

Friends of Sassafras Creek

Newsletter Edition No. 9

December 2024



One of our local slime moulds - Honeycomb Coral (*Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*) - photo by Meghan Lindsay

Jane's journal

It's hard to believe we're at the end of the year already. We had nine Sunday working bees based in either the Secret Garden, Beagleys Bridge or the Nobles Lane area of Sassafras Creek. The Wednesday working bee group have also worked at Lyrebird Falls. We have observed birds nesting in areas where we have cleared ivy and woody weeds, which is always good to see.

Our seed and cuttings collection agreement with Parks Victoria has been extended to December 2026 so the propagating continues. We have collected and planted many Mother Shield Ferns, Southern Sassafras trees, Musk Daisies, Woolly Tea-trees and more as a result of this agreement.

Our 2023 Landcare grant in the Secret Garden is now complete after significant contractor works removing woody weeds and planting natives. A big thank you to Sander Groeneveld and the crew from Diverse Bush Management for their help during the year with these works.

We are disappointed at the restructuring of Parks Victoria and significant funding and staff cuts. Rangers from Olinda who are retiring have not been replaced and this has flow on effects for our work. Nevertheless the deer control programs are continuing with another round of funding scheduled.

A bit of good news - after at least five years the Lyrebird Falls bridge has finally been replaced and walkers can now enjoy the Sassafras Creek trail from Sassafras to Monbulk.

As many of you would know, rains in July caused a major land slip in Sassafras which is also the location of the headwaters of the Sassafras Creek. This resulted in major damage to infrastructure and the creek itself. Repairs are being arranged for engineering works which will not be completed until after the fire season in 2025.

Our AGM was held on Wednesday 27 November and we nominated our new committee. We meet online on the second Thursday of the month and plan the activities of the group. Let us know if you would like to attend these online meetings and help us plan activities and works!

Jane Hollands
President - Friends of Sassafras Creek



Words and photo by Sally Bewsher

A local moth - *Gastrophora henricaria*

Gastrophora is a moth genus in the family Geometridae. *Gastrophora henricaria*, also known as the Fallen-bark Looper or Beautiful Leaf Moth, is the only species and is found predominantly in the east and south-east of Australia. However, iNaturalist lists observations as far north as Cairns and as south west as Adelaide. Both the genus and species were first described by Achille Guenée in 1857.

Whilst walking at Birdsland Reserve recently, I found this moth on the gravel path.

When I picked it up to rescue it, I found that while the upper wings were fawn-coloured, the hindwings, hidden when resting, were orange, with an arc of black dots, a black transverse line and a thin black line at the base. When turned over, the underside of the wings were a surprise too, showing yellow, blue and black markings, in addition to the speckling on the body and remainder of the wings. I have seen two of them in recent weeks. This one appears to be a female, which have a wingspan of up to 80mm, while the males are smaller. Their larvae feed on Eucalyptus species and Brush Box.

It would be wrong

Words by Brian Bloomer

It would be wrong if I pretended that this last Onion Weed season was not the worst that I've seen since living in the Dandenongs.

It would be wrong if I didn't admit the present explosion of Blackberries was not heading in the same direction.

It would be wrong if I didn't include Agapanthus, Sycamores, Ivy and Sweet Pittosporum as other species that are more rampant than ever before.

It would be wrong if I witnessed all this and said nothing.

It would be wrong if I wasn't concerned about the supposed restructuring of Parks Victoria.

It would be wrong if I didn't acknowledge the wonderful work that FOSC and other groups do in attempting to address these issues.

It would be wrong to not wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

I would also be wrong if I didn't hope that all my fears are Wrong.

Slime Moulds in Sassafras Creek?



Oligonema verrucosum

From Dog Vomit to Honeycomb Coral, there's some pretty whacky slime moulds out there. Though the combination of slime and mould may not evoke pleasant imagery for some of us, they really are delightful when viewed up very close.

They're also an important part of our ecosystem. They break down and recycle nutrients at a microscopic level.

My top tip is to search for them once there's been rain after a long dry period. Logs are particularly good places to look.

Article and photos by Meghan Lindsay

Is it a fungus? Is it a plant? Actually it's neither!

Slime moulds are incredible. For much of their lives they exist as single celled organisms. Then when the time is right, those single cells join together to form spectacular sporing bodies. But before the sporing body comes the plasmodial stage. That's when they can move around and feed.

For many years, they were categorised as plants. Though it sounds like they share similar traits to plants, animals and fungi, they're actually in a completely separate group.



Chocolate tube slime mould (Stemonitis splendens)

FOSC working bees for the first half of 2025

January 26 (TBC), February 23, March 30, April 27, May 25, June 29, July 27, August 31

These dates are for our primary working bees, which are the last Sunday of every month. Information about the working bees will be sent out via email in the days prior to let you know where we will be working. Some of us also meet a couple of times a month on Wednesday afternoons at about 1.30pm.

If you would like to come then, even if only occasionally, please email us at foscreek@gmail.com.

October working bee



Sid, Tess, Siobhan, Strauss, Helen and Jane

Acknowledgement of Country



In the spirit of reconciliation, the Friends of Sassafras Creek acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, the Wurundjeri People, and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Kangaroo Apple Season in the Eastern Kulin Seasonal Calendar



Kangaroo Apple (Solanum aviculare)

Changeable, thundery weather. Dhuling (Goannas) are active. Buliyong (bats) are catching insects in flight. Days are long and nights are short.

'Usually when a storm's coming, rain birds, black cockatoos, yellow crested, they come down from the mountains. And you can bet on it within two or three days it rains. Never fails. Two days and it rains. And they make a racket.' Brian Paterson, 1999

Fruits appear on Kangaroo-apple bushes. Bali (Cherry Ballart) is fruiting. Bundjil (Wedge-tailed Eagles) the Creation beings, are breeding.

Source: museumsvictoria.com.au/melbournmuseum/resources/forest-secrets


Thank you!

A big thanks to those who contributed to this newsletter - Ash, Jane, Sally, Brian and Meghan.

Get in touch
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friendsofsassafras creek](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofsassafras creek)

Are you interested in joining FOSC or have a question about weeds in your garden? Have you got something you'd like to add or see presented in the newsletter? We would love to hear from you!