Reserve could they please let me know.

Owenia venosa (Crow's apple, Rose almond, Rose apple) Refer December 2006 Notes

A small clump of *Owenia venosa* trees is growing on the bank near the lower end of the large erosion gully. These trees appear to be quite old and are clearly part of the remnant vegetation. The Queensland herbarium has recorded this stand as the most easterly naturally occurring plants of this species found in Queensland. The trees grow to about 20 metres and have a dense crown of glossy dark green leaves. The young plants are easy to identify because the juvenile leaves have a winged rachis. I've been watching the trees each spring and early summer in the hope of seeing them in bloom but with no luck so far. Obviously though they have flowered because I found this fruit on the ground underneath the trees. The fruit contains a hard tough stone that is reputedly very difficult to germinate. It was suggested to me that they needed to be eaten by an emu and then to pass through its system before they would germinate.

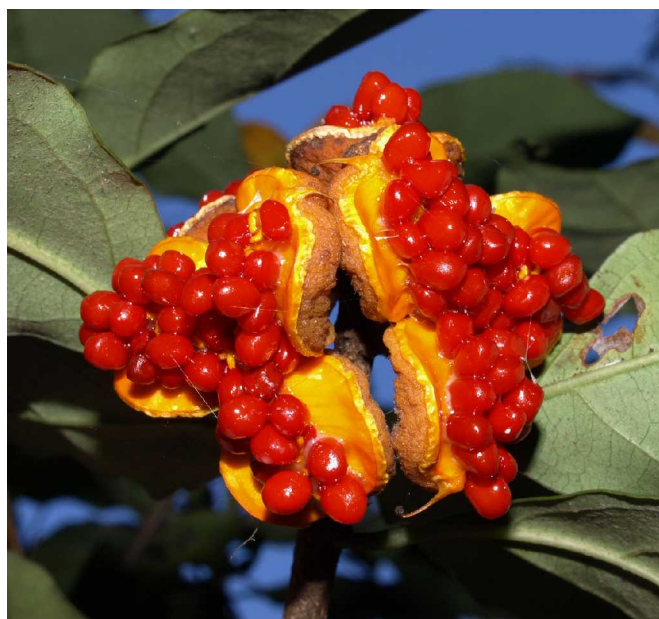




Pittosporum revolutum (Rough-fruited Pittosporum or Hairy Pittosporum) Refer September 2007 Notes

This shrub grows to about 3 metres and plants can be found scattered through the reserve. I've recently noticed that seedlings are starting to appear in the areas that have been cleared of weeds. The plant on the left flowered in September last year. The small fragrant yellow flowers are followed by quite large very rough fruit which turn yellow when ripe and then split to reveal a mass of sticky red seeds.

It should be noted that the photos of the fruit below belong to a different plant to the one in flower on the left. I am still in the process of testing my hypothesis that the plants of this species that have apparently perfect flowers (with pistils and stamens) do not set any fruit. The fruit is only borne on plants that have flowers which lack stamen and pollen.



***Euoplos sp.* (Golden Trapdoor Spider)**

We found the burrow of this large trapdoor spider while we were weeding one Thursday morning. It is flat on the ground and quite difficult to spot among the leaf litter. All the trapdoors I've found previously in National Parks have been on relatively steep mossy banks and this is the first I've seen on flat ground. From the size of the burrow I'm sure the spider is fully grown and it appears to have been living there for some time. Hazel's ring gives an indication of just how big the burrow is and it is definitely the largest I have seen.

I've found the Queensland Museum to be extremely helpful in helping to identify native wildlife and in providing useful information about them. I've included, with the distribution of my Notes, the information sheet which they kindly sent me in response to my enquiry.



The young leaves of the *Jagera pseudorhus* trees are being eaten by this colourful looper caterpillar. In the hope of being able to identify it, I kept one in a container where it pupated between three leaves held tightly together by silk. After 25 days it emerged as a dark moth that is about 2.5 cm long and 2.5 cm across. Unfortunately I am still unable to identify it. Any suggestions?



The next Bushcare working bee will be Sunday 6th June at 8am.