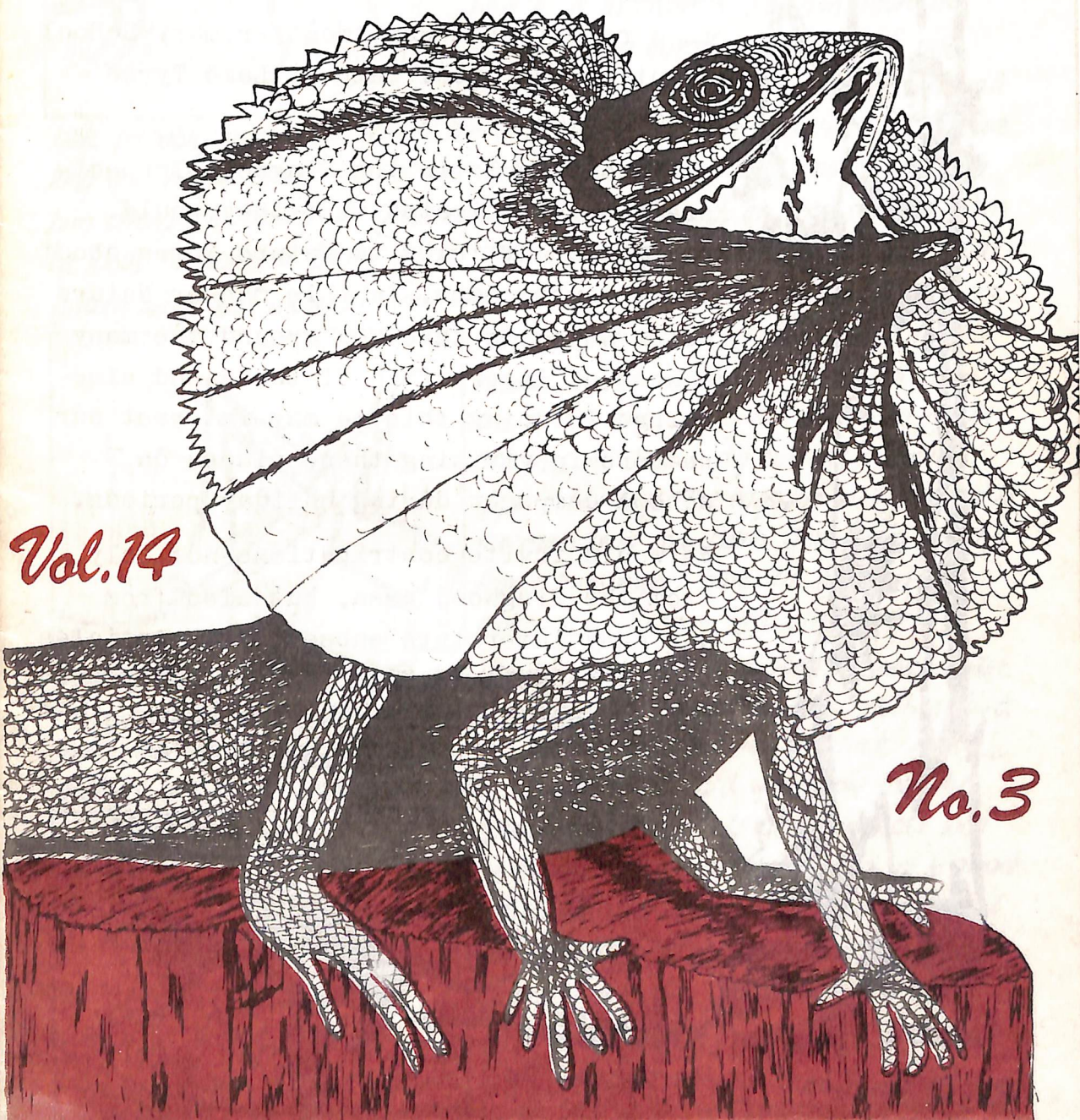


# Nature Notes

Registered for Posting as a periodical—Category B

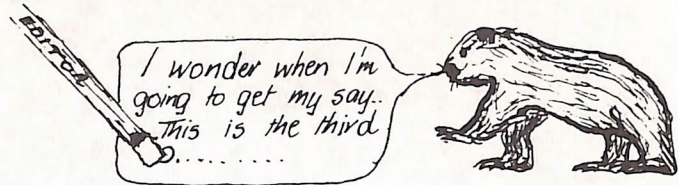


Vol. 14

No. 3



# Editorial

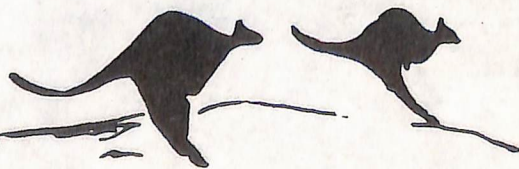


Appearing in this issue of Nature Notes is a report from Heathmont Primary School about their School Camp at Lake Tyres held during March.

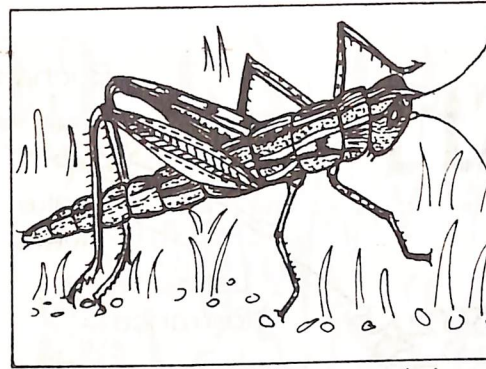
Various schools in the Ringwood Inspectorate have indicated that they would contribute articles to Nature Notes about their tours/camps. In this manner Nature Notes hopes to take you around the many places of interest in Victoria and elsewhere. In doing this we may interest our readers in visiting these places on school camps or during holiday periods.

We would invite contributions not only from the Ringwood area, but also from our many interstate subscribers. Articles should be sent to Nature Notes before the end of each month so that they can be included in the next issue.

B. d. Archibald.  
Editor.

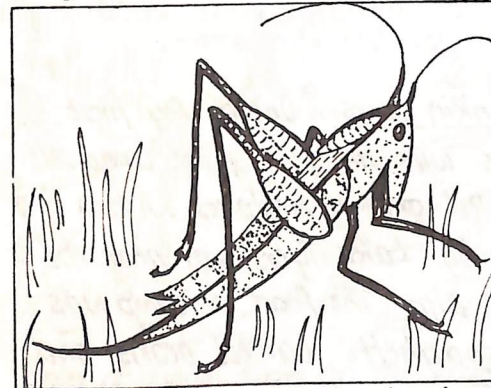


## The Acrobat



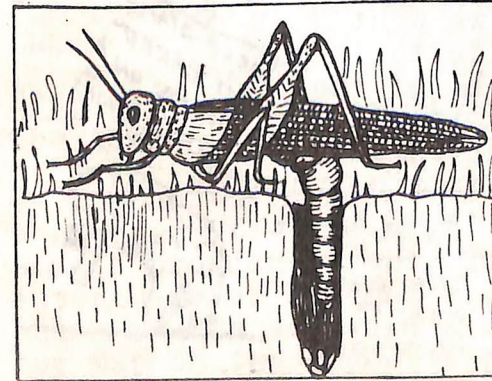
Have you ever tried to catch a grasshopper? If you have, you know how smart you have to be in order to trap him before he springs away out of your grasp. If you have observed him at close range you will

have probably noticed how Nature has designed him for jumping. His hind legs are long and he has broad muscles close to his body - these are the muscles that give him strength to 'spring.' The grasshopper's feet have soft pads on them so that when he lands he won't be badly jolted. Many grasshoppers can also fly. Their large, gauzy wings fold away like fans when not in use underneath top wings which are



narrower and much tougher. However, all grasshoppers do not have wings. When you find one with a long, pointy tail - this is the female. She uses the tail to dig burrows in which to deposit her eggs. The eggs are well protected in the earth until they hatch. Once again - not all female grasshoppers have the long tail! This makes identification difficult, doesn't it?

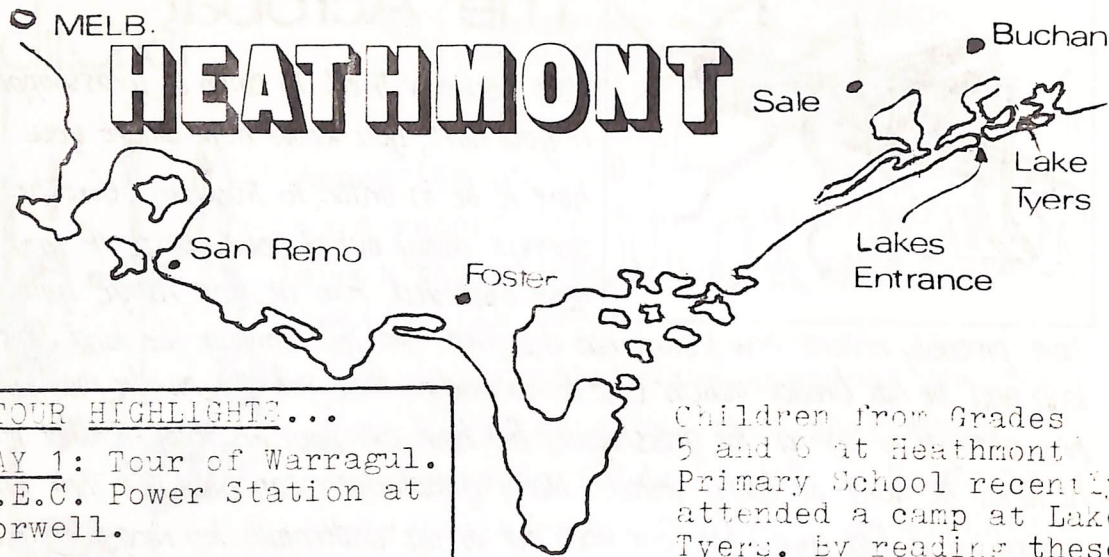
If all young grasshoppers lived we would have plagues of them. However, Nature has provided for this in that the grasshopper has natural enemies such as birds and other insects. They help to keep the grasshopper population in check. Man also declares war on the grasshopper every summer. Why? Did you know that the



grasshopper sings? As you found out with the cicada last month, the singing is to attract the female. How is the sound produced in the grasshopper? What is a locust? Is it a grasshopper? If so, how can you tell the difference? Write to us at Nature Notes with what you find out.

Ringwood E. P. S.





### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS...

**DAY 1:** Tour of Warragul. S.E.C. Power Station at Morwell.

**DAY 2:** Buchan Caves and a tour of the Timber Industry at Nowa Nowa.

**DAY 3:** Full day tour of Boydtown, the Port of Eden and the Woodchip Industry.

**DAY 4:** Ecology study of the Lake Tyers Area. Fishing Industry at Lakes Entrance.

**DAY 5:** Melbourne via Sale, Heyfield passing R.A.A.F. Base.

### BUCHAN CAVES.

"From the camp on the second day we went to the Buchan Caves. We had a guide to take us through the cave and show us all of the interesting rock formations. He told us about the stalagmites and stalactites and told us all the other names for certain types of rocks. It was a long but interesting walk. The cave that we were in was beautifully colored. Some people thought that the cave was made of wax, but of course it wasn't."

-Robert Horwood.

Children from Grades 5 and 6 at Heathmont Primary School recently attended a camp at Lake Tyers. By reading these articles perhaps your school may like to visit the area.

Jeff Honkin says: "One of my first impressions was the size of the camp. It was situated on 4 hectares with a big beach nearby. Lake Tyers was near the camp-site also. The food at camp was great - spaghetti, baked beans and cereal. There was also a cafe bar which was used a lot. The huts had 3 bunks and a single bed. We all thought the camp was great."



## IN CAMP.



How the Caves were formed:  
300-400 million years ago this area of East Gippsland was beneath the ocean. It was alive with shellfish and coral. Their remains were deposited over the ages and become limestone.

Over many thousands of years water action has carved out of the rock, large chambers and underground passages. As rain water seeps through the soil, lime from the rock dissolves in the water.

Drops of water form on the roof of the cave - as the drops evaporate, it leaves a ring of lime, forming stalactites and stalagmites. What are they? - which one forms on the roof of the cave; which one forms on the floor of the cave?

\*\*\*\*\*

"On the fourth day we went on a cruise around the lakes of Lakes Entrance. We went up Chinaman's creek. In one of the lakes we saw the rock that was supposed to be a meteorite. SOME FACTS ABOUT LAKES ENTRANCE.

The township of Lakes Entrance stands on a low-lying strip of sandy land near the eastern end of the Gippsland lakes. On its northern side the waters of North Arm are backed by a steep cliff-like bluff at Jemmy's Point. On its southern side a broader strait, Cunningham Arm is bordered by an outer barrier covered with sand dunes and with a fine sandy beach on the sea-ward side." (You can note these "arms" in the map on the opposite page.)

-Monique Wurz.



# Plants in the

You have now been back at school for several weeks and many of your teachers will have made some arrangements about providing decoration for the classroom. Part of this decoration is in the form of pot plants. Let's have a close look at some of these plants. We find that they fall into two groups:

## FLOWERS : NO FLOWERS

Very few of our plants have no flower, but in some the flowers are insignificant in comparison to other features. Do you know any of these? Pilea, Coleus, Cacti, Rex Begonia, Succulents, Ferns (no flower).

Flowering: Cyclamen, Primula, Tuberous Begonia Bulb plants. These plants grew originally in a variety of natural habitats and to get the best from these plants in the

classroom we must try to create the correct habitat for each plant.

The classroom, especially those of new schools can be a most suitable place, as it offers protection from the wind. This leaves us with four other conditions to adjust. LIGHT, HUMIDITY, TEMPERATURE, WATER.

LIGHT: All plants need some light. Many of our indoor plants come from tropical forests where direct sunlight is filtered and subdued. Providing the filtered sun does not shine directly on a window, the window sill of

Nature Notes - May 1977



Anthurium Schetzerianum.



# Classroom.

a well lit room is a suitable position for these plants. Most flowering plants require some sunlight so a window which receives light during part of the year only, would be a suitable position. Ferns usually grow in damp gullies so have little need of a window position.

HUMIDITY: Indoor plants require a reasonable amount of humidity in the air. They dislike the warm, dry atmosphere which we humans prefer, especially during the winter. Humidity around a plant may be increased by placing the pot in a larger container and filling the space with peat-moss or permanently moist sand.

TEMPERATURE: Except for a few very tender indoor plants, classroom temperature should be satisfactory. Take

care to see that plant leaves are not touching glass panes on frosty nights. Plants need some fresh air but dislike the constant draught of an open window.

WATER: More indoor plants fail through over watering than any other cause. A good rule to follow is - WATER ONLY WHEN THE TOP-SOIL BECOMES DRY.

N.B. The V.S.S.H.S. provides a good selection of plants for the classroom. A catalogue can be obtained by writing to:

\* The Victorian State Schools' Nursery, Arthur Street., OAKLEIGH. 3166. Victoria.

Our Error: in the article by Robert Horwood on page 4, the words, "stalaghtes and stalagmites," should read: "stalactites and stalagmites."

Philodendron andreanum.



Cymbidium Orchid.

Nature Notes - May, 1977.



## BEFORE PLANTING

THINK \* what sort of tree do you want?

How big? Flowering? Evergreen?

\* what do you want it for?

Shade? (All year around - or just summer?)

To attract birds? (Native trees are best.)

As a wind break? (Branches low down.)

For beauty? (Flowers, Autumn colors?)

To hide something?

To climb? (No prickles!)

# PLANTING A TREE.

I think I'll branch out into tree planting!

## AFTER PLANTING

\* Watering - give your tree a good soaking once a week rather than a light watering every day.

\* Weeds - keep weeds clear of your tree.

\* Check that your tree hasn't outgrown its stake.

\* Any bothersome or colliding branches may be pruned after flowering & before winter.

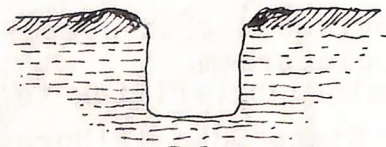
HELP!



### 1 Preparing the ground.

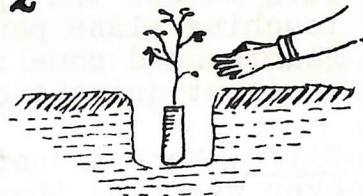


Remove weeds & grass.  
Break up the soil.



Dig a hole into well prepared soil slightly deeper than the tube your tree is in & about a spade's width.

### 2



Stand tube in centre of hole to test its depth.

Remove plant by unrolling the wood veneer (or pots, tin etc.)

Carefully stand the tree in the hole, supporting it with one hand, & pressing down the soil with the other.



As I was walking  
Through the city  
I saw a sight  
I thought was pretty.  
A little tree  
Was growing there  
Despite the concrete  
And polluted air!

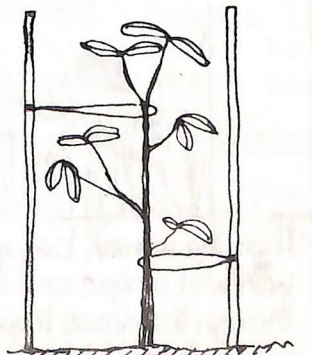


3 Gently break the "crust" around the neck of the plant (where the soil has gone hard). Fill the hole with good soil and leave a shallow "saucer" to collect the water.



Fill this saucer with water several times if the soil is dry.

4 Then fill the saucer with loose soil. Stake your tree if you want it to grow straight.



Keep a diary of how quickly your tree grows!



# A Legend of the Snake.



Many years ago two women stole all the fire in the land and would not share it with anyone.



When people tried to take the fire, the women hit them with hot sticks and the people died.



But one day a man crept towards the two women, pausing now and then to lift his head and listen.



And suddenly he leapt from the grass, seized the burning fire stick, and ran back to his home.



Then the women began to spit and hiss with wild anger, and they crawled swiftly through the grass trying to find the man who had taken the fire. And as they crawled they changed into snakes.

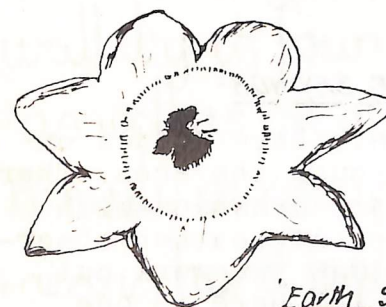


Even now they hiss angrily as they crawl along in search of that man; he is now a lizard and wherever he goes he pauses to lift his head and listen just as he did so long ago.

Nature Notes - May, 1917.



The beautiful, warming days of autumn are with us as are the invigorating cool mornings. In America this is known as "Fall"- Why? Nature is at work as far as the trees are concerned anyway - some trees shed their leaves. The leaves of these trees change color before before falling. What type of trees are these called? Why do the leaves change color? Why do they fall? What is the name given to trees that do not shed their leaves. List some examples of each type.



Have you noticed any toadstools or mushrooms growing about your home or school? During autumn many types of fungi may be seen. Compare fungi with ordinary plants. If they have no flowers how do they reproduce? As fungi have no leaf green, how do they obtain their nourishment? Make a list of the places where fungi is to be found. What sort of environment do fungi prefer? What useful work do they perform? It is important to remember that most fungi are poisonous. Learn to recognize the different kinds.

'Earth Star'

Toadstools

What is the difference between these two?



Shelf-Fungi.



Mushrooms.

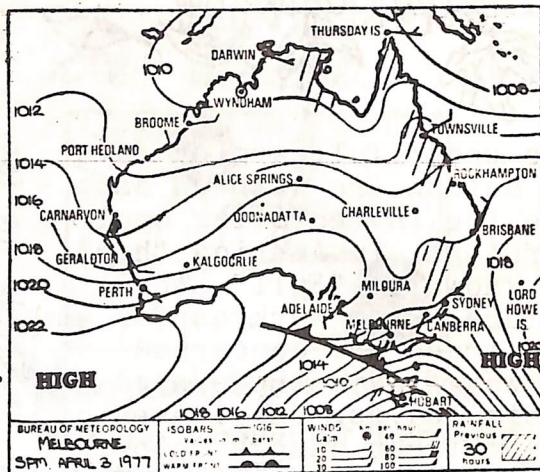




# WEATHER

Why are weather maps printed in all daily newspapers? Why are weather forecasts given over radio and television? Is this sort of information really important?

On the weather map you will notice curved lines with a special number for each line. These lines are known as ISOBARS. What do they tell the "weather-watcher?" Why is the word HIGH written on the map? You can also notice that there is a very dark line with spikes on it. There is another type with semi-circles as you can see below the map. These are known as FRONTS; the spikes indicating a COLD FRONT and the semi-circles a WARM FRONT. A cold front means colder air moving in the direction of the spikes and a warm front warmer air moving in the direction of the semi-circles. Perhaps you may be able to find other types weather maps.



## • CONTROLLING OUR WEATHER..

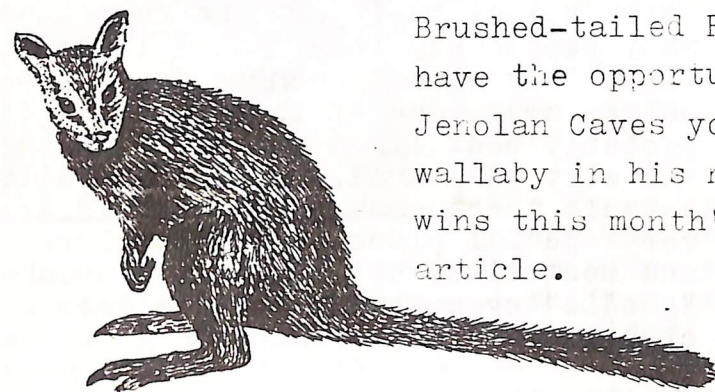
With his knowledge of weather man has learnt to be able to invent ideas for controlling certain weather conditions. In open country where farmers plant crops, quite often you will see wind-breaks. Why are trees planted in this manner? During the football season helicopters have in the past been used above the airspace close to the ground on water-soaked ovals. Why?



## • WEATHER SAYINGS.

These have been handed on down through the ages. There is a major drawback with this type of weather observation. Can you work out what it is? Here is one example of this.. perhaps you know more.." A red sky at night is a shepherd's delight. A red sky in the morning is the shepherd's warning." The trouble with this is that it all depends on what kind of a sky there is at sunset: some do mean a fine day to follow but some do not. One can never be certain of being correct.

# letters



This month's letter comes from Glen Prohasky of Ringwood East Primary

School. He writes to us about the Brushed-tailed Rock Wallaby. If you have the opportunity to visit the Jenolan Caves you would see this wallaby in his natural habitat. Glen wins this month's book prize for his article.



This large, stockily built, dark colored rock wallaby is found in rocky areas of Australia, as well as on off-shore islands. It is found mainly in mountainous dry sclerophyll (which means hard leaved plants) forest country, resting in caves and rocky crevices during the heat of the day. It feeds on vegetation during the cool of the evening and at night. It is dark-brown-grey on the head and body, while the stomach is yellowish-brown.



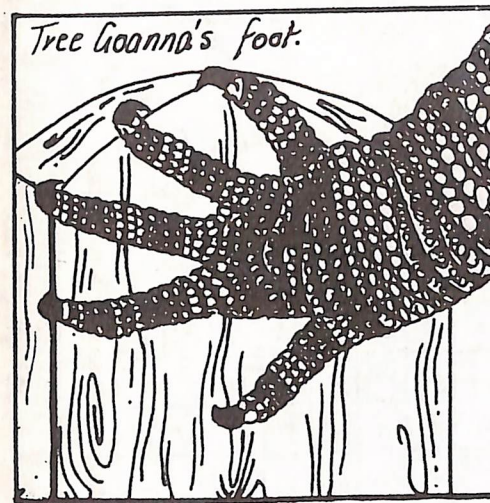
# The Wily Goanna



-Tree Goanna.

Whenever I've visited Healesville Sanctuary or for that matter any other sanctuary there has always been a large crowd around the reptile enclosure. They seem to hold a fascination all of their own and even though many people say they "hate" looking at them, they cannot seem to drag themselves away. One of the largest and probably best liked of our reptiles is the wily od goanna. Of all Australian animals the goanna seems to hold a very special place on our folklore and most times he's looked on as a "goodie" even though he sometimes crosses the path of man.

What is there about this reptile that has so endeared him to our legends of wildlife? I can remember being able to buy a wonderful cure for cuts and scratches called "pure goanna oil" - the old timers used to swear by it. Then another story about the goanna said that if you were bitten or were scratched by one it would break out every year there-after. I knew an old farmer near Numurkah whose dog had been bitten by a goanna. He was absolutely convinced that the sore on his dog used to become re-infected every year. Possibly the reason for these stories came from the fact that a goanna being an eater of carrion, carried much bacteria on his teeth - with the result that whatever he bit became badly infected and unless well treated, often re-infected itself every so often. Thus, the legend was born.



Tree Goanna's foot.

And who hasn't laughed at Banjo Patterson's poem "Johnson's Antidote?". If you haven't read this yet you will certainly enjoy it when you do.

I had a brush once with a goanna once myself in my early teaching days. In an old bush school the boys had discovered a four foot goanna in the boys toilet and of course it was Mr. D's job to get him out while the boys waited with wide faced grins outside. The goanna was entrenched on a narrow

ledge over the door from which after much prodding he launched himself - at me. I shifted ground very quickly and the old goanna landed on my shoulder. There wasn't much wrong with my reflexes as he didn't stay for very long. I'm not sure who received the biggest shock but I do know it only took a split second for him to slide down my arm and out the door much to the boy's delight. I sure did wash those scratches with Dettol - about 10 times for I remembered what I d been told about the dog.

Anyway enough from me. Why don't you find out all about our goannas? Where did the name goanna come from? Is it a corruption of "iguana?" How many species in Australia? What are the three types (not species) Are they a protected species? Why? Many of your answers can be found in "Treasury of Wildlife" edited by D.F.McMichael in a section by Harold Cogger. I hope you too find old goanna a fascinating reptile.

L. J. DELACCA.

Hey.. wait a minute. I didn't pull your tail!!



Ringwood East P.S.



**Announcement:** The Nature Notes committee has been increased by one. We are pleased to have Mr Colin Bull of Heathmont R.S. working for us. His first article will appear in the June issue.  
-Ed.



# Puzzles

Try Heathmont  
Primary School's  
'mind-stretcher'  
for size and  
good luck!



Artists this

month were:

Mrs. Wilma Prohasky  
and Mrs. Rosalyn  
Cassidy

Find the hidden message... first.

Locate the towns...

LAKE TYERS,

LAKES ENTRANCE,

METUNG, ERICA, MAFFRA,

SALE, DROUIN, TYNONG,

WARRAGUL, MIRBOO,

YARRAGON, ROKEBY,

ES, BUCHAN,

ER, BERWICK,

DANDENONG, BASS,

YALLOURN, MORWELL, MOE,

TRARALGON, TRAFALGAR,

HEYFIELD, ORBOST,

FAIRNSDALE.

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



So you think  
you've got the  
right answer?  
I have it in  
here but it  
won't hurt to see  
what your answer  
is, will it?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_