

Newport Forest

Au29/00

2:20 - 5:20 pm

Weather: sunny/hazy, very hot and humid, 28C, light wind from W

Purpose: to extend both the Hogsback and RSF trails.

Participants: Kee, Nic

On this occasion we decided to split up and work on both ends of the trail at once. Nic took three bags of chips along the OCF trail to the Hogsback, while I took four bags along the River trail and into the RSF. This took two trips. On my second trip to the van, I spotted a Praying Mantis in the grass near one of the tires. It appeared to be a female, swollen with eggs.

Unaware of just what progress Nic was making, I worked along happily enough, stopping frequently to take water. I had brought a hoe with me, just the thing for trail-making in this part of the RSF, as the vegetation is rather sparse and a single scrape with the hoe was, in most cases, sufficient to clear the rather fragile plants along the route. After I had completed some 30 metres of trail, I whistled for Nic, but there was no answer. This discouraged me somewhat, as it meant the two ends were further apart than I had thought. However, a half hour later, after completing another 20 metres of trail, I whistled again and this time got an answer. But the return call seemed far away.

Dropping my tools, I went off through the forest, following the gentle incline along which I proposed to take the trail. Nic had reached the precipice and was busy cutting steps in the clay loam banks of the Hogsback. I joined him, noticing a Maple-leaved Viburnum just beside the trail. It was in fruit, small, oblong, dark purple berries. We completed the steps (rough steps at that), made another ten metres of sloping trail to the east, then went down to the other end, at most 200 metres away now, to extend that end of the trail another 30 metres, until we had used all of nick's remaining chips. We found two young Black Maples (about 4-5" dbh), bent over, their branches trapped by a rather large elm. After much effort, we freed the branches, but the sapling did not spring back up, the bend having permanently damaged their wood.

New Species: Praying Mantis *Mantis religiosa* LM

Old Species: Maple-leaved Viburnum *Viburnum acerifolium* HB