

There is an old story that in the Moluccas one may not approach a clove tree wearing a hat, lest the tree bear no fruit. Our budgerigars, too, take alarm if I approach the aviaries wearing a hat. I may have to adopt this means of slowing down increase!

Colour changes, always a fascinating aspect of bird-breeding, becomes an engrossing game when budgerigars are the subject, but this must be another story. We have kept our mild-greens (cage-bred, of course) separate, and these delight me more than the yellows, blues, cobalt, etc., lovely as they are.

The mild-greens are a part of our sunny land. They speak of sunshine and open spaces. To see these green and gold jewels darting in and out of wet gum twigs calls up a picture of the inland, or the Mallee, when farmer and birds rejoice together over a long-delayed rainfall.

A bunch of grass hung on the wires instantly "blossoms" with birds, just as a dead tree appears to burst into fresh green foliage when wild budgerigars alight on every branch and twig (A. H. Chisholm, *Emu*, 1909).

I should like to emphasize the fondness of these birds, not only for grasses, but gum leaves, wattle phyllodes and she-oak branchlets, and possibly for many other plants. Here we must go cautiously. In a wild state, moving over a wide range, with a wider range of plants to choose from, the budgerigars would doubtless eschew the leaves of harmful plants.

The leaves of the Cootamundra wattle are not taken but the flower-buds are eaten greedily; but grasses are taken first—and to these living, seeding grasses (and Vitamin E) I think we must attribute the surprising fecundity of our birds.

EXCURSION TO CLARINDA

From East Oakleigh Station, on May 17, the route taken was along the straight lane southward a mile to Clarinda, thus giving opportunity to observe clearly the alternations of different vegetations on the slight sandy rises and the intervening moister situations, *Leptospermum myrsinoides* being a typical plant of the drier sand-hills and *Melaleuca* in the damper ground.

Few plants were in flower, but the Silver Banksia (*B. marginata*) made a fine show, this being within its normal flowering season. Other noteworthy features were an extensive carpet of *Scleria* on an area liable to submergence, and vigorous vegetative growth of a patch of the Tiny Sundew (*Drosera pygmaea*), some of the very slender fruit stalks of the previous flowering being still present.

The growth of this Sundew at this season is probably unusual and due to favourable conditions of this year. On search, later, a few examples were also found at Croydon—not so vigorous. Information is lacking as to the frequency of such autumn growth of this plant.

In the lanes near Clarinda School a search was made for a plant of *Casuarina paludosa* carrying both staminate and pistillate flowers, but it was not located, though a specimen found some time ago was supposed to have come from here.

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