

Murnong Trail Notes

#1, November 2015

- **What's down there?**

Our indigenous wildflowers put on their best show in October, so their display was affected by last month's sustained drought. **Murnong** (see below) has almost finished flowering, has set some seed and is beginning to die down after its brief moment of glory. The murnong-lookalikes down there now are, sadly, all exotic weeds like **catsear**.

There is plenty to see from other wildflowers – **everlastings** and several species of **bush pea** in flower, along with **chocolate lily** (smell it!) and *Dianella*. **Blue pincushions** will soon be out. Previously unseen species keep showing up, and are easiest to find when in flower.

You could ask a member of the SusCom or Green Group to show you around at lunchtime.

- **The Trail**

Last week's rain has helped to bed down the crushed concrete to a firmer surface. Good to hear of several classes going down there; the more foot traffic, the better. It may not yet be firm enough for running, so please go easy there.

- **Trail booklet**

Our Development Officer, Sarah Boswell, saw through to publication a booklet for the opening of the Trail - it duplicates the signs from the trail stations. Copies are held in the Library as a staff reference. I also have some spare copies - if you could use one, please let me know. It's a limited print run.

- **Risk management**

Be mindful of allergies within your class group if you go down along the Trail - **jumping jack ants** are about. There is a nest of **bees** in the large messmate tree below the Horticulture area, but they generally mind their own business. **Snakes** and **blue-tongue lizards** have been seen down there this year too. Students need to keep their eyes open in the bush, and learn to let nature be. But you are *in loco parentis*.

I expect we will soon be finding **European wasps** on the premises. These nest in the ground. From personal experience, I can assure you they don't like disturbance. Please let Maintenance know if you locate a nest or suspect there is one in the vicinity of the Trail.

- **We conserve on behalf of others ...**

Staff from Wadawurrung (the Ballarat Wauthurung Corporation) helped and encouraged us in the Trail creation, and will be valuable ongoing help. Their logo (below) is a stylised murnong flower – an indication of the significance to them of this humble plant.

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Wadawurrung

