



Friends  
of  
**Belair National Park**  
Volunteers working for Conservation  
Established 1985  
Friends group of the decade 2004



Best Newsletter 1996 - Friends Group of the year 1998

2009 NEWSLETTER 2, JUNE

Please note this is a quarterly newsletter. 4 per year. March, June, Sept and Dec.  
Deadlines are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month preceding its issue.  
Contributions can be emailed to Michael Cerchez at [cerchez@sa.chariot.net.au](mailto:cerchez@sa.chariot.net.au)

**FRIENDS OF BELAIR NATIONAL PARK. ABN 38 093 387 757**  
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[www.communitywebs.org/friendsofbelairpark](http://www.communitywebs.org/friendsofbelairpark)**

**This newsletter is available by Email. If you prefer not to receive a printed copy please let a committee member know.**

**IMPORTANT!**

**When a meeting is scheduled on a day of a TOTAL FIRE BAN it will not go ahead. In the case of the AGM it will be rescheduled to occur with next month's general meeting**

**OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2009**

**PRESIDENT** Mike Cerchez 8339 6801 **VICE PRESIDENT** Jim Trueman 8278 9359  
**SECRETARY** Jill Salvi 8278 6736 4 Colton Rd BLACKWOOD SA 5051  
**TREASURER** Carol Parrott 8278 6783

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Eric Cole, Brian DuBois, Barry Palmer, Isabel Storer, Ron Tamblyn.

<b>VOLUNTEER CENTRE BOOKINGS</b>	Jill Salvi	8278 6736
<b>GUIDED WALKS</b>	Jenny Skinner	8278 8986
<b>LIBRARIAN</b>	Pam Tamblyn	8278 6593
<b>NEWSLETTER EDITOR</b>	Mike Cerchez	8339 6801
<b>WORKING BEES</b>	Eric Cole	8278 3816
<b>SIGNIFICANT TREES</b>	Ron Tamblyn	8278 6593

**CALENDAR 2009 REGULAR EVENTS**

**General Meetings** on the first Saturday of the month. 1.00pm at the Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair National Park. Visitors welcome.

**Barbecue** – Meetings of 7<sup>th</sup> November are at 12.30pm for a barbecue. Please bring plate of salad or sweet slice to share and \$2.50 donation for meat.

**Working Bees on Tuesdays and Fridays**, meet outside the Information Centre, Belair National Park before 8.00 am in the summer, or 8.30 am in the winter. Enquiries Eric 8278 3816

For working bees on other days telephone Jill on 8278 6736.

### **NO WORKING BEE IF THERE IS A FIRE BAN**

**Guided Walks** are from April to December, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday afternoon. Meet outside the Information Centre, Belair National Park at 2.00 pm. All welcome. The first Tuesday walk for 2009 will be on 28<sup>th</sup> April. (No walk if forecast temperature is over 32 degrees) Enquiries Jenny 8278 8986.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS 2009**

**September 20<sup>th</sup> Prof Cleland Memorial Walk.** Sunday at 9.45am is for 10 am. 1.45 pm for 2 pm. Details yet to be finalised.

**October 30<sup>th</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup> Friends of Parks Inc Forum 2009** at Sunny brae Farm, Regency Park. “Rediscovering Adelaide: Urban Biodiversity and Heritage”. Registrations of Interest are now being sought. [robert.letcher@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.letcher@bigpond.com)

**December -Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Belair Park 118<sup>th</sup> Birthday and Friends 24<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

### **SEED-BURYING ANTS**

Have you ever wondered why clumps of white-flowered, onion-smelling three cornered garlic (*Allium triquitum*) suddenly appear in parts of your garden where you have never seen them before?

As noted in the last issue of the Newsletter, seed burying ants are probably to blame. Seed burying by ants is called myrmecory, and is widespread in both Australia and South Africa. It is especially common in infertile, fire-prone sites where ground cover is rather open, and any fallen seeds would be conspicuous to seed-eating birds.

The seeds that ants collect and bury have a special fat-rich appendage called an **elaiosome** (Gk. *elaion*-olive oil). Being fatty, elaiosomes are attractive to ants as food for their larvae, and because ants are so common in Australia, and other seed dispersing agents relatively rare, this has encouraged the independent evolution of elaiosome-producing seeds in a total of

over 1500 species in 87 genera from 23 plant families. Examples from genera found in National Park are species of *Grevillea* (Proteaceae), *Kennedia*, (Leguminosae), *Acacia* (Mimosaceae), *Beyeria* (Euphorbiaceae), *Leucopogon*, (Epacridaceae), *Xanthosia*, (Apiaceae) and *Allium* (Liliaceae).

The fruiting flower stalks of three cornered garlic (*Allium triquitum*) even become limp and lie along the ground, so when the ripe fruits open, the elaiosome-producing seeds are at a convenient height for removal by ants.

Foraging ants, attracted by the fatty elaiosome, take the seed to their underground nest. Here they remove the elaiosome to feed it to their young. But in order that they are resistant to fire, seeds of many elaiosome species are hard and thick walled and are commonly too smooth or too large to be grasped and broken open by the ants. So having removed the elaiosome the ants are forced to discard the seed right

there in an underground tunnel. Here the seeds lie hidden from birds and other seed predators and are free to germinate in the wet season. Because of the thick insulating wall the extra energy required to provide an elaiosome is minimal so it is no disadvantage to the parent plant to produce an elaiosome on each seed.

The question naturally arises as to why do the ants bother to carry the heavy seed to their nest when only the elaiosome is useful for food. Why not only cut off the elaiosomes and discard the seeds above ground right there where they found them? The answer may lie in the fact that in some cases chemical analysis has shown that the mix of fats that the plant deposits in the elaiosome is different from that deposited in the seed proper, and resembles the mixture of fats in the blood (haemolymph) of at least 7 orders of Australian insects. It has been suggested therefore that the elaiosome fools ants into thinking they have found a dead insect, and that they eat only the elaiosome because the rest of the seed fails to switch on their insect-collecting, and hence seed-collecting, behaviour. Cunning things, plants.

**by Ralph Foster**

### **VERA'S SEAT: WHO WAS VERA?**

Vera was a frequent walker in the park and she and her husband often used to say to each other how delightful it would be to be able to sit and admire the view but like most of us they just talked about the possibility. Vera died in 1996 and Peter then decided that it would be a good idea to erect the seat they had always talked about.

Peter approached the park who firstly refused permission. He persisted and after some time the seat was erected with a simple plaque. The seat was

not to be erected as a memorial...as it would then establish a precedent for other memorials. The seat was installed in 1997.

BNP were very helpful with the installation of the seat and when a large branch fell and broke the back of the seat two years into its life the park replaced the broken pieces.

Peter has at times removed graffiti from the seat and re coated the wood.

He commented to me that the wood seemed to be very durable and is obviously pleased that the seat is there.

Peter also commented that there should be a letter 'somewhere in the office' as there was correspondence with the park at the time.