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A fun-gi day had by all

Ever come across witches fingers or fairy wands poking out of a woodland floor, or know what a curry punk, russler, slippery jack or dung button is? Or seen a bug that looks like a bee but isn't a bee – only mimicking a bee? Or maybe seen a strange fungus that turns from a small puffball to a strange lattice basket upon touch? All this and more was discovered at the Magic of Mushrooms and Beauty of Bugs day organised by Moore Catchment Council 30th August. Rachel Walmsley, MCC's NRM Officer said "We've wanted to do something on fungi for a long time and with the good winter rains this year producing a bumper fungi season, it made sense to do it now. I contacted fungi and bug enthusiast Fay Arcaro to come up from Perth and wow us with her knowledge and enthusiasm for WA ecology."

The day started with a slideshow of fungi of all different sizes, shapes and colours from around WA which impressed everyone in the room. Some fungi were so small or camouflaged that it is amazing to see how they can be spotted. Faye then moved on to the bugs section which covered an array of insects and critters that we can all find in the garden or bushland. The native bees are a favourite with Faye including the spectacular blue banded bee which use a 'buzz pollination' method. Rachel said "Faye also covered what types of plants beneficial bugs like to feed on in the garden and natural pest control including parasitic wasps and preying mantis that are a huge help to organic veggie gardeners. When wanting butterflies such as Monarchs and Swallowtails, you must also plant to feed their larval stage too." The session concluded with Faye showing the group how to make 'bug hotels'. These are simple constructions made of sticks, bamboo, cardboard, gum nuts etc in old plant pots which you can locate to provide bug habitat.



Faye's fungo slideshow was fascinating



A bug hotel in an old picnic hamper

After lunch, the group spent an hour wandering around Candy's Bush Reserve to look for fungi and bugs and the odd orchid or two. Rachel said "Thank you to all who came along, to Faye for inspiring us to look out for those native critters and fungi, and to the State Natural Resource Management Program for funding the event."



Mushroom pushing up through the soil



Spotting bugs on a gum tree

- Finalist in the 2014 CSBP Environmental Awards – Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards
- Finalist in the 2015 Fairfax Media Community Group Award Finalists – Western Australian Landcare Awards
- Finalist in the 2015 LandCorp Sustainability Award - Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards
- Semi-Finalist in the 2016 LandCorp Sustainability Award - Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards

The Moore Catchment Council promotes Natural Resource Management in the Moore River Catchment

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