



F.O.L.K.L.A.W

PO BOX 28 SOMERS 3927

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2004

Artwork: Rosemary Birney

Editor: Anneke Fortuyn

Editors note.

Well another year is fast coming to an end. The drought seems to have been broken and we have had some lovely useful rain this last spring. The weeds as well as the plants seem to enjoy this abundance of water, and we will have to be vigilant to keep the weeds in check.

As we all know the membership fees are due as of the first of January. (keep our treasurer happy)

A BIG THANK YOU to Rosemary for her excellent art work in our newsletters and to everyone who has contributed articles for the newsletter.

A BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers that come to working bees and to Suzie and her group from Kindilan who comes on Wednesday afternoon to do voluntary work

TO ALL OUR MEMBERS HAVE A JOYFULL CHRISTMAS AND A SAFE AND HAPPY 2005

MAY ALL THE WEEDS DIE AND OUR INDIGINOUS PLANTS FLOURISH.

MISTLETOES:

Families: Loranthaceae, Viscaceae

Maybe this is a good time to discuss this plant as we are in the Christmas mood.

Mistletoes are parasitic plants, which mean that they grow on a host plant.

Australia has more than 80 species in the two families, and they vary greatly in appearance.

Leaves can be broad slender or not there at all and the fruits can be from oval to round to pear shaped, and have a variety of colours.

Even though they have such a variation in appearance, mistletoes are easy enough to spot as they contrast greatly from the appearance of their host plant.

The point of attachment is quite obvious as well. Mistletoes grow in all sort of habitats from mangroves to jungle to arid regions

On the Mornington Peninsula the most commonly seen one is in the Loranthaceae family. It has mostly narrow long leaves.

The flowers are mainly yellow and scarlet, tubular, 25-40mm long. The flowers are arranged in close clusters. The berries are 10-15mm across

Mistletoes however could not survive without the mistletoe bird,

The mistletoe bird is only a small bird (10 -11 cm) The male as in most bird species is the pretty one with head and upper parts glossy blue black , with a scarlet throat breast and under tail, it's belly being grey white. They have a dark short bill. The female is brownish grey above with an under tail that coverts to pale scarlet. The young look much like the female except for it's bill which is pink.

They eat the ripe mistletoe berries , their main food source. They eat insects when feeding young.

The birds are an important distributor of the seeds. The mistletoe birds digestive system is an even duct through which a large number of mistletoe berries can quickly pass. The whole process only taking about 25 minutes. The fleshy outerpart of the fruit is digested and the sticky seed is deposited on a branch. They stand usually lengthways on the branch to adchieve this. If the seed sticks it will germinate quickly.

They build their nest from plant down and spiderweb matted to a silken consistency and hangs from a level twig. It is a neat pear shaped purse with a slit like entrance. The female builds the nest and incubates alone.

Non breeding birds are highly nomadic

Aborigines snacked on the fruits of many kinds of mistletoes, but as with all food some taste better than others. The pulp is pleasant sweet, but very sticky.

In case you ever wondered about wastage of hard earned monies received by F.O.L.K.L.A.W. here is some info.

1) Expenses ie, postage, stationary, printing and running costs are mostly donated by the committee members

2) Tools are bought by F.O.L.K.L.A.W. for use by us and other volunteer revegetation groups. These are paid for from memberships/donations and Ritchies C.B. donation card

3) All our income is from donations and membership All income and expenditure is accounted for monthly and audited annually. Copies are available at our AGM every year

4) Cheques and any accounts to be paid, must be authorised at our monthly committee meetings. Cheques are signed, by two appointed committee members from an authorised list.

5) F.O.L.K.L.A.W. RECYCLES TREE GUARDS AND STAKES, TO SAVE MONEY AND REDUCE WASTE.

6) A new program of growing our own plants for revegetation around Somers has now been started. This will reduce cost further.

7) Newsletters are completely funded, including postage, by Fortuyn Excavations.

Your Treasurer.
PETER COOPER

P.S. Thanks for reading this far.

