



Australian Plants Society South East NSW Group

Newsletter 117

April 2016

Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

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Next Meeting

Canberra, ANBG and National Arboretum

Leaving Batemans Bay

8.00am FRIDAY 6th May 2016

Friday 6th meet at the car park turning left off Princes Highway just before Clyde River bridge at Batemans Bay for those coming from the south, ready for an 8.00 am departure.

10.30 am meet at Australian National Botanic Gardens café

Overnight in Canberra

Accommodation suggestions: University House, ANU, Acton; Alvio Tourist Park (Canberra Motor Village), Kunzea St, O'Connor.

Travel and accommodation is up to individuals to organise.

Saturday 7th 9.30 am meet at carpark at the Visitor Centre, National Arboretum

Travel back to the coast will be after lunch Saturday except for those who may wish to stay longer.

**Please notify Margaret Lynch by April 30th if you are coming.
phone 0408447678, email yaraan@southernphone.com.au**

Join a guided walk through the Australian National Botanic Gardens on Friday morning after meeting for a cuppa at the Gardens café at 10.30. ANBG guides will lead an extensive walk through the display gardens including the beautiful rainforest gully and the relatively new red centre garden.

Lunch will be a picnic (self- provided) at the pavilion on the eucalypt lawn. After lunch we will proceed to the nursery and propagation area where staff will lead us on a behind the scenes viewing of the facilities including the pot collection, plants which are part of the living collection but not suitable for planting in Canberra's climate.

The National Arboretum on Forest Drive Canberra, encompasses a 250 hectare site overlooking the western end of Lake Burley Griffin. Trees from around the world have been planted in "forests" on the site and the arboretum is now home to the National Bonsai Collection and a National Rock Garden is also being developed.

On Saturday morning we will meet a guide for an overview of the plantings with the deciduous trees hopefully displaying autumn colour. Then we will proceed to the Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (STEP) to view the design and plantings of this interesting project. STEP is a not-for-profit organisation which gained a site at the arboretum in 2007 to display the trees and understorey plants of the Southern Tablelands. (See p 84 of Australian Plants Vol 28 No 223)

President's Message



Correas presently flowering in the garden remind me that the Rutaceae family contains not only the edible citrus fruits but some of the best Australian native garden plants.

In the autumn months Correas put on a beautiful display with flower colours ranging from reds, oranges and pinks through to white, creams and greens. They tolerate dry conditions and shade so are very useful plants as well. There are many varieties and cultivars to choose from with groundcover forms to small shrubs and also grow well in pots or tubs.

The colourful autumn/winter flowering Croweas also do well in dry, shady areas.

The Philothecas and Boronias have the added advantage of pleasant aroma but even the more pungent Zierias may have a place in the garden. I particularly like the soft grey foliage of *Zieria littoralis*.

Margaret Lynch

Report on last meeting by John Knight

Quite a crowd travelled to Lyrebird Lane Little Forest, to enjoy the extensive garden of Catriona and Phil. As leaders of the Petrophile and Isopogon Study Group, they share a keen interest in domesticating these members of the Proteaceae family. Phil has spent some years perfecting a process of grafting the difficult to grow but horticulturally desirable Western Australian species onto more reliable Eastern states rootstock. From this work he has ventured to graft many difficult to grow plants within the Proteaceae family, including *Banksia*, *Dryandra*, *Grevillea* and *Hakea* species onto stocks which not only survive, but thrive in his garden conditions. (Phil has kindly supplied an extensive list of the successful grafts in his garden, which follows this report)



Phil and Catriona ponder a difficult question during their opening comments at the last meeting

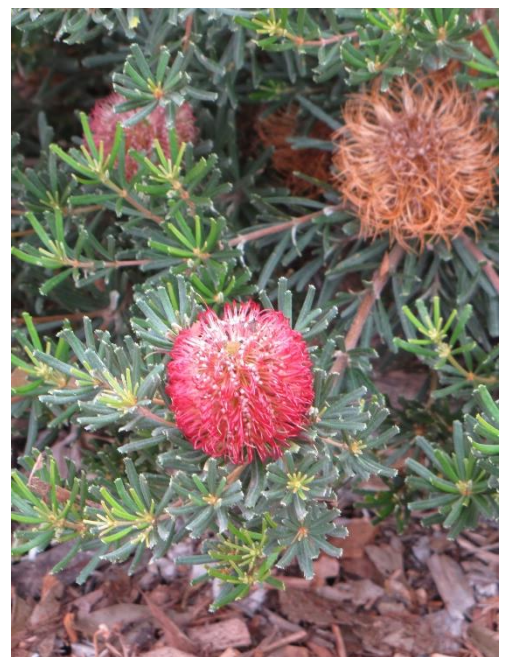
Catriona and Phil's property is located on the edge of the escarpment overlooking Lake Conjola and Milton at an elevation of 350m, just below the Little Forest Plateau area of the Morton National Park, about ten kilometres from the sea, and is a garden set on the rich soils of former rainforest pockets, comprising two hectares of volcanic soil known as Milton monzonite. Whilst we marvelled at the plants and the almost perfect maintenance, both Catriona and Phil were quick to point out aspects which they struggled with. First of course, as the soil retains so much moisture, many plants simply grow too quickly, then being top heavy, are affected negatively by the strong westerly winds which flow down from the nearby escarpment. First timber stakes then heavy star posts have solved the problem. Then of course the roots of many of their favourite plants cannot cope with the constant moisture, and subsequently died suddenly. Hence the serious interest in grafting onto more adaptable rootstock.



*Phil explains the difference between *Banksia vincentia*, *B. spinulosa* and *B. cunninghamii**

This garden allows substantial experimentation into the requirements of an extensive range of Australian plants. Not just Proteaceae plants find a home here, many other plants from quite a range of families happily enjoy what little space is offered. Despite being a large garden, plants often have to earn their space, fitting within the garden beds and jostling with neighbours to be noticed. I guess this should encourage a more flamboyant flowering to ensure each gets the recognition it deserves. Catriona has her doubts as to the validity of this theory.

One of the real treasures is Western Australia's *Banksia occidentalis*, a dwarf form which is grafted onto *B. integrifolia*, which is a large tree. Catriona was keen to point out that such plants can be long term successes, and that apical dominance determines the long term growth habit. That is the scion, in this case a dwarf *Banksia*, determines the final size of the grown plant, despite the strong growth of the stock plant, *B. integrifolia*.





A surprise later addition to the garden is this rockery, which was discovered when a vigorous clump of Kikuyu was finally eradicated.

When asked how the rocks were placed, Catriona was honest enough to say “that’s just where they were”.

Phil is happily and unashamedly extolling the virtues of the many **Eremophila species** growing in this area. When it was pointed out that we were here to learn about Proteaceae, he quickly pointed to a low growing form of **Grevillea iaspicula** collected on a recent Grevillea Study Group excursion.

Grevillea bipinnatifida is a plant not often grown these days, although it was popular in the late 20th century. That seems a long time ago. It was one of the parents of the very popular **G. “Robyn Gordon”**, and subsequently many other similar shrubs. Now grown only by enthusiasts, there is a number of low growing forms found in various locations near Perth, and this one is especially attractive for its prostrate habit, and long flowering period. Phil suggests that it can flower all year if given enough sunlight. Another low growing form known as **G. bipinnatifida “Boys Town”**, was mentioned also as a reliable garden plant.



Both these forms are growing on their own roots. Cultivation practice requires that pruning should be regular, to prevent older growth detracting from the showy plant. Old growth tends to dry off and become brown. Pruning prevents this, and despite cutting off a few flowers, the overall benefits are immense.



Although not flowering at the time of our visit, Phil was keen that we all tried to grow **Isopogon cuneatus**, one of W.A.’s most stunning wildflowers. A number of these plants feature in the garden, and as it is easy to graft successfully onto the eastern states **Isopogon anethifolius**, Phil always has a few in stock. In fact he has been supplying these to some botanic gardens. Another reliable grafted **Isopogon** is **I. “Stuckey’s Hybrid”**, which arose as a chance seedling in the garden of Ken Stuckey in South Australia following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires. It is believed to be a hybrid, possibly between **I. latifolius** and **I. buxifolius**.



Banksia plagiocarpa Hinchinbrook Island

Not all plants in this garden need to be grafted for success. Eastern state Banksias thrive, including the very distinctive and attractive *Banksia plagiocarpa* which grows on Hinchinbrook Island. This small tree has brilliant new growth, first reddish, then brown, light yellowish green then dark green, and the flowers have purple tones. It is easy to grow, requiring good drainage, but adaptive to soil type. Extra water in dry periods will prove beneficial.

Not far away, one finds *Banksia robur*, a vigorous shrub to 3m. Known as Swamp Banksia for its preference for wet heathy environs, and also creek margins, this plant has proved reliable in gardens for many years. It responds very well to hard pruning to keep it in check, and rewards the keen gardener with even greater flower production. Our picture shows just how hard *B. robur* tries to please. I wonder, just how many more flowers could a plant squeeze in?

Banksia robur Noosa heathlands

This garden inspires all who visit, and these few words cannot do justice to the incredible experience offered those who accept a ready invitation.

We are in awe as to just how well Australian plants can grow when given the right conditions. Surely as growers of Australian plants we can learn a lot from the experience of Catriona and Phil's garden. We may not have the terrific soil, or the rainfall, but can do amazing things if we choose the right plants.



To encourage us even further, Phil spent quite some time after lunch demonstrating his grafting techniques, and I am pleased that a few members had a go at this mysterious propagation method, and went home with a little treasure, and great hopes for its success.

Here Phil explains to Ruth just how to go about selecting the right type of growth for both scion and stock, and Ruth seems to have got the message.

Yes they go together just like that !





The mysteries of grafting in detail.

Phil shows the tools and the results.

Secateurs, Stanley Knife, sharp firm knife blade, bucket with 8% bleach for cleansing the stock and scion Methylated spirits for cleaning the implements, paper towel for drying the plant material after



washing in bleach, Nesco film for wrapping the graft in place until the union is strong. And a cup of coffee to steady the nerves as you slice towards a finger.

Phil demonstrating just how to do it.

On the left, selecting the right diameter scion to match his chosen stock material, centre, slicing the scion on either side to create a V shape to fit inside the slit made in the stock, and on the right taping the graft with Nescofilm to protect the graft from drying out whilst the cutting strikes and the graft union is completed. Phil prefers to do cutting grafts, as there is no need to wait until seedling stock material reaches a suitable size, which could take a year or 2. The trick is to ensure you select stock material which roots reliably, and which has proven to be compatible with the scion. It is also important to use stock material which grows in your garden conditions.

For his work, Phil uses *Isopogon anethifolius* for Isopogons, a non-suckering form of *Myoporum acuminatum* for Eremophilas, *Banksia integrifolia* for Banksias and hardy Grevillea hybrids for shrubby Grevilleas. Obviously more work is needed to develop a comprehensive list of what can be grafted to what, and to this end Phil and Catriona maintain an ever increasing store of information. All APS members can help by having a go at grafting, and reporting their results. In this way a better range of impressive plants can be brought into cultivation.

A few members had a go at Phil's, and we now await the results of their work.



Here, Jenny Vine admires her graft of *Eremophila*.

Before we began the garden walk, a quick show and tell session presented some lovely flowers for discussion. As always Jenny John brought along some goodies (plants and a lovely slice) which we appreciated. In particular was a showy spray of the brilliant *Grevillea* 'Golden Lyre', a spreading low growing plant which performs brilliantly in full sun and well drained soil.



Also on display was this unusual form of *Grevillea banksii* (previously known as *G. banksii* var *Forsteri*) Some flowers on the plant, but not all, have a habit of retaining the floral tube attached to the expanding style, such that it appears the flowers are wearing boots. For this reason the plant was, on the day, named *Grevillea* 'Puss in Boots'. As the flowering as such cannot be guaranteed, there is no point in trying to release it as a new cultivar, but it was interesting anyway.

It was a pleasure to have been invited to view the garden at Lyrebird Lane, and all present thanked Catriona and Phil warmly for their generosity. The group presented our hosts with a bottle of fine red in appreciation.

Grafted plants at Lyrebird Lane:

Banksia

aquilonia, benthamiana, blechnifolia, brownii, burdettii, canei, croajingalensis, dryandroides, epica, grandis, laevigata subsp. laevigata, lemanniana, littoralis, media, meisneri var. ascendens, micrantha, occidentalis, occidentalis (miniature), oreophila, paludosa subsp. paludosa, plagiocarpa, praemorsa, prionotes, pulchella, rosserae, saxicola, seminuda, tricuspis, verticillata, violacea

Grevillea

agrifolia, alpina (Tooborac and Warby Range forms), armigera, caleyi, dielsiana, dryandroides subsp. dryandroides, dryandroides subsp. hirsuta, hookeriana, eriobotrya, eriostachya, eryngioides, excelsior, insignis subsp. insignis, insignis subsp. elliotii, intricata, leptobotrys, leucoclada, leucopteris, neorigida subsp. neorigida, petrophiloides, superba, tetragonoloba, thyrsoides subsp. thyrsoides, thyrsoides subsp. pustulata, 'Bulli Beauty', 'Canning Classic', 'Elegance'

Hakea

aculeata, bucculenta, clavata, coriacea, divaricata, erecta, francisiana, grammatophylla, invaginata, lehmanniana, multilineata, obtusa, petiolaris**laurina*, 'Stockdale Sensation'

Isopogon

ceratophyllus, cuneatus, dawsonii, divergens, dubius, fletcheri, formosus, latifolius, petiolaris, pruinosis, scabriusculus subsp. stenophyllus, spathulatus, sphaerocephalus, trilobus, tridens

Dryandra

cirsioides, comosa, cuneata, foliolata, longifolia subsp. archeos, longifolia subsp. longifolia, polycephala, praemorsa var. praemorsa, tenuifolia var. reptans

Eremophila

biserrata, calorhabdos, cuneifolia, delisseri, debilis, denticulata subsp. denticulata, duttonii, ericalyx, forrestii, gilesii, glandulifera, grandiflora, hygrophana, laanii, latrobei, mackinlayi subsp. mackinlayi,

mackinlayi subsp. spathulata, miniata, mirabilis, nivea, oppositifolia, platycalyx subsp. pardalota, pterocarpa, punicea, spectabilis, subfloccosa subsp. subfloccosa, subteretifolia, tetraptera, youngii, cuneifolia*fraseri, 'Big Poly', 'Fairy Floss', 'Permiga Road', 'Summertime Blue', 'Yana Road'

Pimelea

ferruginea, nivea, rosea, spectabilis, suaveolens, physodes

Committee news

Future activities

Your committee continues to work on an evolving program of interesting meetings for this year, activities which will hopefully add to our knowledge of Australian plants, and encouraging all members to get involved.

June 4	Bingi gardens (to be confirmed)
July 2	Wattles
August 6	Grevilleas
September 3	Grasslands, with Friends of Grasslands date to be confirmed
October 8	Garden visit to Cliff Williams property, and driving Western Distributor Road looking at spring flowers
November 5	AGM

If you have any issues or ideas, any of the committee would appreciate your input. (see page 10)

APS NSW 2016 Get-together Tamworth 19-21 August 2016

Tamworth APS members are looking forward to hosting the 2016 NSW Get-Together with a full-on Seminar, dinner and a range of local activities to take part in.

The President's annual dinner will be held for Group Presidents and Secretaries on Friday evening.

Six speakers will enlighten you at the Seminar on Saturday:

Aboriginal Elder, Leonard Waters will Welcome you to Country and talk about the *Plants that are of significance to the Kamilaroi People*.

Rainfall: There is Nothing Average About the Average. Hydrogeologist and APS member Martin O'Rourke will help you to understand why drought – or rather low rainfall – is normal for Australia.

Density and Diversity. Learn from nature. Botanist Warren Sheather, well known to APS members, will outline the advantages of growing plants close together using a wide range of species – even three plants in the one hole!

Been Away to Grow Wildflowers. Growing Australian native plants for cut flowers. APS member Anthony and Annabelle O'Halloran of Bilby Blooms left Canberra to start a Wildflower Farm, now after 16 years what have they learnt? And you can join Anthony and Annabelle for a tag-a-long to the Pillaga on Sunday afternoon.

Conservation Values of Travelling Stock Routes. There are native plants and ecological communities that now only survive in TSRs. These corridors are becoming increasingly valuable but are under threat. Phil Spark from North West Ecological Services will discuss the management issues under consideration.

After lunch visit the DPI's **Native Agro Forestry Trial** planted in 1996 with the purpose of determining the suitability of native species for timber production in an area of low rainfall, and the **Grassy Yellow Box Woodland**, one of the few remnants of Yellow Box Woodland surviving in the Tamworth area.

Then enjoy afternoon tea at a nearby **award-winning native garden** created by another of our APS members.

On Sunday, enjoy **Breakfast with the Birds** courtesy of the Tamworth Bird Watchers at the Tamworth Regional Botanic Gardens and afterwards, view the nearby **Rare and Threatened Species Garden** established by the Tamworth Group lead by the late Bill Hardin who was recipient of an APS 2015 Conservation Award.

Carr's Park Garden, a 5 acre property in a semi-rural area of Tamworth established by one of our APS members will be open for viewing. It is planted with a wide range of eucalypts and in addition features acacias, grevilleas, eremophilas, hakeas and macadamia cultivars.

Visit **Peel Wetlands**. Sited at the conjunction of storm water outlets, the area was a bare flat horse paddock in 1995 until Brett Coble, another of our APS members, lead a dedicated group to undertake the mammoth task of transformation. Now the wetlands play a vital role in wildlife conservation, filtering sediments, chemicals and rubbish from the storm water run-off and supporting a diversity of flourishing plants.

To **Register** for the Get-Together, complete the registration form in the April issue of *Native Plants for New South Wales*, or contact Lee Esdaile at pjltesdaile@gmail.com.

A Few Woes...

by Leigh Murray

I've had quite a few gardening problems lately. Most have been related to dryness. I can't figure out why it's been such a problem at Tuross, where it hasn't seemed hugely dry, but it's pretty obvious at Queanbeyan where we've had an amazingly dry, hot and windy early autumn.

At Queanbeyan, we've lost well-established but not yet ancient plants in the past few weeks; they just dried out. I've done my best to water the neediest plants, and may have saved a few, but others seemed determined to go.

At Tuross, I've been fighting to try to revive our adored, long-established and sizeable (5m) *Eucalyptus leucoxylon rosea*. I decided that dryness was the cause of its die-back, so first I tried a soaker hose. No good. Then I put deep-watering granules around it, and watered them in well, to re-wet dried-out soil. I did this multiple times for short bursts every week or two for a month or two. For a while, this looked very promising. The tree began to respond by producing many new shoots, even near the top of the tree on previously bare branches. But every time there was a bout of strong winds (which happens often there), some of the new growth would be burnt off. The tree was still looking pretty good until a couple of weeks ago when we arrived back to find most of the higher growth had been burnt, and only the lower growth was still looking good. We don't know how windy it had been while we were away.

I'm beginning to think this might be a losing battle - that perhaps it is just too dry in that area to support a healthy medium-sized eucalypt, and specifically that (bird-magnet) eucalypt. I'm wondering if I will eventually have to replace it with something that is both very drought resistant and resistant to Phytophthora. Perhaps no such eucalypt exists, and I'll have to branch out.

Close to the *E. leucoxylon* is a largish *E. lansdowneana*. Until recently, it had been flourishing - flowering enthusiastically for long periods, and really pulling in the birds. But about 6 months ago, all the leaves on one big branch suddenly died. The rest of the tree looked fine. So I didn't worry - not until the same thing happened again on two more big branches a couple of months ago. I felt around the soil, and it did seem very dry. So I gave it the same deep-watering granules treatment. It seems to be responding.

...and a Couple of Blessings

On a more positive note, *Grevillea* 'Flamingo' is finally hitting its straps. It's flowering well, and the birds are developing a taste for its flowers, which are a slightly stronger pink than they used to be. My preference is for the smaller spider and toothbrush-flowered grevilleas, but Flamingo makes a good long-flowering standby for the birds. (*G.* 'Sylvia' looks gorgeous with wonderful deep pink flowers, but the birds generally ignore it.) Other blessings include some amazingly robust plants (such as *Correa glabra*). And a small *Grevillea arenaria* popped up in exactly the right place (where its probable parent died).

So, there's bad news and there's good news...

Other members should consider reporting their successes and failures, so we can all learn about the response of varying plants in our local conditions. Your newsletter is the ideal vehicle for any comments.

Newsletter Editor and Sue are enjoying a third week in Tasmania, and so far the weather has been kind, with rain on only 1 day. Time has been spent in the rugged west coast, and although the Tarkine has been badly affected by bushfires in recent months, most areas are now open for visits. We have of course travelled some distance along bumpy roads only to be met with a “Road Closed” sign at a distant junction. One would have thought it prudent to advise of closures where the roads left the main road. Only one little disaster when we came across a fallen log, partly cleared to allow traffic to pass. Cars that is, not Winnebago’s, and we did not quite have enough side clearance to get through. We had to of course as the road was not one that you might entertain turning around on, no matter what your vehicle. A little damage, more to the driver’s ego, as the passenger let known that we should never have come this way.

Still we have had a lot of fun, and have seen platypus in the wild, well away from the advertised ‘touristy’ areas, so we could watch them for some time without fear of being disturbed.

The unusual Proteaceae plant *Bellenden montana*, Mountain Rocket was in full fruit at Cradle Mountain, where we were blessed with sunny, warm days up to 19 degrees.

It was most conspicuous along the roadsides in full sun, and plants which were competing for light were much less thrifty, with few fruit and little new growth. It is difficult to reconcile that this small subalpine shrub is related to Banksia and others in the family, but it does have the all important 4 flower parts in its terminal cream flowers. Foliage could be regarded as similar to the fleshy leaved Isopogons.



From the wilds of the mountains we travelled to the coast to get some internet service and catch up with family by phone.

We had to travel to Queenstown before the service was reliable, but we got to see a tough footy match between some tough players on the gravel surfaced football ground. The only one in the world we were informed, and the opposition players were certainly glad that they did not play here all that often. Of course the local team Queenstown Crows had a big win, as the other team didn’t enjoy scrapping in the gravelly surface. That’s it for now.

Don’t forget to send any newsworthy articles by email to johnonvista49@outlook.com at any time. Meeting reports, committee news and plant articles will be published in the next available newsletter once received. Hopefully this process will prove satisfactory.

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