



Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter December 2019

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

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

BIRAK

Birak (December-January) is the first season of summer in the Noongar calendar. It is the season of the young and when reptiles emerge from hibernation.

FLOWERING NOW

The spring flush of flowers has finished but there are still lots to be enjoyed in the park. Most notable is the display put on by the Moodjar, *Nuytsia floribunda*, also called Christmas tree.



The gold flowers are stunning against a blue summer sky.



Nuytsia is hemiparasitic: it photosynthesises, but mainly obtains water and mineral nutrients from its hosts using haustoria from the roots which attach themselves to roots of many nearby plants. Almost all species are susceptible to attack; haustoria have even been found attached to underground cables. Roots and rhizomes extend out and may sucker to form new branches that give the appearance of a grove of trees.

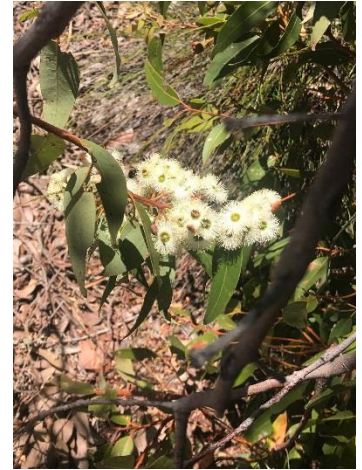
The Noongar people took bark from the moodjar in the Kambarang season, around October to early December, obtaining bark to make shields. The sweet gum that exudes from the wound can be collected later. Children are warned of overindulgence with the story of a monstrous, invulnerable and inescapable

nocturnal being whose cry of 'Nhervalong' could be heard as it collects the gum on which it subsists.

Moodjar is regarded as a protected tree, incorporated into rituals and having a status that forbids their destruction (information adapted from the Wikipedia entry).



Jacksonia sternbergiana



Corymbia calophylla (Marri)

Photos by Margaret Matthews

NEW GRANTS FOR HAND WEEDING

The Friends of Wireless Hill have again been successful in our grant applications for funds to employ bushcare workers to assist us to hand weed the area from the Council car park to the western boundary of the Wildflower Walk area.

In 2018-2019 the State Natural Resource Management (NRM) program provided \$13,728. A new grant for the period 2019 - 2022 provides \$19,500.

In 2019-2020 we had \$6,353 from SALP (Swan Alcoa Landcare Program). For 2020-2021 we have received \$8,900.

The Friends thank SALP and the State NRM for this support.

More information about the project is provided on the next page.



natural resource
management program



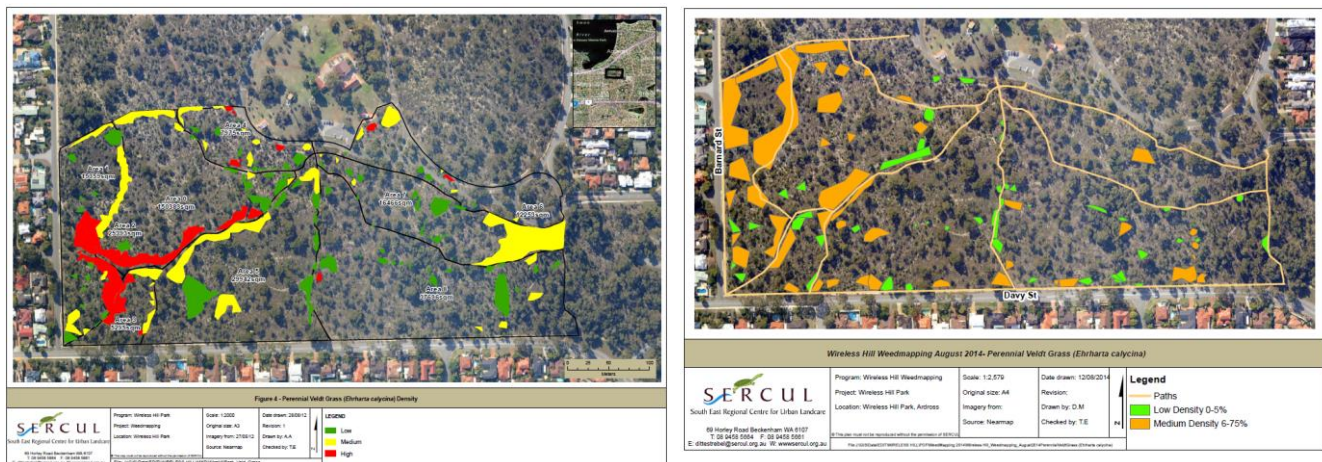
Please note that it is illegal to pick native wildflowers in WA

PROGRESS WITH WEED CONTROL

The Wireless Hill site was purchased by Federal Government in 1911 for construction of the Applecross Wireless Station. Most of the bushland was completely cleared and the site was planted with perennial veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) for soil stabilization. The site was then burned annually until 1967. From 1967 the cleared area was not actively managed and native species began to slowly regenerate over time from the soil seed bank and surrounding bush. Wireless Hill Reserve is now a significant remnant of Banksia Woodland south of the Swan River. It is a Priority 1 reserve under the City of Melville's bushland Priority system and is Bush Forever Site no. 336.

Perennial veldt grass was introduced from South Africa as a pasture plant. It is perennial so it dies down after summer but grows and spreads from underground roots. It seeds prolifically and competes with native plants. It is a significant weed in urban bushland, threatening biodiversity and increasing the fire risk. There are many other South African weeds in the park: Gladioli, freesias, Lachenalia, annual veldt grass, wild oats and gazanias. There are also love grass, Geraldton carnation, brassicas and flat weeds and woody weeds such as Geraldton wax and acacias.

Since 2010 the Friends of Wireless Hill have obtained grants from the State NRM and SALP. These funds employ qualified and experienced bushcare workers from SERCUL (the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare) to assist us with hand weeding.



Weed mapping over several years shows a steady decline in grassy and other weeds.

The figures above show the extent of perennial veldt grass weeds in 2012 (SERCUL, left), with red being high density, yellow medium and green low. By 2014, (right, SERCUL) only a few areas of medium density (yellow) in the hand weeded area and a few small areas of low-density perennial veldt grass remain. The very high-density area (red) in the non-hand weeded area has gone due to Council efforts but there are more wide-spread medium density patches.

We plan to repeat the weed mapping with SERCUL in 2020.



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We look forward to seeing you on Wireless Hill
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Since 1998