ABOUT iNATURALIST AND HOW TO BEGIN

Notes collated from Knox Council webinar with Chris Gambian, and additional info gathered by Gwyn Davies

iNaturalist provides a way of involving the community in assessing and understanding the importance of biodiversity in our suburbs and cities as well as in the bush - encouraging 'citizen science'. Using iNaturalist involves finding/discovering, photographing, and noting plants, animals and fungi etc. and uploading your images and info into a public online application, where it may provide scientists and planners with valuable material for their work.

Reasons people use iNaturalist -

A way of locating people with common interest
To get IDd the things that you find
To share your finds with others
To contribute to research
To join projects

What can iNaturalist do? Click "Explore" to find what you can do, and to see other entries.

- You can search under common or species name.

- You can search specific or broad areas to find out what is being discovered, eg. Wombelano Park, or Wanderslore (here there are about 8 fungi refs, a flat worm and the Velvet Worm.)

- You can also see if the species you found has been recorded before in the same place, and if it has, what its distribution is.

- There are various projects being run - you can choose to join these. They may be collection projects, or as an umbrella group, statistical analysis. Eg, Chris Gambion has one called: "The Little Things that Run the City".

What information do you need for a good observation?

Firstly, one or more photos. If you have found something new to you, or unusual, try to get several views that display as many features as possible.
Secondly, note some details about it - what plant/animal/place was it on?
What was it doing?
Was there more than one, many?
Was it alive, adult, immature?

General location - GPS is best, a general description and address is OK, if not.
Date, time - should be in metadata if photos are from your phone.

Identification: you may be able to identify it straight away, or try looking it up in a book or online. If not sure what its species name is, use the common name, or you can just make a guess, or say unidentifed, but put that in the comments pane, NOT as ID.

To begin contributing:

Download the app. to your device, or go to the iNaturalist web page on your computer.

If not already done, you need to register and then sign in. You may want to use an online 'name' for privacy reasons. You can choose to sign in through Facebook. It is good to have ready a little pic of yourself or whatever - your icon - rather than the usual blank silhouette, as a visual identity.

Check options at the beginning -
Click on the iNaturalist icon to get to your profile. Profile/icon/security/privacy/copyright options.

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If you are uploading an image taken on phone, but put into computer, the metadata should also be transferred, and will automatically be entered in iNaturalist. The metadata includes date, time, kind of camera.

You can go to "Identify" if you don't know what the species is. There are taxon (classification) 'trees' to help. Or you can just add your photo and information and leave it to someone else to make suggestions.

Note that 2 other confirmations of the species name are required for an entry to be useful for research. All iNaturalist data is automatically entered into the Australian Atlas of Living Things.

Preparation:
Collate all photos for upload, check dates of photos/sightings, and have any additional information such as what plant a bug was found on, what it was doing, whether/what it was calling when you saw it, whether adult or larva or egg, etc.

To Add your Observation
On iNaturalist home page: **Add Observation.**

- **Upload photo.**
- Find **GPS location** using your phone. Enter this. However, when you upload an image, you have choices about geo-porivacy, that is, how you load the location. Location GPS is preferred but you can choose to give a general description only of the location for public viewing, to keep the specific location private/safe.
- Put **species name** in ID, if sure. If you only guess the species name of a plant or animal, enter your suggested species name in the comments box not in ID.
- Add comments about what you saw/heard
- Make separate uploads for 2 different species found on the same plant.
- **Use "combine"** after entering an observation when you find the same species in same location on another day. This puts the obs together but they remain separately recorded obs.