

The Fort Bushland

July 2007 Notes - by John Lahey

Our working bees continue to make steady progress in removing the weeds and weed trees from the area just below Fort Road. The size of the cleared area is now becoming quite impressive. The following are a few photos from our working bee on 1 June.



The *Croton insularis* (Silver Croton) trees have flowered profusely this month possibly as a result of the recent rain. However the flowers are relatively inconspicuous being quite small (about 5 mm across) and produced on the ends of the branches. The flowers are very sweetly scented and seem to be attractive to bees.

These trees are normally very easy to identify because the older leaves turn bright orange before falling off so the trees normally carry several dozen orange leaves. This characteristic seems to be less obvious at the moment which I suspect is the result of the prolonged drought.



Solanum stelligerum (Devil's needles)

I've added this species to our list of native plants growing in the reserve. It is a small shrub growing to about 2 metres. The stems are covered in hairs and numerous thin sharp prickles about 10 mm long. While the plant in flower is only sparsely covered in prickles another plant I found is smothered in prickles. The small flowers are about 10 mm across. It produces small bright red berries to about 9 mm in diameter which, like most species of *Solanum*, are poisonous.

The buds on the male plants of *Mallotus claoxyloides* (Smell-of-the-Bush or Green Kamala) have finally opened. The female plants flowered in February. Their flowering seems to be right out of phase which might be the result of the severe drought we have experienced.



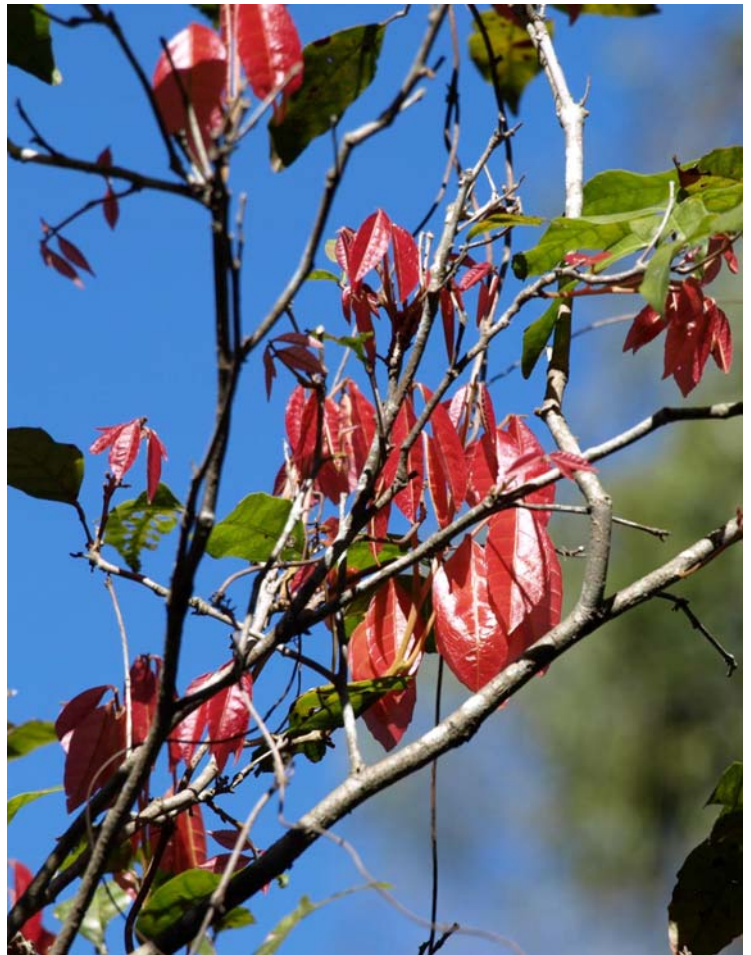


Bruce Cowell

Courtesy of "Wildlife of Greater Brisbane"

While doing some clearing last week I heard a loud hissing sound coming from the undergrowth. It was just like the noise that the large Stag beetles make. I was amazed to discover that the noise came from a Burton's Snake Lizard (*Lialis burtonis*). It was about 30 cm long with a snakelike body but a very lizardlike head. Unfortunately I didn't have my camera with me so I've included this illustration from the "Wildlife of Greater Brisbane".

Anyone walking through the reserve recently would have noticed the brilliant bright pink and red leaves on the *Arytera divaricata* (Coogera or Rose Tamarind) trees. They are really quite spectacular at the moment



The *Jagera pseudorhus* (Foambark) trees which flowered in April are now carrying mature fruit. These seed capsules are about 15 mm in diameter and covered in stiff irritating hairs. They contain 3 dark brown to black seeds.





Secamone elliptica (Corky Milk Vine)

This is another vine that we can add to the list of native plants growing in the reserve. It has milky sap and the old stems are covered in a soft corky bark. It produces small pale yellow flowers carried on short stems.

I found it growing beside the new firetrail on the southern side of the reserve.

The next working bee will be held on Sunday 5 August at 8 am.