



Spinulosa

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Newsletter of *Montrose Environmental Group Inc.*

MEG Website: www.meg.org.au Regn. No. A0018558J

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Mystery Rear Views

Kim Wormald

This year's annual lirrallirra mystery images are rear views which, I found, are just as difficult to take with intention as are front views – but at least I didn't have to worry about getting the eye in focus!





My thanks to Michael and Louise for their kind comments about previous lirrallirra quizzes and for serendipitously reminding me that it's time for this year's mysteries.

I think 50% on these quizzes is pretty awesome, even 20%, they can be trickier than I'd originally anticipated. I've included a few clues this year that might be helpful. Anyways, put your guesses to any or all of the images and I'll share the answers in the next addition of Spinulosa – good luck!

Happy birding

Kim





Brickworks Working Bee Success

Karen Davies

The working bees to address Sweet Pittosporum and other woody weeds are continuing again this year with the first one held on the 17th March 2018. This latest working bee attracted an enthusiastic group of members, including one new member.

Progress continues to be made in the area we have been working to reduce the abundance of Sweet Pittosporum. Other woody weeds also encountered included Box Elder, Desert Ash and Flax-leaf Broom. We also noted a Canary Islands Date Palm growing near the car park. Its position indicated it had not been planted but would have spread to the reserve, seed most likely dropped by birds. I find the presence of this tree a cause for some concern. Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) originates from the Canary Islands as its name suggests. It grows to a very large tree which is then costly to remove. I am noticing this tree more often in people's gardens in my local area and I have observed it becoming weedy in regional Victorian town of Rushworth among other places.

I am planning to hold a further 3 working bees throughout the year.

I would also like to thank those who have attended and helped to date and welcome anyone who would like to join us.





What's the story with MEG's emblem - Hairpin Banksia?

Annette Muir

You may have noticed that Hairpin Banksia, *Banksia spinulosa* var. *cunninghamii*, is the emblem of MEG, and that our newsletter 'Spinulosa' is named after the species name of this Banksia. This species is found in small patches at the end of Sheffield Rd Nth. But it is less common than it used to be some decades ago when MEG was formed. Why could this be?

My observations of small populations of Hairpin Banksia in the Dandenong Ranges over several years have revealed that almost all plants are producing little to no cones although flowering is prolific. Minimal seed production makes the species vulnerable to decline in the event of fire, because plants are killed by fire and do not have soil-stored seed.

A number of possible explanations are being investigated by Madison Hughes, a student from La Trobe University. One possibility is the animals that transfer pollen from one Banksia flower to another are low in numbers. Honeyeater birds do this in the daytime and small marsupials at night. Another possibility is that fragmented populations of Banksias have reduced pollen viability because of inbreeding.

The study sites for Madison's research are in the Dandenong Ranges National Park near Silvan Dam and in Kurth Kiln Regional Park, which have different levels of seed production. We will update readers in the next editions of 'Spinulosa' as the project progresses.



A healthy Hairpin Banksia inflorescence (or spike) containing numerous individual flowers.



A Hairpin Banksia spike that has produced numerous cones, each with two seeds inside. Spikes that produce little or no seed do not produce the woody cones with a seed inside, similar to the upper part of this spike.



Some Banksia pollinators include the Eastern Pygmy Possum, Sugar Gliders and birds such as the Eastern Spine-bill. Photos: Jake Urlus, Office of Environment and Heritage NSW, Kim Wormald, and Kim Wormald LirraLirra.





Fungi Foray with Bruce Fuhrer

Bruce Fuhrer OAM (Order of Australia Medal) is an Australian mycologist and nature photographer and is best known for his very popular book "A Field Guide to Australian Fungi".



Two years ago Bruce took Montrose Environmental Group (MEG) members on a low-key but very interesting walk to see fungi at Silvan Reservoir Park. MEG has arranged to repeat this event given its popularity and positive feedback received. The walk will go for one hour... or maybe a little more.

Sufficient rain has now fallen, so the date has been called. We hope you can come and join us.

When: Sunday 3 June 2018, 10 am.

Where: Silvan Reservoir Park, meet at the main car park. NB the first entrance you see is not the main car park.

Cost: Free for MEG members, \$5 for non-members. Membership costs \$10 so why not join to support our local community group!

This event will depend on the weather and Bruce's health, so **please RSVP** to secretary@meg.org.au or 9723 4700.



Photo credits: Bruce Fuhrer



Lost or New MEG Members

Have you told anyone about the Montrose Environmental Group recently? We'd love to recruit some new members so if you happen to be talking to your neighbours or friends from the area, would you be willing to mention our group and encourage people to join? More information can be found on our website www.meg.org.au.

If you move house or change email address, would you remember to update your details with MEG? We suspect that

we have lost contact with a few of our past members simply through changing addresses. We'd appreciate it if you could ask people you know that may be (or may like to be) members to see if they received this May edition of *Spinulosa*. If they didn't, and they are or were members, we most likely have old contact details. It's a simple fix, just let us know your new contact details by email (info@meg.org.au), phone (03 - 9723 4700), or post (PO Box 7, Montrose Vic 3765).

Upcoming Events

Brickworks Working Bee - winter

Help remove Sweet Pittosporum at the Brickworks Conservation Reserve. Hopefully we will have had some rain and can target weeds such as Asparagus Fern, Angled Onion and English Ivy taking advantage of some softer ground. Nature walk included.

Please RSVP text message to 0400 385 918

When: Saturday 16 June, 10am - 1pm.

Where: Brickworks Conservation Reserve, meeting at the car park at Cambridge Road.

BYO: Cup and gardening gloves. Morning tea provided.

Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves

Meet 9:30 am, 2nd Saturday of the month. Meet at the end of Ormond Place, Kilsyth. Contact Graeme Lorimer after hours for details on 9876 6415.

12 May, 9 June, 14 July, 11 August, 8 Sept.

Montrose Upper Landcare Group, MULGA

Meet 9:30 am, 1st Saturday of the month, corner Old Coach Road and Browns Road, Montrose (or wherever the sign there directs you). Contact mulga@googlegroups.com or Robin Gredler 9761 8180 to confirm.

5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 4 Aug, 1 Sept.

Friends of Heathfield Creek Reserve

Meet 10am, last Sunday of the month. Meet on Belvedere Drive near Richards Road. Contact Claire Thomas 9728 2290.

27 May, 24 June, 29 July, 26 Aug, 30 Sept.

Spinulosa Newsletter Enclosed from the Montrose Environmental Group Inc.

Sender:
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Hairpin Banksia
(*Banksia
spinulosa*) at
Bunyip State Park
– the namesake of
our newsletter

