

Winter 2022

# Angair Quarterly

Bringing you stories from the Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society  
for the Protection of Flora and Fauna.



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Angair

# Angair Quarterly

## Winter 2022

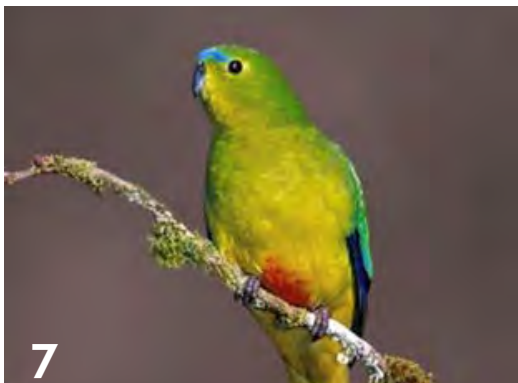


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**Angair inc.** (R/N A0002974W)

3C McMillan Street, Anglesea, Vic. 3230

Phone: (03) 5263 1085

email: [admin@angair.org.au](mailto:admin@angair.org.au)



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## Fabulous fungi

Chris Morrissey

Are they plants? No, they have no chlorophyll so do not photosynthesise. Are they animals? No, they do not move about. Fungi have been given their own special classification – the Fungi Kingdom, but only since the mid-20th Century. Before that, they were considered to be plants.

There are tens of thousands of fungi throughout the world – very few have been described and even fewer have common names, making it more difficult for us to remember them. There is a very small number of mycologists studying fungi, so progress is slow in learning about new species. Angair member Neil Tucker and mycologist Richard Hartland have been able to identify more than 600 species in our area, and are still finding new ones when they go exploring.

Fungi are extremely important recyclers: they break down the litter in our forests and return it to the soil. Without them, the forest would be swamped with an ever-increasing layer of dead vegetation. However, there are some 'bad' fungi. Some grow on live vegetation and gradually kill it; for example Honey Fungus, *Armillaria luteobubalina*, is an aggressive plant parasite that spreads its roots underground to infect plants, but most fungi are beneficial.



Honey Fungus

Fungi can grow under many climatic conditions, from rainforest to desert, and may be associated with specific groups of plants. We have all heard about the symbiotic relationship between orchids and fungi. They can grow on dead or living vegetation, bare earth, in mosses and algae, on animal scats and on other fungi. The substrate on which they grow can help with their identification. They can be edible or poisonous and even cause death. It is not recommended to eat any fungi picked from the wild – buy them from a shop to be absolutely safe!

The roots of fungi are thread-like filaments called hyphae, which form a mass called a mycelium. The fruiting body then grows from this and appears, mostly above ground, as a fungus. They can be brown or extremely colourful and have a multitude of shapes. There are some fungi, however, which remain underground: the truffles which are greatly prized by us and by animals such as wallabies. Fungi reproduce by spores, not seeds, as in plants.

Fungi are divided into two main groups.

**1. Basidiomycota** – These produce their spores on microscopic club-shaped cells called basidia, which are in the gills, pores or outer surface of the fruiting body, and usually fall to the ground.

**2. Ascomycota** – These produce their spores inside microscopic sac-like cells called asci, usually formed on the fertile surface of the fruiting body. When mature, the cell ruptures and the spores explode into the air.

All the fungi pictured belong to the Basidiomycota group although their physical characteristics vary considerably.

## Gilled Fungi include:

Emperor Cap, *Cortinarius archeri*: this large, colourful species has a cobweb-like veil called a cortina which covers the young gills (for protection). It gradually breaks as the fungus grows, leaving a ring (annulus) on the stem. The brown colour on the ring is where the brown spores have fallen and become lodged. They are often found in eucalypt forests.



Emperor Cap

Nargan's Bonnet, *Mycena nargan*: one of the many 'Fairy Parasols', this delightful fungus is very small and grows on dead wood in forests.



Nargan's Bonnet

Little Ping-pong Bats, *Panellus pusillus* (formerly *Dictyopanus pusillus*): this tiny cream-coloured fungus grows in massed tiers on dead and living eucalypt tree trunks in forests. A small stem attaches each fungus to the tree.



Little Ping-pong Bats

**Boletes, or Pored Fungi**, are a group of fungi in which most species have pores instead of gills. They include:

Shaggy-cap Bolete, *Boletellus ananicep*: this species has bright yellow pores and a shaggy cap.



Shaggy-cap Bolete

Rhubarb Bolete, *Boletellus obscurecoccineus*: another species of bolete with bright yellow pores, lovely red caps and comparatively long stems. It is found in eucalypt forests and woodland.



Rhubarb Bolete

**Coral Fungi** can resemble coral or have branched clubs and they grow mostly on the ground. There are two families: Clavarias with white spores and Ramarias with yellow-brown spores.

Yellow Club Coral, *Clavinulopsis amoena*, is common and widespread in eucalypt woodland and forest, it grows among mosses, is unbranched and mostly cylindrical, up to 10 cm in height.



Yellow Club Coral

Green-staining Coral, *Ramaria abietina*: this is a whitish fungus which gradually becomes blue-greenish with age, or rapidly on handling or bruising. There have only been three sightings reported in all of Australia; in SA, Sydney and Anglesea (thanks to Neil and Richard). They found the specimen in Moonah woodland.



Green Staining Coral

**Earth Stars** are made up of two layers – the tough outer layer which splits to reveal the central layer, a soft puffball containing the spores.

Daisy Earth Star, *Geastrum floriforme*: this has split its tough outer layer to resemble a daisy flower. The inner, thin-skinned sac has a central hole through which the spores are released into the air.



Daisy Earth Star



Stinky Squid Fungus

**Stinkhorns** are strangely-shaped fungi that produce a foul-smelling brown slime, but it is ambrosia to flies and other insects. They consume the spore-containing slime and distribute the spores after passing them through their body.

Stinky Squid Fungus, *Pseudocolis fusiformis*: no need to guess what this smells like! Growing on the ground and on decaying forest matter, this fungus is up to 6 cm high and has colourful arms which are joined at the apex.

**Leathery Shelf Fungi** are usually thin and leathery. They have no stems but attach directly to tree trunks or the ground on buried wood. Their undersurface is smooth and contains the spores.

Wine Glass Fungus, *Podoscypha petallobes*: these thin, leathery, frilly rosettes are actually funnel-shaped, and attached to buried wood, especially around tree trunks. They are widespread and common in forests.



Wine Glass Fungus

Golden Curtain Crust, *Stereum ostria*: fan-shaped and brown and orange above, they are richly gold-yellow underneath from where the spores are released. They are a stand-out species when the yellow under surface is seen growing high on tree trunks.



Golden Curtain Crust

Image: Rob Shepherd

Fungi are fascinating and fun to discover, so look out for them when walking in the bush.

Images by Richard Hartland, unless otherwise indicated

Reference: Bruce Fuhrer, 2011, *A field guide to Australian Fungi*, Bloomingdale Books, Melbourne.

### **STOP PRESS!**

A Broad-toothed Rat, *Mastacomys fuscus*, has been discovered in the Painkalac Valley by a survey team from Zoos Victoria.

The rat was last recorded in Aireys Inlet in 1988.

Details of the find will be available in the July issue of Angair News.

## Orange-bellied Parrots' breeding season at Melaleuca 2021-2022

Dr. Shannon Troy, Wildlife Biologist, Orange-bellied Parrot Tasmanian Program



Image: Trevor Prescott

Breeding season is coming to an end and it's been an interesting one. A record number of Orange-bellied Parrots migrated south to Melaleuca in south-west Tasmania last spring, but the number of nests and the proportion of birds remaining at Melaleuca to the end of the season were both lower than average.

The number of female Orange-bellied parrots observed at Melaleuca declined after the December census, resulting in fewer nesting attempts than we'd hoped. However, the success rate of nesting attempts was high, with up to 60 fledglings produced from 18 attempts.

We don't yet know why a high number of birds were not seen later in the season, and there are many possible explanations. We hope to gain a better understanding from the December 2022 census about whether these birds survived.

Although the outcomes this season were mixed, the size of the wild population has steadily improved over the past five years and we know that survival and breeding success for this critically endangered species will vary from year to year. We will continue to build on our knowledge to adapt efforts to help this critically endangered species recover.

With the recent successful release of 50 captive-bred juveniles, the remaining adults and this season's wild-bred birds, about 140 Orange-bellied Parrots are expected to migrate north this season. This would be the second-highest departing population size in more than 15 years, exceeded only by last season.

For more information about this season, see <https://nre.tas.gov.au/obp-updates>

For Angair members interested, the remaining OBP mainland survey dates for 2022 will occur on 23 and 24 July and 10 and 11 September.

If you want to participate contact, Craig Morley, Bellarine Peninsula Orange-bellied Parrot Regional Group Coordinator at [craig\\_morley@birdlife.org.au](mailto:craig_morley@birdlife.org.au)

## Winter plants with a sunny name

Chris Morrissey

Although it is not a spectacular time in the bush, winter has some interesting plants for you to enjoy.

There are six sundews which grow in our area. Because of our infertile soils, sundews trap and digest insects in their sticky leaves to supplement their nutrition. If you look carefully in the heathland and open forest, you may see small green, bronze or red rosettes hugging the ground, with spoon-shaped leaves edged with fine, sticky hairs. These are the rosettes of the Scented Sundew, *Drosera aberrans*. A white, perfumed flower can appear in the centre of the rosette on a short stalk, but you will need to get on your knees to enjoy its fragrance. Each plant can have many flowers, but they only open one at a time. After fire, large colonies of flowering Scented Sundews can occur.



Scented Sundew

Another sundew which is appearing now is the Climbing Sundew, *Drosera macrantha* subsp. *planchonii*. Scrambling its way over the low-growing vegetation, it can be more than one metre long. Later in the season the Tall Sundew, *Drosera auriculata*, will make its appearance in large numbers in many areas.



Climbing Sundew



Tall Sundew



The fresh yellow flowers of the Silver Banksia, *Banksia marginata*, are certainly brightening up the bush. The Silver Banksia is our only indigenous banksia; the similar but much larger Coast Banksia, *Banksia integrifolia*, belongs near the coast, east of Port Phillip Bay. Our banksia can grow up to three metres in height away from the coast, but is usually much smaller where the wind and salt inhibit its growth. The tough, leathery leaves are dark green above, but almost white underneath and covered with with woolly hairs; the ends of the leaves are square. Tiny flowers form a cylindrical spike which start yellow, then become brown, then grey as they age.



Banksia cones (remember the Banksia Men in Snugglepot and Cuddlepipie) split to release their seeds. They can remain on the plant for years. Sometimes it is possible to see all the different stages of flowering at once on the same bush – buds, flowers (yellow, brown, grey) and cones.





A delightful, but often overlooked, low growing plant which is coming into flower in heathland and heathy woodland is Prickly Broom-heath, *Monotoca scoparia*. Its small, stiff narrow leaves end in a point which makes them prickly. They are dark green above but pale underneath – a useful diagnostic feature. The foliage is said to resemble gorse and other materials used in making brooms. The tiny, white tubular flowers open out to a five-pointed star, and may have clearly visible stamens (male) or a filament (female). They grow singly in the leaf axils. The male flowers are larger than the females. Sometimes both types of flowers will be on the same plant (monoecious) and sometimes they are on separate plants (dioecious).



Prickly Broom-heath - male



Prickly Broom-heath - female

The colourful Heath and the Cranberry Heath are still flowering but will soon be finishing. Be sure to take your *Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet* with you when out walking to help to identify the local flora.



Cranberry Heath

### References:

*Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet* ed. Margaret MacDonald 2009

*Flora of the Otway Plain and Ranges* Enid Mayfield 2013

## Conservation and research in the Otways – two opportunities

**Big Otway Tree Plant** - 18 June 2022 organised by the Conservation Ecology Centre  
[Details](#)

**Otways Ecological Research Forum** - Thursday 4 August 2022. Free

Venue: Wurdi Youang Room, Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, 51 Little Malop St, Geelong

Previously called the 'Otways Threatened Species Research Forum'. You don't need to be a researcher to attend. Learn about the excellent ecological research being conducted in the Otways, as well as the interaction of this research with land management.

Further details: [toni@conservationecologycentre.org](mailto:toni@conservationecologycentre.org)

# What exactly is GORCAPA doing?

Sally White



**GREAT OCEAN ROAD**  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

‘In 12 months time people will have a good idea of what we’re about,’ says Jodie Sizer, chief executive officer of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, shortened by those in the know as the Authority rather than the cumbersome acronym, GORCAPA.

At the moment, however, much of the work that goes on in the shared office block, tucked away off Baines Crescent in Torquay is a mystery to many regular citizens. So let’s start with the background.

In September 2017, the Victorian Government set up the Great Ocean Road Taskforce to investigate how the management of the Great Ocean Road (GOR) region could be streamlined. The taskforce comprised members drawn from the Traditional Owners, the tourism industry, coastal management authorities and local governments.

Management along the road was a mess. It had grown over the years and was no longer fit for the purpose of properly looking after country that had high environmental, cultural and heritage values. It was being subjected to increased population growth, the impact of greater tourist numbers and the effects of climate change on its beaches, cliffs, forests and heathlands.

The taskforce consulted with 38 organisations that had interests in, or management responsibilities for, various bits along the 243 kilometres of the GOR between Torquay and Allansford, east of Warrnambool. The region contains three marine parks, three marine sanctuaries, two national parks and almost 170,000 hectares of assorted crown land: a mixed bag. The taskforce report was the basis for the Great Ocean Road Action Plan which was released in October 2018.

The plan outlined 18 actions, all of which aimed at creating a system by which the Great Ocean Road region could be managed as ‘a single, integrated and living entity’. That phrase occurs frequently in the Authority’s glossy online and physical documents and in conversation with staff members. So, too, is the organisation’s purpose: ‘to care for, protect and manage the coast and parks traversed by the Great Ocean road so that they can be enjoyed by all, now and for generations to come’.

The Authority became official on 1 December 2020 and at first was an amalgamation of existing organisations, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and the Otway Coast Committee, which continued their established activities: environmental education, environmental protection projects and management of caravan parks and public land parcels from Point Impossible in Torquay to Elliott River in Marengo.

To the general public it seemed like business as usual. But when CEO Jodie Sizer came on board in July last year, the Authority had already ramped up the internal task of setting its organisational guidelines. Development of a strategy brief had started. Workshops to refine the strategy were then held for board members, staff and external organisations such as the Department of Land Water and Planning (DELWP), councils and the catchment management authorities (CMAs).

“ In 12 months time people will have a good idea of what we’re about ”



‘The immediate and most important tasks were to define the Authority’s objectives and refine the values and principles which were to underpin its future work. The objectives are to ‘protect distinctive areas and landscapes [and] the ecological and landscape integrity of coastal and marine environments, increase Traditional Owner inclusion, modernise governance and grow the local, state and national visitation economies’.

This last objective has caused some community concern. The Great Ocean Road Community Network (GORCN), which comprises 13 local groups, was set up in August last year. A spokesman has said there is ‘a great deal of scepticism’ that the Authority will be able to balance the protection of coast, environment and community while growing tourism.

Jodie Sizer is happy to get any community feedback, even if it is sceptical. She met with GORCN in January, putting into practice one of the Authority’s values of collaboration with all communities. The others are leadership, making evidence-based decisions and trust.

The challenge, she says, is getting the balance of priorities right. ‘Values are important because they underlie what you do and how you do it.’ The process is as important as the outcomes. She concedes that the challenges are complex as ‘there are so many moving parts to the whole thing’. But she is confident, for example, that the four councils involved already accept the Authority’s objectives, principles and values.

Now it is the public’s turn. Last month the Authority began reaching out to general community members. It held two webinars to discuss its Draft Community Engagement Framework and sought feedback through an online survey. The final framework will be published in July.

Jodie Sizer hopes that soon the Authority can get started on other elements of community engagement such as strengthening the capacity of local leaders, connect with – and learn from – the hidden knowledge holders in the region’s diverse communities and work out ways to increase community participation and collective knowledge.

In the meantime, on another less personal level, the Authority is working on land transfers. Although it already manages some of the public land in the region, it must now negotiate with existing land managers such as councils or CMAs to transfer about 1000 pieces of land into its jurisdiction. (Parks Victoria will retain management of broad-acre national parkland near the GOR). Jodie Sizer has already found during community conversations that people are nervous about what is going to happen to the individual pieces of land they care about.

So that the Authority can find the best way to proceed, staff members have started on transferring five ‘test’ land parcels. Three are the Edna Bowman Reserve in Anglesea and the Split Point Lookout and the Bushland Reserve in Aireys Inlet; two more are in Lorne.

The Authority wants all land transfers to be completed by 2025. It is an ambitious target, given the commitment to consultation and transparency. The specific details of how the Authority will handle management of their ‘new’ land can’t be settled until all the consultation is done. Until then, there will be residual anxiety about the way the Authority operates.

But Jodie Sizer says that bringing people along is possible so long as the Authority’s operating principles are brought to life.



**GREAT OCEAN ROAD**  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

[www.greatoceanroadauthority.vic.gov.au](http://www.greatoceanroadauthority.vic.gov.au)

## Anglesea winter orchids

Margaret MacDonald and Alison Watson

With autumn drawing to an end and winter approaching, the Greenhood Orchids are dominant in the district. Tiny Greenhoods, *Pterostylis parviflora*, and Brown-tipped Greenhoods, *P. clivosa*, have almost finished flowering but there are still some to be found. Banded Greenhoods, *P. sanguinea*, are flowering well and looking attractive as they open up displaying their reddish-brown nodding flowers, which are strongly marked with dark stripes. Most impressive is the spectacular patch of Striped Greenhoods, *P. striata*, in their O'Donohue Rd heathy habitat. There are too many to count this year with more still in bud. They have a translucent effect when the light shines through them in a certain way



Banded Greenhood



Striped Greenhood



Striped Greenhoods

Many Tall Greenhoods, *P. melagramma*, are in bud in many areas. If you look close to the emerging flower stem you may notice the leafy rosette of the non-flowering plants. Rosettes of other species are also appearing – Nodding Greenhoods, *P. nutans*, Trim Greenhoods, *P. concinna*, and Dwarf Greenhoods, *P. nana*, with a few in bud already.



Nodding Greenhood - leaf rosette



Trim Greenhood - leaf rosette



Dwarf Greenhood- leaf rosette



Mosquito Orchid

The tiny insect-like flowers of Mosquito Orchids, *Acianthus pusillus*, are appearing above their heart-shaped leaves in many places, while tiny leaves of Gnat Orchids, *Cyrtostylis reniformis*, and Hare Orchids, *Leptoceras menziesii*, have been seen pushing their way through the soil. Helmet Orchids, *Corybas* sp., are starting to appear with leaves and buds of Small Helmet Orchids, *C. unguiculatus*, observed in mid May. This is the first of the *Corybas* orchid species to flower in the district, usually in June. Veined Helmet Orchids, *C. diemenicus*, will then appear, followed by the more widespread Slaty Helmet Orchids, *C. incurvus*. Their ground-hugging leaves will be noticeable before the flowers appear.

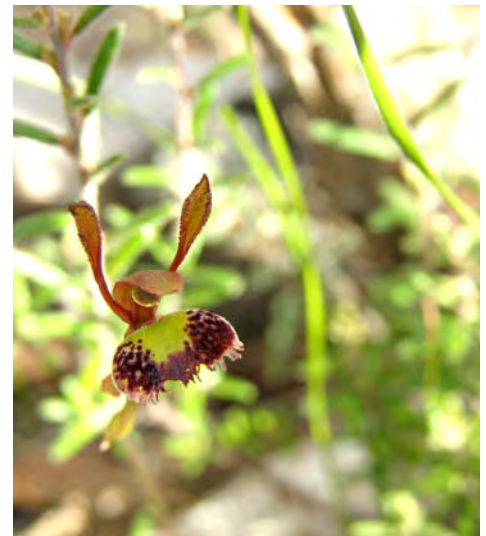


Gnat Orchid leaf

Fringed Hare Orchids, *Leporella fimbriata*, are still delighting viewers at the Fraser Ave site and can also be found flowering in other places around Anglesea if you look carefully. Amongst the Fringed Hare populations at Fraser Ave, early leaves of Flying Duck Orchids, *Caleana major*, have been observed. The pinkish-green or often reddish-brown, spotted, ground-hugging leaf reveals the presence of this orchid long before the flowers appear. These orchids will usually start flowering in October.



Flying Duck Orchid leaf



Fringed Hare Orchid

Leaves of spring flowering orchids including Sun Orchids, Waxlips, Spider Orchids and Red Beaks can be seen if you look closely. We hope spring will bring a productive orchid season.

Please make sure you let us know of any unusual sightings you have. Please watch the recently burnt areas for interesting orchids emerging.

All our orchids are documented and photographed in *Orchids of the Anglesea District*, unfortunately now out of print. A new edition is very close to publication.

Margaret MacDonald [margmacmoggs@icloud.com](mailto:margmacmoggs@icloud.com) Alison Watson [alisonw577@gmail.com](mailto:alisonw577@gmail.com)

## Burning Issues

### Weed monitoring and control post fuel reduction burns.

Janet Stephens

Unless you have been living elsewhere for the last couple of years, you won't have missed the sudden amount of attention Anglesea and surrounds have received from the Forest Fire Management (FFM) team. The many burnt areas and the slashing of strategic areas alongside roads and behind houses have rearranged our landscape.

Given the enormous amount of Victoria's fire risk that sits between Lorne and Torquay, the number of visitors the shire receives in summer and the Black Summer fire events in the east of the state, it makes sense to take steps to protect our towns, people and property. Cool burns are also an important part of maintenance and stimulation for our rich local biodiversity and we all enjoy watching the wealth of orchids, wildflowers and indigenous plants that regenerate after fire.

You may not be aware, however, of one big problem. Angair Monday morning weeders are noting with dismay the enormous numbers of emerging weeds in some burnt areas. Those which already contained some weeds are the worst affected as the seeds remain viable in the ground for some years and are then stimulated as a mass event after fire. Sallow Wattle and Boneseed are the two biggest villains. What is heartbreaking is that in some cases the areas where we are seeing a mass emergence of weeds were largely cleared of weeds before the burn. Areas where Angair has put in many hours of volunteer labour and applied for grants to clear weeds have been badly affected. Nor is this only a recent problem as, for example, in the Anglesea Bushland Reserve south of the Great Ocean Road. Ten years ago, after a fuel reduction burn, a mountain of Sallow Wattle germinated and we still haven't got on top of this infestation. The area around the treatment plant was particularly bad for Sallow Wattle germination.



Emerging Sallow Wattle

Similarly, in the Alcoa Lease west of the Anglesea River, the vegetation close to the river was burnt about 10 years ago. Again, a huge amount of Sallow Wattle came up and our Monday morning weeders spent at least three years having four working bees per year to remove it. It was again burnt in 2020 with a smaller amount regenerating. We often joke that our weeding work is never done but watching our hard work being undone is discouraging!

More recently we have been disturbed by the emergence of weeds in areas where we have already received large grants to clear the land of them.

After a large grant and many hours of volunteer weeding, the Barwon Water Bore site on Coalmine Road has needed an additional 225 hours of volunteer labour to cope with hand pulling the mass germination of Sallow Wattle there after a cool burn. This seems like a very inefficient use of both grant funds (through the government) and our time.



Weeded Sallow Wattle

In 2020–21, the area bounded by Ixodia Track and Blackwattle Track had a grant of \$5500 (Community Environment Program) for contractors to remove large woody weeds, a Working for Victoria crew of six for 10 days and eight volunteer Angair weeding sessions.

Additionally, last year it received a Wild Otways grant for \$23,000, now almost entirely disbursed. The mass germination of Sallow Wattle and Boneseed in the area means that, if it is not controlled, we will be in a worse position than before and all the money and labour will be wasted.

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While Angair largely supports the fuel reduction burns, we cannot understand why FFM do not have adequate resources to remove seedlings of environmental weeds after cool burns. Our district is considered as one of the richest and most biologically diverse ecosystems in the state and yet there are few resources to prevent the destruction of our flora by environmental weeds.

In February, Angair invited DELWP, FFM and Parks Victoria personnel to an onsite meeting to discuss how better to work together and to identify any resources available to help manage this problem. At that meeting we learned that there is very little money available for follow-up weeding and it was proposed to use fire and mulching as a long-term weed control strategy. For example, regular fire regimes can exhaust (eventually) the seed banks of Sallow Wattle and Boneseed but a long-term view needs to be taken. Mulching can also work to eliminate Sallow Wattle, provided it is allowed to be let grow first to the woody stage (about three years). By the time the dense amount of Sallow Wattle reaches that stage, however, the plants will already have smothered and killed many of the indigenous species that also germinated after the fires. The frequency of fire needed to control weeds (two or three years between seed set) is also far too frequent for an ideal heathland burning regime (six to seven years). Eventually, with frequent burning and mulching, the indigenous seed set will be depleted as well.



Boneseed Seedlings



Alice Miller School students assist the weeding program

One thing we were able to agree on is that communication and collaboration is important between all the agencies involved. To that end, the FFM team produced a draft map of priority fire and weed control blocks around Anglesea. Matt Russell, of Parks Victoria, was nominated to update the maps regularly with information he receives about areas weeded, mulched or burnt. In that way, it is proposed to keep track of emerging weed areas of concern. Any additional resources may then be devoted to high priority areas.

Nevertheless, we still have concerns:

- Burning regimens will not happen often enough to control weeds as they are subject to many unpredictable factors.
- Using a mulcher to deal with large areas of weeds has limitations. Access is a problem, as is damage to surrounding vegetation. However, we do welcome this as a possible strategy for some areas.
- Angair will not be able to manage all the weeds that spring up. Our volunteer weeding schedules will need to prioritise only areas in which we can make a real difference. Unfortunately, that will mean sacrificing some areas that have already received large amounts of money and time.
- These same areas, such as the square kilometre bounded by Firebreak Track, Ixodia Track, Coalmine Road and Camp Road currently have a mass emergence of Sallow Wattle and Boneseed. Within two or three years the fire danger will be as high there as it was before.

As the current program of fire management is to reduce fire risk and protect townships (and hopefully biodiversity assets) we question the use of fire without resourcing appropriate weed control.

Anglesea will be a lot more fire safe if we retain our heathlands in good condition. If we burn and create a heavy mid-storey canopy we make the fire risk more severe and reduce biodiversity values. We would welcome a clear plan, with appropriate resources committed, to manage this issue sustainably for the future.

## A story of plant identification

Carl Rayner and Neil Tucker

Early in April our Monday morning weeders had a working bee in the Great Otway National Park opposite Guvvo's, west of Anglesea. The day before the working bee I did a walk through the park looking for environmental weeds that we could target. A lot of Boneseed and Coast Teatree had germinated after the recent cool burn. Returning to my car I walked along the Great Ocean Road and noticed an unusual grass growing beside the road. It was a metre high and the flower heads were at the end of the stem. The radiating flower branches were like the fingers of your hand (spreading from a common centre).



Rhodes grass

I took a specimen and using the key in the Vicflora website for Monocotyledons/Poaceae (grass family), I identified the grass as *Chloris gayana*, Rhodes grass. A botanical key is where the user must answer a number of questions about the specimen's flower structure, the leaves, the height, spread etc to finally come up with an identification. Since the flower structure for grasses are often tiny you need a binocular stereo microscope with magnification up to 40 times to see the detail. Similar equipment is required to identify sedges and rushes that are very common in our district.

There were no records in Vicflora in the whole of south-west Victoria for *Chloris gayana*. Neil Tucker sent a herbarium specimen to the National Herbarium Victoria (NHV). They confirmed the identification. *Chloris gayana* is common along the Murray River in the irrigated districts of the north-west.

At the working bee Neil found another weedy grass growing prostrate beside the Great Ocean Road that I identified as *Eragrostis cilianensis*, Stink-grass. The identification was also confirmed by NHV. There were no records for the Otways and few from south-west Victoria. It also is a common weed in northern Victoria, particularly in irrigated districts.

We are not sure whether the weeds will spread from the road reserve and become a problem in the district but we think it is unlikely.

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Identifying Australia's unique flora is a fascinating hobby. Angair members have an excellent opportunity to learn extensively about our local flora and how to use stereo microscopes, by joining the Plant Study Group, which is run by Gail Slykhuis, an outstanding botanical teacher. It is held on the second Monday of the month at 11.00 am.



Identifying Australia's unique flora is a fascinating hobby



## Ambitious regeneration projects progressing well

Sammy Bodycomb and Roger Ganly

Human activity has often marred the face of the Surf Coast. Rock retaining walls along the Anglesea River and draining of the sloping swampy areas on its east bank have adversely affected the Fairyland Nature Reserve and decades of grazing virtually destroyed the ecology of the Painkalac Valley in Aireys Inlet.

Three regeneration projects – in which Angair is closely involved – aim at restoring the beauty and diversity of these special places.

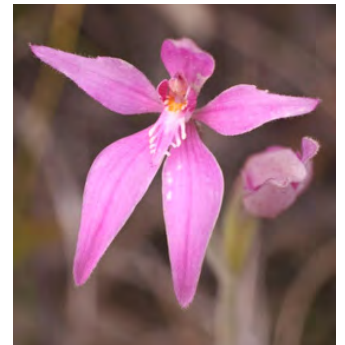
Long-time Angair member, Neil Tucker, was well aware of the conservation value and significance of the 9-hectare Fairyland Nature Reserve, located in the heart of Anglesea along the river, and the Coastal Moonah Woodland and adjacent riparian and salt marsh vegetation communities that it supports. He envisaged a project to restore a degraded cleared area north of the reserve and opposite the Anglesea Men's Shed back to the native vegetation it once was. When the former Federal Government announced the Wild Otways Initiative, aimed at improving conservation outcomes in the Otways region, Angair applied for a grant to fund the project.



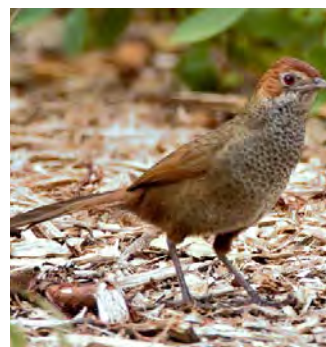
Coastal Moonah Woodland is a listed threatened ecological community under Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act because of the fragmentation and loss of the vegetation type and further predicted disturbance. Within the Fairyland Reserve, more than 270 species have been recorded, including the threatened Rufous Bristlebird, *Dasyornis broadbenti*, and Swamp Antechinus, *Antechinus minimus*, as well as the Pink Fairies, *Caladenia latifolia*, which gave the reserve its name. Pink Fairies flower between September to October and can occasionally form dense colonies with conspicuous pink petals.



Moonah flowers  
Image: Ellinor Campbell



Pink Fairies  
Image: Geoff Lay



Rufous Bristle Bird  
Image: Jordan Ayton



Swamp Antechinus  
Image: Trevor Pescott

Angair's grant application was successful and the Wild Otways Initiative was formally launched at a ceremony near the Coastal Moonah Woodland restoration site March 2021.

The first aim for the revegetation project was to enhance the health of the immediate surrounding vegetation. Infill planting of indigenous herbs, shrubs and trees, including Moonah, *Melaleuca lanceolata*, was undertaken by Angair members with the support of young and enthusiastic Scouts from Eumeralla Scout Camp.



Angair members then established a rabbit-proof fence to exclude rabbits from the project area and to support the growth of the planted seedlings. Weed management has also taken place in the last 12 months, while a soil test was completed to identify the nutrient availability in the dumped soil on site. A cultural heritage assessment was also completed to ensure there was no impact to culturally significant objects/values within the site.

This year, in preparation for the next stage of planting, the ground has been prepared for the tube stock grown by the Angair propagation team to be planted in the main site. This preparation has included ripping the ground to soften and aerate the soil to provide better conditions for seedlings to develop. Mulch, provided by Surf Coast Shire and Parks Victoria, has been spread. Soon Angair will seek support from members to participate in the planting efforts. Angair News and membership emails will give the details. We look forward to your involvement and appreciate all ongoing interest in the project.



‘ ... hopefully these projects will establish a biodiversity corridor along the valley to help the survival of our precious threatened native birds and animals ‘

Around the same time as the Fairyland project was being planned, Angair became involved in a project to revegetate a parcel of land in the Painkalac Valley. Following unsuccessful attempts by a group of locals to buy all the valley land for rehabilitation, a private citizen, Mick Loughnan, bought Lot 2 on Bambra Road, land severely degraded by years of stock grazing. With support of Angair and the Aireys Inlet District Association (AIDA) and using grants from the Victorian Government Landcare program and the Wild Otways Initiative, over 7000 plants of local provenance were planted in 2020-21. A riparian area of trees and shrubs has been established along with natural grassland and an old ox-bow lake, or billabong. Freed from the pressures of grazing and trampling by horses, it is now largely covered by indigenous sedges, rushes, grasses and annual wildflowers that have naturally returned to the area.



The next stage of activities in the valley is to consolidate the planting of this area with a number of working bees, as well as starting a new project nearby. Supported by a different Wild Otways Initiative grant, and with fantastic help of the Surf Coast Shire, the regeneration team has started work rehabilitating another area of land along the banks of the Painkalac Creek: the Salt Wedge Project. Together these projects will hopefully establish a biodiversity corridor along the valley to help the survival of our precious threatened native birds and animals

## Lilliput Landscape

Neville Millen

Grampians – guardian of riches so rare,  
Clinging high onto ledges in rarefied air.  
Mt William Road, seeps – moving slow,  
Dark range lit by afternoon sun glow.  
Grainy rock ledges loom heavy and bold,  
Dark pools of water abound still and cold.  
The ‘Fairy Aprons’ arise in delicate form,  
Tiny, tensile – ready to quietly perform  
They are survivors in this Lilliput land,  
Feasting on insect detritus in the sand.  
A parade of lilac parasols calmly sway,  
Mesmerizing me – it’s hard to look away!  
Mountain vistas lift up my heart in a bind,  
Small worlds in nature can enchant my mind.



Note. **Grampians bladderwort**, *Utricularia grampiana*.

Image: Fierce Flora

Known as ‘Fairy Aprons’; small upright lilac flowers that digest insects for food.

(Declared a rare species in Victoria). Found only on mossy seeps on sandstone between

400 and 1100m altitude on the Mt. William and Mt. Difficult Ranges in the Grampians (Gariwerd)



Angair (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Preservation of Flora and Fauna) is dedicated to protecting our indigenous flora and fauna, and to maintaining the natural beauty of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet and their local environments.

[www.angair.org.au](http://www.angair.org.au)

We acknowledge the Wadawurrung and the Gadubanud of the Maar People as the traditional owners and protectors of this place. We also acknowledge their ancestors who cared for the land, water and marine areas and all its biodiversity for thousands of years. We pay our respect to their elders past, present and future who continue to care for this place.

### Next issue:

Our next issue will be published in September 2022 and will be the spring edition. We welcome any contributions of local, seasonal or general environmental interest. Send your contributions to [angair.communication@gmail.com](mailto:angair.communication@gmail.com) by mid-August and clearly label them 'for Angair Quarterly'.