

BUSHWALK IN BOYA

On a cool Sunday morning in late August, 26 visitors from the Darling Range Branch of the WA Naturalists' Club and the Eastern Hills Branch of the Wildflower Society of WA gathered for a bushwalk at *LFW* member Joan Seaborn's property in Boya.

The two ha site is located on the Darling Scarp on the outskirts of Perth. It slopes down to a seasonal creek at the eastern end and the vegetation consists of a woodland of marri and wandoo with fringing flooded gums along the creekline. The reason for the bushwalk was to show the benefits of weed control and how the bush can recover.

After the visitors had a warming cuppa, Joan explained how she came to purchase the property. Longing for peace and quiet and plenty of space around her, she purchased the bush block 12 years ago. This was the start of Joan's dedication to weed control and regeneration of the bushland on the block.

Joan said that when she first arrived the property was 90% infested with weeds. However, Joan was not daunted and immediately set to work controlling weeds, often starting work in the dark on the road verge at 6 am.

Firstly, the local bushfire brigade came in and burned a section of dry watsonia to reduce the extreme

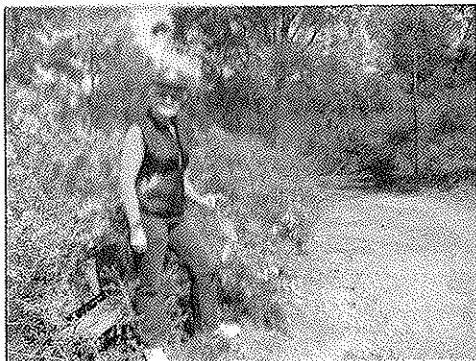
fire hazard. Later, the regrowth was sprayed with glyphosate. Other patches of watsonia were either blanket sprayed, wiped with herbicide if growing among native plants, or slashed near the creek. The combination of chemical and manual control methods has now virtually eradicated watsonia from the property.

The beneficial effects of weed control can be seen in the increase in native flora, especially spider orchids, blue sun orchids and the bicour kangaroo paw. In addition, weed control has contributed to a reduction in fox and rabbit numbers by removing the dense weed infestations which covered fox dens and rabbit warrens.

About one month earlier a motion sensor camera provided on loan by WWF Threatened Species Network had been set up next to a bridge over the creek by WA Naturalists' Club member, Mike Griffiths, who was hoping to record what animals were moving through the property. A number of bronzewing pigeons and silvereyes were recorded and non-natives included a black rat, three foxes and three cats. Mike said that it was a useful exercise, but having the camera there for a longer period of time may have recorded a wider range of species.

With ongoing weed control, natural regeneration, and a National Trust conservation covenant on the bushland, the future of this property is looking very bright. Joan is going to name her property 'Bush Treasure'. She says that she feels blessed to live on her property and has a great passion for the natural world, even when pulling out weeds!

Claire Hall



Joan Seaborn (Photo: Claire Hall)