



Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter Winter 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.

FLOWERING NOW

Following the hot summer and late onset of the rain, there are fewer flowers out this year but in the past 2 weeks, buds have become conspicuous and a few plants have flowers. The small yellow *Acacia stenoptera* and sedges such as *Mesomelaena* (Semiphore Sedge) are widespread. *Lomandra preissii* and *Scaevola canescens* now have occasional flowers. Of the trees, *Banksia menziesii* is attracting Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and several honeyeater species are active. So far this year the yellow *Hibertia hypericoides* is not evident. The first of the orchids, the Greenhoods, will be flowering soon.

PLANTING DAY

On 13 April many people, including members of the public, helped the Friends of Wireless Hill put in seedlings. On the day and during the following week 300 plants of 10 endemic species were put in as well as 100 each of *Banksia menziesii* and *B attenuata*. It is hoped that these will provide food for black cockatoos in the future. Most plants were put in areas shaded by trees to reduce the impact of hot sun. We were fortunate that some rain had fallen a few days earlier and more has followed regularly since. Many thanks to the helpers and to the members of FoWH who provided refreshments.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In 2012 and 2013 there were outstanding displays of Spring wildflowers including donkey orchids (*Diuris magnifica*) and Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthus manglesii*). Despite the late start we hope there will again be a spectacular show. Wildflower Walks will take place on Sunday 7 September led by FoWH with help from the WA Wildflower Society. Please make a note of this date. Meanwhile a new crop of weeds is appearing after the rain, your help to deal with these would be very welcome!



Greenhood orchid *Pterostylis sanguinea* (Photo by Margaret Matthews)



Dean Nalder, Member for Alfred Cove with Louis Meyer from his Electorate Office, and Margaret Matthews at our planting day (Photo by Eleanor Cryer)

MUSHROOMS AT WIRELESS HILL

Wireless Hill is well known for its diverse wildflowers, but it is also home to a wide range of fungi (mushrooms). Since 2009 I have been recording and collecting whenever I have visited the park. So far I have seen 60 different species of mushroom, occurring in the native bush as well as in the grassy area. Although the mushrooms appear to be ephemeral, occurring only when the weather is cool and moist, they are present all the year round, but as the microscopic, vegetative stage of their life cycle. They are present in the soil, in decaying organic matter, and as mutualists on plant roots, including all the orchids.

Fungi are an important, but often overlooked, component of the environment. They are essential recyclers of fallen leaves, twigs and wood because they are able to break down cellulose and lignin, the main components of wood. The nutrients that are contained in organic matter, such as carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus, are released back into soil and air. One of the commonest and conspicuous decomposers at Wireless Hill is the scarlet bracket fungus that is often seen on dead Banksia and Jacksonia branches.

Other fungi grow in a mutualistic association with many native plants. The fungal filaments exploit a larger volume of soil than is available to the plant roots by themselves, and enhance the uptake of minerals such as phosphorus. In return the fungus receives sugars from the plant. Some of the common mushrooms at Wireless Hill are species of *Amanita* which grow in association with eucalypts and other members of that family.

Elaine Davison



Amanita ochroterrea emerging from the soil on the Wildflower Walk



Amanita umbrinella from under marri trees near Davy Street
(Photos by Elaine Davison)

Volunteers are always welcome at our meetings and work days

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