

President's note

The months December 2013 - February 2014 were dry indeed. At Mt Glorious, for example, only 152mm of rain fell instead of the average rainfall of 660mm. And this followed an exceptionally dry August - October 2013 across the Mountain (with 58mm at Mt Glorious instead of average expected rainfall of 224mm).

One noticeable apparent effect has been the movement of the Paradise Rifle-bird out of rainforested areas into wet sclerophyll forest in search of food, presumably due to poor fruiting in the rainforest as a consequence of the summer dry. With the dry predicted to continue, I expect we'll be seeing more of the Rifle-birds out in the eucalypt forests.

Catbirds also seem to regularly accompany our local family of Rifle-birds. Whether this is just a matter of a casual friendship or some more regular association, I cannot say. But the entertainment they collectively provide is a treat to be savoured.

Dominic Hyde

Know Your Natives

Guest column: Roger Finn,
KABI Australasian Orchid Society

Dendrobium gracilicaule

When you stand at the Western Window Lookout at Mount Glorious, you look down a valley in a southerly direction. Not ten metres away on the right, there is a large tree that has at least eight different species of orchids. This tree receives the breezes and the moisture that come up this valley. If you look carefully, you will see several clumps of "sticks" rising from the limbs. These clumps are *D. gracilicaule* – a common orchid in Brisbane Forest Park.

D. gracilicaule has long thin cylindrical pseudobulbs which grow up to 90cm. They are topped with up to six leaves. At the base of the

leaves there are "eyes" from which racemes emerge. The racemes, up to 10cm in length, carry up to twenty flowers that are 15mm across. The flowers are a dull green to yellow and have irregular dark brown/reddish blotches on the outside. Small but attractive.

D. gracilicaule is found from the Bloomfield River in North Queensland to the Hawkesbury River just north of Sydney. It is also found in New Caledonia. It is a widespread species that prefers rainforests (like Mount Glorious) and moist habitats in more open situations. It forms a natural hybrid with *D. speciosum* to form *D. x gracillimum*.

Dendrobium aemulum

In the drier areas of Brisbane Forest Park *Dendrobium aemulum* can be found growing on Iron Bark trees. It is called the Iron Bark Orchid for that reason. Along one road where there are many Iron Bark trees not every tree has *D. aemulum* growing on it, although where they are growing on it, there are likely to be many, right up the trunk. In spring when they flower, it can be such a sight.

D. aemulum is seen growing on the tops of ridges where moist air movement is evident from the lichen on the trees. The short pseudobulbs are topped with two leaves in the middle of which the inflorescence emerges. The inflorescence can bear up to twelve small white flowers. When they gain a pink tinge after a few days the flowering is almost over. The roots of the *D. aemulum* burrow deep down into the bark to gain their moisture.

Can we bamboozle the Bamboo?

If you Google some of our local weeds in the hope of finding how to deal with them you more than likely will find good advice on how to grow them better unless you add the word "control" into your search.

An example is Madeira vine - one of our worst pests- which has a lot of information on the internet about its edible and ornamental qualities.

I've been helping Annelies Zeissink who lives down the mountain a short way with a big Running Bamboo problem. This is a plant which becomes a real pest travelling underground by means of rhizomes which throw up numerous shoots that can grow to 2 or 3 metres tall.

At Annelies's place it seemed unstoppable. We tried all the recommended methods such as cutting and treating the cut stump with Glyphosate (as Bamboo is in the grass family this is the appropriate herbicide to use). We then sprayed it when it re-grew which it did constantly.

We kept at it for a couple of years without a lot of success. Finally Annelies called in a bob-cat with a ripper attachment and ripped up most of the rhizomes. That worked well except for the places the bob-cat couldn't access and the bits and pieces it missed.

Now, back to the beginning of this story. When I Googled Running Bamboo I found advice on how to grow it and interestingly I found that it likes reasonably acidic soil so we decided to give the remaining clumps a good dose of lime. There was one big clump in particular that was cut but not treated with Glyphosate.

The result is good. About 9 months later we find only a few straggling plants remaining and the big clump is dead. It has worked on bamboo other than Running Bamboo too.

We thought other people might try this method and experiment with it. I like the idea of not using herbicides so the best method would be to cut the stems down low and give it a reasonable dose of lime.

I'm not sure of quantities. I think the problem of making the soil alkaline is far less than the problem of being infested with Running Bamboo.

Maggie Scattini

Gardening in the Mountains

Local plants to suit small gardens.

Psychotria daphnoides - (Smooth Psychotria)
Shrub / small tree (3m) on rainforest edges.

Develops into a small, open tree with attractive, 'oriental' growth habit.

Leaves: small, glossy Flowers: cream (5mm)
Fruit: creamy-white like pearl drops.

Psychotria loniceroides - (Hairy Psychotria)
Shrub / small tree (4m). Suitable for understory planting and tolerates heavy shade.

Leaves - soft, velvety. Flowers - white, 7mm.
Fruit - yellow (edible)

Pittosporum revolutum

Shrub (2-3m) on rainforest edges. Responds well to pruning with attractive new growth.

Leaves - glossy, alternate or in whorls. Flowers - yellow, in terminal clusters.

Fruit - warty, orange with showy red seeds.

These plants may be sourced through nurseries such as Greening Australia & Kumbartcho.

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