



## Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter Spring 2014

The Friends meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at the Capital Radio Room, Wireless Hill Park at 7.00pm.

Weeding/planting activities are at 8.30am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday.

### WILDFLOWER WALK

For the walk on 7 September, the weather was kind as there were only a few drops of rain during the walks but a heavy downpour immediately afterwards. The people were impressed at how well they could see the flowers within a metre of the path. This was helped by the new signs along the path with stunning pictures of the flowers with flowering dates together with English, Aboriginal and Latin names. We are most grateful to members of the Wildflower Society for leading some walks.

### FLOWERING NOW

This is the time of year when there are most flowers to be seen on Wireless Hill. Many of the peas and wattles (Fabaceae) are over and Trigger plants (*Stylidium*) are yet to come but the orchids, Kangaroo Paws and many other species are well worth a visit. The smaller herbs such as native violet (*Hybanthus floribundus*), Vanilla lily (*Sowerbaea laxiflora*) and Milkmaids (*Burchardia congesta*) together with many shrubs are now looking good.

### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Although some plants have suffered from the unusual weather earlier in the year most showed little effect – including weeds. On Sunday 13 September we will have a “Gladdi Pull” to remove the invasive *Gladiolus* and other weeds such as *Watsonia* and raddish. We would love you to join us then to help.

**Please note that it is illegal to pick wild flowers in WA.**



Participants in the Wildflower Walk with Neil Goldsborough from the Wildflower Society (Photo by Margaret Matthews)



Kangaroo Paws (Photo by Margaret Matthews)

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ORCHIDS

The Orchidaceae is a large worldwide family with wide variation in size, colour and appearance. Basically there are three petals and 3 sepals but one petal may be modified to produce a labellum (lip) or they may be more-or-less fused or reduced. Leaves are often grass-like but may be large and rounded like the “elephant ears” of the local Red Rattle Beak (*Pyrorchis nigricans*). Orchids are dependent on specific soil fungi for growth and many have become adapted to be pollinated by a single insect species. This makes them difficult to cultivate or transplant.

At Wireless Hill, over 20 species have been recorded in recent years. These vary from the small (5 cm), green Snail orchids (*Pterostylis aff nana*) to the tall blue Sun orchids (*Thelymitra macrophylla*). The most prolific and widespread are the Donkey orchids (*Diuris corymbosa*) which appear in September in large yellow/orange clumps that wave in the wind. Several species of Spider orchid can be seen as well as the closely related Dancing bee orchid (*Caladenia discoidea*) and the Cowslip orchid (*Caladenia flava*).

The terrestrial orchids of southern Australia are small compared with the large blooms of the tropical regions where they often grow on trees. Never-the-less they have a fascination for many people due to their complex adaptations and intricate detail which makes them a great favourite of photographers. We are very lucky to have some beautiful examples that can be easily observed on Wireless Hill.

### Kate Creed



*Caladenia flava* (cowslip orchids)



*Diuris corymbosa* (donkey orchids) (Photos by Margaret Matthews)

**Volunteers are always welcome at our meetings and work days**

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