

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

www.moggillcreek.org.au

MCCG NEWSLETTER: Autumn 2020

Your Autumn 2020 issue includes:

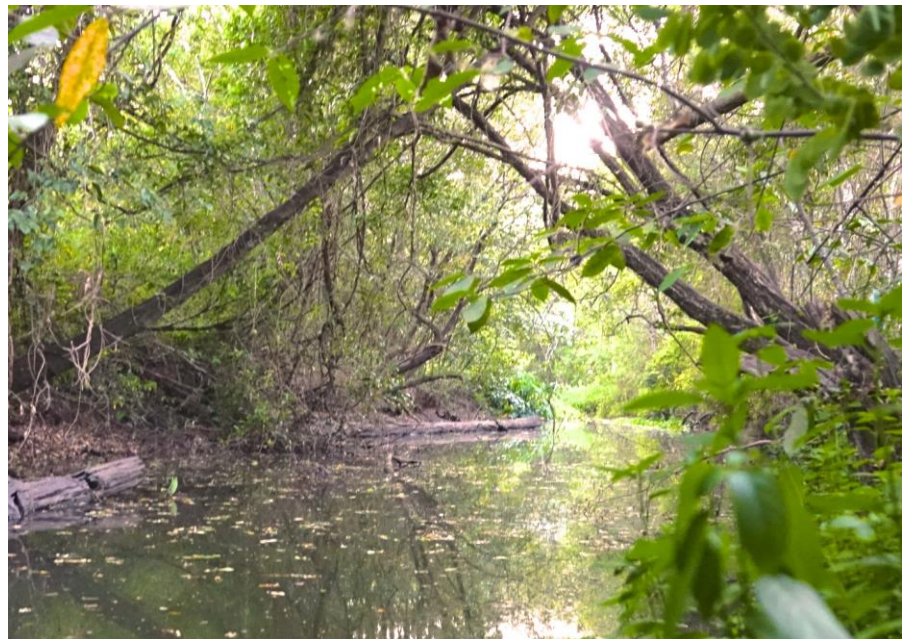
CALM (p6), CTC Update (p6), Catchment Cycads (p5),
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Rainfall (p3), Sandpaper Figs & Catfish *Bush Bite* (p4),
Seeds & Weeds (p4-5), **Website HELP NEEDED** (p7).

BELOW: Rowena St. Park work (picture: *Jim Pope*). For more on the new MCCG CALM initiative, turn to *Jim's* update on page 6.



ABOVE: Frogs over a barrel?!
For more on how to help green tree frogs during a dry spell (and another photo from Tina Heybroek), turn to *Phil Bird's* page 3 *Froggin'*.

**MARCH BROOKFIELD HALL
PUBLIC TALK POSTPONED**
See page 2 for more



ABOVE LEFT: Ala, hard at work finding inspiration for the Digital Young Person's Category for the 2019 MCCG Photography Competition (picture credit: *Monika Konopka*). Now is the time to get ready for the 2020 Competition! Turn to *Rebecca Bain's* page 7 update.

ABOVE RIGHT: In these ever-changing times, we all need to take time out to enjoy beautiful local vistas (picture credit: *Ed Frazer*). Turn to page 4 for more from *Ed Frazer* about this particular site, and what lies beneath.

Chairman's report

After the devastating drought, the recent rains have come as a very welcome relief and have gone a long way to restoring habitat in Moggill Creek, although the long-term impact on our wildlife has yet to be assessed. Fortunately, we escaped the bushfires that devastated much of eastern and southern Australia, although they did initiate some timely discussions on bushfire preparedness and the potential impact of a bushfire emergency on communities within the catchment. The lack of reliable mobile phone coverage in some parts of the catchment is of particular concern, since we are told that mobile phone is the primary mode of communication from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) during a fire threat. MCCG submitted two applications for funding from the Federal Governments Community Environment Program that was announced prior to the last Federal Election; just before Christmas we learned that both had been successful. One of the grants (for \$12,500) is being used to support environmental remediation work by private landholders within the catchment. MCCG members were invited to submit expressions of interest for funding. After a detailed vetting process by a sub-committee (comprising myself, Bryan Hacker and Mike Humphreys), that involved visits to all of the properties involved, nine grants were awarded, ranging from \$900 to \$1800. The sub-committee were very impressed by the efforts of the landholders concerned to control exotic weeds, improve wildlife habitat and enhance biodiversity on their properties. An added benefit of this process has been that several of the properties that were not already *Land for Wildlife* members have been encouraged to apply. The Federal Government are also to be congratulated on initiating the scheme. Although it has been described as a 'one off' program, we sincerely hope it will be repeated in the future.

Jim Pope

STOP PRESS: MCCG Talks' Program

In the light of recent advice on public gatherings, our March Brookfield Hall Public Meeting has been cancelled. We hope to be able to reschedule Professor Jennifer Firn's talk, 'The tale of two non-native grasses: *Eragrostis curvula* and *Cenchrus ciliaris*,' at a later date.

Future MCCG Public Meetings are still planned for the fourth Thursday evenings in June and September (as well as our November AGM and talk) – details to be advised. **Why not 'like' our Facebook page to ensure you always have the latest updates?**

Editorial

It is always great to hear that we have some new people taking on key tasks at the MCCG. I hope that the next issue of this newsletter will include an introduction to Sam Bayford-Brown (thanks and welcome Sam, for stepping up to be the MCCG PR Officer, as confirmed at our AGM) and also to our incoming Website Coordinator (*position vacant*).

This issue includes a 'help wanted for our website' note, following the decision by Michelle Johnston to step down after a number of years of amazing work on the MCCG website (including continuing after moving away from the catchment some time ago!).

I will certainly miss Michelle's regular contributions to this Newsletter – as well as her work to ensure that our website is an invaluable resource. I know I join with all of our fellow MCCG members in acknowledging her great contribution.

I also close this Editorial with my own 'help wanted' note... **ARTICLES WANTED The absolute deadline for the next issue is 12 June 2020.** I am sure EVERYONE has at least 100 words they could email to me.... So get writing **now**. Don't wait until the deadline is upon us!

Cathi

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

Chairman: Jim Pope

Secretary: Kathleen Walmsley

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Articles of interest to Members are always welcome.

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style and space. The decision of the Editor is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. **Please email your ideas direct:**

Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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Froggin' Around: The Rain Chorus

The rains cometh, and with them the frog chorus! On the first night, graceful tree frogs (*Litoria gracilentia*) and the occasional green tree frog (*Lit. carulea*). I still do not know where these particular frogs breed. Our dam had dried up, but with recent rains it is now overflowing. First, I heard striped marsh frogs (*Lim. peronii*)—tok tok-ing, and blowing their foam nests. Then a chorus of eastern sedge frogs (*Lit. fallax*) and cane toads (*Rhinella marina*). I didn't hear any emerald spotted tree frogs (*Lit. peronii*) or tusked frogs (*Adelotus brevis*). I worry they might have become locally extinct at this site. In the creek, there were mottled individual tadpoles of stony tree frogs (*Lit. wilcoxi*), and small schools of cane toad tadpoles. The dried-up creek and waterholes are now waiting for the fish. I recently saw large eel-tailed catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*) swimming upstream. In a pool that captures run-off from two dams, on the edge of the creek, gudgeons (*Hypseleotris* sp.) have taken up residence—either firetail (*H. galii*) or empire (*H. compressa*).

One dam had dried up, so I am pondering what to restock with—and thinking that native fish species which can control mosquito larvae might be a good idea. Smaller fish species tend to better co-exist with tadpoles (subject to the size of the water source, and availability of suitable plants to provide refuges). Perhaps I'll select Pacific blue eyes (*Pseudomugil signifier*), a native species, common in the creeks in Brisbane, which is excellent for mosquito control (and doesn't eat tadpoles). Firetail gudgeons are also great



for mosquito control, but can eat smaller tadpoles. Empire gudgeons are larger, but may also be predatory to tadpoles. If thinking about stocking your own dam, DO NOT use exotic species (particularly if there is even a remote chance of an overflow to the creek).

Tina and Kees Heybroek had a great idea for the "Ric Natrass Frog Habitat," to assist green tree frogs and other species in dry spells (see Tina's pictures, left and front cover). They note:

"Our barrels are located under

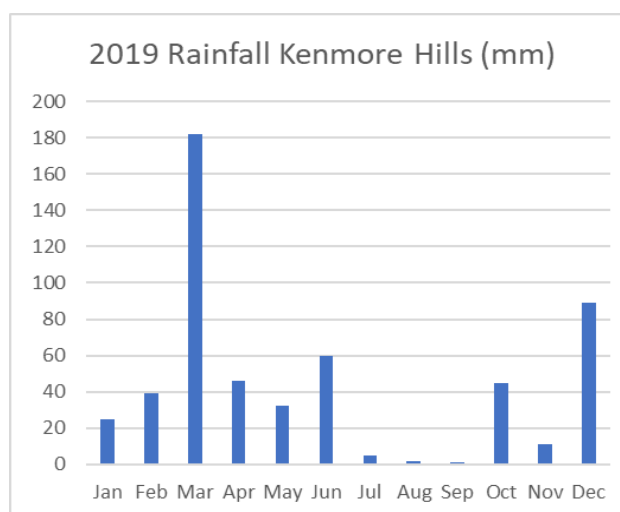
the outlets in the roof rainwater gutters, where they will usually collect rainwater from overflows from the debris filters. They are 50cm high, 40cm diameter at

the top rim and about 55cm at the maximum diameter. They have a hole at about 15cm height, which prevents them from filling up. They are full of rocks. It helps if there is a bit of a peep hole down to the bottom so you can check that there is always some water in the bottom."

Phil Bird

2019 Catchment Rainfall

Rainfall records for our Kenmore Hills property certainly tell a story (see my 2019 histogram, below). Our 2019 rainfall total was just 537mm—significantly less than the Brisbane 2019 total (859mm), which was also substantially lower again than the long-term Brisbane average (1011mm). In only 3 of the 12 months of 2019 did we receive over 50mm of rain.



Over our catchment, rainfall varies considerably. An article in the Summer 2004 MCCG Newsletter suggested that the Pinjarra Hills 15-year average rainfall was 1020mm—which was just 83% of that recorded at Smith's Rainforest Nature Refuge, Upper Brookfield (1238mm). On average, three-quarters of the months across the year at Upper Brookfield received more than 50mm rainfall.

2019 has been a harsh year for those keen on restoring native vegetation, not only because of low overall rainfall, but also because of its distribution over time. At least we can be thankful that we are not in Victoria. When writing (in January), destruction from Victorian bushfires was horrendous and lives were at risk.

Update: I recorded 228mm rainfall in January 2020, more than any single month in 2019. The increased rainfall attracted many MCCG members to the Nursery; 56 members (including a few second visits) collected a total of 3,013 plants from the Nursery, surely a record! February brought more rain (374mm), and 60 members picked up 2,299 local native plants.

Bryan Hacker

Bush Bites: Sandpaper Figs & Catfish

Michelle Johnston's marvellous [Bush Bites](#) initiative continues to attract some wonderful stories to our website—including this latest item from Ed Frazer. If you have a story to share, do email the [newsletter editor](#), or [contact the incoming website manager](#).

The important canopy formed over the Gold Creek pools, alongside our property, is largely composed of Sandpaper Figs and Creek Lilly Pillies. Their roots have been undermined by successive floods, and they are leaning at an angle of about 40 degrees over the creek (see Ed's front page picture of the canopy).

Both species produce huge amounts of fruit that supports a large number of birds and possums. I regularly see figbirds, and a range of doves and pigeons—including purple-crowned fruit-doves, wonga and white-headed pigeons, and bronze buckoo-doves—eating the fruit. At night we have brush-tailed, mountain and ring-tailed possums.

Cockatoos also join the feast; in their regular style they chew off the smaller branches, bite off one fruit and then drop the branch (which then ends up in the creek). While the birds are feeding, showers of ripe fruit fall off and plop into the water below.

Fortunately, the quantity of fruit provided by these mature trees is enormous.



Left: A closer look at a Sandpaper Fig (Note: All photographs for this article are courtesy Ed Frazer).

Large numbers of Eel-tailed catfish live in the creek, under the trees (see picture, bottom right). They have huge mouths, surrounded by long, sensitive whiskers. I think the figs and Lilly pillies are a major part of their diet, as I suspect they eat the fruit as it falls, and also as it rots down in the water.

The Eel-tailed Catfish breed in the creek, laying their eggs in a nest in the gravel (clearing nests that are approximately 1m in diameter). The female attends the nest, fanning the eggs until they hatch. During the daytime I rarely see them, as they stay deep in the water, but I can see evidence of them as their activity results in small streams of bubbles rising to the surface. At dusk these fish rise to the surface—grunting and making slurping noises—and sometimes

travel along the creek, sucking at the surface film (which probably contains microscopic animals such as Paramecium and Euglena—but they could also be feeding on floating pollen from the Lilly pillies, which produce copious amounts from their beautiful, scented flowers [below]).



Years ago my son, then aged about eight, came home with several good-sized Eel-tailed Catfish on a string, and insisted I cook them. I skinned them and cooked the white-fleshed fillets. They tasted terrible, with a very muddy flavour, so they are definitely best left cleaning up what falls into the creek



No doubt there are many other forms of creek life that are dependent on this fruit bounty dropping into the creek, but the Eel-tailed Catfish are the prime recyclers of the fruit that otherwise would turn the creek into a smelly mess.

Ed Frazer

Seeds: Shiny-leaved Canthium (*Psydrax odorata*)

Shiny-leaved Canthium (previously known as *Canthium odoratum*) is a small tree up to 8m tall, with attractively spreading branches from a vertical trunk. Leaves are 3-8cm long, 1-3.5cm wide, shiny and dark green on the upper surface. Highly-perfumed white flowers, each with five petals, are in clusters and appear from spring to summer (see photo overleaf).



Fruits are black when ripe, spherical, 7-8mm in diameter, each with two seeds. A tree I planted some years ago fruited prolifically this year, so hopefully plants will soon be available from our Nursery. Shiny-leaved Canthium is listed as occurring in depauperate rainforests, but on our property off Gap Creek Road (as well as in a neighbouring property) it occurs naturally in eucalypt woodland. It is native to coastal and sub-coastal districts from northern NSW to Cape York and the NT.

Bryan Hacker

Weeds: Mother of Millions (*Bryophyllum* spp.)

'Mother of Millions' is an aptly named weed, as it is very difficult to eliminate. I had mistakenly paid little attention to an area of forest on my property during the drought last spring, and was later horrified to



find it inundated with Mother of Millions, which had been uncommon but quickly flourished despite the extended drought.

Originating in Madagascar, there are several forms, broadly similar, all in the genus *Bryophyllum*. Mother of Millions is an erect plant with fleshy leaves, in time flowering with pendulous reddish flowers. Plants commonly reproduce by seed, but Mother of Millions also has the unusual ability to produce plantlets along its leaf margins, even from a very early age (see photo, above). If hand-weeding, it pays to carefully put all

plants—including every leaf—into a container for disposal. Recommended herbicides include Affray 300 (which I used for my infestation) and Starane Advanced, neither of which affect grasses.

Mother of Millions is poisonous to livestock, and under State legislation is a restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Bryan Hacker

Did You Know? Catchment Cycads

Did you know that we have three species of cycads (*Macrozamia*) in our catchment? So, how to identify them? Two are trunkless species: *Macrozamia macleayi* (zamia palm) and *M. lucida* (pineapple zamia).

M. macleayi can have up to fifty flat, untwisted fronds, with a flattened petiole, lowest leaflets reduced to spines and larger female cones to 40cm x 13cm.

M. lucida has a yellow cone (pictured right).

M. miquellii usually looks bigger than *M. lucida*, and is

distinguished from *M. macleayi* by having fifteen or fewer twisted fronds per plant, cylindrical petioles, lower leaflets not spine-like, and female cones to 20cm long by 9cm wide. One *Macrozamia miquelii* with a trunk is found on the drier hill slopes in the Upper Brookfield area where it grows prolifically, 0.5m high and about 1m across (with a male cone up to 40cm and female cone up to 20 cm). When ripe, the pale orange seeds are 2-3cm in size.



Of the two species on our property, both growing on the dry rainforest slopes, *M. macleayi* (pictured above) develops cones each year while *M. lucida* is less prolific.

Phil Bird

Introducing 'CALM' to the MCCG

Jim Pope, and fellow committee members have certainly been very busy in our catchment. Here's an update from our Chairman about a new MCCG initiative.

On 28th February 2020, Jim Pope and Malcolm Frost attended the *Challenge Employment and Training* graduation ceremony, in Collingwood Park, for students completing the Certificate 1 in Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

In a new initiative for us, MCCG partnered with *Challenge* in making a successful application to the State Government, seeking funding for the project under the 'Skilling Queenslanders for Work' program. The first group of 16 students commenced the course last September; *Challenge* provided training and supervision, and MCCG offered practical experience. Practical support and materials were also provided by Brisbane City Council (Habitat Brisbane).

The students typically spent 1-2 days a week on coursework, with the remainder of their time spent in practical bushcare work, mainly at Rowena Street Park. The students proved to be a hard-working and enthusiastic group (*see the front cover photograph of some of the students at work*). Improvements at Rowena Street Park were dramatic, despite the fact that for most of the time the area was in drought.

An important measure of the success of the collaboration is that a majority of the students obtained employment even before they graduated. In view of this success, we are hopeful of repeating the program with a new intake to commence in September this year.

Jim Pope

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Cane Toad Challenge (CTC): Update

There has been a local explosion of cane toad tadpoles and juveniles. Members will recall that one female can lay 8-25,000 eggs, lay twice a year and live for five years. My dam is full of cane toad tadpoles and there are many young juveniles underfoot. So what to do? My first action is to find the adults before they breed again (and, once having found the adults, to transfer them to the freezer prior to safe disposal).

The next challenge is to remove the strings of eggs and the resulting tadpoles. These can be removed using

cane toad traps (see previous newsletter items on CTC, or visit the various website resources—for example, look at the [MCCG](#) & [CTC](#) websites).

Alternatively, I use the schooling behaviour of cane toad tadpoles and carefully remove them using a net (disposing in the same manner as with the adults: freeze and then safely dispose away from native or domestic animals).

Young juvenile toads can be left to their fate, particularly as it can sometimes be difficult to determine if they are frogs. Not all will make it to adulthood, as they may provide food for some predators (where small numbers are eaten, this can provide some learning, resulting in future avoidance). If you have used cane toad traps and baits, please let us know your results—particularly if you need a re-supply of baits. Traps are not the silver bullet, as they don't always work. We're not yet sure why, so we need *your* records. Happy toading. *Phil Bird*

Pine Correction: It's Very Important to know your Bunya from a Hoop!

An eagle-eyed reader has correctly advised that the image on the front page of Winter 2019 Newsletter, in connection with an article on Hoop Pines, was incorrectly captioned.

The photograph (right), was not of a Hoop Pine, but of the closely-related Bunya Pine.



Being able to identify the difference between the two species could be particularly important to pedestrians. The Hoop Pine (*Araucasia cunninghamii*) has much smaller leaves and also smaller cones. In contrast, the cones of the Bunya Pine (*Araucasia bidwillii*) are as large as pumpkins and weigh between 6 and 10kg.

The heavily-barbed Buyna Pine cones fall from the trees at the end of summer, and are capable of severely damaging cars. These trees are therefore unsuitable as street trees in areas where people congregate.

The Bunya Pine in my photograph (*previous page*), is one of two Bunya Pines at the triangle at the junction of Adavale Street and Savages Road. This is a popular parking area for people exercising along the local roads and a regular swap meeting is also held near the Bunya Pine. Cars are regularly parked underneath this tree. I strongly recommend that care should be taken around the two Bunya Pines at the site between February and March.

Ed Frazer

Fire Ants

We have recently received advice that Red Imported Fire Ants have been found around the boundary of Anstead and Pullenvale. As recent weather conditions are favourable to the spread of Fire Ants, MCCG members are therefore encouraged to be vigilant and check their properties for infestations. If found or suspected, Fire Ants should be reported to Biosecurity Queensland (telephone 13 25 23). See also the [DAF website](#) for more information.

Jim Pope

MCCG 'Photo Comp': 2020 Dates

It is never too early to start thinking about the popular MCGG Photography Competition.

Great to see the lovely picture of Ala (*see front cover*), hard at work taking pictures in 2019.

Here's a quick update from Rebecca Bain, Photo Comp Committee Chair, with the dates for 2020.

Just to make sure everyone has a note of the key dates for 2020:

- **Open entries:** Submit Saturday 17th October.
- **Digital Young Persons entries:** Submit any time from 28th September until 16th October.
- **Kenmore Village Exhibition:** Opens on Monday 19th October, 2020.
- **Prizes presented:** Saturday 24th October, 2020.

Keep a lookout for any Photo Competition updates on the MCGG Facebook and Instagram pages.

We'd particularly love to see more entries in both the Open categories and Digital Young Persons category this year. So, now is the time to start thinking about what to photograph.

If you are looking for inspiration, some of the 2019 winning photos are available on the MCGG [website](#).



including Mandy Watson's fabulous picture of an Eastern Water Dragon photo (*above*), which won the 2019 Chairman's Choice Prize.

Rebecca Bain

HELP NEEDED: Website Coordinator

After many years of outstanding service, Michelle Johnston has decided to step down from managing the MCGG Website. The committee is therefore inviting expressions of interest for the role. We are currently completing website migration from Adobe Business Catalyst to WordPress. Some familiarity with website administration, especially using WordPress, is therefore highly desirable. Please contact [Jim Pope](#) for further information.

PS: An Unexpected House Guest!

One January weekend, I sat down at my desk to work on a project. As I threw a scrap of paper into the bin beside me, I thought "I'm sure I had a bin liner in here." I then heard a slight rustle so peered inside. To my great surprise a juvenile lace monitor, no bigger than a ruler length stared back at me (*see page 8*)!

Fortunately, I'd emptied the bin recently, so I knew he hadn't been caught in there for longer than a week.



After a quick photo, I relocated him outside (*picture above*). I offered him some water, which he gratefully lapped up, before he happily walked off to freedom.

He certainly was a beautiful specimen.

Rebecca Bain

Moggill Magic: Rebecca (Beck) Bain

Another fascinating article, from Ed Frazer, about one of the many residents working their 'magic' in our local environment. If YOU would like to help with the Photography Competition, do get in touch with the committee for the opportunity to work with Rebecca (Beck) Bain.

Involving more school children in the activities of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group through the MCCG Photography Competition is one of Rebecca (Beck) Bain's aims. Beck, a keen photographer herself, is in her second year heading up the Photography Competition Committee. Planning ahead for the 2020 competition, Beck is planning to expand on opportunities for young people to enter the competition, building on the 'electronically submitted' photo categories (successfully introduced in 2019). Importantly, Beck points out that the Photography Competition is far more than a competition for local photographers. "It's a major way for the MCCG to showcase our wildlife (and flora) and attract more locals to see what we do and attract more members," she said. "I became a member as a direct result of checking out the photo exhibition, in turn finding out more about the MCCG. This year we hope to work more closely with the local schools, to grow interest in the young person's digital categories."

She is also working up some other ideas to show off the fauna and flora of the catchment, through the competition display at Kenmore Village and using the MCCG's social media platforms.

Beck took part in the 2015 Platypus survey (her first of many), not long after moving to the Bellbowrie area. As she explains, "I wasn't a member of the group back then, but was delighted that—thanks to the support of the MCCG—I and other members of the community had the opportunity to take part in an activity that helped UQ researchers gain a better understanding of how an iconic local species was faring on our doorstep. This annual survey, like the Photography Competition, is another way to showcase the MCCG and get more awareness and support from the public." Beck is the Head Mammal Keeper at Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. She started there 15 years ago, and has worked her way up—working in all areas of the business, including handling the Koalas that are such an attraction with the visiting tourists and locals. Her responsibilities include looking after Platypus, Echidnas, Tasmanian Devils, Wombats, Dingos and Flying-foxes. As well as looking after their health, and

buying in food for her charges, she collects browsing materials such as Grevillea, Bloodwood and Callistemon flowers and fruit, including figs. Some of this comes from plantings at Lone Pine, but often Beck will approach landowners with shrubs flowering at the right stage and ask if she can prune off a few branches as a treat for her charges.



ABOVE: Rebecca Bain (credit: Ed Frazer)

In her spare time, Beck often takes her camera and goes bushwalking to local places like the Pullenvale Nature Reserve or Deerhurst Road Park. While she is appreciative of the work in revegetating these areas with local native plants, she is more circumspect about re-introducing fauna that have become locally extinct. For instance, the last sighting of the Spotted Quoll in the Catchment was in the late 1970s. "I believe in the future we'll see an increase of reintroduction projects for wildlife that has become locally extinct. Continued work with revegetation and providing suitable habitats will play a vital role in this. However control of predators like cats and dogs, as well as control of cane toads (especially for Quoll reintroduction), is another important facet."

Ed Frazer

PS: Turn to page 7 for more about this 'Rubbish' House Guest....



ABOVE: Juvenile Lace Monitor (credit: Rebecca Bain)