

## WHAT'S ON IN THE BUSH AROUND BOWEN MOUNTAIN

Welcome to the timeline of seasons and environmental changes for the Blue Mountain foothills (Grose Vale-Bowen Mountain region). This includes a seasonal weather calendar, and notes on native plants, fauna, and weeds. There will be opportunities to learn more through participation in workshops or field trips with others. The information provided here will extend your pleasure during bushwalks, or provide contacts to assist you in your gardens. Thanks to Chris Stanfield for notes

on reptiles, frogs and mammals, and Keith Brandwood of Cumberland Bird Observers Club for notes on birds. We also plan to make much of this information available on the BMA website, where readers' photos and comments can add to its success. Chris, Keith and others are also available to conduct bushwalks in the next few months. We will be posting more details in the BMA CALENDAR. Please contact 0414 672 014 if you can offer your own experience to this program.

### IN FLOWER: PLANTS of BOWEN MOUNTAIN NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY (SUMMER MONTHS)

The production of **Bowen Mountain Bushwalks** undertaken in 1994 by Rick Jamieson and others contributed to enjoyment of unknown numbers of locals and visitors to our area. When Rick and others formed the Environment Committee in 2010, it was thought we could add more detail, including colour photos, via the website and newsletter. This is a start. It includes some suggested trails from the booklet. Each season in the newsletter will list just a small number of the vast array of trees, shrubs and

smaller plants which can easily be seen. Other notes on their part in the natural system will be added. Another useful illustrated guide to carry into the bush is **Native Plants of the Blue Mountains** by Margaret Baker and Robin Corringham. The photos are excellent!

The range of flowering period is shown in brackets. Italics are used for the botanical name which is more useful if more information is sought via references including websites.

Sago Flower *Ozothamnus diosmifolium* (Oct-Dec), Blue Flax Lily *Dianella caerulea* (Oct-Feb) Black Wattle *Callicoma serratifolia* (Oct-Dec) Hairy Clerodendrum *Clerodendrum tomentosum* (Oct-Nov)

Blueberry Ash *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (N-Dec), Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, (Nov) Smooth-barked Apple *Angophora costata* (N-D) Prickly Paperbark *Melaleuca stypheliodes* (Nov-Dec) Crinkle Bush *Lomatia silaifolia* (Nov-Feb) Paperbark Tea Tree *Leptospermum trinervium* (Nov- Jan)

Water Gum *Tristaniaopsis laurina*(D-F) Lilly Pilly *Acmena smithii* (N-F) Red Ash *Alphitonia excelsa*(D-M) Grey Myrtle *Backhousia myrtifolia* (N-D) Old Man Banksia *Banksia serrata* (D-J) Narrow-leaf Geebung *Persoonia linearis* (Dec-Jul) Flax-leaved Wattle *Acacia linifolia* (Dec-apr)

Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera* (Jan-Apr) Hickory Wattle *Acacia implexa* (F-M) Blackthorn *Bursaria spinosa* (J-Apr)

**Notes:** Blackthorn's dense prickly branches provide protection for smaller birds against predators. The flowers are an important source of nectar for butterflies and a range of beetles. [More information on Blackthorn at PlantNet](#)

Many spring flowering plants are now setting seed. This can become a high protein and carbohydrate food source for ants, birds, lizards and small mammals. Some seeds are wind-dispersed eg grasses, some daisies, weed species eg cats claw creeper, crofton weed, fire-weed.

**Where to see some of the selection:** Water Gum, LillyPilly, Grey Myrtle, Coach woods, ferns, and other rainforest species on the **Pipeline Track** down to Buralow Creek

Bloodwoods, Banksias, tea-trees, boronias and pea flowers on the **Observatory Trail**.

Waratahs, wattles, Burrawangs and a range of Eucalypts and related trees on the **Southern Trail**.

**SUMMER WEATHER:** Details are from the Springwood climate figures rather than Richmond. ([www.weatherzone.com.au/climate/](http://www.weatherzone.com.au/climate/))

SUMMER (December, January, February). Hottest months, hot NW winds can fan bushfires. Violent storms in February with lightning; high rainfall helps to disperse seeds.

**Weather: Long-term averages**

- December Mean Max temp 26.2C, Mean Min temp 15.2C Mean rain 98.3mm
- January Mean Max temp 28.5C Min 17.0C Mean rain 120.2mm (Hottest month)
- February Mean max temp 26.2C Min 16.8C Mean rain 132.5mm (wettest month)

**BIRDS TO LOOK FOR IN THE SUMMER MONTHS BOWEN MOUNTAIN AND SURROUNDS:**

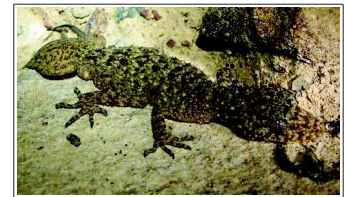
All the migrants from the north will have arrived and be busy establishing their breeding territories. The obvious ones by their loud and persistent calls are the Koel, Channelled -Billed, Brush and Pallid Cuckoos. Less noisy are Rufous Whistlers, Sacred Kingfishers, Dollar Birds, Leaden Flycatchers, Rainbow Bee-Eaters and Cicada Bird. This is just a small sample out of the more than 100 species inhabiting this area. Many young birds are leaving nests. Sounds of the Golden Whistler and Spotted Pardalote are heard; Whipbird comes into garden in misty rain periods. Satin Bower birds are constant garden visitors as well as Noisy Miners which have successfully raised several broods here.

**MAMMALS:** Young mammals are now dispersing which may lead to more road kills eg young foxes, and wire casualties in barb-wire fences eg gliders, possums, flying foxes, as well as electrocution in power lines eg ringtail possums. Male koalas roam out of parent territory, and risk being chased by dogs. Other species known in the area include the sugar glider, ringtail and brush tail possums, echidna, antechinus, swamp wallaby, koala, bandicoots, and quolls.

**REPTILES:** The whole area is important reptile habitat with a wide diversity of small to large skinks, dragon lizards and snakes. The best message is to avoid confronting dangerous reptiles; there is no reason to attack them. Call WIRES or known reptile handlers if necessary. Clear debris, keep grass short.

Common snakes: Diamond python, Green Tree snake, black snake coming into gardens. Less common sightings: death adders and brown snake, small-eyed snake. This is a prime activity time for reptiles, as they come out of the cooler months.

Sandstone Leaf-tailed Gecko uses garages and dark spots, near lights at night. Blue tongue lizards are on the move hunting invertebrates. Please restrict use of snail baits in garden.



*Leaf-tailed gecko*

Water dragons are found around ponds & pools, the pink-tongued skink is arboreal, and needs hollow tree to survive, or house cavities eg brick work. Reptiles are opportunistic feeders.eg will use damaged termite nests for a high protein meal. Lace monitors seen on very hot days after Christmas, take chicken eggs, and chooks. Rats are sources of food for variety of reptiles. Small skinks are seen fighting to establish territory. Gardeners may come across communal nests of 30-40 small rubbery eggs when gardening. Tortoises are also dispersing to new ponds after heavy rain – there is increasing concern that many suffer road kills and injuries.

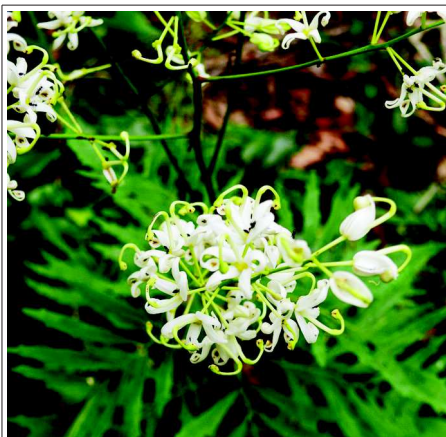
**FROGS:** Some recent heavy rainfalls have increased the activity as male frogs call to females to breed. Usually these are heard rather than seen as many are more active at night.



*Blue Mountains Tree Frog*

Local species include Peron's Tree Frog, the Bleating Tree Frog, active now till late Jan; Blue Mts Tree Frog from early spring onwards, Striped Marsh Frog, Common Eastern Froglet, and the Little Green Tree Frog. Your garden pond or water bowls may provide some cool shelter under shade for these important creatures!

*Robin Woods*



*Crinkle Bush*



*Blue Flax Lily*



*Sago Flower*