

## Wildlife Watch

Once or twice a year in the wet sclerophyll forest around Mt Glorious we catch a glimpse of a beautiful visitor, the dainty Rose Robin. As the name suggests it is a pale pink-breasted robin, with only the male having this bright colouring. The female is greyish brown above and below with white outer tail and wing bars; the male is dark grey above and white below. Dainty and agile, it is a perch-and-pounce hunter like our more common Yellow Robins, though smaller in size. It appears to pass through our forests on migration north from cooler southern winters, heading south again for the summer. Exquisitely fine and beautiful, its rare appearance adds to the joy of encountering it in the forest. Like its southern cousin the flame robin, its markings presents a splash of colour that has me smiling with delight for the rest of the day.

(For more info see:

<http://birdsinbackyards.net/species/Petroica-rosea>)

Dominic Hyde



Rose Robin (*Petroica rosea*)

If you have ideas for articles you would like included in the newsletter, speak to Wendy on 3289-0280 or email: [askmepa@yahoo.com.au](mailto:askmepa@yahoo.com.au)

## Vegetation Management

As a follow-on from the previous article on how to effectively get rid of woody weeds using the cut and dab method, this month I'll be giving an introduction to conventional methods of foliar weed spraying by first looking at the different types of herbicides available.

Most of us are familiar with "Roundup" or the other generic (and cheaper) Glyphosate-based products. These are regarded as 'non-selective' in that they kill pretty much every plant whose leaves they come into contact with. Many people are surprised to find that there are also many 'selective' herbicides available that have some distinct advantages. To realise this we must first understand the botanical division of flowering plants into two distinct groups.

The first group is called the monocotyledons, or 'monocots', which refers to the fact that they have only one seed-leaf. The monocots include all grasses, sedges, palms, ferns (*effectively*), bananas, ginger, onions etc. They can often be distinguished by their absence of branches owing to a single central growth point.

The second group of plants are the dicotyledons, or 'dicots', which have two seed-leaves and include all other flowering plants such as trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants etc. Dicots are often referred to as being 'woody', or 'woody weeds' as the case may be, and generally bear their leaves on branches.

Selective herbicides target only one group — most commonly the dicots, as most of the common weeds are in this group. Using a selective herbicide will eliminate or greatly reduce the chance of damage to other non-target grass species etc. Selective sprays are also generally more effective on fast-growing herbaceous plants and hence larger slower growing 'woody' plants are less likely to suffer the effects of drift or accidental contact.

Grasses and other monocots are great at suppressing other weedy re-growth, which is a common problem with non-selective herbicides that leave the ground bare, just begging any weeds to move back in. Cobbler's Pegs are a great example — their seed can survive underground for over 10 years but most

grasses can out-compete them if they are given an advantage, such as the use of a selective spray.

Starane (or Comet, the cheaper alternative) and Brush-Off are some examples of selective herbicides that are commonly used by MEPA to re-establish native grasses and ground covers in areas being regenerated, hence reducing the need for ongoing use of chemicals.

Next newsletter we'll be looking at the safety aspects of using herbicides and how to use them responsibly. If you'd like to learn more about this topic, there will be more info posted on the MEPA website soon. Alternatively, a MEPA representative can give you more advice on-site through our free Do-Your-Block consultation service.

Alan Carter

## Flowering now: bushland weed



Easter Cassia (*Senna pendula* var. *glabrata*)

This is the shrub with the bright yellow flowers that is so obvious along the roads and bush at this time of year. It is an ornamental that has been spread by birds and is increasing in numbers every year. The yellow flowers will soon be followed by long green pods which turn brown as they mature. The seed inside is relished especially by Currawongs.

The problem with weeds is that they crowd out native plants and alter the ecology of an area. This can result in the whole balanced system between animals and plants being destroyed and consequently the mountain environment changing forever. Workers for MEPA are doing their best to deal with Easter Cassia along with other weed species.

### *Help from mountain dwellers would be much appreciated.*

All you need to do is to cut the bush off at the base and immediately cover the cut stump with neat Glyphosate (Roundup). Do it carefully so that around the outer edges of the cut there is good coverage.

You can apply the Glyphosate with a brush or use a dab bottle, which is an empty perm bottle from the hairdresser. An empty sauce or mayonnaise bottle with the screw top is good but a bit harder to control.

There is a native plant called *Breynia* which looks similar but the leaflets of Cassia are opposite each other, and there is a gland between the lowest pair whereas the *Breynia* has alternate leaves and small round fruit.

If time runs out, just pull off the flowering heads off the Cassia. Kids like doing this. At least it won't seed this year and you can deal with the bush later on.

Maggie Scattini

### **Stop Press** Easter cassia good results

The road to The Gap is finally showing the results of the effort put in by MEPA workers. There is very little yellow to be seen now, whereas some years ago the roadside edge was thick with it.

## Do your block! *Free bushcare service*

Would you like some assistance managing bushland on your block? Advice on weeds or advice on planting local native plants in your garden?

MEPA has a free service offering advice and information (supported by MBRC)

Contact Maggie - 3289 8175 or  
Dominic - 3289 0029 or  
Email: [askmepa@yahoo.com.au](mailto:askmepa@yahoo.com.au)