

NEWS

COFFEE MORNINGS IN TOODYAY

LFW members in the Shire of Toodyay were blessed with fine weather at the two coffee mornings held in July, allowing pleasant rambling through two totally different properties.

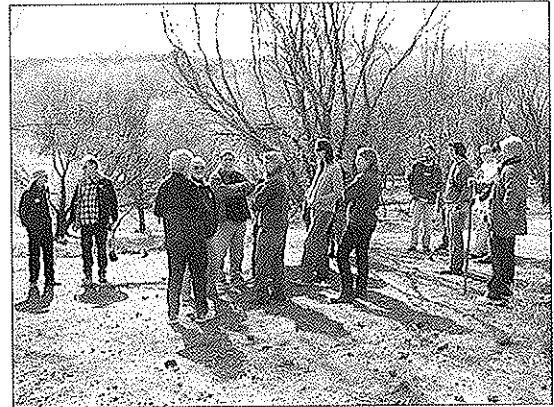
The first was held at Desrae and Wayne Clark's property, and of interest were the variety of bushland types, and the marked differences in their boundaries. Lack of ground cover and understorey was attributed to over grazing by kangaroos and changes in hydrology secondary to the road being bituminised. In addition, some vegetation types, like powderbark

woodland, have naturally sparse understorey.

Desrae pointed out branches laying across the slope to stop erosion.

Later in the month, Don and Eva Smith hosted the second event. *LFW* members were treated to slide shows, orchids, fungi and declared rare flora. Don demonstrated the measures he takes to protect the balgas from attack by twenty-eight parrots.

Harmony, the educational Carnaby's cockatoo, attended both



Discussing regeneration on the Clarkes' place.

events, and managed to entertain participants by upstaging the speakers!

Zara Kivell

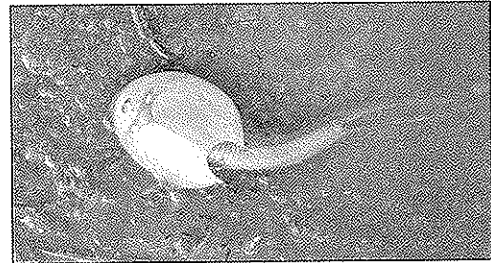
Practicalities

Having problems with pesky twenty-eights tearing the heart out of your balgas? Don Smith demonstrates a method which is working well for him. As soon as there is a sign that parrots are attacking an individual balga, he loosely fixes a 'mob cap' of chicken wire across and around the top of the plant, so the birds cannot get at the fragile central growing point. They will bounce up and down on the wire, but eventually abandon the plant as it is not the dark green leaves that will grow up through the wire that they want to eat, but the soft white bases at the growing point. So don't throw away that old chicken wire, put it to good use!



What is this?

Eric Boon, manager of Doorawarra Station east of Carnarvon, sent us this pic asking "What is this strange-looking creature that appears in claypanns when they fill after rain?"



Despite its unusual appearance, this animal is really quite common and widespread in suitable habitats. It is a shield shrimp, one of the many crustaceans whose eggs lie dormant during the dry season in the mud of claypanns or saltlakes until stimulated into germination by the rains. Along with other crustaceans such as brine shrimps, and the very small ostracods, copepods and waterfleas, they feed on algae and themselves form part of the food chain for animals such as tadpoles and birds. Sometimes these crustaceans are in such huge numbers when our inland lakes fill after exceptional rains that they can support vast breeding populations of birds.

For further information read 'Is there life in our inland salt lakes?', *WW* 4/4 Oct 2000, on the *LFW* website.