

Why don't they notice?

I had been working at home and hearing the constant “peep”, “peep”, “peep” of some baby bird off in the bushes for over a week. It was loud, incessant and became increasingly hard to ignore as the days went by. Eventually I could bear it no longer and went in search of the noise. There, perched just outside my window, was a baby Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

These cuckoos are regulars and adults can be heard constantly trilling in the local forests through spring and summer. With a bluish-grey head and back and pale brown chest, the tail is grey with white markings. About 25 cm long, they are a good-sized bird when fully grown, and the baby on the branch outside my window was already 15 cm or so in size. So you can imagine my surprise when a tiny Thornbill, less than half the size of the baby Cuckoo, came in and fed the screaming baby.

During the following days a pair of tiny, hard working Thornbills came and went, working non-stop to feed their hulking “baby”. They had been cuckolded when an adult Cuckoo had come and laid its egg in their nest. Hatching earlier than its rivals, the baby Cuckoo had instinctively rolled all the Thornbill eggs out of the nest and taken up sole residence. Loved by its adoptive parents, the strange relationship seemed to be working just fine. Parenthood can certainly be demanding.

(For more on the Cuckoo see:

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Cacomantis-flabelliformis>)

Dominic Hyde

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 0093 or
Email: askmepa@yahoo.com.au

Declared plant pest — Class 3

Kahili ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*)



Yellow flowers

Orange fruit

The garden plant kahili ginger has been declared a **Class 3** pest because of its demonstrated potential to spread widely and to form single-species stands in bushland and rainforests. Seeds are produced in hundreds and are carried by birds; kahili has been found in local forests many kilometres from habitation.

The importance of controlling this very invasive plant cannot be overstated. It has the potential to cause huge degradation to native bushland and forest. Coming from the foothills of the Himalayas, it is well suited to the moist conditions of our elevated rainforest and wet sclerophyll areas.

Since the early 1990s continuing efforts have been made to prevent this plant spreading into local forests. In 2005 leaflets were dropped into letter boxes around Mount Nebo and Mount Glorious warning of the dangers of kahili spreading into rainforest. The local council and MEPA combined efforts in 2007 in a “weed swap” which saw 2000 seedlings of **Native ginger** (*Alpinia caerulea*) handed out to local householders and landowners who were prepared to remove kahili and plant native ginger in its place in their own gardens.

In Mount Nebo and Mount Glorious instances have been recorded of large kahili plants growing high in trees – in Eucalyptus, Acacia and hoop pine - and another in a roof gutter.

Two other species of *Hedychium* have been declared:

- White ginger (*H. coronarium*) – **Class 3**, and
- Yellow ginger (*H. flavescens*) – **Class 1**.

Listing a species as a classified pest plant is only a first step in controlling that plant. Work on the ground is achieved by a combination of house owners, conscientious gardeners, landholders and even tenants, working with local authorities such as Parks and Wildlife, and Council.

Exhaustive assessments were done to substantiate the declaration of kahili ginger as a pest plant. That it has now been added to the list of classified pests should alert us to the dangers of allowing it to thrive in our gardens, especially in this close proximity to D'Aguilar National Park.

For more information on the declaration of these gingers, and the DEEDI website for other declared pests, see the web site of DPI :

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_19013.htm

Brian Phillips

Control of kahili ginger

Eradication of kahili ginger can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Dig out or carefully pull out entire plants, cut and discard stems. Bag roots and place in main rubbish bin or skip. Stems and leaves can be mulched.
- For larger stands of ginger, cut off stems approximately 2 cm above root and flood cut with "Roundup" solution 1:2, within 10 seconds.

In this case further checks need to be done as roots left in the ground can revive after a year, so new shoots will need to be dug out or treated again.

Many seedlings (most emanating from gardens) are now appearing in forests, gardens and around roadsides. It is easier to dig or pull these now than to deal with a much larger plant in a year or two.

Native ginger (*Alpinia caerulea*)



White flowers

Blue fruit

Gardening in the Mountains

Summer Rains

After recent rains, many of us have had to repair damage to our yards and put in preventative measures to ensure it doesn't happen again. Some of your 'drought tolerant' plants would have succumbed to the rain and it may be time to go back to those plants that have survived here for years through varying climatic changes.

Below is a short list of some useful plants that may be obtained at 'Greening Australia' or 'Pine Rivers Community Nursery'. Species differ between Mt Glorious and Mt Nebo and it is advisable to seek further advice on your locality before purchase.

Soil Binders

Strappy plants: Lomandra, Dianella

Grasses: Poa, Themeda, Oplismenus

Ground Covers: Dichondra, Viola

Wet Areas

ferns, sedges, cunjevoi, ginger, palm lilies, palms.

Wendy Lees

MEPA welcomes new members (\$5 per person, \$10 per family). Membership form available at:
<http://www.gloriousnebo.org.au/MEPA/membership>