

# FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE Inc.



## COMING EVENTS

### AGM

12th May

### Working Bees

March 21

April 3 & 18

May 1 & 16

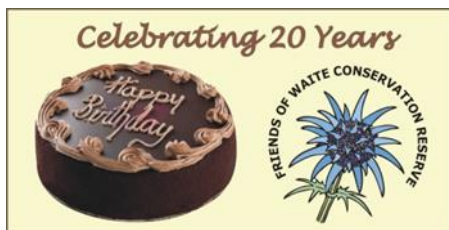
June 5 & 20

See pages 8 & 9 for details



THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE

## President's page



Happy Birthday to us on our **20th anniversary** as a Friends group! Although an informal group of bushcarers was assembled in 1997, the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve as we know it was officially launched on **26 February 2001**.

The Committee is planning a series of activities to celebrate so watch this space. Or suggest an activity yourself!

In light of this milestone it would be reasonable for us to look back over the last two decades and pat ourselves on our collective backs. Better still, the Committee has started the process of updating the reserve **Management Plan** to guide our efforts over the next five years.

As in the past our focus will remain on restoring the reserve habitats (we are about to enter the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**). But we also do a lot of other stuff. It is



important that we capture and

rank all of what we do so that important time-critical activities such as weed control are maintained when inevitably there are constraints on resources. At the same time we need to build resilience into the Friends group and University partnership to enable us to act on the plan. Part of this is sharing the load. This year's **AGM** will be your opportunity to contribute to the plan. See inside for details. Clint's photo below reminds us why we do what we do.



Photo: Clint Garrett

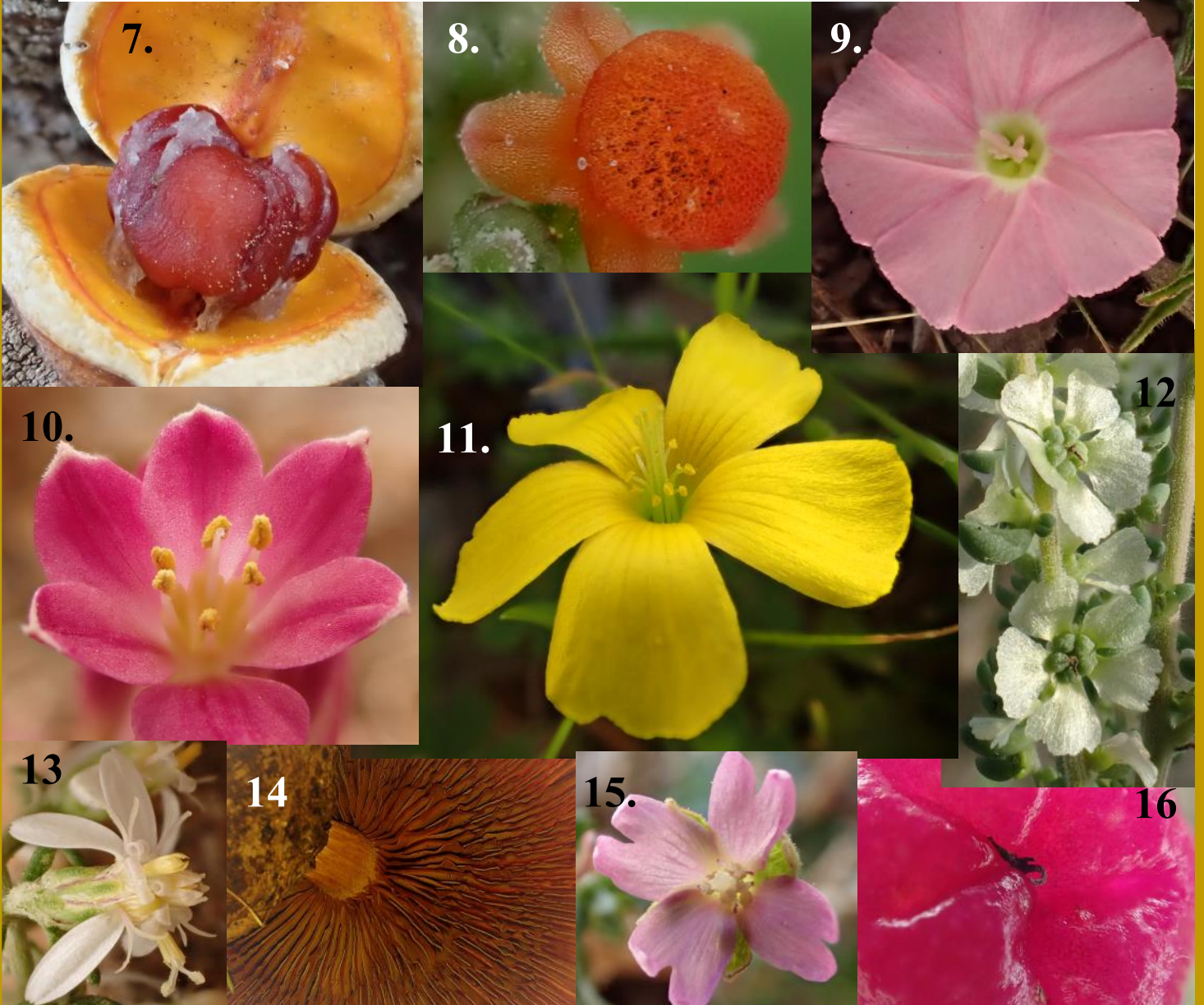
Much of this issue focuses on **plants and revegetation**. A couple of good rains in January and February probably saved some of the 2000 tubestock planted last year. Later than optimal planting coupled with a drier than average spring/ early summer doomed many of them. Things could have been worse but for some timely watering of seedlings thanks to Clint and helped by Charlie.

*Pete Bird*





Autumn wildflowers of Waite Conservation Reserve





## Autumn wildflowers and fruits of Waite Conservation Reserve

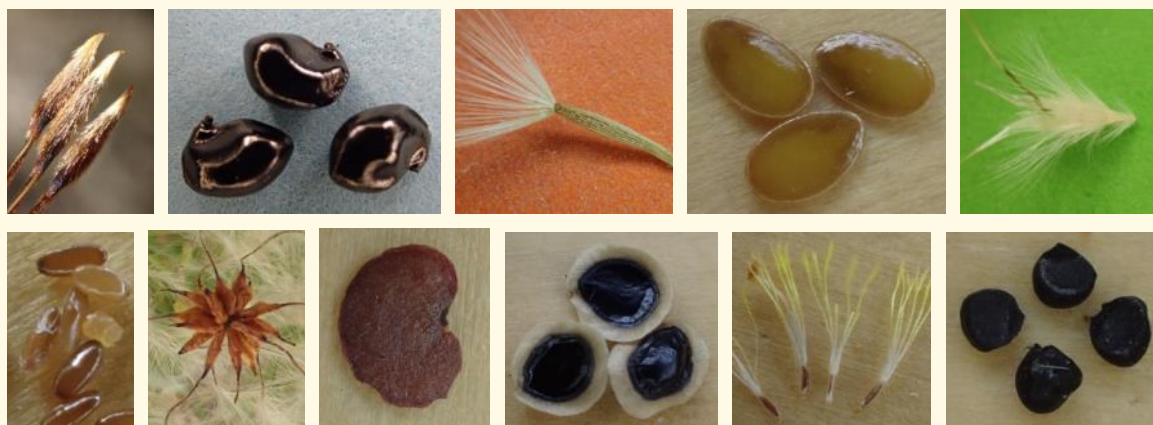
In the vein of our spring and summer wildflower pages (see last newsletters) we bring you images of autumn. Autumn is not particularly wild-flowery but look carefully and there are always splashes of colour, especially after summer rains. But there are a few which peak in Autumn including the Grey Box from our Nationally-endangered Grey Box Grassy Woodland plant community. And then there are the fruits...

Key to images on previous page

1. Fuzzy New Holland Daisy *Vittadinia cuneata*
2. Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha* (gum)
3. Cranberry Heath *Astroloma humifusum*
4. Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa*
5. Harlequin Mistletoe *Lysiana exocarpi* (yellow form)
6. Velvet Wallaby-grass *Rytidosperma pilosum* (seed)
7. Native Apricot *Pittosporum angustifolium* (fruit)
8. Climbing Saltbush *Einadia nutans* (fruit)
9. Australian Bindweed *Convolvulus angustissimus*
10. Pink Garland-lily *Calostemma purpureum*
11. Native Sorrel *Oxalis perennans*
12. Short-leaf Bluebush *Maireana brevifolia* (fruit)
13. Twiggy Daisy-bush *Olearia ramulosa*
14. Spectacular Rustgill *Gymnopilus junonius* (tentative)
15. Variable Willow-herb *Epilobium billardarianum*
16. Ruby Saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa* (fruit)

(Images by Pete Bird)

## Seeds of Waite Conservation Reserve



Images L-R of seed collected in 2020: Short-crest Spear-grass *Austrostipa curticoma*, Pale Flax-lily *Dianella longifolia*, Fuzzy New Holland Daisy *Vittadinia cuneata*, Native Flax *Linum marginale*, Leafy Wallaby-grass *Rytidosperma fulvum*, Tall Bluebell *Wahlenbergia stricta*, Old Man's Beard *Clematis microphylla*, Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*, Cut-leaved Goodenia *Goodenia pinnatifida*, Common Everlasting *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, Common Vanilla-lily *Arthropodium strictum*

## Vomiting deer and other 'myths' - Pete Bird

Last year I was invited onto local ABC radio and ranted (as I often do) about how Fallow Deer spread olive pits (seeds) in the reserve. Soon afterwards the whole notion of deer spreading, and in my words, *cultivating* olives was dismissed as a myth on the website of Australia's pre-eminent deer hunting organisation. They observed that because there is nothing in the scientific literature to suggest that deer spread significant numbers of olives, this was just another example in a long line of unfounded deer-bashing by anti-deer types.

The part about the lack of literature is substantially true. I can find little more than dietary studies that list olive fruit as a minor part of Fallow Deer diet. It is also true that I have no incontrovertible proof that deer are the culprits for the piles of olive pits; I have never seen, or caught on camera, the act of deer regurgitating olive pits. This is what I do have:

1. Something is depositing thousands of 'scatters' of olive pits in the reserve. The pits are cleaned of fruit. They are not passed in dung but are consistent with being regurgitated.
2. Numbers vary in each scatter, usually hundreds. One fresh scatter had 524 pits representing more than half a kilogram of whole fruit. (Foxes & some birds also eat olives but in far fewer numbers). Many scatters are associated with 'scrapes' made by deer. Fallow deer are well known to make scrapes for rutting and territorial marking.
3. Several deer have been shot in the reserve 'full of olive fruit' (Errol Mattig, pers. comm.).
4. Deer selectively browse forage high in nutrient-dense substances such as plant starch, protein and fat. Olive fruit typically contains 10-15% fat.



Olive pit scatter with deer dung

5. Deer are ruminants. Ruminants store food in the rumen, then regurgitate ingesta back into the mouth to 'chew the cud'. A recent review has identified 'spitting' of large seeds is a common but under-reported behaviour by ruminants (Delibes et. al. 2019).
6. The only other large animal in the reserve seemingly capable of consuming quantities of olive fruit is the Western Grey Kangaroo. I know of no evidence that they consume significant amounts of olives or are capable of regurgitating their seeds.

The sum of the above suggests strongly to me that deer are the culprits.

Delibes, M. Castaneda, I. and Fedriani, JM. (2019). Spitting Seeds From the Cud: A Review of an Endozoochory Exclusive to Ruminants. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2019.00265>



Olive pit scatter with deer scrape



# Pete's Nature Diary

## A ghost comes creeping

When a faint piping call rang out across Quartz Hill on 4 January I thought I'd heard a ghost. How could it be a **Brown Treecreeper** when the last local (male) bird had died alone in Belair National Park two decades earlier? My suspicions were later confirmed when the confiding female (right) landed on a nearby grey box trunk. Brown Treecreepers were a charming and characteristic feature of the local grey box grassy woodland until driven out last century by habitat fragmentation and the other usual drivers of change. Unfortunately just as one swallow does not make a summer, one vagrant treecreeper from parts unknown will unlikely be the start of a local recovery.



Common Crow (*Butterfly Conservation SA*)

## Rare Adelaide Crow

“Approaching the top of Wild Dogs Glen I saw a large jet black butterfly with rows of creamy squares along the outer edges of each wing, reminiscent of a chess board”. This (paraphrased) description by Jennifer Gardner led her to believe she'd seen a **Common Crow butterfly** *Euploea corinna*. I concur. This is not only the first record for the reserve but a rare local record for what is only a very occasional visitor from the tropics. This brings to 24 the butterfly species recorded in the reserve and surrounds.

## Owl encounter

Volunteer John di Ubaldo recounts the following story: “On Christmas Day three of us were walking off our long lunch. It was around 8pm and very quiet in that pre-sunset period - a stunning evening. At Netherby Knoll we saw a lorikeet chick on the ground, presumably fallen from its nest. Just as we were wondering whether to intervene, a largish bird swept past our heads and grabbed the lorikeet in its talons. It was an owl, at least 30cm high with some nice streaking. It stood there for a while keeping guard then flew off with its prey to a nearby tree. We later identified it as a Boobook owl and were amazed by the whole encounter!”



## Giant of the deep woods

In late December I came across the fresh carcass of a huge grey moth in Koala Gully. Unusual to see a Ghost (or Swift) Moth at this time of year I thought, especially as it hadn't rained. Looking closer I saw this was instead a **Giant Wood Moth** *Endoxyla cinereus*. Unlike the local ground-burrowing Ghost Moths, *Endoxyla* larvae live inside (*endo*) the wood (*xyla*) of smooth-barked eucalypts, especially Red Gums. Despite being apparently common near Adelaide, this was my first record in the reserve, perhaps because they usually emerge in December when I am less likely to be around.



(Continued) Old yella-bum

Our Facebook followers will already know this little bloke. He was first brought to my attention by Anne Sutcliffe who saw he and the missus quietly feeding along the track at Netherby Spur in early November. He has since become a celebrity, with several observers commenting on his aberrant yellow-instead-of-red rump. **Red-rumped Parrots** are scarce in the reserve at the best of times so sighting one with a yellow rump is doubly rare. Interestingly, Caroline Schultz reported a conventional Red-rump pair in Wild Dogs Glen in mid December so for a while we had at least two pairs visiting the reserve.



Red-rumped Parrot  
Photo: Anne Sutcliffe

## The need for seed

After a hiatus of six years, tree planting resumed in 2019 after an approach by Urrbrae TAFE for us to host students for plant propagation. Two years in and the students have produced a back-wearying 3200 tubestock of mostly understorey shrubs and groundcovers for the reserve.

The planting and direct seeding program continues in 2021. This requires seed. Thirty-seven TAFE students made a good start, collecting seed from 33 species in early December. The Friends continued over the spring and summer to opportunistically gather seed.



The seed collectors: Urrbrae TAFE students in Netherby Gully

COVID delays prevented the students from preparing tubestock last spring so, at short notice, 11 Friends attended the TAFE nursery on 7 January and seeded 970 tubestock with 31 species. Seed from a further 53 species was provided for the students to seed another 630 tubestock on 5 February. I hope not all of the 1600 tubes of 84 species survive to have to plant out!

Pete Bird



The tubestock seeders: Jerry Xu, Richard Brooks, Allan Walker, Pete Bird, Adrian di Ubaldo, Jennifer Gardner, Jake Howie, Gerry Lloyd, Fred Bartholomaeus, Noel Nicholls and Peter Barnes (missing) with 970 tubestock seeded Feb 2021.  
Photo: Sam Bywaters



## Growing rare plants - Pete Bird

Peter Lang's spectacular [Plant List](#) includes a healthy 200-odd native plant species for the reserve. Few would be familiar to a casual Loop Walker; most are restricted to upper parts of the reserve remote from tracks. Many are small and cryptic or emerge only when conditions are favourable.

Above all, many are rare, known only from a few plants or with tiny distributions. All are potentially vulnerable to extinction in the reserve. Some have already gone. The one plant of Winged Spyridium *Spyridium vexilliferum* disappeared from Quartz Hill sometime after 2006. Several others are 'unconfirmed', the records clouded by problems of identification or taxonomy. And time. Some were probably legitimate but appear not now present.

It makes sense to propagate some to increase their numbers and distribution thereby lessening their likelihood of extinction, at least in the short term. Their conservation long term will be problematic. With many already restricted

to cooler and wetter parts of the reserve, the predicted hotter and drier climate-changed world will likely take matters out of our hands.

I have selected a few species below that might be worthwhile growing. An obvious inclusion is our Blue Devil logo. I have avoided some smaller plants whose seed collection and propagation may be problematic, such as orchids. Already we have made a start collecting and sowing some of the seeds below with the help of Urrbrae TAFE.



Tall Lobelia

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location
Hill Wirilda	<i>Acacia retinodes</i>	LEGUMINOSAE	Stone Reserve
Mount Lofty Ground-berry	<i>Acrotriche fasciculiflora</i>	EPACRIDACEAE	Groundberry Gully
Cushion Ground-berry	<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	EPACRIDACEAE	Quartz Hill
Milkmaids	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	LILIACEAE	Quartz Hill
Lemon Beauty-heads	<i>Calocephalus citreus</i>	ASTERACEAE	Quartz Hill
Blue Squill	<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	LILIACEAE	Quartz Hill
Stiff Flat-sedge	<i>Cyperus vaginatus</i>	CYPERACEAE	Koala Gully
Pale Flax-lily	<i>Dianella longifolia</i>	LILIACEAE	Various
Blue Devil	<i>Eryngium ovinum</i>	UMBELLIFERAE	Quartz Hill
Variable Glycine	<i>Glycine tabacina</i>	LEGUMINOSAE	Wild Dogs Glen
White Goodenia	<i>Goodenia albiflora</i>	GOODENIACEAE	Southern Boundary
Pale Rush	<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	JUNCACEAE	Stone Reserve
Native Flax	<i>Linum marginale</i>	LINACEAE	Various
Tall Lobelia	<i>Lobelia gibbosa</i>	CAMPANULACEAE	Pultenaea Hill
Rock Logania	<i>Logania saxatilis</i>	LOGANIACEAE	Peregrine Point
Small Wrinklewort	<i>Siloxerus multiflorus</i>	ASTERACEAE	Sheoak Slope
Smooth Solenogyne	<i>Solenogyne dominii</i>	ASTERACEAE	Quartz Hill
Spoon Stuartina	<i>Stuartina muelleri</i>	ASTERACEAE	Quartz Hill

# WORKING BEES

This early bird aims to catch the weeds! Working bees resume on Sunday 21 March, three weeks earlier than usual. The aim is to hit olive seedlings and other germinating weeds before they disappear among the annual weedy grasses already romping along after good summer rains. Last year's tree plantings have struggled. Tree guards will need to be checked and adjusted or removed and stored.

Thereafter, bees continue as usual on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month through to December.

## Dates:

Sun 21 March

Sat 3 April Sun 18 April

Sat 1 May Sun 16 May

Sat 5 June Sun 20 June

Meet at Gate 82 off Hillside Rd, Springfield for bees in March-April (Left map).

Meet at Springwood Park for bees in May-June (Right map)

Pete Bird



Green in a sea of straw. Perennial weeds such as olive seedlings stand out at this time of year.



## Friends Pens - everyone wins a prize!

Come to a working bee and pick up your free (except for 3 hours weeding) gift. Not a set of steak knives, but a snazzy pen with our name emblazoned across it. Be the first to sign on with your own Friends pen.





## AGM Plans

Weeds, tree planting, tracks, deer, feral olives, membership, climate change, fun activities, olives, monitoring, collaborations, prescribed burning, budgets, olives...

The Friends committee is currently working with the University on a Management Plan to guide management of the reserve over the next five years. The AGM is your opportunity to participate in the process. Bring your two-bob's worth to the issues above and any others you might like to contribute.

Come along to the facilitated meeting and have your say to ensure the plan is a useful and living document and not a dust-gathering door-stop.

**Venue:** Yet to be decided venue on Waite Campus  
**Date:** Wednesday 12 May  
**Time:** 7.30pm  
**Supper provided**

## New signage

Walkers, who have had difficulty finding their way up Hartley Grove to the Reserve now have a two new signs to help them. The new signs have been made possible by a generous donation.

There is a directional sign at the Waite Road/Hartley Grove corner and this sign near the Plant Accelerator.



Photo: Clint Garrett

### Join the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve!

Ordinary membership \$15

The Membership/renewal form and details can be found at:

<https://friendsofwaitereserve.org.au/>

Forms can be submitted electronically or printed. Email: [info@friendsofwaitereserve.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofwaitereserve.org.au)

Non-members are welcome at our activities

## New members

The Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve welcome new members who have joined recently including: Wendy and Paul Holloway, Anita Hourigan and family, Tim Cross.

## FWCR contacts

**President:** Peter Bird (0418-853 -834) [pjbird1@bigpond.com](mailto:pjbird1@bigpond.com) **Secretary:** Glenn Gale (0428-812-902)

**Treasurer:** Lynda Yates **Editor:** Meg Robertson

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