

These quiet achieving volunteers are CALM Herbarium's best kept secret

VOLUNTEERS working at CALM's WA Herbarium were among those who had accolades heaped upon them at the recent Volunteering for the Environment half-day workshop held at the Herbarium.

Expanding on his speech at the workshop,

by Verna Costello

acting curator of the Herbarium Neville Marchant said that Herbarium volunteers were like people in any organisation, some highly visible, others less so. "For example, mar-

ried teams Barbara and Bob Backhouse and Gwen and Jack Abbot, who mount specimens for the Herbarium, and Daphne Edinger, who has worked for 12 years almost exclusively with principal research scientist Kevin Kennelly identifying and processing plant specimens,

are among the more 'visible' volunteers," Neville said.

"But we also have our share of quiet achievers like Brian Best, a former curator of bryophytes at the Harare Herbarium in Zimbabwe.

"Brian quietly hides himself away for two days each week in a small area of the Herbarium, classifying mosses and liverworts, while his wife Nora mounts other specimens.

"They are irreplaceable as we've never been able to employ someone with Brian's qualifications and experience.

"In the past two years they've been with us, the Bests have carried out work I'd roughly estimate to be worth \$100 000.

"Rodney van Proctor is another quiet achiever and a gem of a woman who can be called upon to roll up her sleeves and do any of the multitude of herbarium tasks.

"At present, she comes in two days a week to mount and label the thousands of wildflower specimens from a collection be-

queathed to CALM by the late Ken Newbey.

"Whether volunteers are highly visible or quietly beaver away in a corner down one of the labyrinthine corridors of the Herbarium, each one of them makes a valuable contribution.

"They can come in all age groups, with or without relevant qualifications, and for varying lengths of time and frequency.

"For example, Daphne Edinger works a five-day week, while others come in one or two days a week; Roger Hilton, curator of the fungi collection, comes in once a month.

"We even have 85-year-old twins Barbara and Marg Evans, who spend half-a-day a fortnight helping out.

"Much depends on volunteers' other commitments, but no matter how infrequently a volunteer comes in, there's always one or more tasks begging for attention."

If you know anyone wishing to do voluntary work with the Herbarium, contact the Manager of Collections Chang Sha Fang on (09) 334 0504.



Left: Doing what he does best - is Brian Best.

Below left: Daphne Edinger.

Right: Rodney van Proctor. Photos by Verna Costello



Esperance farmers keen on growing gums and mallees

ESPERANCE has tremendous potential for producing wood fibre and the region's farmers are showing enthusiasm for bluegums and oil-producing mallees.

CALM executive director Dr Syd Shea and vegetation and tree planting advisory service principal researcher John Bartle, recently visited the district to discuss tree crops with local farmers.

Dr Shea said he was impressed with the enthusiasm local farmers were showing for tree crops.

"Their attitude is extremely encouraging as local support will be crucial to the development of a wood fibre industry in the region," he said.

Dr Shea said Esperance had excellent infrastructure to support wood exports. Its port facilities were first class.

He also was impressed with the growth of the bluegum plantations he visited.

"They are doing very well with growth rates above expectations despite the long summer drought," he said.

CALM will work with the South Eastern Agro-Forest Co-operative and the South East Forest Foundation to help farmers who wanted to establish bluegum plantations.

He already had committed CALM resources to assist with selecting planting sites and advise on

planting practices.

It was expected that within two years a major investor could be attracted to enter joint-ventures to help farmers finance planting and provide markets for woodfibre.

"CALM's experience in the Collie and Albany districts has opened the way for local farmers to integrate bluegums into their farming operations, while at the same time enhancing existing pursuits such as livestock grazing or cropping," Dr Shea said.

"In these districts, joint ventures have been formed with two of the biggest woodpulp users in Japan and Korea, so there definitely is solid interest in Western Australia as a

wood fibre supplier."

Esperance also is one of six sites CALM has nominated in the wheat-belt for the initial commercial development of 'euc-oil'.

The aim is to plant mallees over 5000 hectares within a 30km radius of each site. These plantings will provide a base of experience and production from which to develop the industry on a bigger scale.

Australia currently imports 3000 tonnes of euc-oil a year, mainly for pharmaceutical use, but research by CALM, Murdoch University and Alcoa of Australia has shown it has extensive applications in industry, particularly as a solvent.

Bluegums bolster fire resources

VOLUNTEER FIRE-fighting resources in the Collie and Napier districts are being upgraded with the help of income earned from CALM's bluegum joint ventures.

CALM is providing heavy duty units to the local volunteer bush fire brigades as part of the Department's overall fire

management strategy.

The units are being funded through fees CALM earns from managing bluegum plantations on behalf of the Japanese joint-venture, Albany Plantation Forest Company and the agreement with the Korean company, Hansol Forest Products.

CALM's Collie district senior operations manager

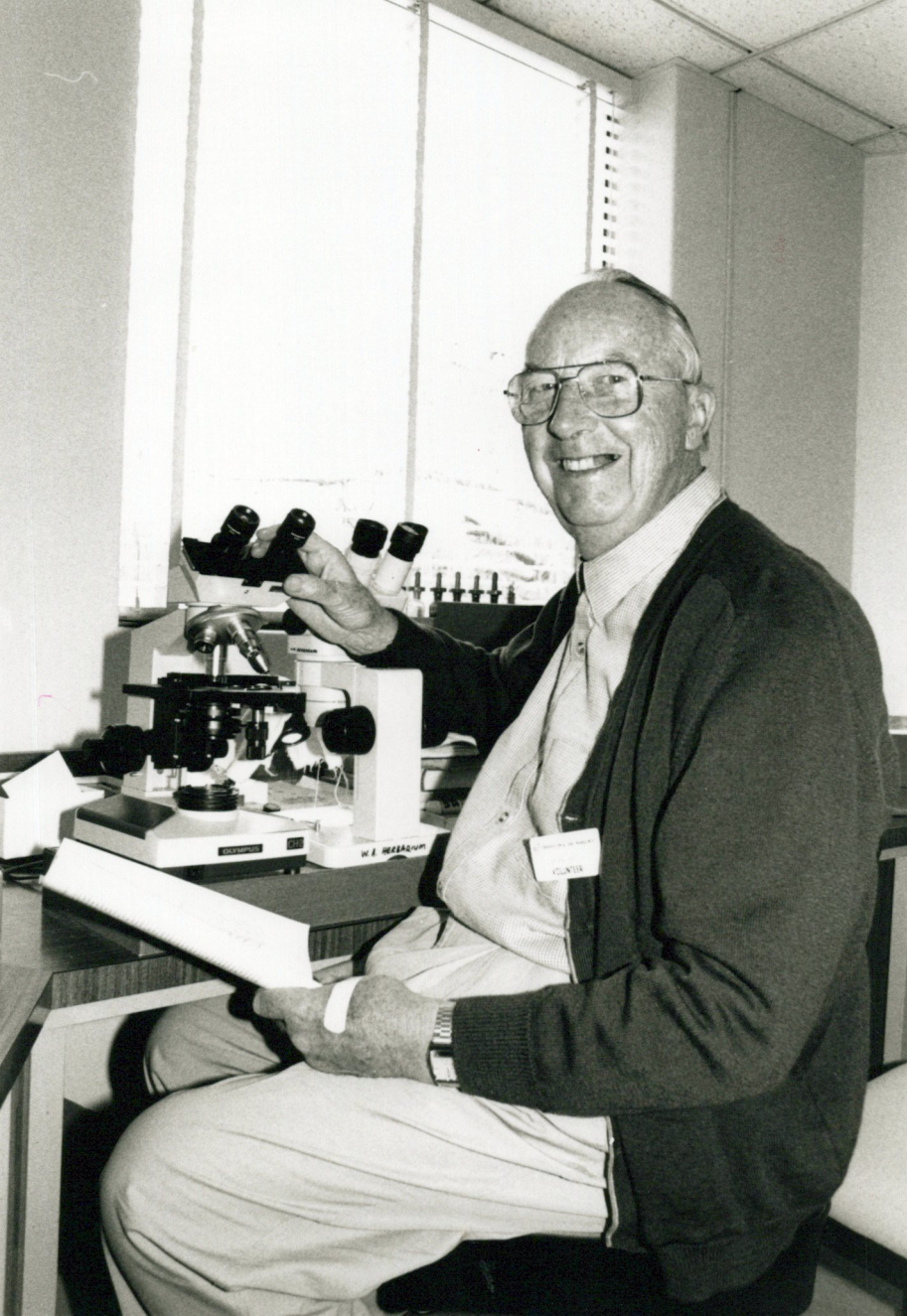
Glyn Yates said bluegum plantations don't pose an added fire risk to surrounding farms and bushlands, but they were a huge commercial investment that needed protection from fire.

Also, local volunteer brigades were under constant pressure to upgrade equipment and maintain standards of fire protec-

tion, and CALM recognised that these brigades could not be expected to do this on their own.

The \$25 000 units are being built at CALM's Collie workshops.

CALM will train brigade members in the use of equipment to ensure that high standards of firefighter safety are maintained.





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