

*The entrance to Forest 20 and the welcome gathering area, photo Andy Russell*

### From the President

Greetings to all.

This is my first message as president of Step and I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their vote of confidence, which led to my being elected at our last meeting in December 2022. Judy Smith has done an outstanding job as president over the last few years, and she is a hard act to follow. I wish Judy and Mike well in their travels this year and am happy to say that Judy will remain on our committee. Thanks again Judy!

On a more practical note, the tireless volunteers at Forest 20 are making serious inroads into the huge tasks of weed removal, mulching and replanting. The ground is finally drying out and the plants that we put in last year are starting to grow. We have trialed making mounds of gravel and soil for the acacia species in badly drained places and the technique seems to be working.

The volunteers and horticultural staff from the arboretum have developed an effective system of removing unwanted plants, laying down wet newspaper and covering with thick mulch. Having the mulch delivered in a ride-on vehicle with a tip tray has saved many back-breaking barrow loads!

Our picnic tables have finally been reinstated down under the *Eucalyptus blakelyi*. This site has been too boggy to use during the last two years, and it was quite a ceremonial procession when the seats were carried back into place.

So, here we are in autumn after a very mild summer. The coming months will be ideal for planting, so the team are eagerly scouring local native plant sales for new stock.

Happy planting and gardening everyone.

Jane Cottee





## News from Forest 20

Dedicated, energetic and determined teams of STEPpers have been busy working to restore Forest 20 after a prolonged period of difficult conditions arising from the La Nina events. Teams have been restoring the Central Garden beds, the entrance area, Wattle Walk plantings and much more.

Over the last year or so we have lost more than 40 well-established trees, many shrub and herb plantings and seen large amounts of mulch and gravel washed down-hill. Excess surface water severely damaged our gravel paths and seriously impacted the bush tucker paths and weaving area.



*Damage to paths*



*Bush Tucker Garden path*

STEPpers and Arboretum horticulture staff have collaborated to plan restoration works and to best organise the skills and capacities of both parties. We have worked closely with horticulture staff who have been delivering mulch right to the places we need, so STEPpers can spread it without having to cart it on site with wheel-barrows. We have removed large quantities of annual grass biomass and weeds. STEP has purchased an electric brush-cutter which has been very effective in removing a very large amount of grass and sedge biomass.



*Tipping mulch where it is needed*



*Terry at work with the electric brush cutter.*



In the last couple of months, we have completed Areas A, B and C, the top three areas of the Central Garden. They are now ready for new plantings, which we have commenced. Cool Country Natives (Pialligo) has been source of new plants and have given us some surplus *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* trees. The monthly Saturday morning growers' market (located at Cool Country Natives) have also been a source of plants. We are grateful to the Australian Native Plants Society (ACT) who allow STEP early access to their twice-yearly plant sales that coordinate offerings from a number of local growers.



*Restoration work on Area B*



*Restoration work on areas A, B & C*

Another team of dedicated STEPpers has been working to restore the ephemeral wetland which suffered much damage from the gravel and mulch that was washed down-hill. This will take some more time to complete, but signs of recovery are evident.

Our entrance area has also benefited from much STEPper activity. A 'Parade of Peas' has been established below the welcome gathering area, and replacement trees are being planted. Replacement plants for species of wattle that were lost along the top boundary have also been planted.

The paths in the Bush Tucker Garden were particularly badly damaged, but remedial work commenced in early March with Iconic Trails contracted by the Arboretum to improve their construction and to divert overland water flow from the Mesa Oak forest through Forest 20. A new concrete culvert pipe has been located under the management road.

The energy and commitment of STEPpers has been impressive and STEP thanks all who have been involved.



*Unloading culvert pipe above photos David & Lainie Shorthouse*



*fitted culvert pipe photo Andy Russell*



*Brachychiton populneus*, Kurrajong tree showing healthy new growth after suffering from the excessively wet conditions.

Text by David Shorthouse

Photo D & L Shorthouse



### A visitor rarely seen at Forest 20



*Ninox boobook* Southern Boobook. An owl species that is referred to as a Boobook. It roosts by day generally in dense foliage. It feeds on insects and spiders as well as small birds and mammals. It is well known for its double hoot at night.

Pictures Terry Murphy

## STEP acknowledges the support of the following Corporate Members



DFK Everalls, Specialist business and personal taxation advisors of Deakin ACT  
Phone 02 6253 4162 Web [www.dfkeveralls.com](http://www.dfkeveralls.com)



Tom's Superfruits Store Belconnen Markets, Belconnen ACT. Great quality food at low prices with outstanding customer service. Phone 02 6253 4162



Morgans Financial, Stockbrokers, Wealth Management and Financial Advisers of Deakin ACT Phone 02 6232 4999  
[www.morgans.com.au](http://www.morgans.com.au)



Equipment Repairers of Mudgee, Gunnedah, Tamworth, Tamworth Trucks, & Rutherford (Hunter Valley) NSW, Leinster & Karratha in WA  
Phone Mudgee 02 6372 3257 Web [www.dblr.com.au](http://www.dblr.com.au)



FlagCentral.com.au E-mail [sales@flagcentral.com.au](mailto:sales@flagcentral.com.au) Phone 1300 788 891 Suppliers of promotional banners and flags of Burleigh Heads, Queensland. Flag Central donated the flag at STEP.



+

Hawker Place Physio & Pilates. Expect excellence in service when it comes to physiotherapy assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. Phone 02 6255 2033 [www.hawkerplacephysio.com.au](http://www.hawkerplacephysio.com.au)

The STEP Newsletter is produced quarterly in March, June, September, and December. This newsletter has been edited by Andy Russell.

The postal address for STEP is PO Box 440, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

Email [membership@step.asn.au](mailto:membership@step.asn.au)

Web [www.step.asn.au](http://www.step.asn.au)



Some recent photo from Forest 20,



Left *Pelargonium rodneyanum*  
Magenta Storkbill.

Right *Ocybadistes walkeri* Greenish  
Grass Dart



Left *Wahlenbergia capillaris*, Tufted  
Bluebell

Photos this page Andy Russell





Left *Austroscolia soror* Bluer Flower Wasp which is often seen feeding on eucalypt blossom Photo Digby Gascoine

Right *Macrotona australis* Common Macrotona Grasshopper

Photo Andy Russell

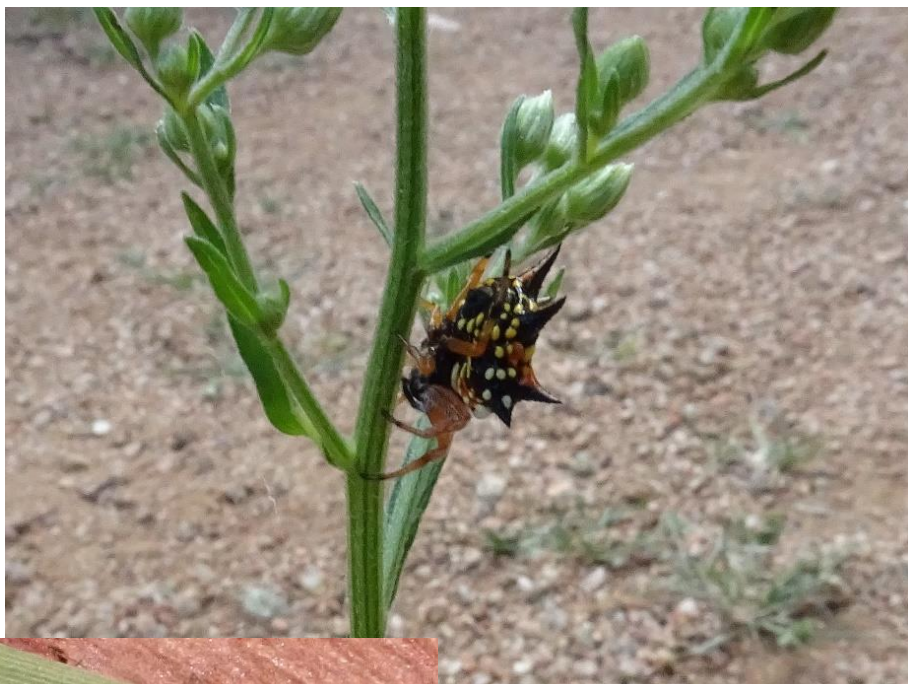


Left *Anthela varia* Hairy Mary, a moth caterpillar. The female adult moth may be up to 9 cm in wingspan.

Photo Jane Cottee

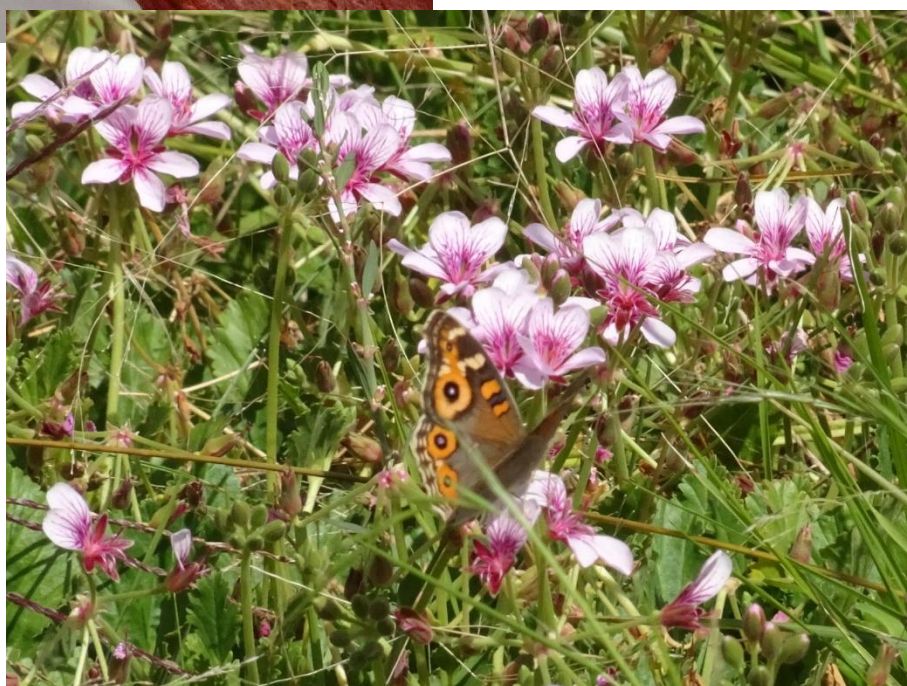


Right *Austracantha minax* the Jewel  
or Christmas Spider



Left *Paropsis atomaria*,  
Eucalyptus Leaf Beetle

*Junonia villida* Meadow Argus  
butterfly feeding on *Pelargonium*  
*australis*.



Photos this page by Andy Russell



*Ranunculus papulentus* Large River  
Buttercup



*Eucalyptus nortonii* Large  
Flowered Bundy

*Glycine tabacina* Variable Glycine  
Photos this page Andy Russell





*Corcorax melanorhamphos* White-winged  
Cough

Photo Terry Murphy



3 Choughs foraging around a  
*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* Red  
Stringybark. Photo Andy Russell

*Crowea exalata* Ginninderra Falls

Photo Andy Russell

