



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

NEWSLETTER *Summer 2010*

*PO BOX 28 SOMERS 3927
http://home.vicnet.net.au/~folklaw/
Ritchie's CB Card Number 92591
Editor: Karin Cooper*

Hi all,



On Sunday, 29th November at the last working bee for the year, 4 FOLKLAW volunteers began improvements on the Beach Hill Avenue entrance to the Koala Reserve. The entrance was waterlogged and impossible to use. Plastic drainage pipe was installed and covered with gravel to raise the level of the pathway. Five posts were set in cement to mark the entrance and barrier rails linking the posts have been added since then.



Truck loads of gravel have been delivered and laid out along the fire access road track to improve the Reserve.

Special Note: FOLKLAW is actively seeking Committee Members to assist in running our independent organisation. No knowledge is required, just some time and enthusiasm. We are a non-political and friendly and social group of volunteers.

The FOLKLAW AGM will be held on Sunday 2nd May at the Balnarring Community Hall, 3041 Frankston-Flinders Rd, Balnarring at 2 pm. Melway Ref: 193 D5. Everyone is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be provided. This is your chance to come and meet us and give us your views and ideas.

Reminder: FOLKLAW working bees are held on the last Sunday of every month at the Somers Koala Reserve. Meet at the end of Campsie Court at 9.30 am. Refreshments are provided.

If you wish to support FOLKLAW you can get a Ritchies benefit card 92951. The money is automatically sent to us. Thank you for your support.

Asparagus Fern – Climbing Asparagus (Baddie): (*Asparagus scandens*)

This plant is a native of South Africa. Its flowers are white to pink, up to 4 mm long and topped by yellow anthers. Flowering is from winter to spring. The Asparagus Fern is a perennial climber or scrambler which climbs up to 2 m high on supporting vegetation. It has leaf-like flattened stems (cladodes), shiny, linear to spear-shaped (lanceolate), unequal in length, 5-15 mm long and to 1.5 mm wide and pointed towards the tips. Stems are wiry and twisting to 3 meters long. Berries are globe-shaped, 5-7 mm wide, orange to red when ripe in Autumn, usually with one seed. It can be distinguished by its climbing habit, tuberous roots and leaf-like cladodes which are in groups of three around the stem with reduced bract-like leaves at the base. Its seeds are spread by birds but can also spread locally by roots. Asparagus Fern can be found mainly around Melbourne and Sydney, in Tasmania and New Zealand. Plants smother shrubs and small trees. It is potentially a serious environmental weed in Australia. They can be removed by digging out the tubers and disposing of them or by spraying or wiping with glyphosate.



Common Appleberry (Goodie): (*Billardiera scandens*)

Billardiera scandens is a bushy climber with slender stems and narrow (linear-lanceolate) dark-green leaves. From August to January it produces a mass of tubular greenish-yellow flowers which evolve into shiny purple berries. The flowers attract honey eaters.

It's a common species that grows in habitats as diverse as cool sheltered gullies to mallee scrub, from Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia, through to New South Wales and Queensland.

It is an adaptable plant, and will withstand a wide range of conditions, including mild frost, semi-shade and periods of dryness although it performs best in moist conditions. It also tolerates a wide variety of soils, including clay.



It's even possible to establish *Billardiera scandens* underneath established eucalypts, as long as they are given a little extra fertiliser. These characteristics have ensured its popularity as a garden plant. It can become a tangled mess though, so it does need a bit of training. *Billardiera scandens* is easily propagated by seed and cuttings, which strike very readily.

The flowers and fruit are attractive to both birds and people. The fruits, which only ripen after dropping to the ground, are valued as an Australian bush food and are variously described as tasting like stewed apples or kiwifruit. They were eaten by Australian Aborigines either in their ripened state or by roasting the un-ripened fruit.