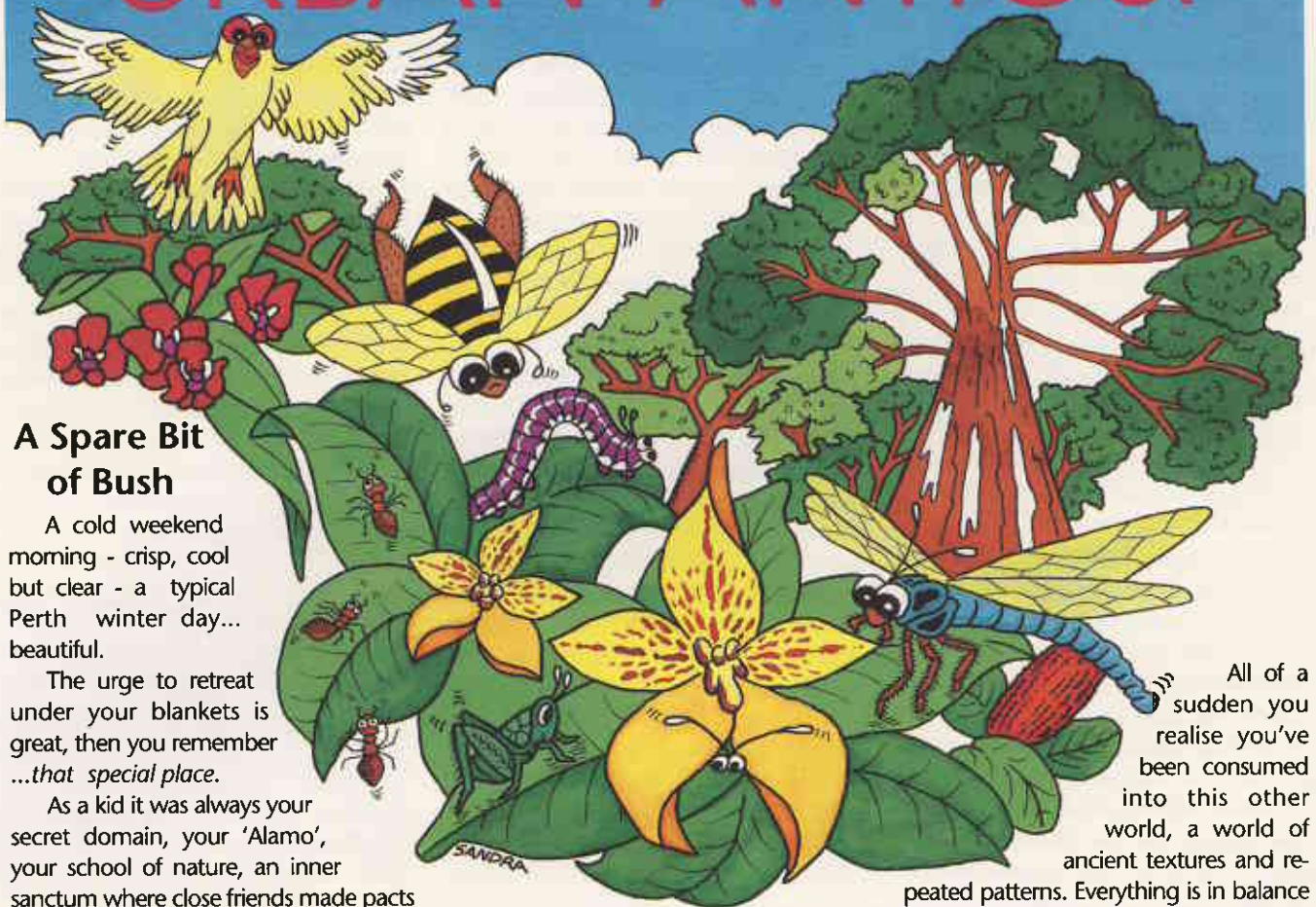


URBAN ANTICS!



A Spare Bit of Bush

A cold weekend morning - crisp, cool but clear - a typical Perth winter day... beautiful.

The urge to retreat under your blankets is great, then you remember...*that special place.*

As a kid it was always your secret domain, your 'Alamo', your school of nature, an inner sanctum where close friends made pacts of impossible dreams. To others, it was simply... a spare bit of bush.

Most of us still have our special spots, be they childhood haunts, new-found parks, or well-vegetated backyards. There we can divorce our minds from the hustle, bustle, bricks and cement of urbanisation, and be at one with nature.

Imagine you've just arrived at one such secluded spot. The old tuart tree thrusts its enormous branches to the sky like a welcoming giant. High above, Port Lincoln parrots silently nip the flowering fruit and shower you with white blossom. Still higher, a black-shouldered kite, its striking white plumage emblazoned against the clear blue sky, stares into eternity through blood-red eyes.

Take a leaf from the tuart, hold it to the sun and observe the amazing textures and patterns of its cells and veins. Better still, crush the leaf in your hands and smell the unique aroma of eucalyptus oil. It's enough to conjure up a vision of cool green cubby houses and long-gone pals.

Wrap your arms around the tree trunk, press your face against its rough, soft, grey powdery bark. Feel its size, feel its strength, feel its majesty.

Time to step away now. The sounds of this living place are starting to take your attention.

A seemingly drunken fat honey bee cruises past your ear like a B52 bomber; a bush cricket, excited by a ray of energy-giving sun, tests its calling apparatus and another answers from the depths of a nearby shrub.

Suddenly a cool puff of wind caresses your cheek and creates musical tones in the sheoak and pricklebush behind you.

By now you're mesmerised and slowly sink to sit upon an old grey banksia log. Against the shadows of the undergrowth you can see and smell the steaming dank remnants of night moisture rising from decaying wood.

Your attention strays toward the grey sandy quartz at your feet. Here the glistening silica comprises myriads of granules, chips, chunks and flakes, together with thousands of tiny twigs, leaves and assorted vegetable matter.

Ants come and go from beneath the log and unashamedly swarm over your boots. Nearby, a flat bush cockroach labours to pull a leaf into the seclusion of its burrow.

All of a sudden you realise you've been consumed into this other world, a world of ancient textures and re-

peated patterns. Everything is in balance but nothing at rest - prey and predator, move and stop, ebb and flow, like the energy of the sun as it moves in the silent flames of grass and then through the bodies of grazing caterpillars.

Your final realisation: we are just another part of being, inextricably enmeshed in the web of life on Earth.

JOHN HUNTER

DID YOU KNOW?

- If the Earth was reduced to the size of a tennis ball, the precious air surrounding it would be no more than the thickness of a human hair.
- If you counted the number of living bacteria at the rate of one every second, in a teaspoonful of soil from a cultivated field, it would take you 30 years.
- In one hectare of cropland, living and dead bacteria in the topsoil make up a mass of organic matter exceeding two tonnes.

LANDSCOPE

VOLUME SEVEN NO. 4 WINTER ISSUE 1992



You don't have to go far from Perth to enjoy the peace and quiet of the bush. The forest is right on our doorstep. See page 10.



Painted ladies, northern admirals, southern admirals and Western Australian skippers - not the stuff of a sailor's dream, but all members of the butterfly family. See page 23.

FEATURES

THE HILLS FOREST
STEV SLAVIN AND RAY BAILEY 10

VEXING THE VIXENS
JACK KINNEAR 16

AUSTRALIAN ADMIRAL
ROBERT POWELL 23

TO CATCH A THIEF
DAVID MELL AND JOHN WETHERALL 28

FUNGI - WINTER WILDFLOWERS
GERHARD SAUERACKER 33

MANAGING THE MIDGE
ADRIAN PINDER, JENNY DAVIS AND JIM LANE 37

NINU MAGIC
PER CHRISTENSEN AND GRAEME LIDDELOW 43

FRESHWATER HAVENS
IAN BAYLY 49

REGULARS

IN PERSPECTIVE 4

BUSH TELEGRAPH 5

ENDANGERED DWARF BEE ORCHID 48

URBAN ANTICS 54



The increase of births in captivity for cockatoos seemed promising, but was it related to the upsurge in 'birdnapping' in the wild? To Catch a Thief explains how forensic experts unravelled the mystery. See page 28.



Our native animals are prey to introduced species. While baiting gives them a fighting chance, scientists are looking for more long-term, humane solutions. See page 16.



The bilby has many names, including ninu and dalgyte. Ninu Magic tells the story of this shy animal and its remarkable survival skills. See page 43.

COVER

The red-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*) is one of several cockatoos native to Western Australia. These spectacular birds nest in tree hollows and can be found in the woodlands and grasslands of the south-west of Western Australia.



Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky

Managing Editor: Ron Kawalilik
 Editor: David Gough
 Contributing Editors: Verna Costello, Helenka Johnson, Tanya Maxted, Carolyn Thomson
 Scientific and technical advice: Andrew Burbidge, Roger Underwood
 Design and production: Sue Marais, Stacey Strickland
 Finished art: Gooitzen van der Meer
 Advertising: Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (09) 389 8644 Fax: 389 8296
 Illustration: Ian Dickinson, Sandra Mitchell
 Colour Separation by Prepress Services
 Printed in Western Australia by Lamb Print

© ISSN 0815-4465. All material copyright. No part of the contents of the publication may be reproduced without the consent of the publishers



Published by Dr S Shea, Executive Director
 Department of Conservation and Land Management,
 50 Hayman Road, Como, Western Australia 6152.