



Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter Summer 2014

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

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

FLOWERS AT WIRELESS HILL

By December most of the Spring flowers are over but others appear as it gets warmer, including Pineapple Bush (*Dasypogon bromeliifolius*), Flax Lily (*Dianella divaricata*), orange *Eremaea pauciflora* and several species of Fringed Lily (*Thysanotus*). All of these are easily seen from the paths. If you raise your eyes you will notice that many trees are blossoming including Slender Banksia (*Banksia attenuata*), Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*), Stinkwood (*Jacksonia sternbergiana*) and the WA Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*).

SURVEY OF NATIVE PLANTS

In 2010 and 2011 a survey was carried out of all plants found in the bushland. 16 native grasses and sedges were identified and 147 flowering herbs, shrubs and trees. 43 exotic weed species were also found. In 2014 a further 4 species were added and all but 10 of the original flowers were seen. Some of these only appear after fire (e.g. *Calandrinia liniflora*, *Pyrorchis nigricans*, *Drosera erythrorhiza*), whereas single specimens of others were not evident in their original site (e.g. *Boronia ramosa*, *Cyanicula deformis*, *Lomandra caespitosa*).

ANIMALS AT WIRELESS HILL

In addition to flowers, many animals can be seen now. The Bobtail (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and Western Bearded Dragon (*Pogona minor*) are active in the warmer weather. Insects are frequently seen including butterflies, dragonflies, bees and the inevitable flies. The latter might annoy visitors but are essential for flower pollination and are a source of food for many birds. The Rainbow Bee-eaters have returned from the north to nest in the Park and both Red and Western Wattle Birds together with many smaller birds are frequently seen among the leaves at the tops of trees seeking insects.



Eremaea pauciflora (Photo by Margaret Matthews)



Fringed Lily (*Thysanotus triandrus*) with leaves of *Pyrorchis nigricans* (Photo by Margaret Matthews)

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS TREE

The Western Australian Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) is the largest mistletoe in the world. The plant is at least in part a parasite as the extensive roots of younger plants attach themselves to roots of other small plants such as grasses. These may be several metres away in all sides. Eventually it grows to a tree 7 to 10 metres high, with dark grey-green leaves 100 by 7 mm. In summer, from December to January, it becomes covered with spectacular bright orange flowers in dense clusters all over the tree.

The name *Nuytsia* is after Pieter Nuyts, a member of the Council of the Dutch East Indies and a 17th Century explorer who sailed with the Gulde Zeepard along the coast of Western Australia in 1627. The tree grows from Murchison River in the north to the western end of the Great Australian Bight. Several large Christmas Trees flower regularly in Wireless Hill Park and many smaller plants have arisen from seed or as suckers from the parent trees, and should make an excellent show at future Christmases.

Alison Croft



Christmas tree flowering at Wireless Hill (photos by Margaret Matthews)

Volunteers are always welcome at our meetings and work days

**Friends of Wireless Hill www.friendsofwirelesshill.org.au
Kate Creed, Convenor ph 9316 8109, kate.creed@optusnet.com.au**