

NATURE NOTES

CENSORED

VOL: 20
NO: 4

This month's Nature Notes has been declared too awful to look at, so DON'T open the page and read about Australia's unwelcome inhabitants!

Quick Wal! ..The
INSECT
SPRAY!



ED'S PAGE—

Yes, I know all these animals and plants aren't really as dreadful as we often make them out to be, or some of them aren't, at least. Perhaps 'unloved' would be a better word to describe them, instead of nasty, or unwelcomed.

This month we are taking a look at some of the plants and animals we've come to dislike here in Australia, for one reason or another. But... like it or not, we've got them, and by understanding them a little bit better, perhaps they mightn't seem SO bad after all. (Yes, I know it's hard to like a white pointer shark, but did you know they are the sea's garbage bin, and clean up around the ocean a bit?)

Happy Reading
Mandy Carmichael
Editor.

STOP PRESS! Our newest nasty arrival seems to be the European wasp, a brightly colored little beast who is causing havoc in the suburbs of Melbourne. See what you can find out about this pest.

COMPETITION WINNERS: C. INGRAM, R FITZGERALD + M. FORD
WELL DONE GIRLS! (WILDFLOWER COMPETITION)



William Dampier wrote about them; so did Fransico Pelsart of the "Batavia", and last but not least Matthew Flinders complained about them.....The Bush Fly, Australia's own!

The bush fly nuisance is usually at its worst on the warmer days because the flies stop being active when the air temperature drops below 12°C. This isn't a lot of help though because it's really too cold to be comfortable outside. At very high temperatures above 35°C, the flies seek shade to get out of the heat.

The bush fly is a member of the order Diptera, which include all two winged insects with the hind pair of wings reduced to club-like organs. These beat in unison with the front pair of wings and are used to sense changes in flight.

The bush fly is typical of this group of insects in that eggs are laid, maggots hatch and then go through three larval stages before they pupate and emerge as fully grown flies. The bush fly lays its eggs in fresh, moist dung: fresh because it has a lot of nutrition still remaining in it, and moist because the eggs are not allowed to dry out.

Bushflies can live for as long as three months in a temperature around 15°C, however when the temperature rises to say 30°C, they die in less than three weeks, although they are the same physiological age when they die!

The bushfly has lapping mouth parts which can take up food only as a liquid. The flies need water, protein, sugars and other foods, most of which is provided in the average family picnic. We therefore give flies everything they need to keep living!

Bushflies in the southern part of Australia have a problem with the winter temperatures. The whole population dies out over winter, but repopulates with the warmer weather. Those hot northerly winds bring the flies down from the north to begin their life afresh 'down south'!

*Find out more about the life cycle of the bush fly, and where it likes to breed.

*What are some of the flies 'relatives'?

*What makes bushflies different from 'house flies' and 'blow flies'?



by David Dobson.

Tree Termites, known in Australia as white ants, live in the dry forest areas of Australia. They live in trees, posts, stumps, anything that is made of wood. They can be highly destructive if they find a nice bit of wood to live in that makes up part of your home, too!

The termites live in colonies similar to ants and bees. There is a queen, who lays the eggs, soldiers, who guard the nest against predators, and workers who gather the food, and tend to the nest.

The tree termites cause a large amount of damage in the eucalypt forests, and are thought to be introduced, not natural dwellers as the grass land termites, who build the tall mounds are.

The termite's main enemy are ants, which the soldiers have to watch out for. The soldiers have big nippers for their jaws, whilst the workers have smaller, stronger jaws to gnaw at wood.

Termites are a reknown pest in Australia, because of the damage they cause to both the forests and to timber buildings.

Can you think of any precautions that are taken when building a house against termites?



scratch.

Doesn't even look like a termite to me!

WHO ASKED YOU ANYWAY, SPIKEY?

DEAD BRANCH (ooh.)

NEST

QUEEN

WORKERS

TERMITE NESTS CAN HAVE OVER 2,000,000 INHABITANTS!!

WORKER TERMITES HAVING A FEAST. (GOBBLE, GOBBLE)

I think she should go on a diet.

Yeah.

MAGNIFYING GLASS

SAWN LOG

TERMITE NEST ON A TREE TRUNK. THEY USE THE DEAD BRANCH FOR FOOD!

A TERMITE COLONY INSIDE A FELLED LOG

WOODY MATERIAL WHICH MAKES THE NEST SNUG.

TERMITES

WHAT DO THESE PINES NEED?

Watch out ants

BY M. CARMICHAEL

S-S-SPIDERS!

Only 2 types of spiders are known to be deadly in Australia. The funnel web to be deadly up to 1m underground, at the end of a long, web lined passage way. The female takes extraordinary care with her eggs.

MALE

Funnel webs like dark gullies, and well shaded areas like under houses. Use a stick or a broom to get balls out from under houses won't you!

Funnel webs rear up on their back legs when they feel threatened. They will only strike with their strong fangs if the 'enemy' doesn't go away after it has had its warning. Male funnel webs have caused the most deaths.

These are the sort of things that a spider reckons are 'threatening'. (And I for one don't want to argue with a spider.)
FIND OUT WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BITTEN BY A DANGEROUS SPIDER.

Funnel Webs live in most of the Eastern states, but only those that live around Sydney have been known to cause deaths.



Redbacks only bite if they are squeezed in some way. They have tiny, hair like fangs that cannot bite through gardening gloves or boots. (Good enough reason to wear them?) Redbacks have very untidy webs. They like dry, quiet places like old sheds, empty tins, garden rockeries, and even hollow fence posts. THEY DON'T LIKE BEING DISTURBED. AN ANGRY SPIDER ISN'T A VERY HAPPY SPIDER.....

Only the female redback is deadly. The male is so small, you would probably overlook him in the straggly web!

The red back USUALLY

has a redish patch or stripe on its back. It has long, slender legs and a large, rounded back.

IN THE

USA, Spiders will only bite if they feel threatened.

THE RED BACK'S

COUSIN IS

CALLED THE BLACK WIDOW.

CAN YOU GUESS

WHY? WHAT IS ITS

OTHER COUSIN

IN NEW ZEALAND

CALLED? HOW

DID RED BACKS

COME TO LIVE ON

TRISTAN DA CUNHA, IN

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN?



if you wish, JELLYFISH

Jelly fish, especially those found around Australia's northern coast can be really dangerous.

BLUE BOTTLE

The Blue-bottle is a surface swimmer, which has a gas filled float to keep it on the surface. It can cause a painful sting.

This jellyfish has killed over 70 people this century. It is especially active in the summer months, between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer.

You should never go swimming if the local people say it is sea wasp season. The sea wasp has been known to grow to about 20cm by 30cm, and to weigh up to 2kg.

JIMBLE

The Jimble lives all around the coast of Australia. It is about 1cm across with tentacles about 5cm long. The sting can last for months, and can cause scars.

The mauve stinger lives all around our coastline and causes a nasty sting with its 8 tentacles. The body is about 12cm in diameter.

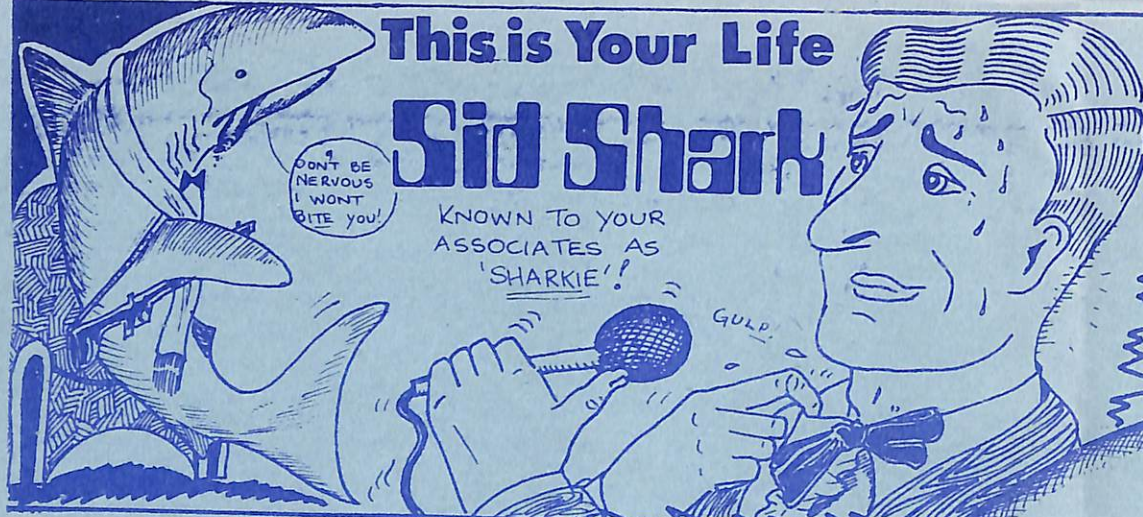
MAUVE STINGER

OTHER JELLYFISH TO

WATCH OUT FOR -

The Irukandji, the sea blubber, and Chiropsalmus quadrigatus who is a cousin of the sea wasp.

To read - "Venomous Creatures of Australia" by Dr. Struan K. Sutherland.



This is Your Life Sid Shark

KNOWN TO YOUR
ASSOCIATES AS
'SHARKIE'!

GULP

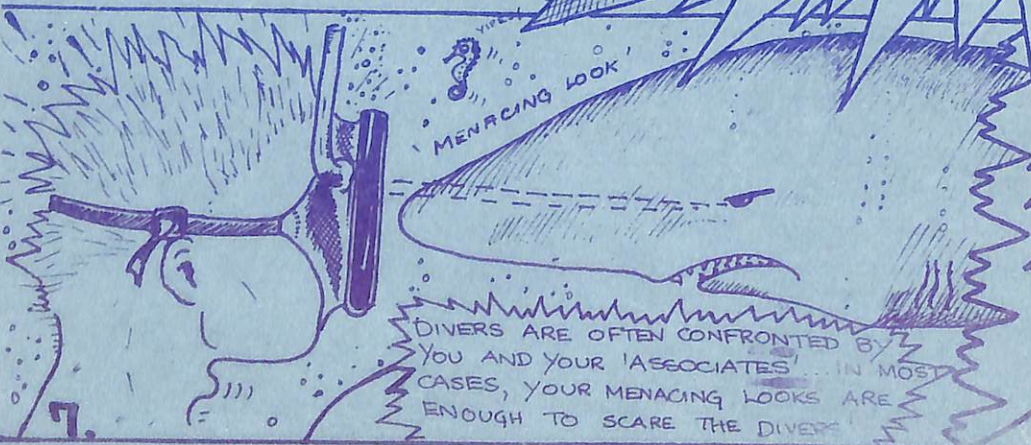
WELL SID YOU CERTAINLY HAVE
A REPUTATION FOR BEING FIERCE
AND FOR ATTACKS ON SWIMMERS.
PEOPLE DO TEND TO FEEL
UNEASY WITH YOU ABOUT



IT'S ALL A BIG
FRAME UP I TELL YOU..
I MUST ADMIT SOME OF
MY RELATIVES GET A
BIT 'CARRIED AWAY' SOMETIMES..

Sharks have become a feared
adversary of the deep,
but experiments and
monitoring have disproved
many of these myths.
The shark is an
order of cartilaginous
fishes of which there
are about 250
species living
in the oceans and fresh
waters of the world.
Of these, only a
few are considered
"killers".

Can you spot a tiger shark and
hammer head shark in these drawings?



DIVERS ARE OFTEN CONFRONTED BY
YOU AND YOUR 'ASSOCIATES'... IN MOST
CASES, YOUR MENACING LOOKS ARE
ENOUGH TO SCARE THE DIVER

The White Pointer, star of "Jaws" is
renown for its attacking with
ferocity. The teeth of the shark
are constantly being replaced due
to a unique process, whereby
rows of 'denticles' along
the skin surface of the shark
(which gives it that
distinct abrasive feel) gradually
move along toward the
mouth area, and eventually form
a tooth in the jaw. A shark can
replace a lost tooth fairly
rapidly with this strange
process.

THANKS TO CAROL MEASURES FOR 'SID'!

WELL SID
THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP
SO, ALONG WITH OUR
STUDIO AUDIENCE, WHO
APPEAR TO HAVE ENJOYED
THE SHOW VERY MUCH.
LET ME SAY THANK
YOU SID AND ALSO
TO YOUR 'FRIENDS'
FOR COMING ON
OUR SHOW.



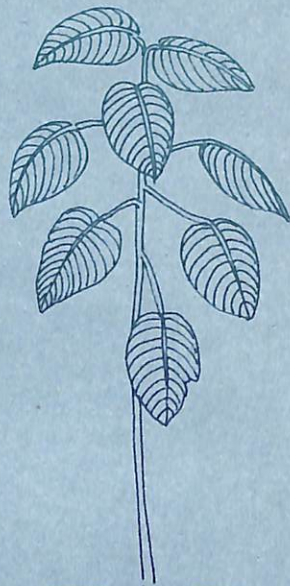
LET'S
HEAR
IT
FOR
SHARKIE

POISONOUS PLANTS!

There are some plants in Australia which are really dangerous. Here, we're taking a look at just two of the plants that can make you sick, or even blind!

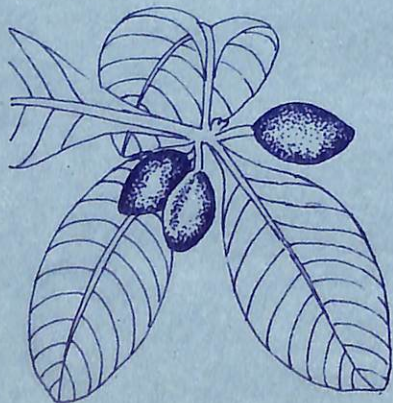
STINGING TREE

The stinging tree is found along the eastern coast of Australia, as far south as Bega, N.S.W. and as far north as the rainforest stretches. There are several types of the tree, ranging in height from one to thirty metres tall. The tree's leaves are covered with stiff, hairy spines which have poison in their tips. The spines are made out of silica, which is the main ingredient in glass. When you brush against the leaves, the spines break the skin, and the poison is able to get into YOU! The spines give an intense sting that lasts for a week or even more.



FINGER CHERRY

The finger cherry grows in the north of Queensland, and is a distant relative to the eucalypt. Its bright red fruits can cause blindness if they are eaten. Animals that ate the cherry were said to go blind as well. There is no known cure for the poison that the cherries contain, and earlier this century, posters were sent to all the schools in Queensland, so that children would know of the danger of eating the bright red fruit.



FRIEND OR FOE ?

Bidens Pilosa, or "Farmer's Friends" as they are called are a pesky weed that is found in Australia's warmer areas. Farmer's Friends originated in tropical America, and found

its way to Australia by hitch hiking a ride on farmers' socks and clothes.

It is so good at hitching a ride that it has spread right throughout the warmer region of the world. The plant can grow up to 1.6m high, and can have up to 6,000 seeds on it, which can lie dormant for over 5 years!

These little seeds are barbed, and stick onto clothing, eventually dropping off and starting a new plant somewhere else. The plant can grow all year round in warm climates, and can produce 3 or 4

generations a year! Apart from being a pest to farmers' clothes, the plant is a troublesome weed in over 32 crops in 40 countries. It is the main weed in nearly every tropical country. It infests tea in Mozambique, macadamias in Australia and beans in Brazil.

The only people who seem to like it are the Zulus and the Indians, who eat the boiled leaves mixed with cornmeal. Everyone else hates

the prickly, itchy little seeds and the damage it does to crops.

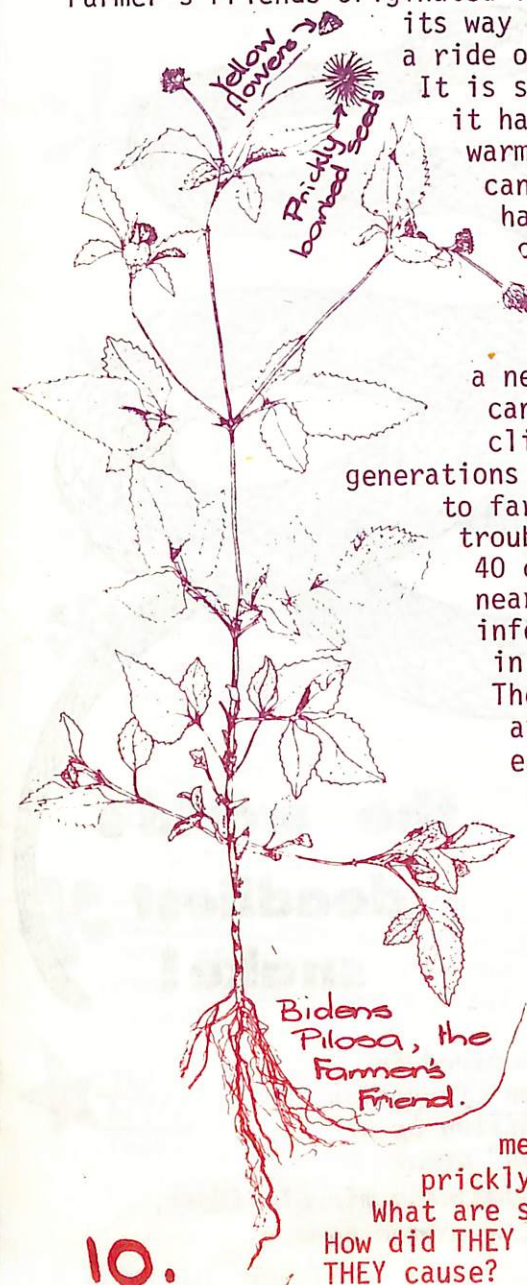
Although the plant is called "Farmer's Friends" in Australia it has many different names in other countries. In Argentina it is "Seco Amor", in Chile it is "Cacho Decabra", and in

Angola it is "Olokosso". See if you can find out what these names mean, and any more about these

prickly little intruders into our country.

What are some other INTRODUCED plant pests? How did THEY get to Australia? What trouble do THEY cause?

by Greg Carmichael.



10.

KILLER SNAKE

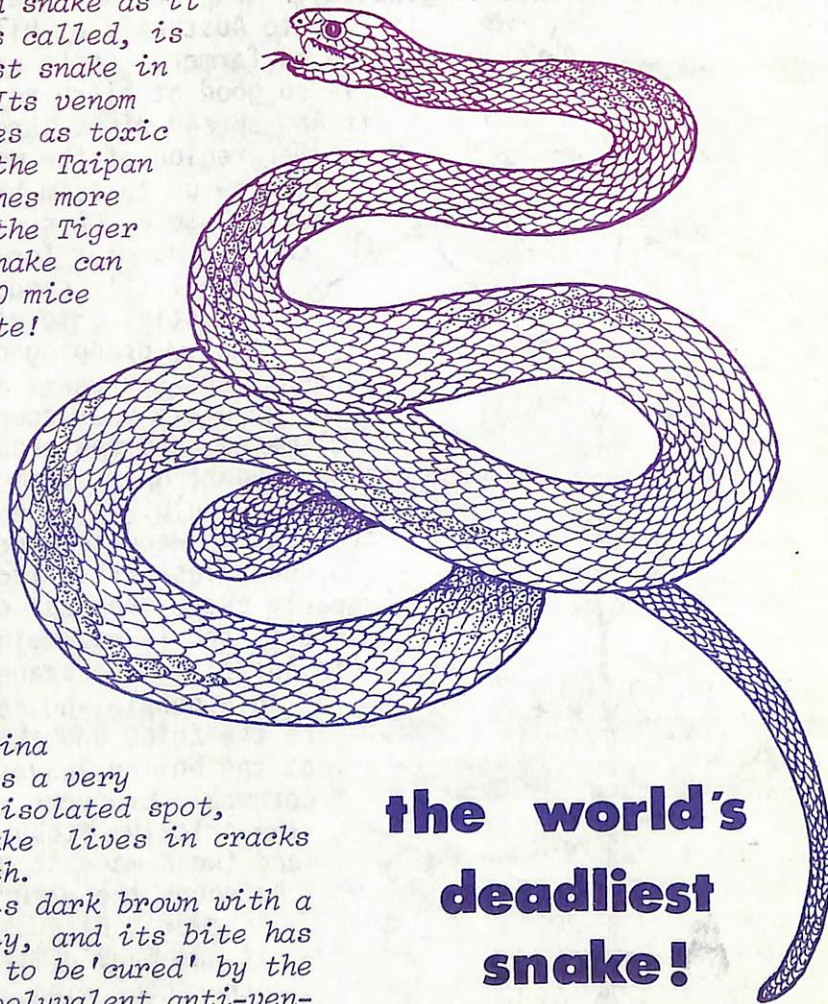
The Fierce snake, or the small scaled snake as it is sometimes called, is the deadliest snake in the world. Its venom is four times as toxic as that of the Taipan and nine times more toxic than the Tiger snake. The snake can kill 125,000 mice with one bite!

The Fierce snake is found near "Ashy Downs" which is close to Coopers Creek and the Diamantina River. It is a very remote and isolated spot, and the snake lives in cracks in the earth.

The snake is dark brown with a yellow belly, and its bite has been found to be 'cured' by the Taipan or polyvalent anti-venenes available.

The Fierce snake was first discovered in 1879 by Frederick McCoy, but was forgotten until recently when a man was bitten by a strange snake in the "ashy downs" area.

The snake turned out to be *Parademansia microlepidota*, or the Fierce snake, which is its common name.



**the world's
deadliest
snake!**

Oh, No They Don't !

a few snake tales exposed.....

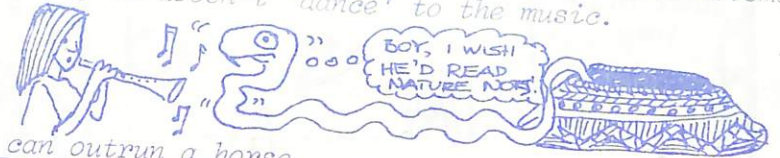
* Snakes like milk.

Snakes will not drink milk if water is available.



* Snakes can be enticed from hiding places with music.

Snakes cannot hear music, or any other airborne sounds. In the snake charmer's act, the snake moves with the movement of the pipe, it doesn't 'dance' to the music.



* Snakes can outrun a horse.

Snakes can move quickly, but only for short bursts. The fastest American snake can move at about 6km per hour, or walking speed, but not for long.



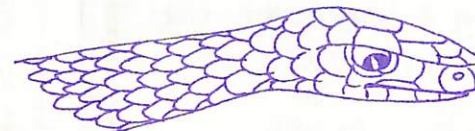
* Snakes are slimy.

A snake's body is quite dry to touch.



* Snakes hypnotize their prey.

They do not hypnotize their food animals, but as they don't have any eyelids it may look like they're staring at the prey animal



THAT'S THE HEIGHT OF BAD MANNERS, MISTER!



* Snakes will not die until sundown, and if you kill one, its mate will come to avenge the death.

Both stories are not true. Snakes may take some time to stop moving after a fatal wound, but will die at any time at all.



* The hoop snake holds its tail in its mouth and rolls down hills.

There is no such snake!



PUZZLING

3 nests of ants must walk from the sugar to nest 1, the honey to nest 3 and the jam to nest 2 - without crossing or they will mix up scents and lose their way.



Q: WHAT IS GREEN, HAS SIX LEGS AND IF IT FELL ON YOU WOULD SQUASH YOU?

A: A BILLIARD TABLE IN A TREE

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST FORGETFUL ANIMAL?

A: THE SNAKE. HE'S ALWAYS LOSING HIS SKIN!

Eg. Take away the dog & leave the cat.

APLESRASTIAIANN
= A L S A T I A N
P E R S I A N

1. Take away the spider & leave its dinner.
FUFLNNELYWEB
2. Take away the cat & leave the bird.
LIOOSTRINCH
3. Take away the bird & leave the insect.
MIMANNATIDH
4. Take away the fish & leave the bait.
WHIWOTRINMG
5. Take away the tree & leave the flower.
WABLOTTSSLEOM

Q: HOW DO YOU STOP A HERD OF ELEPHANTS FROM CHARGING?

A: TAKE AWAY THEIR CREDIT CARDS.

PAGES

OH NO! NOT MORE OF THOSE DREADFUL RIDDLES!!

Re-arrange the letters on this page to find the names of animals, birds or reptiles.

1

A Y S O
W C E U r
S a M

Two Flightless Birds.

Flying Mammal.
- 2 words

2

T
B R
U F I A T

Two Marsupials
Without
Tails.

3

L k T
A A M
O B
A W O

5

Bird with a yellow crest.

C O T O
a T c
O k

Three egg-layers..
- 1 mammal, 1 bird, 1 reptile.

4

p R R d
c e
S E K a
T a
N H i

ANSWERS: 1) EMU, CASSOWARY 2) FRUIT BAT 3) KOKOA 4) WOMBAT 5) SNAKE 6) PARROT 7) EFTLING

The BORING CUP

Ladles and
Jellyspoons....
and extinguished
visitors; I present
to you ROTOR and
MOTOR, the two
fastest wood borers
in the world!!



To decide the World Champion,
they will race through this
old tree stump. The winner
of the Cup is the first one
out the other side. On your
barks, Go!!

I'm beginning
to feel bored
already!



AND THE RACE STARTS, AMIDST LOUD
YAWNS FROM THE SPECTATORS.....

Help! I'm stumped! I've
hit a knot in the wood!

Serves you right for
going against
my grain!



Arrgh.... my energy is
sapped, by gum!

That'll teach you
not to get into
sticky situations!



THE FINISH DREW CLOSER
BUT NOBODY KNEW JUST
WHAT TO EXPECT.....
(because they could see
nothing — only the borers
saw dust.)

SAW
SAW 822 822
ZOOM



WHEN SUDDENLY.....

Out bored Motor!



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