



Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

Australian Plants Society South East NSW Group

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Next Meeting SATURDAY 7th March 2015

Following on from a very successful start to the year, members are in for a special treat this month.

We have been fortunate in securing for this meeting the leader of the Grevillea Study Group

Mr. Peter Olde.

**We will meet at 10.30am at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens Princes Highway,
about 5km south of Batemans Bay**

After Peter's presentation, and lunch at the Gardens, we will travel to Moruya for a look at some Grevilleas growing at Mark and Carolyn Noake's garden, and then participate in a practical propagation session.

Please bring morning tea and lunch. Those wishing to do so may purchase lunch from the Chefs Cap Café at the gardens.

As we will walk around the Noake garden, comfortable walking shoes and a hat are advisable.

There is plenty of seating at the ERBG, but you will need to put in a chair for use at Mark and Carolyn's.

See page 2 for details of these activities

Future activities

Due to Easter falling in the first week of April, the committee is discussing whether the April walk will be deferred till the 11th. More on this next newsletter

Our next meeting on May 2nd, is another treat for members. We will have to travel a bit, but Fern expert Kylie Stocks will let us in on the secrets of growing ferns successfully. Mark your diary now.



Peter in his garden, doing what he does best, enthusing about a Grevillea

Next meeting

Peter Olde is the co-author of the definitive 3 volume book “Grevillea” and has been studying the Genus for over 30 years. He has a microscopic knowledge of Grevilleas, having travelled throughout Australia in his research.

Over the years, Peter has published many scientific papers on Grevillea, and has named a number of new species. Currently he is researching the complex species included in the G. lanigera, G. rosmarinifolia and G. arenaria groups.

This will surely be a popular meeting, and members are urged to come along to hear what Peter has to say about Grevilleas.

Members please bring along some flowering specimens for our “show and tell” segment. We are recording what is flowering each month for the benefit of each of us, so the more information we can record, the more useful this work will be. There will be an opportunity to ask Peter some questions about Grevillea as well.

Following the meeting, we will take lunch at the Gardens.

Depending on the weather, we will adjourn to the picnic area, or stay around the visitor centre. Members wishing to buy lunch from the Chefs Cap café are urged to order on arrival so that we all lunch together.

Our afternoon session will be an opportunity to practice some propagation by cuttings. We will travel south towards Moruya, where at Mark and Carolyn’s large garden, 20 Glendeuart Grove, you will look at some of the many Grevilleas they have growing. The propagation techniques for Grevillea will be demonstrated by experienced members, and everyone will be given an opportunity to practice those techniques. Propagation materials will be provided by the Group, so that we all have the same propagation medium and rooting hormones.

There will be a cost for this of \$1 per pot, payable on the day

Those attending this session will need to bring some sharp secateurs or similar, suitable for making cuttings. A spray bottle with water would also be useful to keep the cuttings in good condition.

Also there will be a need to protect the cuttings once done, and if you have made a propagation box as described in the January newsletter, it would be handy to bring it along. Otherwise a large ziplock plastic bag would suffice.

This session will be in the open air, and as mentioned earlier, you need to bring a chair. It would be wise to arm yourself with sunscreen and insect repellent just in case, although we will be shaded by trees.

To get to Mark and Carolyn’s, head south from the ERBG along the Princes Highway towards Moruya.

Turn right off the highway at Larry’s Mountain Road, which is just 1km south of the North Moruya industrial area in Shelley Rd.

Once on Larry’s Mountain Rd, travel 1km and turn left on Glendeuart Grove, and continue for about 800m to the next corner on your left (Maclean Place). Our venue, 20 Glendeuart Grove, is on this corner, and the APS sign will be put out to advise that you have arrived.

To respect the wishes of the owners, cutting material will be selected by them or their helpers on the day. In this way plants which are special will be preserved. If you would like to bring cuttings of plants from your own garden, that is fine. Make sure they are collected early, lightly sprayed, and sealed in a plastic bag. It is important to protect them from heat, so placing them in a portable esky with cooling blocks is recommended.

The next couple of months is a great time to do cuttings, so avail yourself of this workshop activity.

Committee news.

President's message

Well into February and still a relatively mild summer which has made it a pleasure to be out in the garden. Frequent rain has meant a welcome break from watering particularly for me establishing a new garden. But of course this can bring other challenges, weeds are thriving and some more dry tolerant plants have turned up their toes in the unusually damp and humid conditions.

It was wonderful to see so many enjoying a chat and catch up over morning tea and lunch at our first social meeting for the year. On a perfect summer day it was a great chance to exchange gardening stories and tips. Refer to the full report and plant list for details.

Our next meeting will be a talk/workshop with grevillea guru Peter Olde and local guru Mark Noake. Lots to learn so don't miss out.

Margaret Lynch

Membership Report

Regretfully, I must convey the decision of the APS NSW Region Board to increase the fees for membership of APS NSW Region by \$3. This decision has been confirmed and is required to assist the Society to cover its administration and publication costs.

The new rates, which took effect from 1 January 2015, are as follows:-

Individual	\$53	Individual Concession	\$45
Joint	\$61	Joint Concession	\$53

Those members whose payment is outstanding from June, Sept or Dec 2014 can pay at the old rates which are on the renewal form attached to the reminder e-mail. Those due by 31 March 2015 will pay at the new rate. The payment methods are described on the renewal form.

For our Group, payment by direct transfer is the preferred method requiring minimum administration.

The payment date and any necessary changes to contact details can be notified, by e-mail or return of the form, to the membership officer.

Please contact me if you have any questions. My contact details are on the last page of this newsletter.

Jenny John

Next Committee meeting.

Your committee meets next on 26th February.

If you have any issues or ideas, any of the committee would appreciate your input.

See the committee contact details at the end of this newsletter.

The committee is still seeking assistance from our members in the Bega Valley Shire area to liaise with the current committee.

Please consider whether you might assist the group in this way. Any support would be welcome.

Draft BVSC landscaping guidelines

Past committee member **Bernadette O'Leary** asked the members be made aware of Bega Valley Shire's recent landscaping guidelines. This is her report. Please consider its content, and contact Bernadette, ph 0403 711927, or any of the committee if you have comments or concerns.

Bega Valley Shire Council exhibited draft ‘Landscaping guidelines: a guide for preparing landscaping plans for lodgement with development applications in the Bega Valley’ in mid-January 2015.

The guidelines state that such plans ‘may be required for any development application depending on the characteristics of the site and nature of the development’. The comment period closed on 13 February. Copies were available mostly through local libraries, not online.

I made comprehensive comments on the draft because I considered it was not yet adequate for the task. For example, the process was not well defined, the language and construction were often confusing, there were issues of scale and scope, and the content was out of order and incomplete.

The draft also misses an opportunity to prevent damage to environmental values and to seek good landscaping outcomes for developments in the Shire, including through encouraging the use of local native plant species. I am unaware that any relevant local groups, such as APS, were either made aware of the guidelines or asked to participate in drafting.

If you would like to know more about the guidelines I suggest you contact Planning Services at BVSC. I would be happy to share my comments.

Report of meeting Saturday 7th February

Thirty seven people gathered at the picnic area at Bodalla Park for the first social day and bush walk of the year travelling from as far north as Ulladulla and south from the Tathra/Bega area.

After enjoying a chat over morning tea under the shade of beautiful spotted gums and ironbarks the group set out on the track following the edge of Mummaga Lake.

The diversity of plants was evident even at the picnic area with a scattering of grasses, dianella and lomandra. The dry forest gave way to damper conditions closer to Mummaga Lake and casuarinas lined the lake’s edge.

Thickets of Notelaea (mock olive) often dominated the understorey and vines were common.

Though February isn’t the best month for flowering there was a brilliant display by bursaria and the aroma of the mint bush and spicy cassinia could be appreciated. Lots to see and talk about (refer to plant list) which slowed the pace at times, often the case when observing plant life.

Some chose to retrace the pleasantly cool lakeside track as lunch beckoned while others continued on up to the dry forest to complete the loop back to the picnic area.



President Margaret organizing the troops at the start of the Lake Mummaga walk

After lunch a smaller group continued on to the Box Cutting rainforest walk and yes it took an hour to complete the 350 m track! It was a delightful walk in the cool damp under magnificent towering sassafras, pencil cedar and lilly pilly with bird's nest ferns perched high in their branches. A variety of ferns covered the forest floor, some scrambling up trunks and crab apple and hairy clerodendrum were identified in the understory. All emerged from the forest leech free and agreeing we are truly fortunate to have such a treasure to enjoy.

My thanks to John Knight for compiling the plant lists.

Margaret Lynch



On the rainforest track, the group went single file, discovering. Here Catriona waits for stragglers who happened upon treasures, and were necessarily delayed



High in the trees Birds Nest ferns, *Asplenium australasicum* find conditions 'just right' and thrive among a tangle of lianas

Bodalla Park plant list. Note that the plants are listed in order they were seen to assist those wishing to re-visit.

This site was visited in February, and not many plants were flowering. Hence some species were likely to be overlooked.

<i>Corymbia</i>	<i>maculata</i>	Spotted Gum
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>pilularis</i>	Blackbutt
<i>Entolsaia</i>	<i>stricta</i>	Wiry, or Right Angle Panic
<i>Poa</i>	<i>meionectes</i>	Fine-leaved Snow Grass
<i>Hardenbergia</i>	<i>violacea</i>	False Sarsaparilla
<i>Dianella</i>	<i>caerulea</i>	Paroo Lily
<i>Macrozamia</i>	<i>communis</i>	Burrawang
<i>Pittosporum</i>	<i>undulatum</i>	Pittosporum
<i>Marsdenia</i>	<i>rostrata</i>	Common Milk Vine
<i>Exocarpus</i>	<i>cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart
<i>Notelea</i>	<i>longifolia</i>	Large Mock Olive
<i>Acacia</i>	<i>implexa</i>	Hickory Wattle
<i>Acacia</i>	<i>irrorata</i>	Green Wattle

<i>Imperata</i>	<i>cylindrica</i>	Blady Grass
<i>Ghania</i>	<i>melanocarpa</i>	Black-fruit Saw Sedge
<i>Allocasuarina</i>	<i>littoralis</i>	Black Sheoak
<i>Pteridium</i>	<i>esculentum</i>	Bracken
<i>Hibbertia</i>	<i>aspera</i>	Rough Guinea Flower
<i>Lomandra</i>	<i>longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed Mat-rush
<i>Leucopogon</i>	<i>lanceolatus</i>	Lance-leaf Beard Heath
<i>Marsdenia</i>	<i>suaveolens</i>	Scented Marsdenia
<i>Pseuderanthemum</i>	<i>variabile</i>	Pastel Flower
<i>Eustrephus</i>	<i>latifolius</i>	Wombat Berry
<i>Synoum</i>	<i>glandulosum</i>	Scentless Rosewood
<i>Zieria</i>	<i>smithii</i>	Sandfly Zieria
<i>Lagenifera</i>	<i>stipitata</i>	Blue Bottle daisy
<i>Cissus</i>	<i>hypoglauca</i>	Giant Water Vine
<i>Goodenia</i>	<i>ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>paniculata</i>	Grey Ironbark
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>botryoides</i>	Bangalay
<i>Geitonoplesium</i>	<i>cymosum</i>	Scrambling Lily
<i>Smilax</i>	<i>australis</i>	Sarsaparilla
<i>Parsonsia</i>	<i>straminea</i>	Common Silkpod
<i>Myrsine</i>	<i>howittiana</i>	Brush Muttonwood
<i>Eleaocarpus</i>	<i>reticulatus</i>	Blueberry Ash
<i>Pittosporum</i>	<i>revolutum</i>	Yellow Pittosporum
<i>Morinda</i>	<i>jasminoides</i>	Morinda
<i>Hibbertia</i>	<i>dentata</i>	Twining Guinea Flower
<i>Ozothamnus</i>	<i>diosmifolius</i>	White Dogwood
<i>Platysace</i>	<i>lanceolata</i>	Lance-leaf Platysace
<i>Wahlenbergia</i>	<i>gracilis</i>	Australian Bluebell
<i>Poa</i>	<i>labillardieri</i>	Tussock Grass
<i>Pratia</i>	<i>purpurascens</i>	White Root
<i>Cymbopogon</i>	<i>refractus</i>	Barbwire Grass
<i>Xanthorrhoea</i>	<i>resinifera</i>	Grass Tree
<i>Sanantha</i>	<i>pluriflora</i>	Tall Baeckea
<i>Lepidosperma</i>	<i>laterale</i>	Variable Sword-sedge
<i>Acacia</i>	<i>longifolia</i>	Sydney Golden Wattle
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>globoidea</i>	White Stringybark
<i>Bursaria</i>	<i>spinosa</i>	Native Blackthorn
<i>Banksia</i>	<i>spinulosa</i>	Hairpin Banksia
<i>Pandorea</i>	<i>pandorana</i>	Wonga Vine
<i>Acacia</i>	<i>falciformis</i>	Broad-leaf Hickory
<i>Cassytha</i>	<i>glabella</i>	Devil's Twine
<i>Acacia</i>	<i>terminalis</i>	Sunshine Wattle
<i>Lomandra</i>	<i>confertifolia ssp confertifolia</i>	Slender Mat-rush
<i>Santalum</i>	<i>obtusifolium</i>	Sandlewood
<i>Exocarpus</i>	<i>strictus</i>	Dwarf Cherry
<i>Prostanthera</i>	<i>incana</i>	Velvet Mintbush
<i>Doodia</i>	<i>aspera</i>	Prickly Rasp Fern
<i>Prostanthera</i>	<i>lasianthos</i>	Victorian Christmas Bush
<i>Clematis</i>	<i>aristata</i>	Travellers Joy
<i>Cassinia</i>	<i>longifolia</i>	Shiny Cassinia

<i>Coronidium</i>	<i>elatum</i>	White paper Daisy
<i>Selliera</i>	<i>radicans</i>	Swamp weed
<i>Cotula</i>	<i>coronopifolia</i>	Waterbuttons
<i>Brachyscome</i>	<i>graminea</i>	Grass Daisy
<i>Viola</i>	<i>hederacea form</i>	Native Violet
<i>Hakea</i>	<i>eriantha</i>	Tree Hakea
<i>Astrotricha</i>	<i>latifolia</i>	Broad-leaf Starhair
<i>Einadia</i>	<i>hastata</i>	Berry Saltbush
<i>Lomandra</i>	<i>confertifolia ssp rubiginosa</i>	Red stem mat-rush
<i>Asplenium</i>	<i>flabellifolium</i>	Necklace fern
<i>Breynia</i>	<i>oblongifolia</i>	Coffee Bush
<i>Dodonaea</i>	<i>triquetra</i>	Common Hop Bush
<i>Pomaderris</i>	<i>intermedia</i>	Golden Pomaderris
<i>Persoonia</i>	<i>linearis</i>	Narrow-leaf Geebung
<i>Epacris</i>	<i>impressa</i>	Common Heath
<i>Pomaderris</i>	<i>elliptica</i>	Round-leaf Pomaderris
<i>Hibbertia</i>	<i>scandens</i>	Snake Vine
<i>Lomandra</i>	<i>multiflora</i>	Many-flowered Mat-rush
<i>Austrodanthonia</i>	<i>linkii</i>	Wallaby Grass
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>fibrosa</i>	Red Ironbark
<i>Hibbertia</i>	<i>obtusifolia</i>	Grey Guinea Flower
<i>Dichondra</i>	<i>repens</i>	Kidney weed
<i>Desmodium</i>	<i>varians</i>	Slender Tick-trefoil
<i>Microlaena</i>	<i>stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass
<i>Glycine</i>	<i>tabacina</i>	Variable Glycine
<i>Arthropodium</i>	<i>milleflorum</i>	Vanilla Lily
<i>Daviesia</i>	<i>ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter Pea
<i>Podolobium</i>	<i>ilicifolium</i>	Native Holly
<i>Poranthera</i>	<i>microphylla</i>	Small Poranthera
<i>Calochlaena</i>	<i>dubia</i>	False Bracken, Rainbow Fern

Box Cutting Rainforest Gully Narooma

Note that the plants are listed in order they were seen to assist those wishing to revisit.

<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>piperita</i>	Sydney Peppermint
<i>Corymbia</i>	<i>maculata</i>	Spotted Gum
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>globoidea</i>	White Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>cypellocarpa</i>	Mountain Grey Gum
<i>Cissus</i>	<i>hypoglauca</i>	Giant Water Vine
<i>Hibbertia</i>	<i>dentata</i>	Twining Guinea Flower
<i>Pteridium</i>	<i>esculentum</i>	Bracken
<i>Correa</i>	<i>lawrenceana var cordifolia</i>	Mountain Correa
<i>Persoonia</i>	<i>linearis</i>	Narrow-leaf Geebung
<i>Psychotria</i>	<i>loniceroides</i>	Hairy Psychotria
<i>Eleocharis</i>	<i>reticulatus</i>	Blueberry Ash
<i>Synoum</i>	<i>glandulosum</i>	Scentless Rosewood
<i>Blechnum</i>	<i>cartilagineum</i>	Gristle fern
<i>Doryphora</i>	<i>sassafras</i>	Sassafras
<i>Aphanopetalum</i>	<i>resinosum</i>	Gum Vine
<i>Sticherus</i>	<i>lobatus</i>	Spreading Shield fern

<i>Backhousia</i>	<i>myrtifolia</i>	Grey Myrtle
<i>Calochlaena</i>	<i>dubia</i>	False Bracken, Rainbow Fern
<i>Cyathea</i>	<i>australis</i>	Rough Tree Fern
<i>Schizomeria</i>	<i>ovata</i>	Crabapple
<i>Clerodendrum</i>	<i>tomentosum</i>	Hairy Clerodendrum
<i>Rubus</i>	<i>parvifolius</i>	Native Raspberry
<i>Microsorium</i>	<i>diversifolium</i>	Kangaroo Fern
<i>Dendrocnide</i>	<i>excelsa</i>	Giant Stinging Tree
<i>Syzygium</i>	<i>smithii</i>	Lilly Pilly
<i>Dicksonia</i>	<i>antarctica</i>	Soft tree Fern
<i>Blechnum</i>	<i>patersonii</i>	Strap Water Fern
<i>Asplenium</i>	<i>australasicum</i>	Birds Nest Fern
<i>Polyscias</i>	<i>murrayi</i>	Pencil Cedar
<i>Rumohra</i>	<i>adiantiformis</i>	Shield Hare's Foot
<i>Adiantum</i>	<i>formosum</i>	Black Stem Maidenhair
<i>Oplismenus</i>	<i>imbecillis</i>	Creeping Beard Grass
<i>Gahnia</i>	<i>melanocarpa</i>	Black-fruit Saw-sedge
<i>Solanum</i>	<i>pungentium</i>	Eastern Nightshade
<i>Pseuderanthemum</i>	<i>variabile</i>	Pastel Flower
<i>Pittosporum</i>	<i>pauciflorus</i>	Orange Thorn
<i>Pyrrhosia</i>	<i>rupestris</i>	Rock Felt Fern
<i>Adiantum</i>	<i>hispidulum</i>	Rough Maidenhair
<i>Santalum</i>	<i>obtusifolium</i>	Sandalwood
<i>Pomaderris</i>	<i>aspera</i>	Hazel Pomaderris

The Practical Pages

Syzygium smithii: a plant for everyone

This summer (2014-2015) has seen an extraordinary flowering of Lilly Pilly trees in our district. Maybe it was caused by the rains in December, or some other factor, or factors, but many of these trees produced masses of fluffy flowers. Then it rained again and the stamens became soggy, turned brown, and fell off, leaving unsightly gluggy blobs on footpaths and in drains.

Lilly Pilly is the common name given to several rainforest tree species belonging to the family Myrtaceae, a family that also includes eucalypts, *Callistemon*, *Melaleuca*, *Backhousia*, and others. The name Myrtaceae was given to this large family because of a similarity to the Northern Hemisphere representatives. In ancient times, the European *Myrtle* was considered sacred to the goddess Venus, which led to the name of one of her nymphs, Acmena, to be given to the widespread eastern Australian species, *Acmena smithii*. The *smithii* bit honours James Edward Smith, a prominent English botanist of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It seems as if the more we learn of the naming of Australian plant species, the more the same names keep turning up.

Acmena smithii was not always named so. It was introduced into cultivation at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew by Joseph Banks in 1790 as *Eugenia elliptica*, after Prince Eugene of Savoy. Previously, in 1787, James Smith had described it as such, but two years later this combination was declared illegal because it had already been used for another species. A French botanist, Jean Louis Marie Poiret, corrected this error, bestowing the generic name *Eugenia*. However, by 1813, the generic name *Acmena* was in use, but only until 1893 when the species was reclassified into the genus *Syzygium* by a German botanist Franz Joseph Niedenzu. In 2009 this name was confirmed by all the major Australian Herbaria.

Syzygium smithii, to use its current name, is a handsome rainforest tree with glossy, dark green opposite leaves that have a distinct pointed tip. The flowers are rather like those of eucalypts, with many long stamens surrounding the style and stigma, but they differ in that they do not have a cap, or caps, that drop off when the stamens uncurl. The petals (or more correctly the perianth segments) are united at the tip, explaining the name *Syzygium*, meaning 'joining together'. The fruit of *S. smithii*, and other *Syzygiums*, are spongy and fleshy, not hard and woody as in eucalypts, and coloured very pale pink to dark magenta. Although edible, the taste is, well, almost tasteless, and the single seed gives the fruit a nasty texture on the tongue. If cooked, strained, sugar and lemon juice added, a very pretty, sweet jelly can be made, but with a rather nondescript taste.



Syzygium smithii fruit (Wikipedia)

There are many cultivars of *Syzygium smithii*, as well as of other *Syzygium* species. Some of these have dramatic pink or red new foliage, particularly after rain, while some horticulturists have concentrated on 'improving' the colour and size of the fruit, and still others have developed dwarf varieties for pots and small gardens.

Lilly Pillies are generally fairly impervious to attack from most insects, but the Pimple Psyllid (*Trioza eugeniae*), related to cicadas, can cause unsightly pimples on new leaves. Some of the cultivars are not susceptible, while others are. Contact sprays are not successful in controlling this pest because the insect resides inside the leaf, but systemic sprays are rather more effective.

The number of cultivars makes it possible to grow a Lilly Pilly in even a small garden, while in a large one the full size tree can make a dramatic statement. In spite of being classed as a rainforest tree, it will grow in both full sun and shade, and can withstand dry periods and moderate frost. A species for everyone.

Jenny Liney

While I was searching for material on *Syzygium smithii*, I came across a reference to *Syzygium aromaticum*, an Asian representative of the same genus. Then there was a picture of cloves (used as a spice). To my astonishment, it turns out that cloves are the dried, unopened flower buds of *Syzygium aromaticum*. Who would have thought it?

Propagation by cuttings John Knight

As mentioned in the last newsletter, December through to April or May presents ideal conditions to propagate new plants. Whilst there is no secret to propagation, understanding how plants are able to reproduce from pieces can add to greater success, or at least an appreciation of the wonders of nature.

To be successful, we need to be mindful of the needs of cuttings. These are the same conditions in which the plant requires when growing in the garden.

Plants need water for transpiration and evaporation. For cuttings water also provides cooling and humidity. Oxygen is needed for cuttings to produce callus growth, which is discussed below, and for the formation of roots.

Technically, the cutting medium should have an air filled porosity value of around 25 - 30. This means that the mix, when thoroughly wetted and then allowed to drain, would contain air that fills up to 30% of the mix, and as such could never become waterlogged, which is a common cause of failure of cuttings.

(At our next meeting a simple AFP test will be conducted, and you will shown how to make your own test kit.)

Cuttings also need light to enable them to continue the process of photosynthesis, and the more light the better. But of course more light might mean higher than desirable temperatures, which can cause the cuttings to suffer stress because they lose too much moisture.

Next is the need to provide the optimum temperature for the type of cuttings you are trying to strike. This time of the year, when overnight temperatures rarely drop below 15°, you need only consider how to keep the day time temperature at a reasonable level, say below 27°, but this is not so easy. Shading is the obvious answer, but we also need sufficient light, as previously noted, for the cuttings to continue their necessary functions.

Ideally, the base of the cuttings should be maintained in a warmer state than the vegetative parts. In the cooler months bottom heat can easily achieve this, but for now the dilemma is how to keep the tops cool enough. Everyone's conditions are different. When using the propagation box described last month, it should in my experience be placed in good light on the south side of the house this time of the year. As the weather cools it can be brought to the east but still protected from direct sun. Watering is the critical thing to get right. I currently water my boxes with a light mist early in the day, and again in the afternoon if necessary. The top cover is allowed to remain partly open on hot days, held so by a 25mm stake on its edge, and this necessitates an additional watering as the box atmosphere becomes less humid.

My experience is that too much water is more damaging than drier conditions, as the moisture promotes conditions suitable for fungal growth. That said, cuttings which are allowed to dry out will rarely be successful this time of the year, and yet in winter, drying out is sometimes beneficial. Only you will be able to work out what works best for you, but that is the secret science for which you are seeking the answer.

I will continue this discussion next newsletter.

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Website can accessed by searching the APS NSW website, and access the South East NSW Group. You are then redirected to our website host thebegavalley.org.

Once work is complete on our new site, access will be simply through APS NSW, where a direct link takes you to our pages.