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My Favourite Place

By Barry Lees



There is a section of Fagan Park called Carrs Bush. As the name implies, it is near Carrs Road. I think it is just beautiful. You will find delicate maiden hair fern and another fern called Doodia, and soft native grasses covering the ground. In the right season, native ground orchids fight for space. Vines climb skyward on massive trees. The grand-daddy tree is a huge turpentine, probably 200 years old. Enormous red gums (Angophora) look human-like, with their smooth pink skin and arms twisting in all directions. They even have creases in their armpits! There are not many tall shrubs, so you can see further through this bush than in other places, adding to the sense of calm.

This is a community of plants that fit the description of 'Sydney turpentine ironbark forest' and because there is hardly any of that community left, it has been classified as 'endangered'. Being aware of this makes it even more precious. Carrs Bush is one of the best remaining examples.

I volunteer in the Bushcare group there. We rummage around on the ground like chooks, pulling out weeds while nattering about all sorts of things. We can solve all the world's problems, if only they would listen to us! Over time, I have learnt to identify most of the plants. As the seasons change, we are often surprised by what comes up. My favourites, of course, are the orchids. One called *Cryptostylis leptochila* has totally weird looking flowers in February. It is propagated by a single species of male wasp, when the flower sends out the scent of a female wasp – even weirder! I have not seen this orchid anywhere else.



I'm in Landcare as well, and we won a grant to help restore the bottom corner of Carrs Bush. We are using contractors and our own labour. Council also employs contractors to help in a different area. As we remove privet, honeysuckle and other weeds, there is more light and space for natives to come up. We are starting to see what it might look like one day.

Experts say this type of activity does wonders for your overall health. I find it relaxing and interesting. If you would like to help, even on a trial basis, we would love to hear from you. Contact me, Barry Lees, on 9653 3691.

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