

Following such legislation, there have been large-scale takeovers of small seed companies. In the UK, 84 seed companies were bought out by the giant food and chemical corporation Rank/Hovis McDougall.

"Such restrictive legislation would mean the inevitable decline of the quality and variety of seeds. Those which do not yield a profit would disappear!" Multi-national companies marketing mainly hybrids, could force growers to rely solely on the seed company for plants. The seeds that would be bred would require the use of chemical fertilizers and weedicides.

Save your seeds, swap seeds with friends or contribute to the seed bank of an organic club or society. Sign a petition to stop this legislation.

Further reading: "Seeds of the Earth- A private or a public resource." 1979.
available from the Australia Council of Churches
199 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000. \$10.

from "Seeds For All",
Earth Garden, No. 27,
June/Aug 1980.

NATIVE PLANTS AND BUSHFIRES.

This article was written by John Kelly. Members are asked to comment.

"Generally Europeans have regarded the Australian Country-side unfriendly, alien, and even frightening. They have never ceased their efforts to "tame it", put it in order, and make it more like "home".

The wish being father to the thought, those who would like to see a European countryside seek to justify their attacks by inventing a precedent. They speak of the "Fire stick farming" of the Aboriginal inhabitants; a concept not acceptable to the hunting and gathering economy of the Aborigines. Those who are shocked by the periodic bushfires - which carelessness causes - speak also of fires used by aborigines conditioning Australian plants to a system of re-generation which needs fire, as an excuse for arson on the bushland close to urban settlement.

It is true that many Australian plants bear fruits which retain their seed until the plant dies or the fruit is severed; others drop seed which has a protective coating, which must disintegrate before germination will take place.

In my opinion, these are characteristics which have ensured the survival of the plants in climate of the continent, which is certain to be uncertain, not in response to the uncertainty of human habit. After drought many if not all the plants may die off. On the bush floor there still remains a bank of seed in various states of readiness for germination. Those furthest advanced will germinate in the next rainy period, the rest will remain as a reserve against future bad times.

Fire is likely to promote germination condition in all the seed it does not destroy, and thus leave none in reserve. It is also likely to give such heavy germination that the plants kill each other off in the fight for survival.

The following instances illustrate the latter effect.

1) At Heathcote some years ago a prolific growth, almost grass-like, of *Boronia serrulata*, on a visit to the same spot some two or three years later, no plants were found.

2). A similar happening was observed at the Kur-ing-gai Wild Flower garden, this time *Eriostemon australasius*.

Fire will regenerate plants in the Australian Bushland. Be-heading will cure a headache."



Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1980.

P.O. Box 119, SPRINGWOOD, 2777.

President: B. Bramsen 512787 Secretary: W. Godfrey 391748.

NEXT MEETING.

Friday night AUGUST 8th, at 8 P.M. at the Glenbrook Teacher's Centre, Ross Street, when Paul Gobert will show some of his nature slides.

The president is concerned about the length of recent meetings continuing too far into the evening. Besse has decided to limit the business of the meeting to one hour, giving one hour to the speaker, slides or film etc. However, in order that important topics will be discussed, it has been decided to hold a barbeque, three a year, to enable members to enjoy a day out with the family in a relaxed atmosphere as well as enabling more members to get together who are unable to attend the meetings on Friday night. The first of these BARBEQUES is to be held on SUNDAY, AUGUST 10th at Besse Bramsen's home. 52 Boomerang Road, Springwood, starting at 10.30 a.m. This will enable time to discuss some pressing topics.....

- 1) Pivot in the Deanii Forest at Springwood
- 2) Penrith Lakes Scheme
- 3) Dark's Common
- 4) Copyrighting of Plant Seeds

NEXT OUTING

SUNDAY OCTOBER 12th to the Kangaroo Park at Dural followed by lunch at the Pennant Hills Forestry Nursery.

FUTURE MEETING:

SEPTEMBER 12th, at 8 p.m. at the Glenbrook Teachers Resource Centre. Wendy Godfrey is going to show her slides of the Bass Strait Islands.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st has been set aside for the screening of the Nuclear Energy Films at the Glenbrook Theatre.

PLEASE help make this a success. It is hoped that there will be a speaker from the Total Environment Centre or Mr. Bob Debus to address the audience. Supper will be served.

COPYRIGHTING OF PLANT SEEDS.

It is believed that this Act is scheduled for the August session of Parliament, and similar laws have already been passed in the U.K., the E.E.C., New Zealand and the United States. Unless there is enough outcry to prevent such a law being passed in Canberra, the ownership of seeds will be concentrated into the hands of a few powerful companies. The origin of the foreign legislation was to "protect the rights of companies which had developed hybrid strains and asexual and sexual varieties of seeds and trees and to allow these to be patented." Newer laws in the USA (Plant Variety Protection Act of 1970). Britain and the EEC make it illegal to sell the seed of patented seeds owned by the seed companies or to grow seeds which are genetically similar.