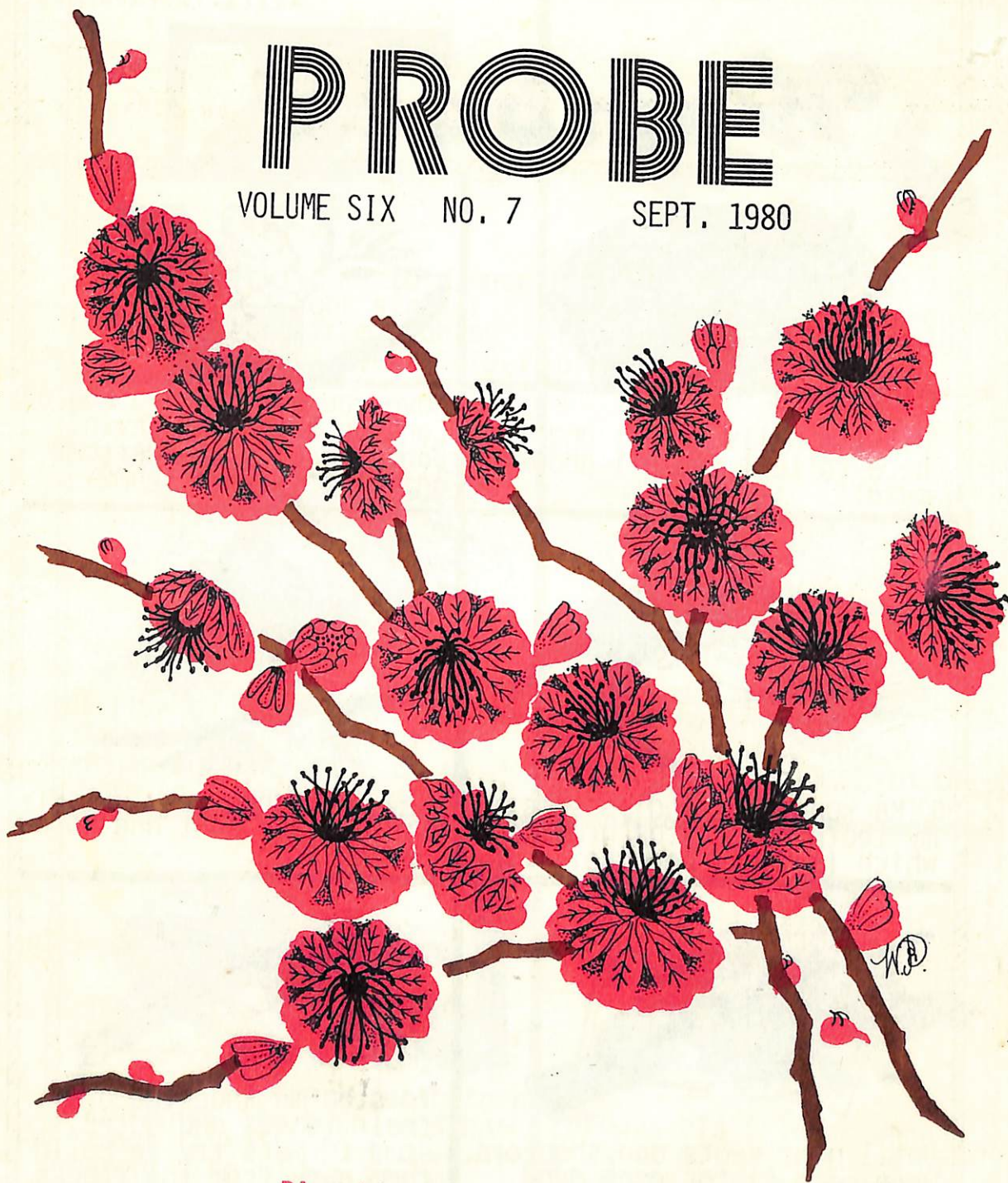


# PROBE

VOLUME SIX NO. 7

SEPT. 1980



Plum blossom is on this  
months' cover.



# Wombats

by D. Brydon



Hi! I'm Wally Wombat and I'm here to tell you all about myself.



Have you ever seen a koala? Can you think why Kevin Koala here is in the same animal family as I am?



Like kangaroos and possums, my teeth never stop growing which is lucky because....



they wear down very quickly with all the root and bark chewing I do.



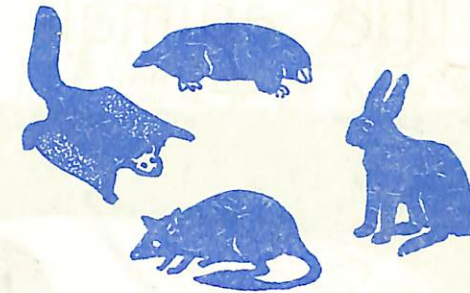
Until nine years ago, shooters were paid \$1 for each dead wombat they shot.../



To stop me knocking over their fences and gates, some farmers try to build them away from the tracks I use.



When you invite me to dinner please don't cook steak. I only eat food from plants, like fungi, grass and roots..



so small animals and people have no need to be afraid of me.



I live by myself in a burrow. Sometimes my friends from other burrows visit me at home so I don't get lonely.



Sometimes I remember when I was a baby in my mother's warm pouch...and when I learnt how to tunnel in the side of my mother's burrow.



Thousands of years ago (before my grandma was born) a giant wombat lived in Australia. He looked like me but was as big as a donkey.



Perhaps his friends were D.....s. Today there are no giant wombats anywhere in the world.



# The animals on our coins • • • the Platypus



Those of you who visit the Sir Colin Mackenzie Fauna Park this year may be lucky enough to see the platypus tank. This is not open all day because the platypus only spends about two hours a day actually in the water. While in the water he uses his duck-like bill to find food in the mud at the bottom. In one day, a platypus living in a tank will need about 1,200 earthworms, 50 yabbies as well as yabbies and beetles.

Unlike f---, the platypus cannot breathe underwater. While he tries to find food, a piece of skin covers his eyes and ears. Any food that he finds is stored for later on in his mouth or in little pouches in his cheeks. What other animals store their food? How do some people store food they don't need straight away in their bodies?

Platypuses live in tunnels on the river bank. When people brought rabbits to Australia they made it hard for the platypus to find a home. Rabbits dig their burrows in river banks sometimes, too. When the mother platypus is about to lay her eggs, she leaves the father platypus' burrow. She digs another burrow which is blocked off. This keeps the new burrow warm and wet so the eggs will h---. When the eggs hatch, the babies feed on milk. What other baby animals feed on milk?



20 cent piece - A. Sandford

Sometimes large goannas and pythons eat platypuses, if they can catch them.

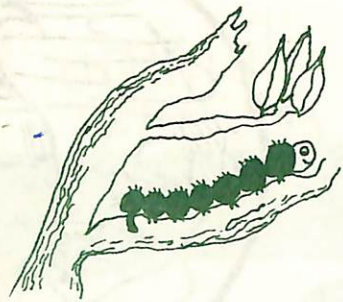


by D. Brydon



# What is

# Spring?

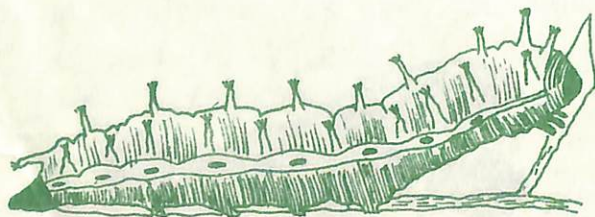


Now is the time that insect eggs hatch into caterpillars.

DON'T BE AN  
EGGHEAD.  
LEAVE BIRD  
NESTING TO  
THE BIRDS!



Wattles are in bloom.  
How many different kinds  
can you find in your  
neighbourhood?



On what kind of tree would you  
find an Emperor Gum caterpillar?  
Do you know the correct name  
for a gum tree?

Wattle makes  
me sneeze!

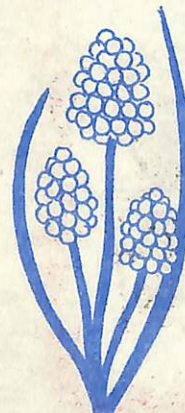


Birds are returning to  
look for places to build  
their nests. Where have  
they been all winter?

Bulbs have pushed  
through the ground and  
are in flower. Do you  
know any of their names?



Spring is a good time for  
walking. Make a list of all  
the signs of spring you see  
on your walk. This page will  
give you a start. What else  
can you add to it?



Trees that lost their leaves in  
autumn are now getting new leaves.  
Many will be covered in blossom.  
This means that fruit will begin  
to grow on some of them.

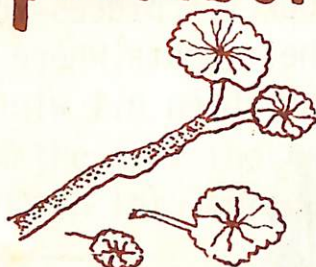




# What to do in September

Spring is the season when most plants start to grow faster. It is a good time for starting off new plants.

Sowing seeds is not the only way to start off a new plant. Many plants will grow from cuttings.



Geraniums are common garden plants which grow easily from cuttings. Break off an end piece (about 12 cm. long) and gently break off all the leaves except the top 2 or 3.



Now plant the bottom half of the cutting in a pot filled with loose crumbly soil. A

small yoghurt container with holes poked in the bottom it with water. If you remember to keep your cutting

moist but not soggy you

should have a healthy plant

to give as a Christmas gift.



*PROBE: Registered at the G.P.O. as a periodical Category B.*

*P.O. Box 28, Ringwood East, Vic. 3135*