

The Fort Bushland

August 2007 Notes - by John Lahey

We had a successful working bee on Sunday 5 August, although our numbers were slightly down on normal, possibly due to members suffering colds. The area below Fort Road that has been cleared of weeds continues to expand.

The council has marked the exotic trees (with the exception of the Mango trees and Toon tree) adjacent to Fort Road for removal and chipping. The remaining Chinese elm in the northeast corner of the Reserve has also been marked for removal.



Petaurus – Sugar Glider or Squirrel Glider

I recently found a small *Flindersia schottiana* tree on which I counted over 60 small bite marks in the trunk from about 1 metre above the ground to 4 metres high. Thick resinous sap was oozing from these wounds in the trunk. From these photographs, Ric Natrass has confirmed that they were made by either a sugar glider or squirrel glider. I believe the gliders are visiting this tree quite regularly as the sap appears to be being licked away overnight. Ric is planning to visit the reserve in the near future and I am hoping we might be able to install some nesting boxes suitable for gliders.

I'm optimistic that the restoration work we're doing is making the reserve more attractive for our native birds and animals. The cat's claw creepers probably tangled them up.



During the month I found five plants to add to the list of native plants which can be found in the reserve. The number on the list now stands at 178.

Cryptocarya triplinervis* var. *triplinervis

Brown Laurel, Three-veined
Cryptocarya

I found this small to medium tree growing in the bottom of the gully on the eastern edge of the reserve. It is an attractive tree with glossy dark green leaves and is one of several species of *Cryptocarya* to be found in the reserve. The most common one in the reserve is the undescribed species *Cryptocarya* species "Worlds End Pocket".

Arytera foveolata Pitted Coogera

After studying the *Aryteras* for some time I was convinced there were two different species growing here. *Arytera divaricata* produces bright pink to red new growth, but some had a much paler fawnish-coloured new growth. I took a specimen to the Queensland Herbarium and they confirmed that those plants were *Arytera foveolata*. So we have both *Arytera divaricata* and *Arytera foveolata* growing in the reserve.

Acronychia imperforata Beach Acronychia

I found this poor tree smothered in Cat's Claw creeper, with its top knocked off and pushed sideways by the fallen tree that had taken out its top. It is unusual to find this plant growing so far inland, because as the common name implies, it is usually found quite close to the coast. A botanist from the Queensland Herbarium has confirmed the identification.

Alphitonia incarna
Hairy Sarsaparilla Ash

This is another plant I found buried by the Cat's Claw creeper. It is in such poor condition that I am reluctant to take a specimen to have the identification confirmed. It is usually only found in the Nambour district and in North Queensland. I've put a question mark against this plant until its identification has been confirmed. Its relative *Alphitonia excelsa* (Red ash or Soapbush) is quite common right across the reserve.

Ailanthus triphysa (White Bean)

I found this very attractive tree growing near the very top of the erosion gully. It is an Australian native but is also found in India and Melanesia. The very large compound leaves can have up to 60 leaflets although the leaf specimen I collected had 35 leaflets. The tree can grow to about 30 metres tall and produces panicles of cream/green flowers in summer. The flowers are followed by winged seeds, called samara, which are brownish when ripe and about 5 cm long. It appears to be highly ornamental and I am surprised it is not used more commonly in horticulture.

The pale yellow-green leaves on the trunk belong to one of the ubiquitous Cat's Claw creepers.



When I looked carefully at the *Ailanthus triphysa* leaf I had collected I found this pinhead sized, very young lacewing larva. It had a body diameter of about 2 mm and quite formidable looking mouthparts. These lacewings lay their eggs on long stalks in a typical U shaped arrangement. The long stalks are to prevent the newly hatched larvae from devouring the eggs of their siblings.

I saw a small green lacewing (approx 15 mm long) in the bush a few days ago and wondered if it was the adult form of this larva.

The following plants have flowered this month.

Alectryon tomentosus (Hairy Alectryon)

There are a number of these small to medium sized trees growing in the reserve. They have recently produced a flush of bronze-red new growth accompanied by masses of tiny flowers. These plants are quite easy to recognize as the leaves are covered in soft brownish hairs and the leaflets, which can number from 4 to 8 (typically 8), are much smaller at the lower end. Note the absence of any petals on the flowers. The flowers seemed to be very attractive to these small black honey ants that were busily collecting nectar. I'm not sure whether the ants play a role in the pollination of the flowers.

The fruit is a one to three lobed hairy capsule containing up to 3 black seeds which are enclosed in a fleshy red aril. The red aril is edible.



Flindersia bennettiana (Bennett's Ash)

Flowers first appeared on the *F. bennettiana* about two months ago and I'm amazed that the same trees are still covered in bloom. As this tree is not particularly common, I collected a specimen for the Queensland herbarium.

I'm hoping that the trees will set some seeds this year. The fruit is a "prickly" five-sided capsule containing winged seeds.



Alyxia ruscifolia* subsp. *ruscifolia (Chain Fruit or Prickly Alyxia)

This prickly understorey shrub is quite common in the reserve and very hardy and drought tolerant. The fragrant white flowers are produced in heads of from 3 to 5 flowers on the ends of the branches. The fruit is an orange berry about 10 mm in diameter which is produced singly or in a chain of up to 4. In the photo there are two single berries and two in a chain.

This plant together with the following plant are very useful understorey plants as replacements for the Ochna.



Pittosporum multiflorum (Orange Thorn)

This small very prickly shrub, which is very common throughout the reserve, grows to about 2 metres high although most of our plants are under 1 metre. Many plants were completely covered by Cat's Claw creepers and while a few have died many are recovering and starting to thrive. Their flowers are small (about 5 mm across) and produced singly from nodes along the stems. The fruit is an edible orange berry about 4 – 10 mm in diameter which is attractive to some fruit eating birds.





***Pandorea sp. Ipswich* (Wonga Wonga vine)**

This is one of the larger vines growing in the reserve with thick stems and a vigorous climbing habit. It is in full bloom now and most of the plants are smothered in flowers. It has small yellow tubular flowers growing in clusters on the ends of the stems. While the flowers are somewhat difficult to see in the tops of the taller trees there are three plants in the north-east corner of the reserve growing in trees which are only 4 or 5 metres high.



***Cupaniosis anacardiodes* (Tuckeroo)**



This hardy small to medium sized tree is scattered through the reserve. One of the larger specimens is growing beside the firebreak on the eastern side of the reserve and there is one that has been planted as a



street tree in Fort Road. The dark green glossy leaves are thick and leathery and form a dense crown. Because of its attractive appearance and hardy nature the tree is often used in horticulture for street plantings. The small greenish- yellow flowers seem to be highly attractive to our native stingless bees (*Trigona carbonaria*) which were flying around the flowers in swarms.



The next working bee will be held on Sunday 2 September at 8 am.