



# NATURE NOTES



# ED'S PAGE —

## WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

Yes, I know it's a twelve letter word that could win you a lot of points in scrabble, but do you know what this word MEANS? My dictionary says it's the 'preservation of our natural environment', which means SAVING or KEEPING the things that nature put around us on earth.....plants, animals, people, and the places they live in.

An excellent publication published by the Gould League of Victoria called 'The Edge of Extinction, Australian Wildlife at Risk' tells you all about different plants and animals that are in danger of dying out. Can YOU name five plants and animals that are ENDANGERED?

One last thing to think about.....(and perhaps to discuss with your class)...WHY DO WE NEED TO PROTECT PLANTS AND ANIMALS?

Happy Reading,  
Mandy Carmichael.  
Editor.

\* A big thank you to Dr. L.H.Smith for the photograph on this month's cover!



# A SNAIL NAMED VICTOR

Who ever heard of an endangered or threatened snail? Aren't they the things we squash in our gardens? Don't we put snail bait in our vegetable plots? It's just so difficult to imagine a snail as an endangered species. After all, it is not as appealing to look at as others on the list! Nor is it huge and obvious, such as a whale or an elephant... even though Victor is large among snails!

It is about 25 -30mm in diameter, with a glossy black shell and can only be found in the forests of the Otway Ranges, an area where land clearing operations threaten the snail's existence. Usually the snail keeps to the wetter parts of the forest where it prefers to bury itself in the layers of leaf litter or beneath a rotting log. Down there it searches for food which - since Victor is a CARNIVOROUS snail- is usually earthworms or other snails.

Although it has natural predators such as birds and native rodents, these are part of its life and offer no threat to its existence as a species. The real threat comes from the possible changes to its only habitat, changes such as land development or wood chipping. Unless some protection is ensured, the Victor could become the loser.



Taken from  
THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION,  
AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE  
AT RISK

produced & published  
by the Gould  
League of Vic.

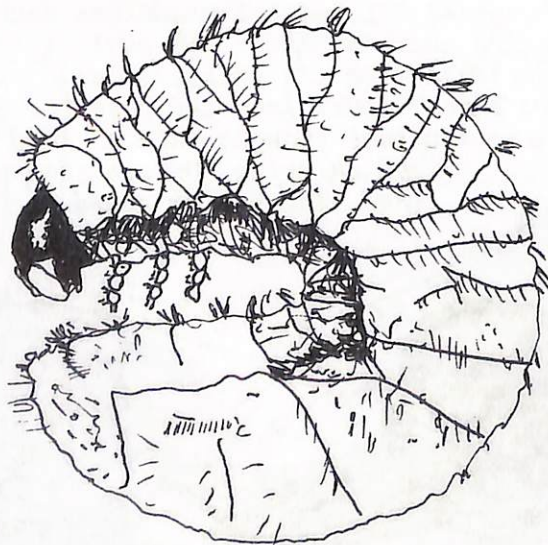


# AUSSIE RHINOS

Did you know there are more species of beetles in the world than any other group of insects? They come in a great range of sizes, colors and shapes. The largest of all are the Rhinoceros beetles, so named because the males have large horns on the front end of their body, and grow to over 50mm long. All of these beetles belong to a big family known as Scarabs. Christmas beetles also belong to this family, but they don't grow horns.

One of the most spectacular beetles in Australia is a Rhinoceros beetle called Xylotrupes gideon. It is found in towns along the Queensland coast, including Brisbane. This black beetle is easily recognized by the two large horns on its head, and by moving its head, the beetle can pinch weakly with them. The fearsome appearance these beetles give is increased by the loud hissing squeaks they make when disturbed, but they're really quite harmless, and can be handled safely, like most beetles.

Beetles lay eggs, and these hatch out into a small white grub, which grows in places like compost heaps until it gets as big as this!



Larva of the Rhinoceros beetle (actual size)

Adult Rhinoceros beetles.



male



female

These grubs are called larvae and when they get big enough they turn into a pupa before they break out as beetles.

All of this can take up to two years to happen!

Only the males have horns, they females are quite plain and aren't seen very often. The males use their horns in a form of fighting as they try to push one another off a tree branch. Males will only fight when there is a female around; this behaviour forms the basis of a gambling game in Thailand. Big males are kept as pets and made to fight by putting them on the outside of a bamboo cage which holds female beetles.

Our Australian Rhinoceros beetles are only small beside the world's largest beetle, which lives in the jungles of South America. This giant can grow to 160mm long - almost as big as this page!

Slarty Bardfast.



# DREAMTIME

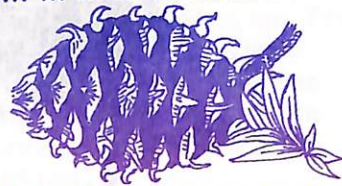
The close relationship in Australia between plants and Aborigines developed through tens of thousands of years. During this time a huge part of our flora was used by Aborigines as a major resource.

As well as providing a large part of Aboriginal diet, plants provided fibres for string and nets, spear shafts shelters and clothing.

Here are a few plants that Aborigines used in different ways.....

## BUNYA BUNYA PINE

The large cones had seeds which were eaten raw when unripe, or toasted when ripe. The ripe seeds are supposed to taste like chestnuts.



## NATIVE CRANBERRY

The round, green fruit is said to have a sweet taste, and was eaten by the Aborigines in Eastern Australia.



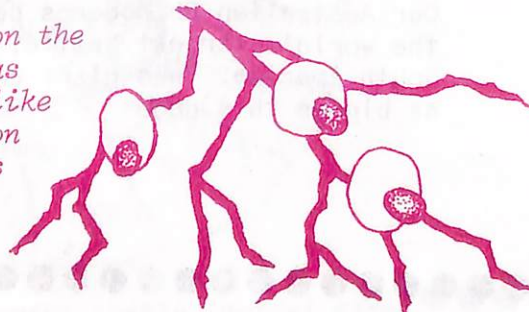
## BANKSIA

A refreshing drink was made by soaking the flowers in water over night. Some of the trees were used for honey.



## NATIVE CHERRY

This plant, which lives on the roots of other plants, has small fruits, which are like cherries with the stone on the outside. The fruit is sweet and very tasty.

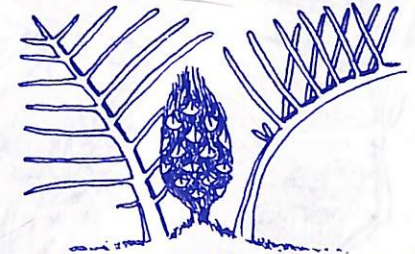


# TUCKER!

Text: M. Carmichael  
Artwork: W. Prohasky.

## BURRAWANG

The kernels were removed from the cone and crushed into coarse flour. This was then placed in running water for 6 or 7 days, to remove the poison. The water was squeezed out, and the flour cooked over hot coals.



## NATIVE RASBERRY

These were really popular fruits. A medicine was also made from the small leaves, which were soaked in water. It was to help stomach upsets.



## AUSTRAL BUGLE

The fresh leaves were pounded and soaked in hot water, and then used to bathe cuts and scratches.



## HOP BUSH

The juice from the leaves of this plant was sponged on the forehead and body to relieve fevers. Cattle and sheep used to eat the bush in drought times.



## PIG FACE

The fruit was picked when ripe, and the pulp was said to taste like custard! The leaves were sometimes roasted and eaten, sometimes as a salt substitute.





# wildflowers

This month at 'Nature Notes', we have a feast of wildflowers, drawn for us by Mrs Wilma Prohasky. See if you can color them in their CORRECT colors, and send them in to Mrs. Prohasky here at NN, and she will judge the three best entries, which will receive a prize. Competition closes 22nd April. Send to 'Nature Notes' P.O. BOX 28, Ringwood East 3135.

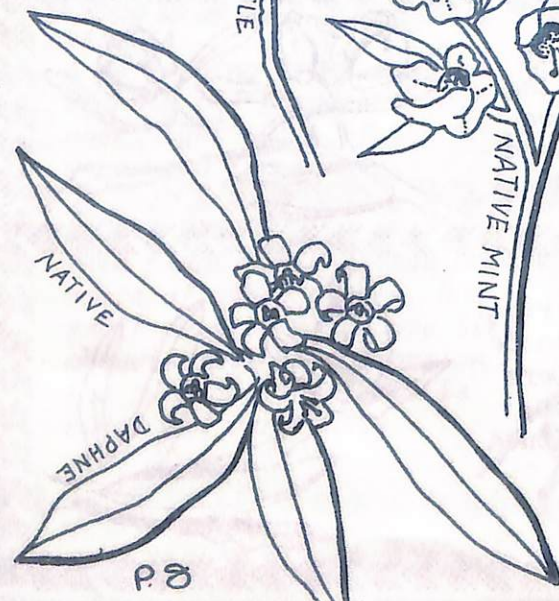


CEDAR WATTLE

TINSEL LILY



EARLY NANCY



NATIVE DAPHNE



NATIVE MINT



BUTTERCUP



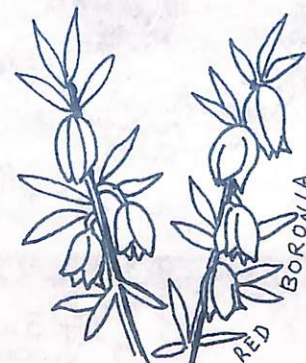
BLUE BELLS



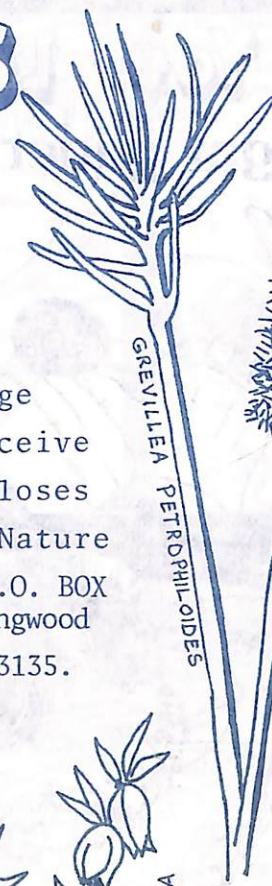
MIRBELLA



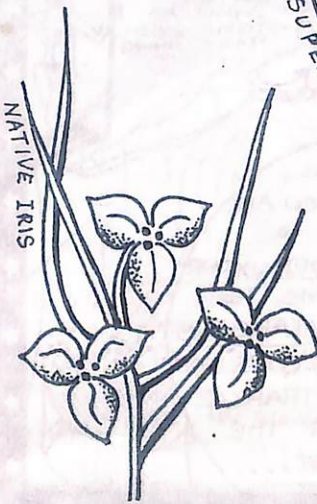
EVERLASTING DAISY



RED BORONIA



GREVILLEA PETROPHILOIDES



NATIVE IRIS



FISHBONE FERN



SUPURB GREENHOOD ORCHID





# This is Your Life sybil sugar glider!

ME?! IT CAN'T BE... REALLY ME? WE - I NEVER... WHO'D HAVE GUESSED... FANCY ME BEING PICKED FOR THIS IS YOUR LIFE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... I ALWAYS THOUGHT.. IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO ME.....



BY CAROL MEURES

I HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO GLIDE UP TO 45 MINS NOT BAD, SINCE I AM ONLY 37CM LONG AND WEIGH 100GRMS EH?



WHO INVENTED HAND GLIDING?!

QUITE REMARKABLE SYBIL... ER..HUM NOW TELL US ABOUT YOUR HOME ETC..



"IS THAT ANOTHER CARD FROM UNCLE SILAS?"

I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK... WELL WE SUGAR GLIDERS CAN LIVE IN EXTREME CLIMATES YOU KNOW... FROM THE HEAT OF N.T. TO THE SNOW COVERED ALPS DOWN SOUTH...

THIS IS SUCH A SURPRISE..... INDEED I WAS ONLY TELLING MY NEIGHBOUR PERCY POSSUM THE OTHER DAY WOULDN'T IT.....

ER..YES..WELL.. WE WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR WIFE SYBIL, AND THIS IS ONLY A HALF HOUR SHOW!



OUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO LIVE IS IN THE WOODLAND AREAS.. SO COSY YOU KNOW AS I WAS SAYING TO PERCY POSSUM..

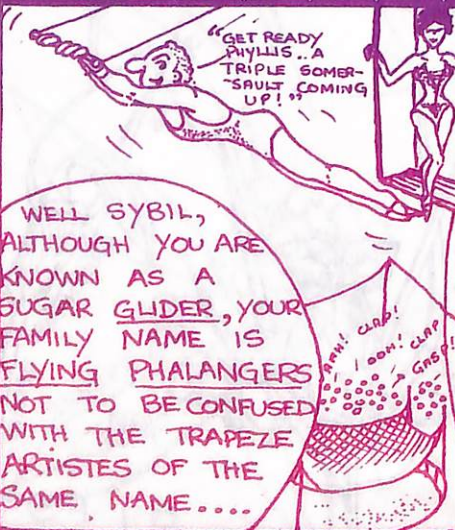
S. SUGAR GLIDER 3RD TREE ON LEFT

YES SYBIL, BUT TO GET ON WITH THE SHOW... PLEASE!



OK! OK! WELL OUR BABIES ARE BORN IN THE WINTER AND STAY IN THE MOTHERS' POUCH FOR 2 OR 3 MONTHS.... I REMEMBER WHEN MY SHIRLEY AND SID WERE BORN..... THEY...

SYBIL... PLEASE... WE ONLY HAVE 5 MINUTES...



"GET READY PHYLLIS... A TRIPLE SOMER-SAULT COMING UP!"

WELL SYBIL, ALTHOUGH YOU ARE KNOWN AS A SUGAR GLIDER, YOUR FAMILY NAME IS FLYING PHALANGERS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE TRAPEZE ARTISTES OF THE SAME NAME....



YOU DON'T FLY OF COURSE, BUT THE LOOSE FOLDS OF SKIN DOWN EACH SIDE OF YOUR BODY ENABLES YOU TO GLIDE UP TO 166 FROM TREE TO LOWER BRANCHES

DO NOT EXCEED SPEED LIMIT 16

"DID YOU SEE THAT?! I RECKON WE HAVE A NICE LITTLE SPEEDING FINE HERE STANLEY!"



HOPE MUM GETS BACK SOON... I'M STARVING!

WELL WHEN THE YOUNGSTERS ARE OLDER THEY ARE LEFT IN HOLLOW LOGS WHILST MUM LOOKS FOR FOOD.

WELL... I'M SORRY SYBIL BUT THAT ABOUT WINDS IT UP, WE HAVE RUN OUT OF TIME... IT WAS LOVELY HAVING YOU, ON OUR SHOW... IT'S A SHAME WE HAVE TO CUT YOU SHORT LIKE THIS.. BUT..



GOOD NIGHT SYBIL!

BUT... BUT.. I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU WHAT I WAS TELLING MY FRIEND PERCY POSSUM AND ABOUT THE TIME MY HUSBAND SAM AND I WENT TO.....



# native

## ABORIGINES AS CONSERVATIONISTS.

Different scientists agree that the Aborigines practised what we call conservation many many years before the Europeans came to Australia, and managed the land very well.

The Aborigines used to leave scarce plants alone, so they had a chance to regenerate, and used to scatter the seeds of valuable trees around to help them grow.

They used nets when fishing, that were made to let smaller fish through the nets, and only catch the large, adult fish. They also used to stop hunting certain fish when they knew it was their breeding season.

When possums were plentiful in some areas, they would catch some and release them in other areas, where there weren't as many possums. This was to make sure there'd be possums to hunt in all sorts of different places.



Also, when they were collecting yams, they would leave a few in the ground, to make sure there'd be more when they visited the same place at another time.

How do you think the Aborigines learnt to do all these things? Did they learn by their mistakes, or did they just 'know'?

Do we use any of these ideas today in conserving plants and animals?

What are some of the ways we conserve or look after our plants and animals?



# conservation.

12.

# ARBOR WEEK

'Arbor Week' is a time when kids and trees get together to help improve the environment. By doing this crossword puzzle you will discover the importance of trees and why it is essential that we plant and conserve them.

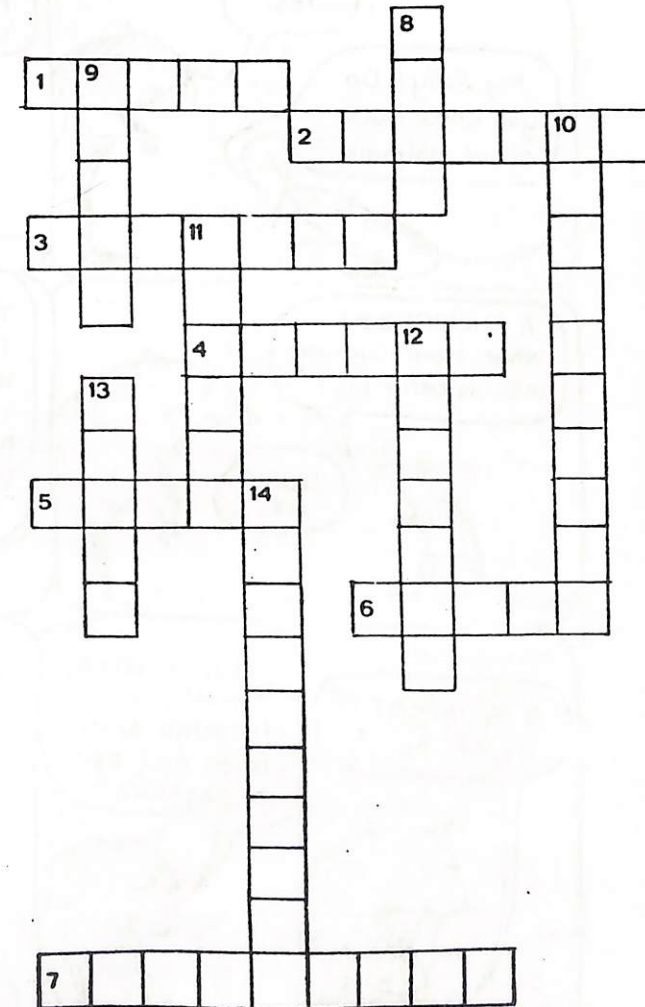
Why not celebrate 'Arbor Week' in the last week of April by planting a tree.

## ACROSS

1. What's black & white and read all over and comes from trees.
2. Trees give animals and people — from wind and rain.
3. Something which improves the soil and is made up of dead parts of plants and animals.
4. Trees clean the air by giving out-----
5. Trees bring this up from the ground and transpire it into the atmosphere.
6. Trees provide-----for many animals and insects.
7. By planting trees we help to make the environment look very -----

## DOWN

8. Insects which pollinate flowers.
9. A latin word meaning tree.
10. An oil which is good for colds comes from the-----tree.
11. -----must learn to conserve forests if the earth is to survive.
12. When wind and water carry away the top soil.
13. Trees give us this on hot days.
14. A dense wet forest.



THANKS TO CATHERINE MULLINS FROM THE STATE SCHOOLS NURSERY FOR THIS CROSSWORD.

13.

When you have finished the crossword, turn it into a beautiful tree. Imagine all the animals and insects that live in and visit this tree - draw them in to show how they depend on the tree for survival.



# WALLY'S QUIZ TIME!



HOW MANY ANIMAL QUIZ QUESTIONS OF YOUR OWN CAN YOU WORK OUT?

# PUZZLES!

## ANIMALS from AFRICA!

1. H
2. E
3. C
4. G
5. O

1. Greek for river horse.
2. A huge animal!
3. The fastest cat.
4. A graceful Antelope.
5. This bird lays the largest eggs in the world.

## MEMBERS OF THE KANGAROO FAMILY

- The smallest member being from 10" to 18" high. kangaroo
- The largest of all marsupials is the kangaroo
- This kangaroo is not a ground dweller... kangaroo
- This little fellow has a pointed snout and short round ears, it lives along the East + South coast of Tasmania...

## ALPHABET ANIMALS

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. E
6. F
7. G

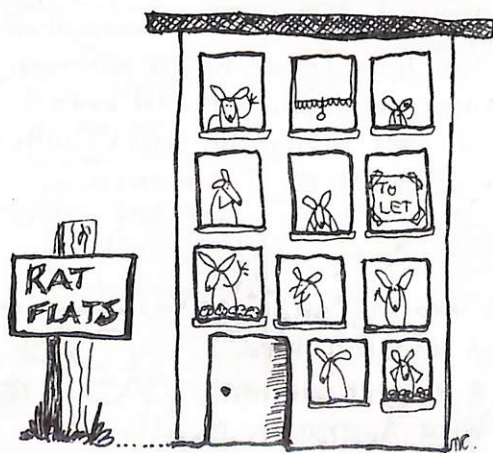
1. A "deathly" snake.
2. A dancing bird.
3. A desert animal.
4. Wild Australian Dogs.
5. Three of these animals work for the P.A.W organization!
6. A sly animal!
7. The second largest reptile. ...

Can you keep going right through the alphabet? Write clues as well!



# high rise rats

Ever heard of a rat living in a flat? Well, that's just where the stick nest rat (Technical name *Leporillus conditor*) lives. This little rat, first called a native rabbit by our pioneers, builds a nest of twigs, often wedged against something like a tree. The nest can be up to one metre high. In this nest a group of rat families can live, each in their own 'apartment' or 'flat'. The rats used to be fairly common inhabitants of mainland Australia, but feral cats and foxes have literally wiped them out. They now exist only on small islands off the coast of Australia, such as Franklin Island, and the Nuyts Archipelago in South Australia. Another completely different type of rat, which lives in the U.S.A. builds 'flats' too. These rats, called 'Pack Rats' build their nests of sticks, but they have passage ways to each room in the 'flat'. They have separate rooms for sleeping, storing food and dumping rubbish. These rats seem to have been able to survive in America very well.



## THINGS TO DO.....

- \* Find out where the stick nest rat lives, on a map.

- \* What are some other INTRODUCED animals that have caused damage to our wildlife, and to the environment?