

# NEWS

## MAWSON FIELD DAY

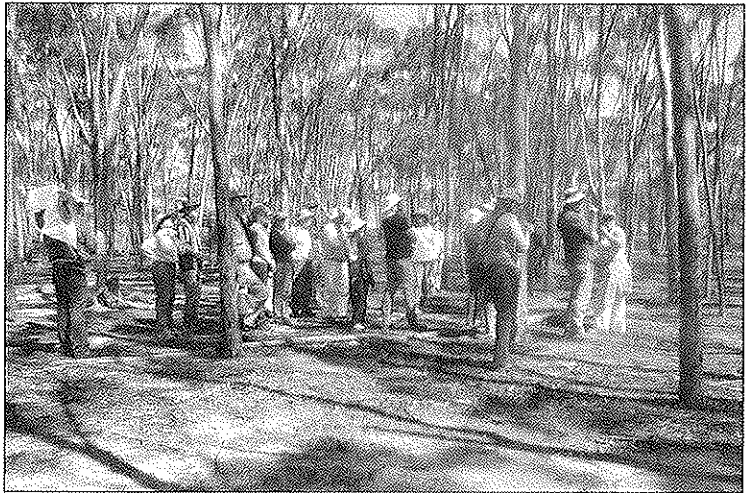
Mal Harper

The Mawson area is in the south-western corner of the Quairading Shire. It is noted for having a large area of remnant vegetation - significant in a shire which has only 3.6% remnant vegetation in total. The probable reason for the relatively large amount of bushland in the area is the fact that there are a lot of breakaways and deep white sand over gravel soils, which are agriculturally unproductive, as well as supporting populations of poison plants.

The Mawson area also has a significant number of small landholders and life-style blocks, some landholders living in the area and others living on most weekends. As many of them were city-based, it was thought the landholders may be interested in some assistance with the management of the bushland.

As a result, *Land for Wildlife* and WWF arranged a field day and walk at the end of September. It was held during a long weekend to cater for those who are absentee owners.

The format of the day was a series of short talks held in the Quairading hall after morning tea, followed by lunch and then a walk and talk through some excellent remnant vegetation on two private properties.



*Brown mallet woodlands are a distinct community, unique to the central wheatbelt. Photo: M. Harper*

The morning talks by *LFW's* Penny Hussey and Mal Harper covered the management of native vegetation and designing a revegetation programme. Helena Mills of WWF then spoke about the flora of the area and specifically the rare species found around Mawson.

Following these talks the crowd of about 40 people then proceeded to Mawson for a light lunch on one of the two properties to be visited, after which the bush walk began, led by Penny Hussey and Helena Mills. The Mawson area has had an excellent season and wildflowers were still blooming. The participants were able to pick up a wealth of information and spend a pleasant three hours on a lovely spring day walking through the bush. The insights provided by the two leaders were an inspiration to the crowd.

Major threats to remnants in the shire were pointed out, the worst of these being the threat of weed invasion and the presence of rabbits, foxes, feral and not so feral cats.

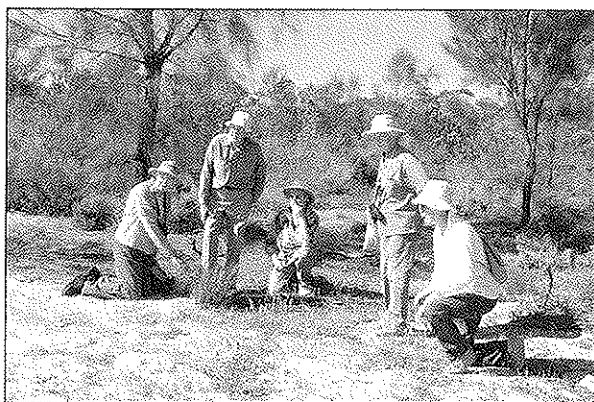
Even though the remnants in the Mawson area are relatively large and numerous compared to the rest of the shire they are generally too small to maintain populations of mammals previously present in the area. Revegetation and the provision of corridors, along with control of introduced weeds and feral animals, may give landholders the hope of being able to reintroduce some of these locally extinct species.



*Dryandra (Banksia) ferruginea has large, golden-brown flowers. It grows on white sand over ironstone and forms a dense cushion-shaped shrub. Photo: P. Hussey*



*A bee fly on a painted featherflower, Verticordia picta. Photo: P. Hussey*



*Studying annuals on the sandplain. Photo: P. Hussey*