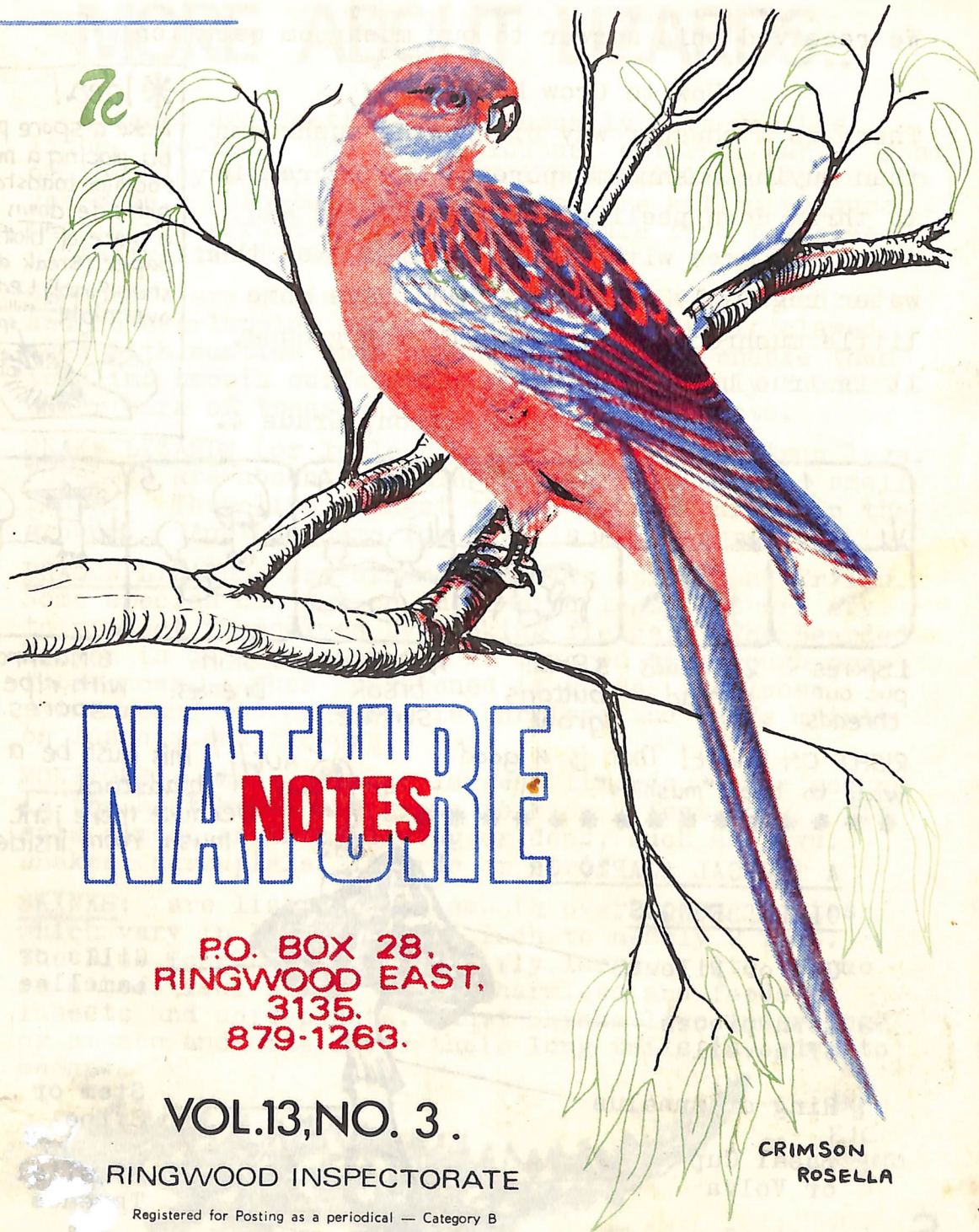


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NATURE NOTES

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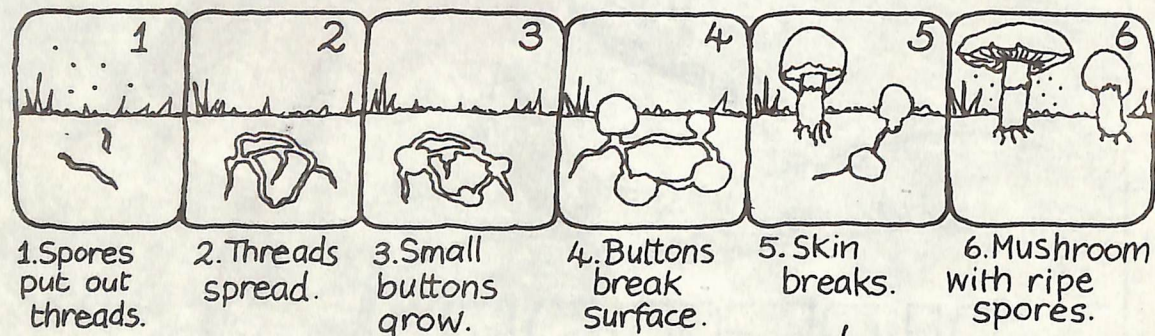
CRIMSON
ROSELLA

We received this answer to our mushroom question:

How to Grow Mushrooms.

There is a cheaper way of growing mushrooms than buying mushroom spores. The secret is to throw down peelings from mushrooms and cover the area with stable manure. You then water regularly. Soon you will have some little mushrooms poking out of the ground. It is true because I've tried it.

Stuart Robertson, Grade 4.



RIGHT ON Stuart! That is a good way to grow "mushies".

A TYPICAL AGARIC OR GILLED FUNGUS.

Cap or Pileus

Torn pieces of a veil

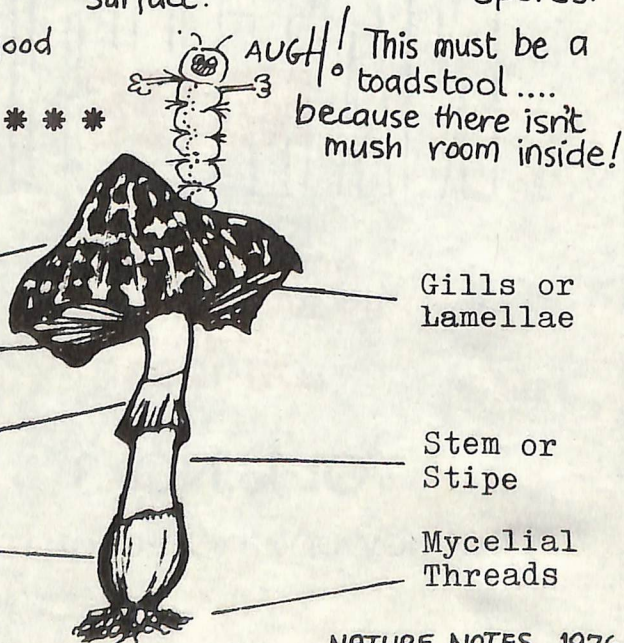
Ring or Annulus

Basal Cup or Volva

Gills or Lamellae

Stem or Stipe

Mycelial Threads



NATURE NOTES 1976

* Idea!

Make a spore pattern by placing a mushroom (or toadstool) gill-side down on a piece of blotting paper. (Break off the stem first!) Leave overnight. Millions of spores.



MORE ABOUT LIZARDS..

Lizards are reptiles which usually have visible limbs, eye-lids, and a conspicuous external ear. Most of them lay eggs, and none of the Australian lizards is venomous. Unfortunately many are killed because people are afraid of them. There are five families of Australian lizards.

GECKOES: are quaint little lizards with soft bodies and no overlapping scales. Most have simple clawed toes with suction pads on the toes, which enable them to climb smooth surfaces. They are commonly found under bark of trees where they feed on insects.

SNAKE LIZARDS (or legless lizards): have no true legs. Forelegs are absent and hind legs are reduced to small flaps. They live amongst the grass and burrow in the ground. Another name for them is "Slow-worm".

DRAGON LIZARDS: are ornamented with spines and frills. Some species can run on their hind legs; others try to protect themselves by looking fierce. The Bearded Dragon is quite common and is covered with rough protuberances. When frightened it raises the loose skin around its neck but is harmless and feeds mainly on insects and flowers.

MONITORS: these are our largest lizards. The goanna is the best known and grows to 6 or 7 feet long. It eats almost anything living or dead, such as eggs, snakes, marsupials, lizards or birds.

SKINKS: are lizards with smooth overlapping scales which vary in length from 1 inch to nearly 2 feet. The Blue Tongue lizard is fairly large. Its tongue is a beautiful blue. It is harmless and feeds on insects and soft plants. Most Skinks live under logs or stones and some sever their long tails in order to escape.

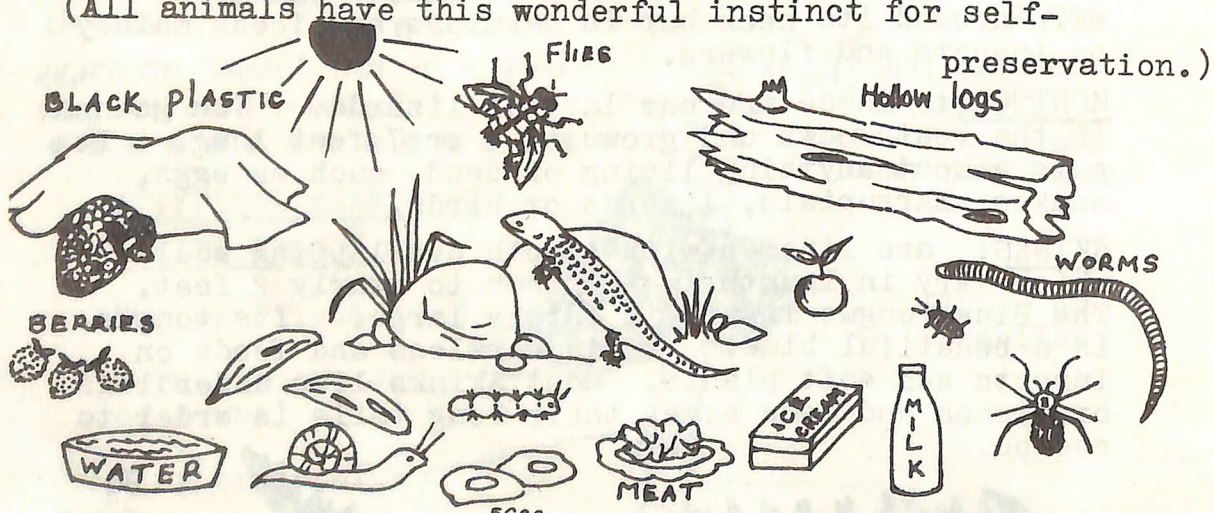
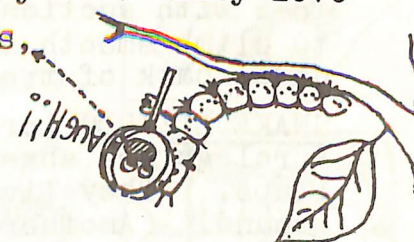


By
F.J.C.
Rogers.

Thorny Devil

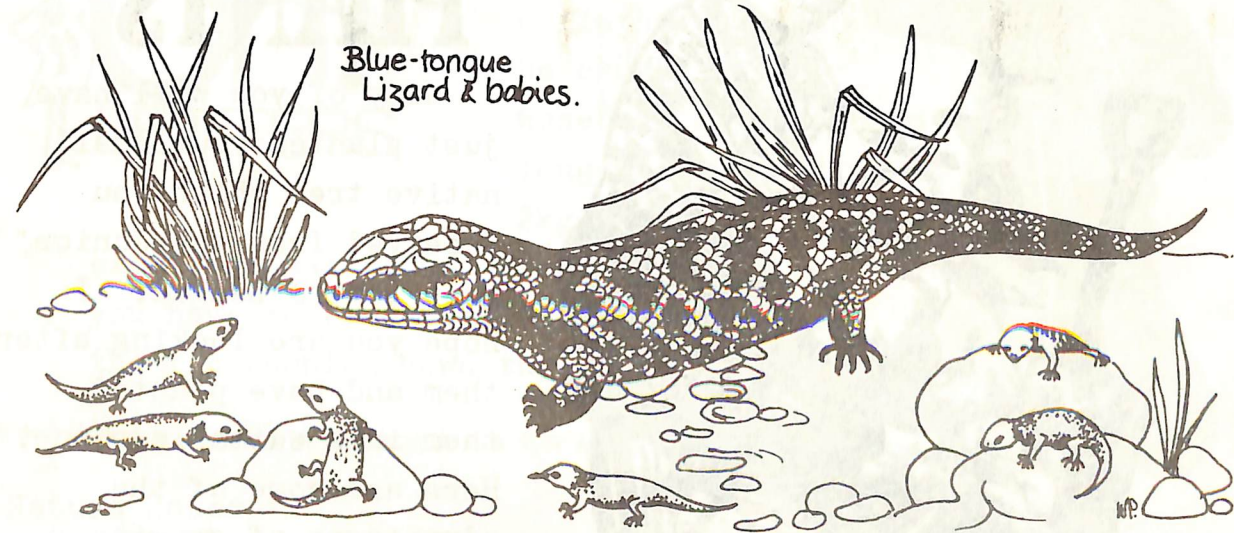
AND STILL MORE ABOUT..

FEEDING: Lizards do not seem to get very hungry on cool days and when waking from hibernation in the spring they may only eat twice a week. On very hot days they have large appetites, eating perhaps half a small banana at a time. It seems the hotter it becomes the more active they are and the more they eat. They love to eat snails and slugs, caterpillars, melted ice-cream, tinned cat meat, vita-brits crushed in milk, eggs poached or raw, banana, berries and minced steak. However, if you are feeding lizards, don't force them to eat and don't leave unwanted food around to be infected by blowflies. When a lizard is sick, it will know whether to eat or not. (All animals have this wonderful instinct for self-



Some of the things you would need to look after lizards. The black plastic absorbs the sun's heat - which is much appreciated by cold-blooded animals.

LIZARDS. *by W. Prohasky.*



BABIES : Most fully grown female bluetongues have between 7 and 10 babies each summer. They are born live rather than from eggs. From the moment they are born they are on their own - the mother does not feed them. Immediately after they are born the mother turns around to see that all is well as the babies have to bite through the membrane bag in which it is born. Stumpytails usually have only one (perhaps two) babies at a time - but they are up to 12cm long at birth!

NOTE : Lizards make interesting pets - but unless you have read a lot about them and look after them carefully, it is better to let them go in the bush in their natural surroundings.

GREAT lizard drawings by Mrs. Prohasky, photos by Mr. F. Rogers & Mr. D. Dyer and caterpillars & me by Mrs. Dunstan!



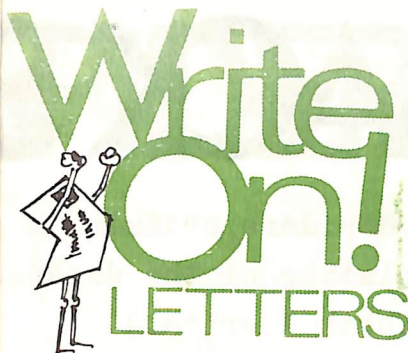
AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

Many of you will have just planted your small native tree which you received from the Junior Tree Lovers League. I hope you are looking after them and have planted them in a suitable place. Here are some of the advantages of growing AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS:

1. They are evergreen - your garden will never be bare.
2. They are hardy and suited to Australian conditions - they can survive droughts and are easy to keep.
3. They attract native birds such as honeyeaters.
4. They don't all just flower in the spring (see p.10) but it is possible to have a native garden with many differently colored flowers in it all year round.
5. Many natives are quick-growing (such as some Melaleucas) and provide shelter for other plants and flowers.

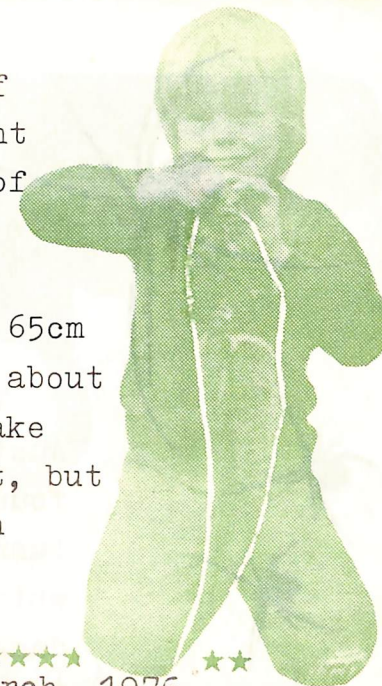
IF YOU want to know which trees attract certain birds and when they flower and what color their flowers are, then you'll find it, and more, in the two books written by F.J.C.Rogers (published by Nelson) :

6 "Growing Australian Native Plants" and "Growing More Australian Native Plants".



Matthew Davine of Ringwood East sent us this picture of a flathead which he caught off Rosebud. It was 65cm long and weighed about 2kg. Flathead make

excellent eating and are easy to fillet, but you have to be careful of the spikes in the fin running down their back!



26th March, 1976.

Nature Notes
P.O. Box 28
Ringwood East 3135

Dear Sir,

3 Bullants versus 1 Red Backed Spider!

On Monday 15/2/76 my teacher found a red backed spider and put it in the jar with some egg sacks. We noticed that there were the remains of some woodlice and bullants in its nest. So the next day we put three vicious Bullants in the jar with the spider. The spider sprayed some white liquid over one of the Bullants but the other two pulled off two of the spider's legs and now the spider is dead. One of the Bullants was alive but it died two days ago. Might we still have a chance of hatching the eggs?

Can you tell us more about the redback? We had the female; is the male similar to look at? Is the male poisonous?

O.K. Ken, you
asked for it!



Ken O'Neill,
Grade 5V
Croydon South Primary
School.

RED-BACK SPIDERS.

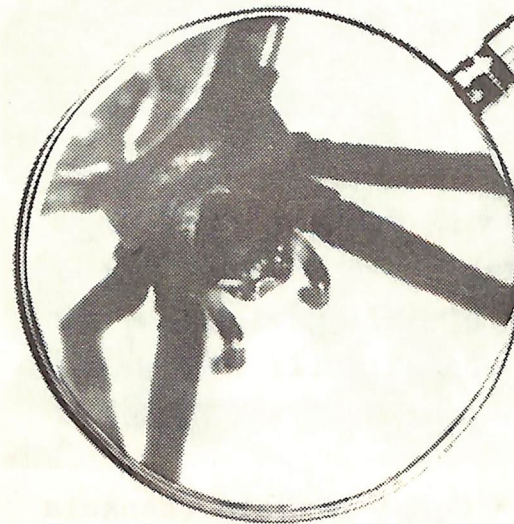
(Also known as Jockey Spiders or *Latrodectus hasselti*, the Red-back spider is a close relative of the dreaded Black Widow Spider of North America.)

The female Red-back Spider is one of three poisonous Australian spiders and the only one likely to be found in Victoria. (The other two are the Sydney Funnel-web and the little known Fiddleback, which has only recently been shown to be dangerous.) The female Red-back (pictured on this page) has a body length of 10mm whereas the male is only 4mm long, has 4 black bars on a white body, and is completely harmless.

The Red-back likes to breed in dark corners - particularly in old tins and boxes on rubbish heaps. (So that's one good reason for having a tidy yard!) They feed on insects and sometimes even small skinks (see p.3.)

It is not known for certain how many people have died from Red-back bites (at least 13 up to 1959), but it is wise to keep well away from them when you see them. An Antivenene serum for treating bites has been produced in Parkville, Victoria, and this has proved most effective provided the patient is taken to a doctor quickly for treatment.

(Aren't we fortunate to live in the age of modern medicine.)



IF BITTEN BY A
RED-BACK.....

The treatment is the same as for a snake bite.

1. Keep as still, calm and warm as possible. (Running only makes the blood pump the poison around your body more quickly.)

2. Send for a doctor.

3. A tourniquet could be used - talk this over with your teacher.

AUTUMN is a wonderful time for flowers in the Australian bush. There is no dropping of leaves for winter, but rather the emergence of flowers to attract honeyeaters.

Many Banksias begin to flower now and continue until spring. Which of these can you find in flower?

* Saw Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) flowers Jan-Apr.

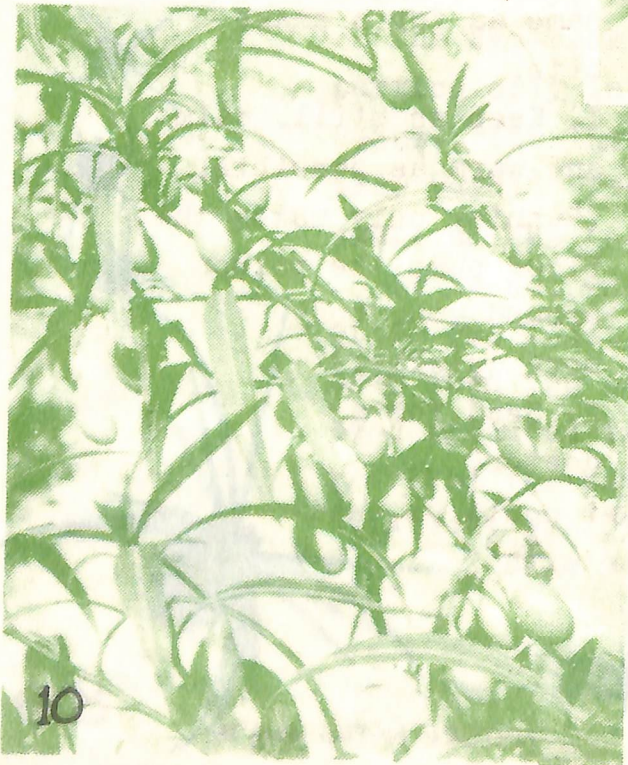
* Hairpin Banksia (*Banksia spinulosa*)



* Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)

* Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)

THE KANGAROO APPLE (*Solanum aviculare*) has fruit which colors from orange to almost red. The fruit is reported to be poisonous while green so perhaps you shouldn't sample it! Flowers are blue.



THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN MAY



by F.J.C. Rogers.



1. FLOWERING BANKSIAS

2. MUSHROOMS & OTHER FUNGI
(See p.2.)

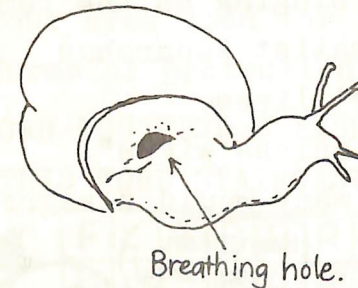
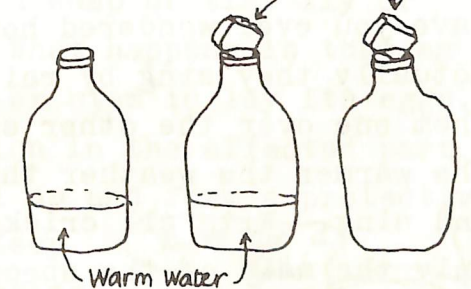
3. BIRD MOVEMENTS

4. SNAILS & SLUGS

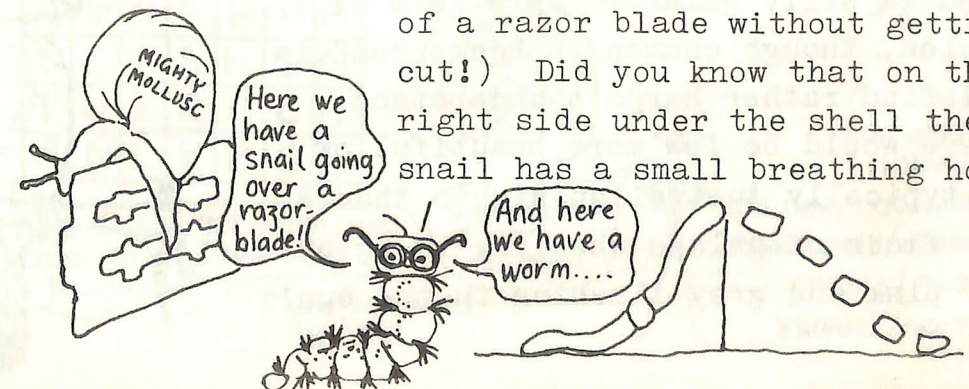
Cube of ice sitting in neck.

Perhaps you have had your first frost when ice has formed on ponds - or the dog's drinking dish. You may like to try the experiment illustrated.

Why does fog form in one bottle?



SNAILS are not everybody's favorite animal but they do have their interesting points. Have you ever examined closely how a snail moves? (They are supposed to be able to crawl over the edge of a razor blade without getting cut!) Did you know that on the right side under the shell the snail has a small breathing hole?



THIS'n THAT



At the present time a lot of Victoria is beset by a plague of crickets - eating all before them. Usually crickets have been looked upon as a "good insect" - by legend a bringer of good fortune - but our Western District farmers wouldn't think this now as they see their paddocks stripped.

Crickets are probably among the noisiest of insects but have you ever wondered how they manage their songs? Actually they sing by raising their wings and scratching them one over the other so quickly that they become a blur. The warmer the weather the faster the cricket will move and sing. With all crickets, grasshoppers and cicadas, only the male of the species does the singing as the female is quite voiceless. An old Greek dramatist Xenarchus once wrote:

"Happy the cicadas' lives,

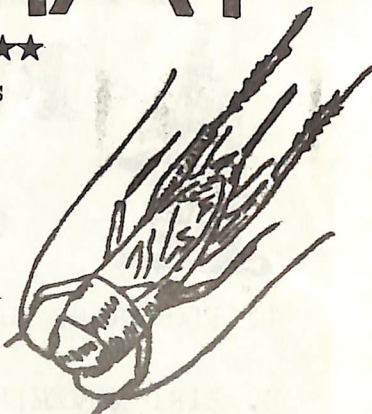
For they have voiceless wives".

No doubt in these days of Women's Lib many would disagree.



No doubt you have often heard someone called "a silly galah". This term of derision, though common in "ockerdom", is one I find rather hard to understand.

There would be few more beautiful or more typically Australian sights than a flock of galahs wheeling in union - pink and grey flashing in the sun!



Hear, hear!
Pretty Cocky!



By L. Delacca.

Children often ask me what the strange looking lumps or swellings on leaves or stems of plants are. Some trees seem to be covered in them. These lumps are called

galls and come in many shapes and sizes.

If you were to open one up you may find it to be the home of some tiny insect with tunnels running through it. It

may be the home of the young of a wasp or tiny fly or some other microscopic insect. What happens is that an insect may burrow into the leaf or stem to lay its eggs. This in turn sets up an irritation in the affected part of the plant causing it to swell up and form a protective home for the creature inside. Keep your eyes open for these interesting forms of protection in nature.

CAN YOU FIND 8 FISHES IN
THIS WORD STAIRCASE ? ? ?

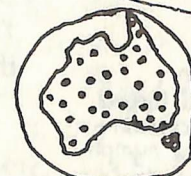
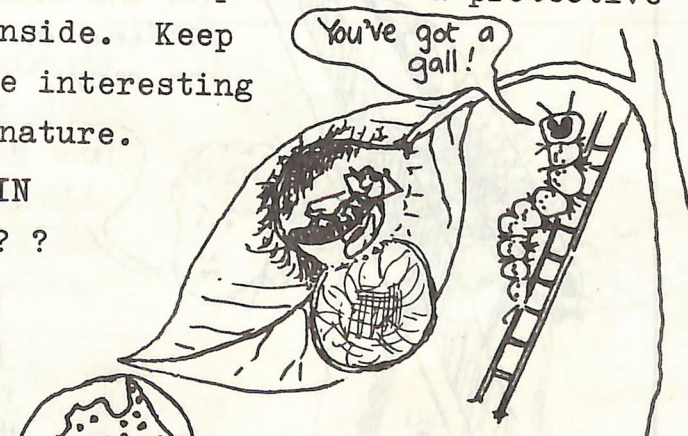
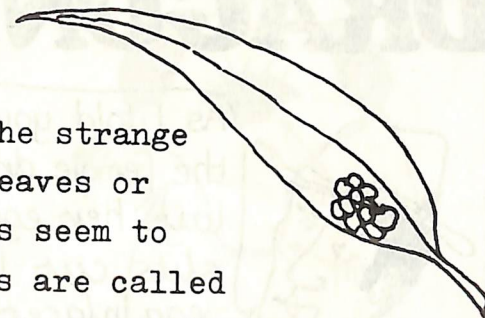
F	L	A	B	R	R	L
B	O	T	H	E	A	M
A	U	N	E	P	P	A
S	S	D	A	H	S	N
T	U	E	R	A	C	H
A	N	L	K	B	O	D

What do you get when you cross an elephant with a kangaroo?

Riddle sent to us by Katy!

Great big holes all over Australia!

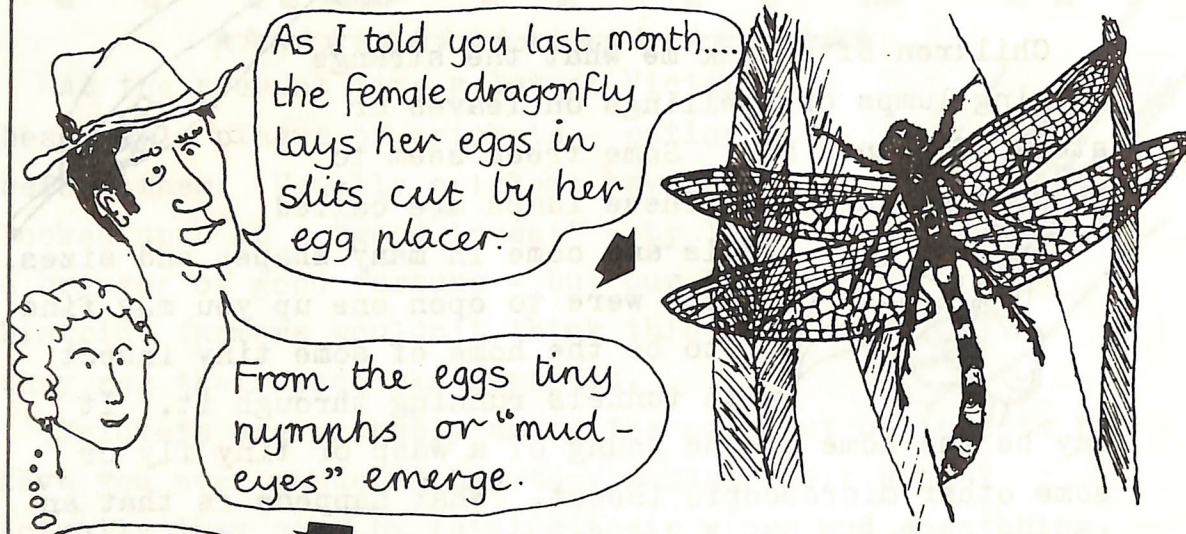
LION/TERRIER
EMU/SHARK
WASP/HUNTSMAN
DAFFODIL/WATTLE
SPINACH
{ URANIUM
BUFFALO }



DRAGONFLIES

CONTINUED

By H.J. Lawry



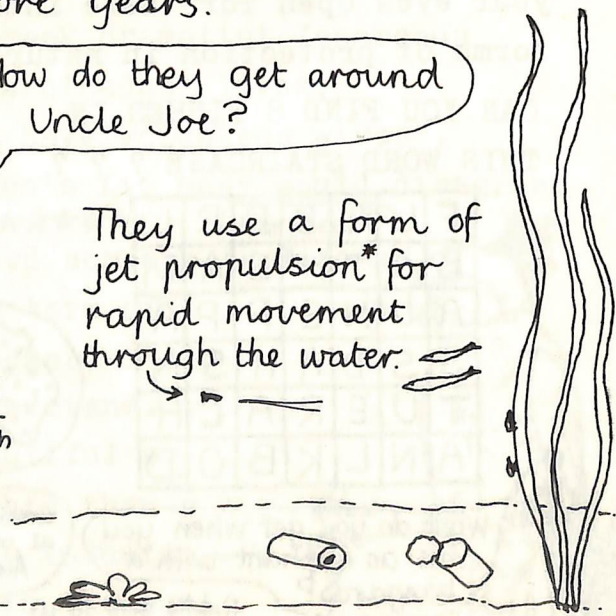
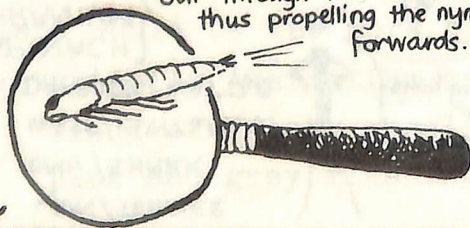
Looks like a grasshopper gone wrong to me!

...The mud-eyes hide in the mud at the bottom of the pool or stream, feeding on small creatures for one or more years.

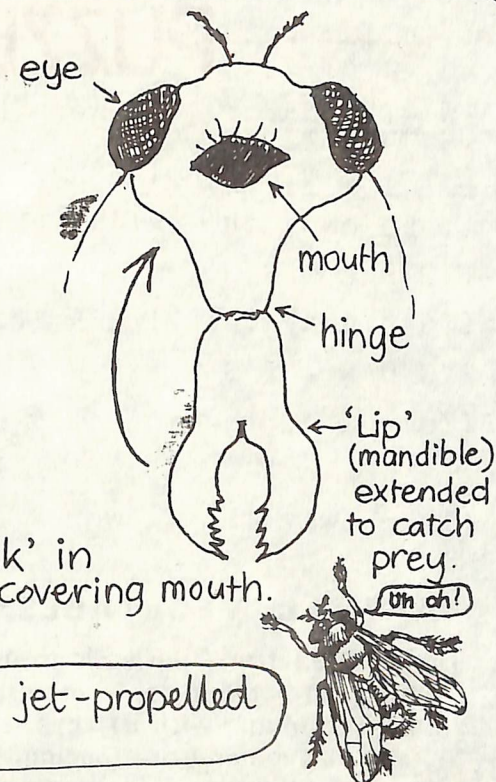
How do they get around Uncle Joe?

They use a form of jet propulsion* for rapid movement through the water.

* Water is drawn in through the gills and forced out through the rectum — thus propelling the nymph forwards.



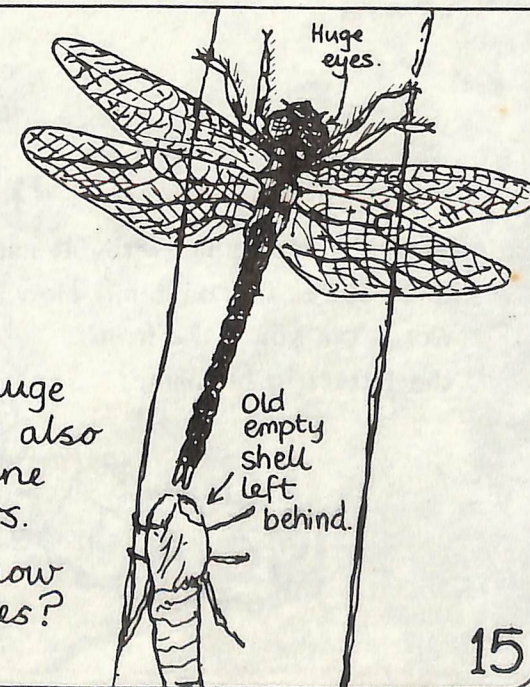
The nymph has a marvellous method of eating. Its lower "lip" is hinged and is used to snap up its prey. When folded, it is like a mask covering the mouth completely — like a built in knife and fork!



Wow! Nymphs are like jet-propelled front-end loaders!

After about a year, during which time the nymph grows bigger and BIGGER, the mud-eye climbs to the surface, his ugly shell splits open and out crawls the beautiful Dragonfly. Dragonflies catch insects as they fly — and so they need huge eyes to see all around. They also have two wings like a biplane and are very acrobatic fliers.

By the way — what do you know about Damselflies and Mayflies?



PUZZLES

TWO-IN-ONES : (Answers hidden in Nature Notes.)

L T I E O R N R I E R

(Take away the cat & leave the dog.)

E S H A M R U K

(Take away the bird & leave the fish.)

W H U N A T S M A S N P

(Take away the insect & leave the spider.)

D A W F A F T O D I T L L E

(Take away the flower & leave the tree.)



ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, AND MINERAL

Taking one letter from each group of three and working from top to bottom, see if you can find: i, the name of an animal (beginning with B); ii, a vegetable (beginning with S); and iii, a mineral ore (beginning with U). They are all seven-letter words.

S	B	U
U	R	P
F	I	A
N	N	F
A	I	A
C	U	L
M	H	O



THE CATERPILLAR PUZZLE

Here is a caterpillar with his name spelt out clearly on him. How many words can you make from the letters in his name?

