



# Australian Plants Society South East NSW Group

Newsletter number 105  
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*Corymbia maculata* Spotted Gum and  
*Macrozamia communis* Burrawang

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## Next Meeting SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The Committee suggested that the April meeting, due to be held on Easter Saturday, be postponed a week as many members said they would be not available.

The meeting will now be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in April, that is the 11<sup>th</sup>.

### “Bits of Bermagui”

Note that we intend to start at 10.00am, as daylight saving has finished and the earlier start will allow everyone to get home in daylight.

We will meet at Bermagui State Forest picnic area on the banks of Black Lagoon. Coming from the north, turn left at Wallaga Lake road, off the highway, and travel past Wallaga Lake. Turn right on the Cobargo/Bermagui Rd, and after 3.1km, turn right at the State Forests sign. There a sign says Picnic area 1km, but it is actually 1.5km. Travel along Scenic Forest Drive to a fork, and keep right, taking the signposted road to the picnic area. Those travelling from the south will drive to Cobargo, and turn right onto the Bermagui Road, following this until reaching the State Forests sign as mentioned above.

We intend looking at the area known as Tommy’s Gardens within Spotted Gum forest, then the Lilli Pilli Gully. (see page 2 for more information on this area) After lunch a walk along Long Swamp offers glimpses of the bird life on the swamp, views to Mt. Dromedary and an opportunity to observe dune vegetation whilst enjoying the seaside walk along the Old Tilba Road. If there is time we intend visiting the different flora on the Headland at Blue Pool before heading to Bermagui Wharf precinct for a well earned coffee.

As always, come prepared with morning tea and lunch, a chair in which to relax, although there are a couple of wood tables and benches available. There is also a clean “long drop” toilet at the picnic area. As the weather has cooled, mosquitoes and other bities should be hibernating, but the risk is your choice.

**Tommy's Gardens** sits in an area of Bermagui State Forest between Black Lagoon and Narira Creek. There is a loop walking track known as the Narira Creek Walking Trail, a 1.3km track which winds around the lagoon to an open grassy area where the creek spills into both the lagoon and Wallaga Lake. The track then follows a fire trail along the creek before rising through Spotted Gum / Burrawang forest. At the picnic area is a spotted gum with distinctive V shaped scarring on its trunk, indicating a yellow bellied glider feeding tree.

The Lilli Pilli rainforest walk is a loop of around 1km., in a damp gully dominated by Syzygium and Backhousia, with a tangle of strong lianas and an overstorey of spotted gum. This area is somewhat drier than the forests we visited around Narooma in February, and the suite of plants is quite different even though the same trees dominate.

We look forward to another big roll up this month.



**There is a lot happening over the next month or two, and members have been offered the opportunity to be involved.**

## **Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens GIANT PLANT SALE & Easter Fair**

**25%-50% off thousands of plants!**

**Easter Saturday 4 April 2015 from 10 am–2 pm**

Members are invited to the Botanic Gardens for a fun day out and some great plant bargains (don't forget to bring a bag, a box or even a trailer).

The Easter Bilby will be there between 10--11 am handing out Easter eggs!

**You and your family can also enjoy:**

jumping castle, craft stall, buskers,second hand books/DVDs, gift baskets,face painting  
gnome painting kids Play Space, make your own big bad Banksia man  
cake stall, sausage sizzle, eat at the Chef's Cap Café or bring a picnic...

For more information call 4471 2544 during Gardens opening hours



## **Invitation to join APS Nowra group.**

**Valerie Forgan, (m. 0487409063) program committee member for Nowra APS has forwarded details of 3 gardens to be visited by APS Nowra on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April.**

**The day starts at 9.00am**, meeting at Kings Point Road turnoff on the Princes Highway, just south of Ulladulla, where maps and contact details will be made available to those attending.

Arriving by 9.30am, at the first garden, of Karen and Trevor Bulbert at Kings Point close to Burill Lake, where there will be an opportunity to study ongoing revegetation of the foreshore as well.

Following morning tea, self catered of course, we will head to Brian and Suellen Harris's garden, which has just recently been established, and still a work in progress, just north of Ulladulla.

From here we head towards Little Forest where we arrive at the garden of Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate. Before the visit though, Phil and Catriona have offered that we have our lunch on 'the terrace' with views as far as one can

see. Bring a special picnic and really make a day of it. Their garden, of 6 acres, is established on old farming land, so they have a bit of trouble with kikuyu. And the soil is so rich that plants just can't help but grow. Phil specialises in grafting unusual plants, and has a stunning collection of Proteaceae. Members might recall the plants Phil showed at our last Show and Tell session, where he produced a perfect specimen of *Telopea* 'Shady Lady' Whilst it seems a bit of a hike, we have been assured that the trip will be worthwhile, so I hope to see you there.



# fungimap 8



**16-21 April 2015**  
**Batemans Bay, New South Wales**

**Registration** For information and updates on the conference program, please visit

**[fungimap.org.au/index.php/events/fungimap8](http://fungimap.org.au/index.php/events/fungimap8)**

**Enquiries** contact the Fungimap Coordinator email [info@fungimap.org.au](mailto:info@fungimap.org.au) or phone (03) 9252 2374.

We hope you will join us for Fungimap 8 where you can learn about macrofungi through talks, fungi walks and workshops. The focus of this event is to build up people's knowledge of macrofungi. Every day we will get

out in the bushland around Batemans Bay to look for fungi and learn about them in their natural habitat. Fungimap 8 is suitable for all levels of knowledge from beginner to expert. We are keen to create an environment for friendly sharing of enthusiasm



### **Venue & Program**

The main conference venue will be Coachhouse Marina Resort, Batemans Bay, New South Wales. There is an interesting line up of talks about fungi and the Eurobodalla region. Presenters include Teresa Lebel, Ray Kearney and Michael Anlezark. Workshops presenters will include 'How to photograph fungi' with Paul George, "Growing fungi" with 'Boletes' with Roy Halling and 'Truffles and animal surveys' with Sandra Abell.

This event focus is to develop people's knowledge about fungi and collecting fungi data. We will introduce preferred Fungimap survey protocols and help participants develop their fungi recognition skills. We will also give tips on how to take photographs of fungi that assist with identification. We'll also cover the best ways to share data with Fungimap and get it up on the Atlas of Living Australia. On Monday there will be a day to explore the wonderful Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens



### **Committee news.**

### **President's message**





**be effective, and members would have to be advised and given a chance to participate. At present the weekends I have available are: April 11-12, 18-19 and 25-26.**

**If no one is willing or available to join me in this undertaking as demonstrator, I could run one on my own here at my home which is 13 Woodland Dr., Merimbula to see whether any participants come forward. To be wildly optimistic- we could always run it again if anyone was missing out.**

**The Committee has agreed that Heather should give it a go, and we hope that many will take this opportunity to be involved in what we believe is one of the most satisfying aspects of gardening.**

**Members should contact Heather directly, on( 02 ) 64951884**

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### **Committee meetings.**

#### **Web site**

At the recent meeting of the committee, further discussion centered on the new website, which is being developed by Mark Noake. The site is in the formative stages, but is up and running, with domain hosting being sponsored through the APS NSW Region website. Go to [www.austplants.com.au](http://www.austplants.com.au) and follow the links to our group, South East Region. The site can also be currently accessed at <http://southeast.austplants.com.au/> Additional content for our site is being generated, and will be added as it becomes available. Members are free to provide any material they feel will benefit the group. Mark has requested all content in Microsoft Word format so it can be added to the site without the need for re-typing. Pictures should be supplied in .jpg format, with the photographers details to cover any copyright issues. Send any comments to a committee member in the first instance. See contacts on the last page of this newsletter.

#### **Brochures**

Previous committees have developed brochures which advertise our group, its activities and the benefits of growing Australian plants. Secretary Michele Pymble and Publicity Officer Jillian Peck have reworked these, updating where necessary, and have arranged for new brochures to be produced for issue at the APS display at the Sydney Easter Show. The committee decided that a single brochure presenting details of group activities, and how to join is the best use of our promotional budget.

#### **Growth and Promotion**

NSW region issued a paper last year on the need for district groups to be proactive in promoting their activities within a broader community to assist in membership development. Previous committee members began the process of activity generation in an effort to ensure the long term success of our group. The committee has worked on this through the efforts of Secretary Michele, and have now reported back to the NSW Region, presenting our plans and program of events that will hopefully ensure we remain viable as a group.

**Australia’s Open Garden Scheme**The Committee received correspondence regarding the demise of Australia’s Open Garden Scheme, and has agreed that the following detail was worth presenting to the membership.

“Like many people, you would have been greatly disappointed at the recent announcement that the Open Gardens Australia organisation will close its doors in June this year. It has been an institution in Australia for 27 years and those who were selected to open their gardens drew respect and admiration from all who visited.

Those who have opened their garden to the public will understand what a rewarding experience it is to share their garden with others. For visitors, these open gardens can be a wonderful source of inspiration and discovery. Of course these events were also important fund raisers to support the garden, local communities and for charity.





**A wallaby enjoying Peter and Jenny John's garden delights Photo Jenny John**

### **A Wallaby-Modified Australian Garden**

As the only property for some distance around without a dog we are regularly visited by the local wildlife. Grey kangaroos, in different stages of family life present no problems, snacking on the grass on their way back to the forest after a night feeding on adjacent farm paddocks. However, it has taken several years for us to understand and accommodate the swamp wallabies. We have graduated, from the horror of finding all but one plant in a crate, brought from Canberra for planting here, had been eaten to soil level when left on the verandah overnight, to being able to smile benignly as one of our two regular visitors nibbles the young shoot of a well-established *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon'. We have given up trying to grow, unprotected, *Hardenbergia*, *Hypocalymmaangustifolia*, *Melaleucaincana* and

some *Eremophilas* as they have proved irresistible to the wallabies, who will lean on the netting cage to crush it in order to reach these plants.

However, provided new plantings are robustly protected until the plant reaches a maturity when it has a full complement of noxious oils, we have found we can successfully grow a selection of the hybrid *Grevilleas* as well as *G. rhyolitica*, *Banksias*, *Kunzeas*, *Zierias*, *Hakeas*, *Westringias*, *Goodenias*, *Lambertiaformosa*, *Philothecamyporoides* and *Calothamnusquadrifidus*. Spreading ground covers are harder to protect but *Isotomaaxillaris*, *Goodeniaovata* and *Brachyscomes* are not touched. *Chrysocephalumapiculatum* and *Rulingiahermanniifolia* bounce back after being grazed.

We now accept the limitation on the plants we can grow because it is amply offset by the pleasure of encountering these endearing animals in the garden.

Hopefully members will see benefit in writing about their own special garden, and offer to put pen to paper, or fingertip to keyboard, with their own experiences. Contributions should be sent to the newsletter editor.



**Perennial contributor Leigh Murray** always has something interesting to say, and the following article offers just the sort of information members can use.

#### **D is for Durable**

Two of our hardiest plants are *Darwiniacitriodora* and *Dodoneacuneata*. Both do well in the quite different conditions of a frosty, rocky ridge at Queanbeyan and a wind-belted spot near the sea at Tuross Head.

*Dodoneacuneata* is a particular favourite of mine, because it has proven to be such a tough little survivor. It seems to be almost as tough as *Lomandralongifolia*, and that indeed is high praise in the toughness stakes. I've been amazed at how tiny plants of *D. cuneata* have survived where other, larger plants around them have died (say, in heatwaves). It forms a neat, small shrub with handsome hops, and makes a nice, reliable gap-filler.

*Dodoneaviscosa* is also a tough cookie in our conditions. And to my surprise and delight, I recently discovered an indigenous one on our land at Queanbeyan. I didn't know we had any, and I'd never noticed this one before (it's in an out-of-the way spot). But one day the hops caught my eye, and the otherwise unprepossessing and rather gangly shrub suddenly became obvious. Now that I know it's there, I'll prune it from time to time, to help it look a little smarter.





Many of the species Peter spoke of were not general garden plants, but often relic plants from long changed climate.

Following this, Peter agreed to tackle the difficult question of taxonomic research. Whilst we have only our observation of characters available, scientists are delving deeper and deeper into plant DNA to discover 'true' relationships. Much has been made of recent plant name changes, based not on morphological characters that we common folk can see and make sense of, but on genetic research. The recent recommendation to include *Banksia* under *Dryandra* is a case in point. It seems that not all is as it seems with *Grevillea* either, and Peter said he has an open mind on work currently being undertaken which might see *Grevillea* disappear as a Genus, being consumed by *Hakea*. Whether this is agreed by the scientists is still being debated. It is amazing just how much work is being done in this field. We do not find out about it until a paper is finally published, giving new names to a plant we might have grown for years and thought we knew. Many scientists are working on the family Proteaceae, both here and overseas.

We learned a couple of facts which were unexpected.

It was generally assumed that the evolution of plants was influenced by a drying climate. Plants that were of rainforest origin began to evolve different characters to suit a new, drier environment. Genetics shows that the oldest evolved *Grevillea* is *Grevilleaendlicheriana*, a shrubby species from the Darling Range in Western Australia. This species is unusual in that the flowers are held well above the foliage on long woody, sparsely foliated stems. The flowers are sweetly perfumed, and insect pollinated. Research also shows that plants probably first evolved as insect pollinated, and moved to bird pollination over time. There is evidence also to show that some plants are returning to a state whereby insects will be their main pollinator. What will we learn about plant relationships when all this research is complete?

The second surprising revelation was that the Proteaceae of the world has evolved from the Platanales, which is the Plane Tree family. Dr Peter Weston of the Sydney Herbarium has presented quite a number of papers on this issue, for comment within the scientific world. His is a fascinating story which I believe members would find interest. Maybe we should try to seek his attendance at a future meeting.

The group offered Peter a couple of nice bottles of red in appreciation, although were not presented, as someone had left them in the car.

**John Knight**

## **The Practical Pages**

After lunch many of the group travelled to Moruya, to Mark and Carolyn Noakes garden for a practical propagation session and garden visit. This garden was chosen as Mark has a keen interest in *Grevillea*, with a good range growing well. Peter and Mark led half the group around the *Grevillea* gardens whilst the other half were offered some advice about propagating *Grevillea*. This session was led by Phil Trickett and John Knight.

To start off, the group discussed how to select the right type of material to give the best possible results. Each member selected a branch from *Grevillea* 'Forest Rambler', a hardy cultivar which is easy to grow and just as easy to propagate. They were shown how to choose wood suitable for cutting, and the type of wood which should be discarded. Of course, if you need to collect material and only unsatisfactory wood is available, then you must take what you can get. After completing the 'spring test' and the 'snap test' we went to collect material from other plants, using this new found knowledge. This material was to be used to propagate new plants, with each member choosing material from a plant they wished to grow at home.



Last month I mentioned air filled porosity, and the importance of getting the right balance of moisture and air in the cutting mix. I had prepared cutting mix of 2 parts sharp sand, 2 parts medium grade horticultural perlite and 1 part cocopeat. During lunch this mix was placed into a container and allowed to totally fill with water till it was fully saturated.

**The informality of the day is highlighted by this pic, taken by Jillian Peck. Here I explain my preferred method of firming the cutting mix to ensure the perlite is not destroyed**

To undertake an air filled porosity test, it is important that the container holds exactly 1litre, so that the results are easily interpreted.

The container I used is a 1kg Goulburn Valley sliced peaches ( grown and packaged in Australia ) plastic container, which holds precisely 1 litre of water, just perfect for this experiment. In the screw top lid, 4 holes of 10mm diameter had been drilled to allow the mix when drain when the container was inverted. These holes are covered by the first 2 fingers of each hand whilst inverting the container to prevent water spilling out before the container is placed in the measuring jug. The mix was subsequently drained into a measuring jug to see how much free water was in the mix. This free water, when completely drained, will equal the amount of air now available in the mix. In the case of the prepared cutting mix, this was just shy of 300ml drained, which equates to almost 30% air in the mix, which ensures an adequate supply of oxygen for the cuttings to callus and root successfully. The container took about 30 minutes to completely fill with water when immersed in a deep bucket, and about 2 hours to finally drain, so you need to be patient.

This test can be performed on any type of soil, including potting mix, garden soil ( although soil takes a long time to wet and much longer to drain ) or anything else you care to experiment with. Using the test for garden soil is a useful exercise as you can determine what the drainage of a garden bed is likely to be, and then adding other material to the test you can see what improvement various additives make to a garden bed before going to the effort of actually doing the work.

Back to the cuttings. We set a very tight timetable so that everyone could have a go, and also get to walk around with Mark and Peter discussing this and that about Grevilleas. Alas, the best laid plans. The first propagation group were still hard at it, asking questions, stripping or cuttings leaves, discussing hormones, setting cuttings and generally enjoying their afternoon, oblivious to the needs of the rest of the group. I take a fair share of the blame, as once started, find it difficult to keep quiet. There is always something new to discuss, so the timetable went out the garden gate. Phil was having just as much fun with his group. The first garden visiting group returned and just joined in, but the first propagation groups did not get to see the gardens as time was done before we were.



The plans for the day meant a tight schedule, and if we decide a follow up session on propagation is needed, maybe that is all we will do, so everyone gets plenty of attention.

The garden visits conducted by Mark and Peter was also hailed a success. Peter's knowledge was certainly on show as he discussed the various features of the Grevilleas, and gave his opinions on

their suitability for garden cultivation. Mark has a very large garden with well drained raised beds allowing him to grow many species others find difficult. The evidence was here, on show. Improve your drainage. As Aristotle said (or was it his brother) you can always water dry soil, but it is very difficult to dry a perennially wet soil.

All in all the presenters had a great time, hopefully the attendees did too. Peter was impressed by our group members, and Mark Carolyn's garden. It was getting on when we finally packed up, and then Mark and Carolyn offered that the presenters and our guests stay a meal. What could we say. So a few good reds appeared, with cheese of course, followed by salad and lasagna with crusty bread. Cooked to perfection in Mark's huge home made brick pizza oven. While the oven was hot an opportunity was taken to heat up some Banksia cones for seed collection. Another great APS day, which ended a little later than anticipated.



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Thanks to all who participated, and especially to Peter and Margaret Olde for making the trip from Sydney, Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate for assisting with the propagation session, Mark and Carolyn for being such generous hosts. Carolyn needs special mention for working like a Trojan in the weeks leading up to the garden visit, getting the garden into such great order. Her enthusiasm has no bounds. Then she turns around and makes a meal for us. What a girl!

**John Knight**

Sorry about the extra page for those who print the newsletter. There was too much news to fit even pages

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Website can accessed by searching the APS NSW website, and access the South East NSW Group. [austplants.com.au](http://austplants.com.au) and follow the link to South East Region