

# THE GECKO



Edition 10  
January 2016

Welcome to the January 2016 edition of the Gecko.

We had a mixed bag of activities held in the previous quarter with weeding, a night stalk, seed collecting, propagation and a Christmas breakfast. Plus we found a new native plant species, started a Tuesday group and regular invertebrate surveys.

We need your input. Have you taken a photo or seen something in the bush that you'd like to share with the group? Perhaps you have a question to ask. Send it in to [fqpbushland@gmail.com](mailto:fqpbushland@gmail.com) and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

## October to December 2015

### **25 October 2015**

A fine morning greeted the eight members who came to deadhead the pink gladioli. The bush was putting on a good show, too, despite the lack of rain over winter.

There was so much flowering that the morning wasn't so much about weeding, but more a wildflower walk with a spot of weeding on the side.

The red and green kangaroo paws (*Anigozanthos manglesii*) were in fine form, as were the fringed lilies (*Thysanotus multiflorus*) and the purple flags (*Patersonia occidentalis*). And with the temperatures warming there was more insect life making its presence known (including the flies).



The search was on to find the remaining pink gladioli.

The City of Canning has a spray program for the pink gladdies, which is working very well. This meant that the weeds were dotted here and there, rather than being in concentrated areas. The volunteers did well

to fill five bags with weeds when faced with having to hunt for their quarry and the wildflower distractions.

### **28 November 2015**

Seven members went on a night stalk on a fine but windy evening.

We saw spiders, cockroaches, lacewings, a marbled burrowing frog and a large white moth while walking through the bush and more moths back at the light trap. There were lots of crickets heard but we couldn't see any of them.



Marbled burrowing frog, *Heleioporus psammophilus*.

There was an exciting moment when a cockroach we were watching ran straight into the arms of an unseen wolf spider. Together, they did a couple of somersaults while the spider subdued the cockroach. It ended up with the spider lying on its back and the cockroach clutched to its belly. Once the fight had

gone from the cockroach the spider turned the right way up and started feeding.

Thanks go to Rosemary and Ikhlalas for providing the supper.

### 12 December 2015

Due to the short notice and proximity to Christmas, only four members made it to seed collecting. But that made it easier for everyone to see what was going on and ask questions about the plants and their seeds.

As is the way with seeds, many had already ripened and been dropped by the plant while others were not yet ready to be picked.

Some, like the marri, had dropped their black seed on the white limestone path making harvesting easy. Then there was the Daviesia that scratched our arms as we plunged our hands in amongst sharp phyllodes (the flattened stems).

However, we were able to find a reasonable amount of seed and will make a return visit in the hope of finding more seeds ripe for the picking.



Seed collecting.

### 20 December 2015

We couldn't have asked for a better morning for our end of year breakfast. Twelve of us enjoyed pleasant weather, fine food and even better company. The

conversation was always entertaining and there were plenty of birds to watch in the trees.

Thanks go to Sue and Peter for providing the venue and preparing the delicious food.



Enjoying the good food and company.

### 27 December 2015

There was some confusion surrounding the start time of the propagation workshop. Four people started at 8.00am, one at 8.30am and another at 9.00am.

However, regardless of what time they started everyone was able to get their hands dirty and help with striking cuttings and sowing seed.

Nine species of seed were sown (*Acacia pulchella*, *Corymbia calophylla*, *Daviesia physodes*, *Gompholobium tomentosum*, *Hakea prostrata*, *Hakea varia*, *Jacksonia furcellata*, *Jacksonia sternbergiana* and *Kennedia prostrata*) and two species had cuttings struck (*Dampiera linearis* and *Lechenaultia floribunda*).

The work was handled so quickly by the team that photographs were forgotten so you'll just have to trust that everyone had a good time.

A big THANK YOU goes to Ash, Barbara M, Bev, Collette, Ed, Graham, Ikhlalas, Jelena, Jessica, Lee, Nikole, Omar, Peter, Ronnie, Robin, Rosemary, Sara, Sian, Sue, Ubaydah and Zaid for helping out with these activities.

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## Upcoming events

January – Rubbish collecting  
February – Annual general meeting  
March 6 – Clean up Australia Day

Details of activities are yet to be finalised but will be distributed by email and advertised on the FQPB website.

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## Also this quarter

**Feral honeybees** have been creating a potential health hazard by inhabiting a tree hollow close to a path in the bushland. As the bees were leaving and entering the tree hollow they were flying straight across the path at head height.

As the tree was on land managed by the City of Canning, their pest controller poisoned the hive and removed the risk of someone being stung.

Feral honeybees are bad for the bushland as they take over nesting sites that could otherwise be used by native animals (e.g. birds or bats). Plus, they compete with many native animals, including native bees, for food resources, like nectar.

If you find a feral honeybee hive on City of Canning land, let them know the location and it will be dealt with. If you are a beekeeper, make sure you manage your hive so that they don't swarm and start a new colony in the bushland.



Poisoning of the bee hive was watched from a safe distance.

**A new native plant species** was added to the flora list for the Queens Park Regional Open Space. Two plants of *Stylidium dichotomum*, commonly known as pins and needles, were found in November. This find brings our native plant species tally to 122.

These two plants are separated by 100 metres and grow on opposite sides of Welshpool Road. One of them is growing in a highly degraded area, in the middle of a sea of white sand. The reflected heat in this area is more than most of us can stand, yet this little plant has steadfastly held its ground while other plants around it have perished.

We'll be on the lookout for more plants now that we've found these.



*Stylidium dichotomum*.

**Cat trapping** happened during December in response to an increase in activity in the bushland.

Unfortunately no cats were trapped. However two bobtails pigged-out on big bowls of cat food and spent the night in the cages to sleep it off.



Bobtails caught in cat traps.

**European wasp monitoring traps** have been placed in the bushland to monitor for European wasp activity. These are yellow, hung from trees and wasps are lured in with pieces of raw fish.



European wasp monitoring trap.

While we have not found European wasps in the bushland, they have been found in our suburbs. Welshpool and Kewdale are key areas for wasp activity as the wasps are often transported from the eastern states in freight. The wasps then disperse to neighbouring suburbs.

Our members are well-positioned to make a contribution towards keeping European wasps from establishing in Western Australia. In fact, one of our members, Sian, has reported wasps occurring in her garden twice. The latest report was made just a few weeks ago in December.

In both instances the wasps were coming into Sian's garden for water. The first time, 12 years ago, a single wasp was visiting Sian's fishpond. The latest instance had dozens of wasps sucking water from the potting mix of seedlings growing in Sian's shadehouse. Both times the wasp nest was found in a nearby garden hidden in long grass.

If you would like to contribute to the monitoring effort, traps can be obtained for free from the Department of Agriculture and Food. You can place the trap in your own garden or in bushland you visit regularly. Each week or two you will check the trap for wasps and put in fresh bait. The bait recommended is raw fish but any uncooked meat could be used.

The replacement bait will be your only expense and this could be avoided by using offcuts of meat you are preparing to cook or asking for scraps from your local fish and chip shop.

Monitoring traps are placed all over the metropolitan area and in country areas, so it doesn't matter if you don't live near industrial or freight areas. European wasps are relatively easy to identify. They have a yellow and black body, black antenna and are about 15mm long – about the size of a honeybee. They have a direct flight –flying straight to their target, land, drink or eat and fly off again. Our native wasps, on the other hand, tend to fly back and forth, and appear indecisive, before they land. Also, European wasps fly with their legs tucked in close to their body, while our native wasps usually dangle theirs.



European wasps eating an offcut of steak in Sian's shadehouse.

Report any suspicious wasps you see to the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) on 1800 084 881. The DAFWA will send someone out to find and destroy the wasp nest free of charge.

### **Tuesday group**

As the name suggests, there is a group of volunteers who meet up each Tuesday to work for an hour or so. Tasks undertaken to date include weeding, rubbish collecting, seed collecting and seedling maintenance.

During the warmer months the group meets at 8.00am but will change to 9.00am as the weather cools down.

You are welcome to join the Tuesday group on a casual basis or as a regular commitment. Contact Sian at [fqpbushland@gmail.com](mailto:fqpbushland@gmail.com) to find out where to meet.



Seed collecting with the Tuesday group.

# Invertebrate surveys

This quarter saw the start of regular invertebrate surveys. Bug hunters fan out from the processing table to bring back whatever they find. The catch is placed in a container that is then placed in a cooler bag of ice. The lower temperature reduces the invertebrate's ability to move (and therefore escape) while photographs are being taken. The invertebrates are free to leave when they warm up. The following are some of the invertebrates photographed in this way (the graph paper has grid lines every 2mm).



*Diplacodes bipunctata*,  
Wandering percher



*Myrmeleontidae* family,  
Antlion



*Diplazon laetatorius*



*Harmonia conformis*,  
Common spotted ladybird (larva)



*Microleola* sp



*Polistes dominula*,  
European paper wasp



*Choerocoris paganus*  
Ground shield bug