

MEPA NEWS

Protecting the Mt Nebo & Mt Glorious environment -
Promoting awareness, understanding and enjoyment
through education, discussion, and community activities.

WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the latest edition of MEPA News, and our first for 2023. Since the last issue:

- MEPA held our AGM at the end of 2022 – our thanks go to those that attended, and we are grateful to all members supporting MEPA this year.
- We would like to warmly welcome our newest committee member Jenny Leask, who has a wealth of experience in supporting bushcare groups.

This issue we are focusing on sharing the connection between our mountains and biodiversity. MEPA is committed to related issues such as preventing habitat degradation and increasing biodiversity, and we believe that our work is just one important part of protecting the of biodiversity in our area.

DO YOUR BLOCK!

MEPA has a free service offering advice on managing bushland, weeds and native plants on your block.

(supported by MBRC)

Contact Maggie - 3289 8175 or Dominic - 3289 0093

Email: mepa.enquiries@gmail.com

MOUNT NEBO MACADAMIAS

The endangered Gympie Nut (*Macadamia ternifolia*) is a small, evergreen tree growing eight to ten metres in height and is found only in SE Qld. Amazingly, it has recently been found in significant numbers on both private land and along the road reserve in Mt Nebo. It is the southern-most known population.

A particular cluster population on private property probably constitutes 4-5% of the entire remaining world

population. And it also appears to be one of the biggest populations of a single stand known anywhere. The species' "vulnerable" status means that it is protected under Federal legislation (the EPBC Act), and these discoveries considerably boost the species' chances of survival.

Growing in stands of relic rainforest on southern slopes, its main threats are fire and weed competition. These trees are fire sensitive, and it seems that fortuitous protection from fire has enabled their continued survival. For more information see: [https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-](https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=7214)

[bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=7214](https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=7214)



PHOTO: via iNaturalist.org



MEPA is also organising two community events:

Fire/forest walk Sat 29 April 9- 12pm

Guided walk along Taylor's Break with Dave Kington (ex-Forestry, QPWS and 47 years experience fire mgt) to look at the effects of fire over time, on the landscape and vegetation along Taylor's Break including areas proposed for burning this year. Discussion of the role of fire management in determining forest structure and ecology.

Meet at entrance to Taylor's Break off Forestry Rd. Bring hat, water bottle and wear walking shoes. Basic level of fitness required to walk approx 3km total along fire trail.

Fire management case studies: Fri 16 June 6.30-8.30pm, Mt Nebo Hall.

Dave Kington will present a couple of case studies from SEQ (Scenic Rim and Minjerrabah) where fire management has had significant ecological outcomes. Followed by informal discussion of the role of cool burns in maintaining forest structure and ecology.

Entry by Gold coin donation. Bar. Curry \$10

We hope to see you there!

AMAZING GECKO FIND AT MOUNT GLORIOUS

For decades amateur and professional ecologists have been looking around the southern D'Aguilar Ranges for unusual species, focussing especially on the elevated biodiverse rainforest areas around Mt Nebo and Mt Glorious. One species that eluded them, despite comprehensive surveys over the years, was the Border Ranges Leaf-Tailed Gecko (*Saltuarius swaini*) so it was supposed that it simply did not occur here – its nearest population being Mount Tambourine, 80 kilometres to the south.

But a few years ago a group of keen herpetologists, out

spotlighting for interesting frog species around Mt Glorious, were amazed to see a gecko that was clearly a species of *Saltuarius*. But was it *S. swaini* or a new species? Further visits resulted in more sightings and some tissue samples were taken (just from the tail tips! No harm done). Lo and behold, they were confirmed as *S. swaini* – the Border Ranges Leaf-Tailed Gecko – though separated long enough from their southern kin as to now be well on their way to a new species all their own. Our forests continue to surprise and delight.

For a very readable account of the find see <https://www.museum.qld.gov.au/collections-and-research/memoirs/nature-60/mqm-n60-18-revell-et-al>

NEW LOMANDRA SPECIES DISCOVERED BY LOCALS

Lomandra phillipsiorum – by Sue and Brian Phillips

Some years ago we came across a small Lomandra on the range which didn't fit the plant key. However, it was not fertile so the botanists at the Queensland Herbarium couldn't identify it either. Some time passed before we got the tip that some Lomandra species have flowers and fruit right at the base of the plant. After that, by carefully hunting below the leaf litter we had success, finding

male and female flowers and fruit. There are separate male and female plants. It was then declared to be a new species and Jian Wang got to work describing it.

The plant is widely distributed along the range. Being a fine-leaved "grass-like" plant it is easily overlooked amongst other Lomandra species, sedges and grasses. Almost all of these populations are in the protected area of the D'Aguilar Range which is a comfort.

The plants growing at the base of this eucalypt are a good example of *L. phillipsiorum*, on a walk to Lepidozamia bush camp in D'Aguilar NP. The fertile parts are not visible, but

they would be hidden in the leaf litter at the base of the plants.

The plant has narrow, dark green leaves to about 40cm and forms clumps and stands and favours trackside banks.



BUSH TALES

It's about this time of the summer that the results of spring start to become obvious. Kids of different kinds seem to be all around the place, some rasping all day, some rasping all night, and others just quietly trying not to get eaten.

The Kingfishers returned from their New Guinea winter vacation and everything points to the summer season having been a pretty good one so far. They spent a lot of the early summer scaring away every goanna and snake in sight. (Poor goannas. It's a hard life for a reptile. Some of their speedy escapes down tall trees, with the birds in hot pursuit all the way looked pretty hairy.) And the Kingfishers' efforts paid off with two healthy kids ... kids that demand a lot of attention. Now the parents have to find food for the whole family and keep up regular attacks on enemies. That is some schedule! When night-time comes they must kick their feet up and take a very deep breath. (Come to think of it, parenthood is probably pretty much the same whatever animal you are!)

When the Kingfishers head off to bed the Tawny Frogmouths get up. And they've been busy too. A fine family of four can be seen roosting in the trees during the day, catching up on some sleep before a busy night. Like all kids, the youngsters always seem to be restless, pushing each other and Mum and Dad up and down the perch. The parents must be very patient. I think if I was trying to sleep and I kept getting pushed and shoved by the kids I'd get pretty snappy, but they always seem to be as calm as can be. Come night-time, they get up and silently go about their business getting enough for everyone to eat. The kids just seem to sit around playing with each other on a perch, rasping whenever Mum or Dad comes near. ("What's for dinner Dad? Cockroaches again? Yum!") And that's just those families. It's all happening out there!

