



Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter Autumn 2018

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.

SUMMER FLOWERS

The weather has been unusual as we have had few really hot days this summer and there was some heavy rain in August and September. However, flowers could be seen along the Wild Flower Walk throughout the summer months, including Fringed Lily (*Thysanotus sparteus*), Hairy Yellow Pea (*Gompholobium tomentosum*) and Snake Bush (*Hemiandra pungens*). Flowering shrubs and trees in the Park included Pink Summer Calytrix (*Calytrix fraseri*), *Jacksonia furcellata*, Marri and Jarrah and Slender Banksia (*Banksia attenuata*). If you look carefully this month you will see that female Zamias (*Macrozamia riedlei*) are showing their bright orange seeds within the large cones and if you walk down the sealed path leading to the river you will be met by the sweet smell of *Grevillea vestita*.



Banksia attenuata

THE 2016 FIRE

It is two years since the fire occurred near the eastern of the Wild Flower Walk. The bushland has now grown back but the fire site is still apparent by several burnt trees and shrubs. Extensive regrowth has occurred from seeds and other underground structures. Unfortunately the weeds also have regrown and are now being removed by volunteers. A particular problem is Perennial Veldt Grass (*Ehrharta calycinus*).

This was first introduced from South Africa over one hundred years ago as a pasture plant and to fill degraded areas. Unlike most grasses, it is a perennial which means that it dies down but grows and spreads from the underground root system every year. It also drops seeds.



Perennial veldt grass appears dead at the end of summer but has green shoots at the base photos by Margaret Matthews

ACTIVITIES ON WIRELESS HILL

Last year some bat boxes were put up on tree trunks. If you see bats during evening walks in the park, please let us know the time and place. (see over for details).

Please note that it is illegal to pick native wild flowers in Western Australia

BATS AMONGST US

There are only microbats in this part of the state. They are small mammals, use echolocation, and prey on insects. They roost in tree hollows, but they may also find a place to call home in the crevices of buildings and houses. In the city, we mainly find four types of bats. The Long-ear Bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyii*), takes its name from its unusual big ears. They can roll them back which makes them look like a small 8g angry ram. The Gould's Wattled Bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*), is a gentle creature with brown and black fur. It has a wattle at the bottom on the corner of its lip, hence its name and, somehow, it resembles a bison. The Little Forest Bat (*Vespadelus regulus*) is the smallest of them all. It weighs 5g, barely the same as an A4 piece of paper and its body is hardly the length of a thumb. The White-striped Free-tail Bat (*Austronomus australis*) is the largest at around 40g, and the "click, click" of its call can be easily heard at night.



Long-eared Bat



Gould's Bat Photos by Diana Prada

Summer is an excellent time of the year for bat spotting. They come out at dusk and can be seen as they fly around stretching their wings, preparing for the night shift. Once darkness has set in, they may even come close to a head torch attempting to catch the insects clustering around the light. You can also look for them near flowering trees; flowers attract insects, and insects attract bats. Hence bats are magnificent regulators of insect populations and are invaluable to urban and natural environments. Winter gets too cold for these small creatures. They cope with the chilly nights and lack of food by falling into a hibernation-like state called torpor. During this period, they lower their temperature and metabolic rate so that they can survive the winter. Soon the spring will come again; the baby bats will be born and once again the opportunity to see the bats amongst us.

Diana Prada, Murdoch University

We look forward to seeing you on Wireless Hill
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