

# MEPA NEWS



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## President's note

After one of the longest dry spells in many years, summer storms and the accompanying rains have heralded the beginning of summer here on the Mountain.

The Spangled Drongos have returned from their winter grounds in New Guinea, so too the Kingfishers. The Rose Robins, on the other hand, have returned south from their winter in northern Australia. The Bull Ants and Jumping Ants are back in business, and the summer rhythms slowly return.

We hope that your summer is a good one, with festive cheer and a Happy Christmas.

Dominic Hyde

Guest column: Roger Finn,  
KABI Australasian Orchid Society

## Epiphytes of Brisbane Forest Park

### Orange blossom orchid (*Sarcochilus falcatus*)

When you visit Mount Glorious you can't miss finding *Sarcochilus falcatus*. It is common and widespread and is found growing on trees especially those covered in moss, fern or lichen.

Look for a fan shape set of flat pale green leaves that are slightly curved towards the apex. These meet at the bottom where they spread out a network of roots that can extend a long way.

In springtime racemes, up to 15cm in length, appear. The flowers can be larger than a twenty-cent piece, white in colour with reddish red yellow stripes on the labellum. This has been called the orange blossom orchid. After flowering, the dead raceme does not drop off but remains and turns black.

Although *Sarcochilus falcatus* lives quite successfully up at Mt Glorious as the climate is suitable, it will not survive in Brisbane. It may grow for a few years but it usually withers away.

## A beautiful skink

A year or so ago we suddenly became aware of a different looking skink in the garden. I think perhaps we'd seen it previously and taken it for a young Major Skink (*Egernia frerei*). The Queensland Museum has confirmed that it is Murray's Skink (*Eulamprus murrayi*).



*Eulamprus* means beautiful and it is indeed this. It's a plump skink about 20cm long with a handsome coppery sheen flecked with black. Its sides are blackish-brown with tiny white or bluish spots. It's a charming little creature, amenable to being scrutinised at close quarters if approached quietly and slowly. They have become very common in our garden (or possibly previously overlooked) where they hide in hollows under rocks or in logs - often you see their little heads peeking out. They bask on our ramp, brick paving and logs.

They are confined to subtropical rainforest in the D'Aguilar Range, north-eastern NSW and south-eastern Qld. A very similar species, Tryon's Skink (*Eulamprus tryoni*) is only found at high altitudes at the Border Ranges. Both species bear live young.

It would be interesting to know if other residents have seen this skink.

Sue Phillips

**Reminder** Become a MEPA member  
(\$5 per person, \$10 per family).

Membership form available at:

<http://www.gloriousnebo.org.au/MEPA/membership>

## Clearing Lantana And what to do afterwards

### The best way to clear lantana

1. Pull it out by hand, give it a few whacks with a cane-knife and make a pile of it. Make sure all the roots are out. It won't regrow in a pile but if left scattered on the ground it probably will.
2. If the lantana is growing on a steep bank where disturbance could cause soil erosion then cut it as low down as possible and *immediately* dab the cut with 50:50 water and Glyphosate (Roundup). Then make the piles as with the hand pulling method.
3. It's best not to spray. Spraying creates a lot of dead sticks that are more prickly than live ones and something still has to be done with them. Worse is the likelihood of killing native plants underneath that have been suppressed by the lantana canopy and are just waiting to get going. Spraying is best used very sparingly and reserved for low growing carpets of a weed like Madeira vine.
4. Never get in heavy machinery. It destroys the seed bank, ruins the soil structure and compacts the soil. Remember, soil is sacred. Treat it with respect.

### After clearing

1. Do nothing but continue to pull out any weeds that appear. There will be a lot at first but the natives will soon dominate. There will be plenty of dormant seeds in the soil and birds and flying foxes bring the rest.
2. If you want to hurry it along by planting make sure you only plant species local to your area. The best way is to collect your own seed from local plants. Only plant natives, not exotics. Don't ever plant Mock Orange (*Murraya paniculate*) anywhere; it is becoming an invasive exotic. Maggie Scattini

MEPA's 'Do your block' can advise on plants.

## Flowering now – Native Twining Guinea flower

(*Hibbertia scandens*)

This is a very interesting plant as it can be seen growing naturally in the mountains or at the beach. It likes an open, well drained position and has a scrambling habit. It requires support to climb and can be encouraged to cover a wire fence. It has glossy, mid-green leaves with large yellow flowers along the stems in spring and summer. Fruits contain red seeds.

Wendy Lees

## Forests and Gardens

Some of the first public gardens in Australia were developed in the 1800's when appreciation of the natural world differed from that of today. Then it was common thought that there was a need to 'improve' on nature by supplementing the indigenous flora and fauna; even the early National Parks were 'improved'! In the latter part of that century, thought began to change and Ferdinand Mueller, director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens was quoted as saying:

*'I regard the forest as heritage given to us by nature, not for spoil or to devastate, but to be widely used, reverently honoured and carefully maintained.'*

(Australian Garden History - Vol. 20 2008)

Hopefully we can all 'honour' what is on our doorstep and think about what we plant in our gardens, to help protect and nurture our forest.

Wendy Lees

### Do your block!

#### *Free bush care service*

Would you like some assistance managing bushland on your block? Advice on weeds or advice on planting local native plants in your garden?

MEPA has a free service offering advice and information (supported by MBRC)

Contact Maggie - 3289 8175 or

Dominic - 3289 0093 or

Email: [askmepa@yahoo.com.au](mailto:askmepa@yahoo.com.au)