

THE Rosedale ASSOCIATION INC



Newsletter Issue 108 March 2010

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2010

SATURDAY 11 APRIL 2009

Notice is hereby given that the 2010 AGM of The Rosedale Association Inc will be held on Easter Saturday, 3 April at 10.30 am in the grounds of 31 Rosedale Parade (enter off car park).

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Call for nominations to both Committee and executive
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Landcare Report
5. Fire Officer's Report
6. Saltwater Creek
7. Sewerage Update
8. History Project
9. Any other business

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the Committee are welcome and necessary. Do please consider volunteering.

Nominations should be in the hands of the Secretary by Friday 26th of March, 2010.

Nominations must be nominated and seconded by members of the Association

and signed by the candidate. The nomination form is inside the back cover of the March 2010 newsletter and on the Rosedale Association website.

Our financial year is the Calendar year.

**FEES ARE NOW DUE
\$10 PER VOTING
MEMBER**

COME TO THE ANNUAL WEEDATHON AND SAUSAGE SIZZLE

The annual Weedathon and Sausage Sizzle will be held on the afternoon and evening of Easter Saturday.

Make these both family outings, bring the kids, bring your visitors, friends - have a fun time, meet new faces, renew acquaintances, learn about plants and how to deal with weeds. Do some good for your local environment and let us say 'Thank You' to you while you relax at the Sizzle afterwards.

We supply the food, bring your own drinks and seating.

Along with the AGM these outings constitute the Association's only organised social events – don't miss any part of this Easter Saturday Trio!

START TIMES:

Weedathon - 2:30 pm, meeting places will be announced at the AGM.

Sausage Sizzle - 6 pm, on Mallets' Lawn.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Once again, this letter must take the place of a President's Report, since the Association is still without a President.

The year has been a fairly quiet one, without much activity on the development front. The welcome rainfall in February has had a significant impact on Saltwater Creek. I refer you to the article in this Newsletter from Michael Orr, who has been studying the creek as part of his honours degree. The burst of plant growth after the rain has also, no doubt, contributed to the increase in rabbit numbers, of which you may already be aware. See David Mackenzie's article in this Newsletter. I commend to you, also, Max Tischler's prescient contribution about frogs, and John Knight's very useful description of bird-attracting flora suitable for Rosedale.

The ongoing concern of Landcare for the natural environment is important to our hamlet. Their efforts should be encouraged and supported. See the notices for the Weedathon and the Bush Ramble published here.

As you can see, we have been forced to move from our "village green" on the cabin lawns, where our AGMs have been held since the inception of the Association. Permission to use the lawns was refused by the owners. This is deeply regrettable, after such a long time. Without the great generosity of the Malletts we would be homeless, so we are very grateful to them.

It is a pleasure to welcome Barry Shorter as our new Fire Officer. His report is included in this Newsletter, demonstrating his command of the detail of a seriously fire-risk affected area and all information available from a number of authorities. His report is a timely summary we should all read carefully.

There may be no imminent threat to Rosedale's serenity, but it would be a mistake to relax our guard. There will be massive development on the other side of George Bass Drive, putting a lot of pressure on our beaches and foot tracks, and on traffic patterns in general. Your committee has done its best to maintain a vigilant watch on the catchment area of Saltwater Creek, which Darren Gribble rightly describes as "our most vulnerable asset". A detailed submission on the subject by Emmett O'Loughlin, written at the request of last year's AGM, has received no reply. Nonetheless, further submissions will certainly be written into the future.

All of this requires the attention and co-ordination of your Committee. This Newsletter closely follows discussions at our last meeting in late December. Please take some time to consider whether you may have a contribution to make to this work, whether you might nominate for a position on the Committee, and whether you may be the President we are all looking for. Do not let the Association dwindle and wither, lest suddenly, when you really need it, you find it's no longer there.

BUSH RAMBLE GOOD FRIDAY 2 MARCH 10:00 AM

GATHER AT THE FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE CREEK BEFOREHAND

You are invited to join Landcare Committee members for an informal walk right around the village precinct on Good Friday covering a range of plant and animal habitats.

There's absolutely no weeding, it's for any one who likes walking and if you are new to the area, it's a great introduction to the highways and byways of Rosedale.

Depending on the experts we can co-opt, there will be comment and discussion on plant identification, bird and other animal spotting, nature notes, other useful information - all imparted free. Everyone is encouraged to join us.

All are welcome, especially children. It takes about two hours but you can stay with us for only as long as you want. Don't forget good foot wear, sunscreen, insect repellent, hat (not cap), water bottle and camera.

Only heavy rain will cancel it. No need to RSVP, just turn up.

4471 8471 is my Rosedale number. David Mackenzie

FIRE OFFICER'S REPORT

BUSH FIRES..... WHAT IF?

Black Saturday changed everything. The assumption that providing one had made reasonable preparations it would in many, perhaps most, cases be possible to stay and defend one's property was disproved by what happened in Victoria on a day of extreme weather conditions. The severity, range and speed of the numerous fires made them, at least in the short term, uncontrollable. A second assumption, that the warning and evacuation measures in place were adequate was also blown away. Victoria responded by drawing up a radically revised survival plan. New South Wales has followed suit.

BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

This indispensable fifteen page report is available from the Rural Fire Service (30 Campbell Street, Moruya) and may also be downloaded from the RFS website (www.rfs.nsw.gov.au).

Based essentially on the Victorian plan, its gist is summed up in its first heading: PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. The emphasis, as compared with earlier plans, has clearly moved on to the 'leave early' option. For Rosedale, both CATASTROPHIC and EXTREME warning categories would warrant evacuation, and the RFS and Police action plans reflect this. The Plan has a lift-out personal Survival Plan that the RFS and the Police urge people to fill in.

The RFS website is an important source on everything from Fire Danger Ratings to Post-Fire recovery.

THE ROSEDALE ASSOCIATION INC TREASURERS REPORT

BANK BALANCE \$1544.30

CREDITS

Payments Received 3445.00

Interest Received 0.11

Total 3445.11

EXPENSES

Printing and Newsletter 164.80

Malua Fire Brigade 500.00

P.O. Box Rental 75.00

Sausage Sizzle 230.00

Insurance 350.00

Payment to Landcare 1720.00

Payment to Fair Trading 45.00

Total Expenses..... 2874.80

Rosedale Account Balance 2114.61

Balance at Bank 2114.61

PERPETUAL CASH MANAGEMENT FUND

Balance at 01.01.09 16773.47

Interest for year 2009 551.02

Balance at 31.12.09 17324.49

ROSEDALE LANDCARE GROUP

FINANCIAL REPORT 2009

Balance 01.01.09 7374.02

Receipts from members of RAI Inc..... 1720.00

EXPENSES

Herbicide 43.98

Labour. Eco Friend Garden and Bush. 3366.00

Total Expenses..... 3409.98

Balance 31/12/2009 5684.04

Balance as per Bank Statement 6740.04

Unpresented Cheque 1056.00

Reconciled Balance 5684.04

FIRE OFFICER'S REPORT continued

EMERGENCY WARNINGS

Arrangements are better than ever before and are under constant development. (There is still some way to go, however—see comments below.)

NSWRFS Information Line is always open: 1800 679 737. And, of course, Emergencies 000. But log-jams are certainly possible, so general (outgoing) warnings will be the prime source of information:—

- **Radio:** The ABC has undertaken to co-operate closely with the Emergency Control Centre: stay tuned to ABC Local 103.5 FM. Keep a battery powered radio with you, and spare batteries.
- **Landline Telephones:** Warnings will go out on all landlines.
- **Mobile Phones:** Warnings will go out on all cell-phones with a local billing address. In the future this will be extended to all cell-phones, whatever the billing address.

There are three levels of Emergency Warning available on the RFS website, as well as on 000 and radio.

- **Advice:** A fire has started—no immediate danger
- **Watch and Act:** Heightened level of threat—start taking action
- **Emergency Warning:** You may be in danger—take action immediately

Phone messages will go out on the third (Emergency) level. They are sent out from Central Control in Sydney to all accessible phones in any area judged to be under threat. They will carry necessary but fairly minimal information. The hope is to provide up to two hours warning, though of course for any given receiver, depending on where they are, no advance

time can be guaranteed; things can develop at unpredictable speed.

Regular updating, let alone real time information, seems to still be something of a problem. Procedures have been extensively upgraded since Black Saturday, with heavy emphasis on warnings, the provision of relevant information, and forecasts of fire-front movement. However, data cannot yet be given in real time, though it will be made available as rapidly as possible, and all (brief) warnings will be very prompt—again bearing in mind, that the Fire Service can give only as much notice as they themselves get in a rapidly changing context.

It seems that information about the speed and direction of fires may still be lacking, and an expectation of comprehensive regular (say, every 30 minutes) updating on any media will not be met.

INTERNET WARNINGS

Apart from Fire Ban maps the only **graphic** (warning) display is the Current Incidents site (RFS website). The utility of the map is limited by its small scale and the use of conventional icons (e.g. a small 'flame') rather than animated computer graphics. All maps will be updated twice a day at best.

Aerial surveillance is severely limited by the fact that there is only one spotter plane for the whole of NSW. Independent analysis and overseas experience suggests that at least three planes using normal vision and infrared cameras would be needed for something approaching saturation coverage of very large areas. Our (as yet) modest resources mean that for any given fire region there will be only one aerial photograph a day.

POLICE ACTION

The Police will be working closely with the Control Centre set up by the RFS.

- **Evacuation:** in the event of a general declaration. Police will try to knock on every door; if there is no answer they will move on but will return later if possible. They are authorised to use force where necessary but officers are to use their discretion and not waste time trying to coerce those who insist on staying put. But they will try and return in all such cases. People will be directed to evacuation assembly points.
- **Roadblocks:** Under no circumstances should anyone try to go through any Police roadblocks, manned or unmanned, in any direction.
- **Notifications:** People who decide to leave early should notify the Police, and on arrival at their destination should let relatives, friends etc. know they are safe.

The Police are well prepared and will be very active in any emergency but will not be expected to take action where their own lives and safety are at risk. It cannot be stressed too much that initiative lies, in the first instance, with residents themselves. Act early and keep in touch!

SAFER PLACES

Note—no longer called 'Safe Places'. An eleven page 'Places of Last Resort (2009/10 Fire Season)' is available from the RFS Headquarters at Moruya and can be downloaded from the RFS website. A Eurobodalla list has finally been approved by the State central authority: the three most relevant for Rosedale residents are at Malua Bay Beach Reserve (building, adjacent to Surf Club);

Hanging Rock Oval (building, corner Beach Road & Hanging Rock Road); and Moruya Show Grounds (Albert Street).

These really are to be seen as a last resort—if it has been left too late to do anything else.

PREPARATION / DEFENCE OF PROPERTY

There is no shortage of information on this matter, starting with a useful summary in the new Fire Survival Plan. It is important that people do what they can as even modest measures can help the Fire Service save your property. And this, of course, applies to an 'ordinary' house fire that may have nothing to do with bush fires.

- **Full Fire-proofing:** No such thing! Extensive protective measures are possible but expensive—very expensive, and in a full-on conflagration would likely be ineffective.
- **Stay-and-Defend:** Possible under modest ember attack and if adequate advance preparations have been made. But bear in mind what has or hasn't been done on adjacent properties.
- **Bush Fire Household Assessment Tool :** Advice on what you can do to prepare your property can be sought via this website (bfhat.rfs.nsw.gov.au). It means filling in and forwarding a reasonably detailed report, and no guarantees can be made

by the RFS on the basis of the advice given. Help in completing the report can be sought from the RFS.

FIRE HYDRANTS

The state of the hydrants was until recently far from satisfactory. This issue was raised in an earlier newsletter and feedback from Association members was invited—none was received.

We have had regular dealings with the Eurobodalla Shire Council on this matter. The efforts of David Mackenzie, who is team leader of one of Canberra's 46 Community Fire Units (CFU) - all trained volunteers - have been especially effective in getting the right outcome. All hydrants are now operational and are clearly marked, though there is still some obstructing vegetation to be cleared in a few cases. A special request has been lodged with Council to have this carried out, and it has been given top priority. With luck the job will have been done by the time you receive this newsletter.

HAZARD REDUCTION IN ROSEDALE

The Rosedale Bushfire Mitigation Plan on the public notice-board beside the car park, in addition to the extensive Strategic Fire Advantage Zones (selective burn-back approximately every seven years), shows Council Slashing and Council Hand Clearing zones (marked with blue and red hatching). These are confined to two or three relatively small areas mostly on the periphery of the hamlet and are scheduled for regular inspection and maintenance, as are the limited patches of Crown land.

The extensive areas marked on the map simply in dark green (no buildings) may be Council, Crown or private land and some sections of this are due for designation as clearing zones.

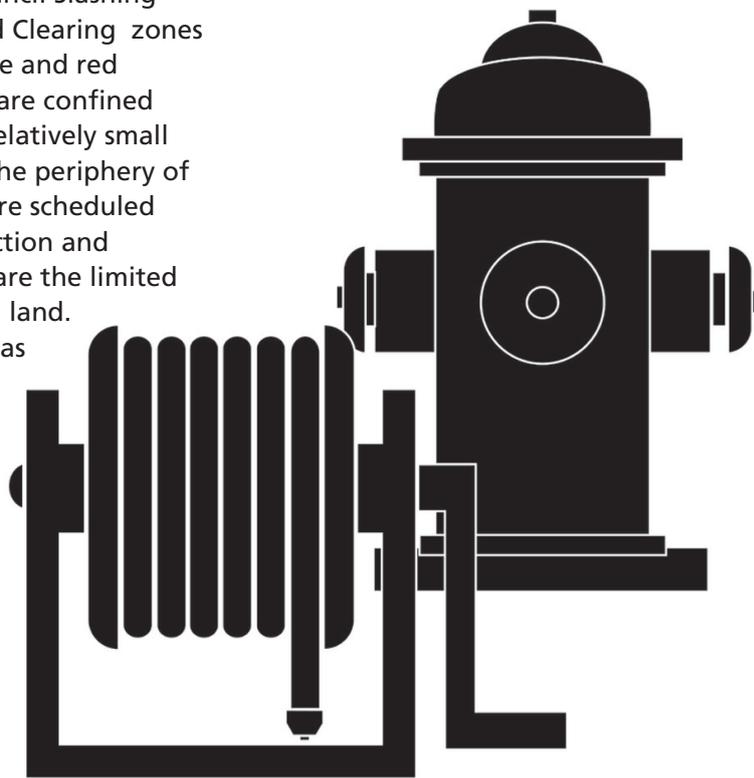
If any of these areas is believed by a home-owner to have become a potential threat the proper procedure is to notify the RFS and they will undertake to pursue the matter with the relevant owner (Council, Crown or private).

The same applies to the Strategic Fire Advantage Zones. Ideally, the aim is to meet the circulating seven year target, but this is not a perfect world and sensible suggestions from the public will receive full consideration from the RFS.

The region south of Rosedale, between us and Guerilla Bay, is apparently ticketed for attention in the near future.

The purpose of this article is purely informational. The Rosedale Association Committee has no operational responsibility in this area. Specific queries should be directed to the Rural Fire Service who are always very helpful.

BARRY SHORTER



LANDCARE REPORT

Landcare has been relatively inactive in the past year. Our Coordinator, Adrian Lewis, was obliged through a temporary disability to withdraw from active participation. He expects to be able to resume duties by mid year. As your Landcare Tech. Advisor I have had limited opportunity for on-ground activity but have maintained my post at the desk. The main burden has been born by the small number of unsung, dedicated folk who regularly attend to selected areas and nip things in the bud on their walks around the precinct. To these folk we extend our sincere thanks for their contribution. Earlier, a small number of organised working bees was attended by a small number of individuals. To all outward appearances the precinct is in reasonably good shape.

However, closer examination reveals patches at locations across the Hamlet of different weeds that have been relatively benign for some time and have not yet reached explosion level. Those that worry us in particular are asparagus vine and its close relative, bridal creeper, both spread by birds. Once they really get on the move, as weeds do, recovery will be difficult. This potential remains, as ever, Rosedale Landcare's principal challenge.

The principal project in the last few years has been the further development of the Banksia Flat Reserve. Work there began in the early 90s but working bees could not maintain regular and effective control of the weeds. A series of grants from around 1999 brought outside assistance and for

a while the vegetation improved considerably but, despite many very good efforts, the community could not keep up. The pity is that unless the pressure is kept up, previous gains are lost. As reported in earlier Newsletters, we won a federal Envirofund grant which expired in mid 2009. Then, to keep up the momentum, Landcare engaged the Envirofund bush regeneration contractor, Michele Tribolet, to cover, firstly the winter period, and subsequently spring and early summer. This work was paid for out of the Landcare Fund. This was intended as a stop gap until further outside funding could be obtained. We have now applied for funding from Eurobodalla Landcare who await the distribution of Caring For Country funds. We expect to know the outcome by the time of the coming AGM.

SEWAGE RETICULATION PROJECT - a progress report

Exhaustive investigations at the finer scale have been going ahead to finalise installation plans for domestic properties in Guerilla Bay and Rosedale. Adjustments have been made from the perspective of both Council and individual property owners. Street mains layout is almost finalised and property plans are about 90% finalised. The next step is to call for an Environmental Impact Statement to help establish the trade-off between the proportion of mains that is direct drilled to that laid in open trenches. Open trench is not so environmentally desirable but a good deal cheaper than the environmentally preferred drilling method. The assessment will, among others, consider the social impact both on individual properties and public lands.

Guerilla Bay and Rosedale were scheduled to begin in 2010-11. However, a number of sewage schemes around the state has been left in limbo as State Government has withdrawn from arrangements to subsidise their costs until at least 2012. Our Project has gone ahead so far under an arrangement with State Government for an approximately 50% subsidy. However, this agreement has never been confirmed; a request for confirmation from State Government last June remains unanswered at the time of writing in late February.

The proposed new Bodalla sewerage scheme is affected in a similar manner with approximately 20% subsidy still to be confirmed

before tenders can be called to commence construction proposed for this year.

Council is in an invidious position. It cannot readily go ahead with our scheme without the 50% State subsidy, at least not for some years it would seem. One has to see this in the context of Council's current dilemma where it was refused an increase in rates beyond the State agreed threshold and has resorted to asking the community and ratepayers to tell them which services it is prepared to go without. My contact in Council is optimistic; let us hope that optimism is justified and that at the AGM we can bring you news of the scheme remaining on schedule.

DAVID MACKENZIE

Our other major project is the Carpark landscaping and maintenance. The carpark was originally planted by and has been subsequently maintained by the Rosedale Community. Council does not do anything other than mow, occasionally. As the plants mature some require thinning and the weeds are sporadically handled, principally by members of the unheralded band mentioned above. Skyline Tree Services maintain a steady supply of free chippings for mulch: so far there has been enough for the carpark as well as the noodlers who help themselves. If you have tree loppings and droppings chipped, please consider asking the contractor to leave the chips for the carpark.

In the forthcoming year we hope to be able to mount working bees in school holidays and we urge parents to get their children involved and acquaint them with the need to keep our bushland healthy as well as as how go about it. The need for on-ground contribution remains as great as ever, this is a community activity that the Landcare Fund can never replace. Nevertheless, donations are also needed for the bigger tasks. As a guide, in previous years the average working bee lasted for an hour, was attended by 7-15 persons and were held about 8 times a year. Landcare Australia rates community effort at \$35 per hour.

On behalf of the community I extend thanks to those who have continued to support Landcare in various ways. May you continue to enjoy the bush-like atmosphere of Rosedale to which you have so generously contributed.

DAVID MACKENZIE
LANDCARE TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Rabbit Control

The recent increase in Rosedale's rabbit population is causing concern. Earlier control activity by Rosedale Landcare had a noticeable effect but the effort could not be maintained in recent years. This, and the recent improved seasonal conditions have contributed to the increase. It is now clear a more professional approach is required and Landcare has lodged a request with Council to stage a rabbit control program at Rosedale. There are other locations in the north of the Shire with expanded rabbit populations and a ranger will do spotlight head counts at all of them in the near future to assess populations. There is funding for perhaps only one more location this financial year and the location with greatest potential for a good outcome will be chosen.

There were successful programs run at Mystery Bay and Congo last year while at Tuross, community opposition forced the withdrawal of the program. Greater success results from community participation. For example, outside reserves, the program can only operate on holdings of 1 ha or more so neighbours on small blocks have been known to amalgamate them to exceed the 1 ha threshold and allow the program onto their properties. There is also a lot the community can do to assist with observations; rangers cannot be present all the time.

The program is extremely safe for other animals, domestic or native. Initially there is free feeding, the food (mostly carrot) is laid under small cages that exclude most native animals. Once a habit has been established, the bait (Pindane) is added. Rabbits mostly return to their burrows so few dead rabbits will be seen. Any carnivores (including cats, dogs, foxes) will need to devour 5 or 6 dead rabbits, if they can find them, to have any effect. Among other animals, bandicoots, for one, are not targeted, they do not like the bait.

Should Rosedale be chosen for a control program and you are interested in assisting or simply want more information, please contact me.

DAVID MACKENZIE



SALTWATER CREEK

I have been studying Saltwater Creek as part of my honours project at the University of Canberra since September 2009. My aims are basically to investigate changes in water properties (such as salinity and temperature) over time and particularly to look at changes in such properties when the creek is closed and when it is open to the ocean. And as some of you would know I have finally been given an opportunity to study the creek when it is open and during the subsequent period following the breakout on Monday 15th February. Before this I was giving up hope of this actually happening before my study finishes mid this year!

Saltwater Creek is a water body commonly referred to as an 'ICOLL' (Intermittently Open and Closed Lake or Lagoon) and has also been described as a 'brackish creek'. As these lagoons are mainly closed to the ocean they do not constantly flush like larger estuaries do. They rely a lot on wind to mix them as freshwater runoff is typically sporadic. And given the wind protection given to Saltwater Creek by its surrounding terrain and vegetation it is safe to say that it is not very well mixed.

Up until the breakout on the 15th February I had observed very low salinity levels in Saltwater Creek to a point where the water was

almost fresh. Despite this, plants and animals in the creek seemed to flourish, particularly up towards the ocean where the mats of water plants and algae became thicker as time went on. And as the water became clearer more and more fish became visible, with large schools of mullet and teams of other species being spotted. The importance of these lagoons as nurseries for fish was realised, that's for sure.

My study has also tracked the level of phytoplankton, which basically is the quantity of floating microalgae in the water responsible for photosynthesis and the production of dissolved oxygen. Too much phytoplankton for extended periods generally indicates poor water quality and it is promising to see that these have remained, for the most part, below the threshold for good water quality in Australia with occasional, brief increases following runoff events.

I have also observed low dissolved oxygen levels in the creek, with some of the deeper waters having no dissolved oxygen at all. This has occurred mainly as a result of the decomposition of organic matter such as dead algae and leaf litter (of which the creek has a lot, I might add!). In such conditions hydrogen sulphide is produced and the resulting smell coming from the creek has been described

as that of rotten eggs. These conditions are exacerbated by nutrient inputs from the catchment however the high amounts of decomposing organic matter along the creek ensure this natural process will always occur in these types of water bodies.

It will be interesting to see the changes following the opening of the lagoon. On the 25th February I observed a large increase in salinity, and an obvious decrease in clarity. Dissolved oxygen levels were down in some areas causing the deeper water and sediment to smell in places. With no nutrient data available yet I can only assume levels are high at the moment and algae should grow throughout, hopefully restoring dissolved oxygen levels and not diminishing them via the decomposition of large amounts of algae. But the future of the creek looks promising once things settle down, with a good amount of seawater and plenty of fish remaining within and looking happier than ever. I look forward to making observations the next few months and will hopefully have an update for you when my study is complete.

MICHAEL ORR

(Michael is a student of Prof. Bill Maher in the Department of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra.)



ROSEDALE FROGS

Summer has been such a good season for Rosedale. I know some of you may disagree, but the rain has been a real gift. In the three months since December Batemans Bay has recorded 398.7mm, and Moruya copped 497.2mm! This rain has kept a lot of unhappy holiday makers indoors, but it's also meant many of the streams, creeks and wetlands in our catchment have received a much needed top-up. The warm, humid conditions have provided an ideal opportunity for wetland critters to breed, but also move about into some less frequented areas of the district. Over January, and February in particular, for many living or staying in the low-lying parts of Rosedale, around the Lagoon or close to Banksia Flat, you may have heard the deafening chorus of male frogs, as they jostle for the webbed-hand of a nearby lady frog?

Frogs are a very interesting group of animals. They have been around for approximately 200 million years. They are cold-blooded and have permeable skin, which means liquids and gases are absorbed and can pass back and forth through it. This requires always having to stay around water, in moist damp areas, or possessing highly specialised behaviours to maintain an 'internal-external balance'. Having permeable skin makes frogs extremely susceptible to pollutants and chemicals, and makes them useful indicators of water quality or whether high levels of toxins are present within an ecosystem. Unfortunately, the rapid decline and extinction of some species in the past 50 years has been the direct result of increased pollution and habitat contamination.

In just the last 10 years, it is estimated that 170 species of frogs have gone extinct worldwide, and

a further 1900 are threatened! Besides pollution, threats to frog populations include: habitat alteration, increased temperature fluctuations, feral predation and an uncontrollable parasitic fungus called amphibian chytrid. It is possible that if things continue we may witness the entire extinction of frogs: a sad thought indeed.

There are 219 species of frog in Australia, and about 20 of these could potentially live in Rosedale



and its surrounds. The species that we might find around Rosedale are quite diverse and include tree-frogs, marsh-frogs, froglets, barred-frogs and toadlets. These range in size from small 20mm long toadlets to around 90mm for the larger barred-frogs. Besides the distinct (but sometimes discrete) colouration and patterns, the best method of identifying frogs is by their call (unless of course you want to crawl through wet mud on a rainy night). Each species has its own unique call which is used to communicate and ultimately appeal to a potential mate. A group of raucous male frogs is called a 'lek', and even in the smallest ponds you can find an army of singing suitors. On a rainy night several years ago I found four species of frog within 10m of each other whilst spotlighting in North Rosedale. I am always amazed at just how much noise a group of tiny frogs can make.

Besides the more predictable spots, like the marshy grasslands around the Lagoon, frogs can turn up pretty much anywhere in Rosedale. The tree-frogs in particular like getting into the damp crawl space of our roofs and gutters, as well shower recesses and the occasional cistern (always a surprise to the unsuspecting). The usual culprit of this offence is Peron's Tree Frog (*Litoria peroni*). Frogs are extremely adaptable at living amongst our dwellings, and will attempt to breed in bird-baths, fish ponds, and many other backyard items if conditions are favourable. In fact, a small pond or water feature in the yard is a great asset to the native fauna, and will undoubtedly be colonised by frogs soon after it's established.

During extended dry periods frog numbers will shrink back into the more reliable creeks and wetlands. If these areas are altered, removed or polluted, then frogs run into trouble. Without clean, uncontaminated wetlands and waterways frogs will continue down the shaky path of the last 50 years. A few things to keep in mind, for the frog's sake: limit your use of chemicals in the garden, don't let your pets roam around at night, and let's be thankful we haven't got Cane Toads to deal with (yet!)

There are some fantastic websites that have many of the common Australian frog calls recorded. If you want to try and identify the calls you hear in your backyard, this is a great place to start. Have a look at www.frogs.org.au for more information.

MAX TISCHLER

FRUITS OF THE FOREST

Isn't life strange?

When all we seem to do is try to keep the plants in our gardens alive with meager water supplies, and even more severe restrictions appear imminent, liquid gold falls from the sky. Not just in small amounts either. As these words are put to paper, rain tumbles down, and little rivulets scurry across ground already saturated by previous falls.

You might have noticed that many forest birds have sought refuge in your gardens, if for nothing else, at least the water in bird baths. There is no doubt that the local bush appears quite dry, but despite this, plants have produced a lot of flowers which are now fruiting heavily.

Rainforest plants which are suitable for growing in home gardens are locally quite common in many gullies and protected sites. Some even manage to grow happily on roadsides. No doubt many are familiar with *Acmena smithii*, Lilly Pilly, which is a quite attractive tree for home gardens, coping well with dry conditions once established. In its natural state, it is a large tree to 20m. or so, growing in deep gullies and with protection from drying winds.

As a cultivated plant, it is more likely to grow to about 8m, with an attractive rounded head of glossy green foliage, and during late spring sprays of light greenish white flowers, held in panicles outside the foliage. The fruit is forming now, a berry about 1cm across, whitish with tinges of pink or purple. As the fruit ripens in autumn, you might notice an increase in the number of colourful visitors, for King Parrots and Crimson Rosellas, as well as Currawongs and pigeons find the fruit to their liking.



A somewhat smaller plant, *Alectryon subcinereus*, Native Quince also inhabits rainforest areas close to the sea, and usually grows only 4m or so in gardens. Another common name, Bird's Eye, refers to the fruit, which as it ripens displays a glossy black seed about 6mm across, surrounded by a red fleshy skin or aril. This is a very easy to grow plant, tolerating quite tough conditions once established, and will grow quite happily in sun or shade, and in sandy or heavy soil. In summer, groups of pinkish flowers appear at the ends of branches, and the fruit, which is just starting to develop now, is prominently displayed outside the foliage to attract birds.

The Euphorbia Family contains a few plants which are ideal as shrubs growing under other plants. Coffee Bush, *Breynia oblongifolia* is one such plant, which has attractive pinnate foliage on reddish stems. The

plant grows to 4m, but is mostly less than 2m. in the garden, and anyway you can prune the life out of the plant and it will come back strongly. It often is found shaded by other plants, but will grow quite happily in sun once established, and needs little water. Flowers can occur at any time of the year, with the main flush during spring and summer. Both male and female flowers are small and greenish, but the fruits develop to about 6mm across, becoming bright red when ripe. This is a good plant to keep the fruit eating birds coming to your garden.

Another plant of the Euphorbia Family is the Cheesetree, *Glochidion ferdinandii*, a small tree usually between 4 and 6m, but in open sites can become a bushy shrub.

Leaves are glossy green, typical of rainforest plants, about 8cm long and 4cm wide, with prominent light coloured veins. Cheesetree

FRUITS OF THE FOREST continued

is so named because the fruits resemble cheeses of times past. At first cream coloured, the fruits become darker and reddish purple before they split to reveal many red seeds. Actually the seeds are not red, but covered with a reddish aril which attracts the birds which eat the seed.

This is a quite easy plant to grow, and is a very pleasant size for the home garden. It is quite adaptable to soil type, and tolerates dryness once established. Initially quick growing and somewhat lanky, the plants fill out attractively as they develop.

Tree Violet, *Hymenanthera dentata* is often found growing in dense shade beneath other trees and shrubs. You might not notice



it readily, until you accidentally grab its foliage as you pass by. It bears quite an armory of sharp spikes, similar to *Bursaria*, and these are as a defence against browsing wallabies, which quite like the succulent growth. It seems the more the wallabies browse a plant, the bigger the thorns become, to discourage nibbling.

Flowers are small pale yellow tubular bells, borne along the branches from late winter. Although small, they exude a delightful fragrance on warm days, but some with sensitive

noses might find the scent overpowering. Fruit, which is greenish tinged with purple, is ripening now, and is eagerly sought by all manner of seed eating birds. Tree Violet is another of our local plants which rarely rate when selecting plants for the garden, but it is an easy to grow shrubby plant, tolerating sun or shade, and dryness once established. Pruning to shape is quite easy, although the more you prune the bigger the thorns !

Myoporum acuminatum, the Northern Boobialla is a very attractive small tree to about 6m, with bright green leaves and ironbark like trunk with corky grey bark. White flowers appear during spring, and are followed by small purple berries which

are keenly devoured by a range of birds. This plant responds to changes in the weather, dropping leaves to save energy in drought, and regenerating quickly after rains, often flowering a second time in its excitement. Hardy in all but poorly drained sites,

and copes with full sun or quite heavy shade. Over time the trunk develops deep wrinkles, and often becomes crooked, adding to the charm of the plant.

In the Cedar Family, *Meliaceae*, *Synoum glandulosum* or Scentless Rosewood, is a small tree but more usually a shrubby plant of 2 – 4m. You will often only notice the plant when it is flowering or fruiting, as it tends to blend in with the surrounding bush. However the foliage is most attractive, glossy green with a tinge of red, with pinnate leaflets

up to 8cm long. Flowers are pinkish or cream coloured, with a sweet scent, and are carried in small bundles in the forks of the leaves. Flowering can occur through the year, but mostly from summer to spring. Fruiting is mainly from late winter through summer, and large bright red fruits up to 2cm across split to reveal 2 or 3 glossy brown seeds. Possums and wallabies are fond of the red outer covering, and the seeds are quickly devoured by birds. This plant makes an attractive and long lived container plant, and can be kept inside for some time without detriment.

You might have noticed that I omitted *Pittosporum undulatum*, Sweet Pittosporum. I do not subscribe that the plant is an environmental weed, but that we encourage its spread by removing other plants which would have been natural competitors. There is a place for Pittosporum in your garden, as it provides food and shelter for a range of birds. By all means thin them out if you have too many, and be aware that some produce many more fruit than others, so if they are becoming a nuisance, keep only those that produce few fruit. Pittosporum provides a great barrier to the spread of weeds, as little can get established in the dry shade under the plants. It also provides good hunting and scratching sites for ground feeding birds.

If you have the space to plant a few rainforest species, now might be a good time to get the ground prepared, and seek out some of the plants described to add to the diversity of your own piece of paradise. Who knows, in a few short years you will have a shady corner to hide in on the hot days ahead.

JOHN KNIGHT

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2010 ARE NOW DUE

If the address label on your newsletter has a red dot your membership subscription for the calendar year 2010 is now due. Subscriptions support the work of your Rosedale Association and are only \$10 per voting member per year.

Please note that you cease to be an Association member if you are unfinancial for two calendar years.

Please include a completed Membership Application, Renewal and Payment Form with your cheque so that we can keep our records fully up to date.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION, RENEWAL AND PAYMENT FORM

You may use this form to apply for membership, to renew your membership, to make a Landcare fund donation, or to advise a change to your membership details.

The annual membership subscription is \$10 per voting member and subscriptions become due on 1st January each year. Please complete and forward this form with your cheque to:

The Treasurer
The Rosedale Association
PO Box 4134
Manuka ACT 2603

You may renew your membership and make payment by bank deposit. Please use the form on the Rosedale Association Inc website. Go to the Membership page at <http://www.netspeed.com.au/rosedale>

Application type (Please tick one)

- Membership application
- Membership renewal/Landcare donation
- Change of membership details

Voting members

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- 2 _____
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----- (w) ----- (m)

Rosedale telephone number

Email addresses (please print carefully)

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

Weed notices (Please tick one)

Would you like advice on noxious weeds on your property?

- Yes
- No

PAYMENTS

Membership subscription for _____ voting member(s) for the calendar year _____	\$ _____
Landcare fund donation (optional)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

COMMENTS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ROSEDALE ASSOCIATION INC COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM - 2010

Please print and complete this form and forward it to reach: The Secretary
The Rosedale Association Inc
PO Box 4134 Manuka ACT 2603

by Tuesday 30 March, 2010, or hand it to The Secretary before the AGM on Saturday 3 April 2010.

Nominator, seconder, and nominee must be members of the Rosedale Association Inc.

I nominate: _____ for a position on the Rosedale Association Inc Committee

Nominator: _____ Signed: _____

Seconder: _____ Signed: _____

I agree to stand: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I, _____
(full name)

of _____
(address)

Being a member of the Rosedale Association Incorporated
hereby appoint _____
(full name of proxy)

of _____
(address)

Being a member of that incorporated association, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the annual general meeting and the special general meeting of the association to be held on the 3rd day of April 2010 and at any adjournment of those meetings.

(signature of member appointing proxy)..... (date)

Note: Each member is entitled to appoint another member as proxy by notice given to the secretary before the time of the meeting.

If undeliverable please return to:
The Rosedale Association Inc.
PO Box 4134
MANUKA ACT 2603

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