



Australian Plants Society

South East NSW Group

Newsletter 116

March 2016

Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

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Next Meeting

10.30am SATURDAY 2nd April 2016

Banksias and other Proteaceae plants

At the home and garden of
Catriona Bate and Phil Trickett

Lyrebird Lane Milton (map on page 10)

This coming meeting promises to be a real treat for anyone with an interest in the wide diversity of plant forms in the Proteaceae family. The meeting will start with a broad overview of the Family characteristics, and then Catriona and Phil will lead us on a tour, with discussion on the many forms growing in their large garden. They have chosen to highlight Banksia, which feature prominently and of which there are many forms flowering at this time of the year. However, there will be a range of other plants flowering, and as we wander, there will be ample opportunity to discuss these as well. Bring a camera to record your visit, as you will want to remember all that is on offer. See pages 7 and 8 for detailed information on the Lyrebird Lane garden.

After lunch, Phil has agreed to demonstrate his technique for grafting the harder to grow plants, including Banksia and Isopogon, and members will be offered an opportunity to try their hand at this seemingly mysterious form of propagation. If grafting is not your thing, there will also be advice on propagation by cutting, and it is not yet too late to put in some Banksia, Grevillea or others in this family.

As usual sensible footwear, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and water are advisable.

Presidents Message,



Banksias have some of the most strikingly beautiful flowers of all our native plants and many are starting to flower now, providing a source of nectar for birds and insects over the autumn/winter period.

Some favourites in my garden include *Banksia baueri* which at last I have had success growing in a sunny, very well drained site. The long awns on the flower give the inflorescence a cute woolly appearance hence it is often referred to as woolly or possum banksia. The prostrate *Banksia blechnifolia* and *Banksia repens* are also admired for their tough interesting foliage.

All WA species, but we have many beautiful banksias in the eastern states. The adaptable *Banksia robur* certainly rivals any from the west with its lime green flowers and large leathery leaves, 3 have prime position in my garden.

Margaret Lynch

Some other eastern beauties include *B. ericifolia*, *B. serrata*, *B. spinulosa* and *B. integrifolia* all of which now have a dwarf or prostrate form available. So even in the smallest of gardens there is room for at least one of these important winter food plants.

Report on last meeting by Margaret Lynch

APS Visit to the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens

A group of keen APSers braved the forecast hot day and gathered for morning tea at the shady and pleasant Friends shelter at the Gardens picnic area.

To begin the walk Margaret took advantage of the beautiful *Acacia blayana* (Brogo wattle) providing shade nearby. The many adaptations of this widespread genus were discussed including moisture conservation through the development of phyllodes (flattened stems containing few stomata) which replace leaves in many species.

As the group moved to the shade of a *Eucalyptus longifolia* (woollybutt) at the sensory garden there was opportunity to reflect on the adaptive characteristics which make the eucalypts a common site throughout most areas of Australia. These included leaves often with a thick cuticle, hanging vertically to the sun's rays, thick or reflective bark and the presence of epicormic buds which sprout following fire.



Margaret explains the adaptation of Acacia leaves beneath a mature Acacia blayana
Photo by Amanda Marsh

A grove of *Allocasuarina littoralis* displayed green branchlets often mistaken for leaves which are instead reduced to tiny scales, another water conservation measure. Banksias and a magnificent Xanthorrhoea extended the discussion on adaptations for fire survival.

Other plants (apart from eucalypts) were noted for oil glands in their leaves giving them a distinct smell and led to the question of “why is this so”? A mechanism to discourage browsing perhaps yet wallabies love the minty Prostantheras?

From plants adapted to dry and sunny situations we moved to look briefly at the contrasting characteristics of rainforest plants in the plantings next to the sensory garden. Here challenges in a sometimes dark and damp environment lead to adaptations including large leaves to obtain maximum sunlight rather than avoid it.

Pollination and the many specific adaptations developed allowing this to occur were also touched on throughout the walk.

The infinite number of survival techniques displayed by our native plants gives much food for thought and provides a fascinating insight into the development of our flora over thousands of years.

After this short walk we continued to the Gardens nursery and propagation area.

Here we sat in the coolish breezeway while manager and fellow APS member, Michael Anlezark outlined the changing functions of the area and plans to further enhance its productivity and efficiency.

Groups of volunteers work on propagating the plants of the region for not only the Gardens own living collection displays but also for sales to the public, revegetation projects and weed swaps. The latter bring in a substantial income now expected from ERBG to contribute towards the budget. These environmental projects come largely from local land services where guaranteed local provenance is required. Currently there are eight and a half thousand plants ready for such projects including some for local salt marsh revegetation.

The approval for the redevelopment of the Visitors Centre area to allow for more visitor facilities will see the herbarium moved to the nursery precinct. There this important collection will be housed under climate controlled conditions with the ability for fumigation when necessary. This will ensure a much better long term storage outcome for the specimens housed in the Herbarium.

Michael also envisages the area becoming a science hub with the seedbank, herbarium and propagation facilities all under the one roof, better enabling the ERBG’s core conservation and education goals.

The Gardens remain part of Mogo State Forest and following a visit from Forestry Corporation representatives it appears there will be a more mutually beneficial partnership developed into the future.

Following Michael’s talk the group was shown the propagation areas and the processes carried out there further explained.

Members thanked Margaret and Michael and then adjourned for lunch. Margaret and Amanda left us at this stage as they had another commitment, to lead another group around the gardens in the afternoon.

After lunch the rest of the group strolled over to the Arboretum display gardens and then through the Creekside rainforest area, which has developed into a lovely shaded walk. Before leaving members browsed the plant sales area, selecting some treasures to take home.



Committee news

Future activities

Your committee has almost finalised the program for the coming year, and has an interesting and varied range of activities to help us all learn more about growing Australian plants, and encouraging all members to get involved.

May 6, 7

Canberra trip: Margaret Lynch is co-ordinating a visit to ANBG, and the National Arboretum

Details are below, and members wishing to attend should contact Margaret to discuss, 0408 447 678

Friday May 6 Meet in the carpark eastern side of Princes Highway just before the Clyde R bridge in Batemans Bay. Park near the toilet block.

Leave Batemans Bay at 8.00 am. Travel to ANBG, meet for morning tea (around 10.00) in cafe area. Guides have been organised for an extensive walk including the relatively new Red Centre Garden and the display glasshouse. Lunch will be a picnic (self-provided) at the pavilion on the eucalypt lawn allowing a break before proceeding 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 part of the living collection not suitable for Canberra's climatic conditions).

On Saturday 7th we will meet a guide at the National Arboretum for an overview including autumn display and then we will proceed (with guide) to the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP) to view the design and plantings of this interesting project. (See p 84 of Australian Plants Vol 28 No 223)

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

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

Travel (car pooling) and accommodation is up to individuals to arrange.

June 4 Bingi gardens

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.

Membership Renewals

Annual memberships come due for renewal at each quarter of the year and I send reminders, with an attached form, to members at the beginning of March, June, September and December. The preferred method of payment is by direct credit as detailed below:.

BSB: 062 217

Account Number: 0090 7163

Account Name: Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd

Reference: Your surname and membership number

However, if you prefer, payment by Cheque and Money Order, payable to Australian Plants Society NSW can be forwarded **with the completed form** to APS NSW, Membership Officer, PO Box 3066, BOWENFELS, NSW 2790.

To help me to keep accurate records of our SENSW Group would you also please send me an e-mail (peteandjenny.john@gmail.com) giving your name, type of membership and method of payment.

If you have any queries or require a copy of the renewal form you can contact me at the above e-mail address.

New Members

We are pleased to welcome recently joined members Norm and Lesley Hulands of Moruya. Welcome to our group. We trust your involvement will be fruitful.

Jenny John

Membership Officer APS SENSW Group

Newsletter Editor is off on holidays in Tasmania for the next couple of months. The newsletter will be published as best as practical during this time, and any articles for inclusion can be sent 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.

Plant of the Month

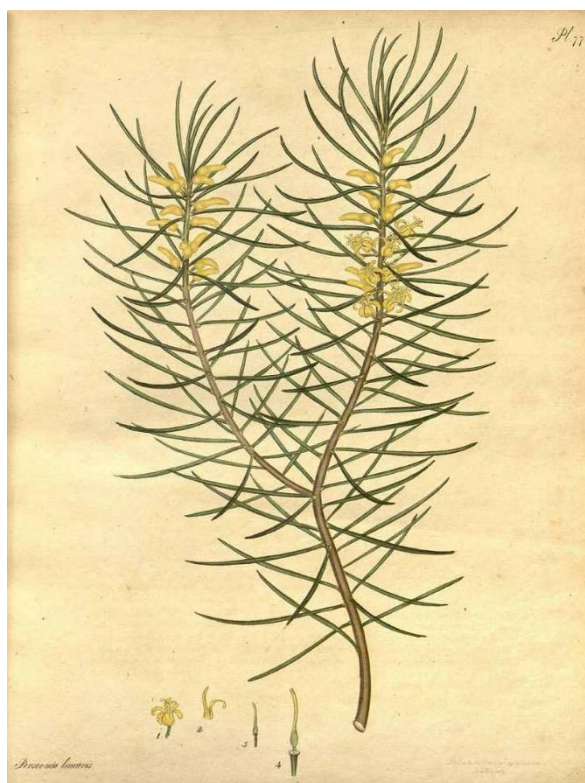
Persoonia linearis

When people speak of the Geebung group of plant species, it immediately brings to mind the Banjo Paterson rhyme The Geebung Polo Club; when *It was somewhere up the country in the land of rock and scrub that they formed an institution called the Geebung Polo Club.*

In those areas of rock and scrub, Geebungs are commonly found.

Geebungs are, as we know, the *Persoonia* genus, belonging to the large and varied family Proteaceae. The common name was taken from the Aboriginal name for the genus in the language of the Dharug people; the current Latin name was most likely given by an English botanist, botanical artist and engraver, Henry Charles Andrews, who honoured the Dutch botanist (who specialised in fungi) Christian Hendrik Persoon. The original (or base) name for the *Persoonias* was *Linkia*, a name coined by a German botanist, but this was eventually rejected in favour of Andrews' *Persoonia*.

The 18th and 19th century botanists in England and Europe must have had quite close relationships – there appears to be a considerable amount of species author swapping. In addition, well known nurserymen who propagated plants from the New World for avid collectors with large estates were honoured by having species named after them. An example of this is that Andrews' daughter married the plantsman John Kennedy, who assisted Andrews in the descriptions of the plants that he (Andrews) illustrated, and who also propagated many of the species.



Henry Charles Andrews artwork

Andrews was an accomplished botanist and artist, in that he was not only the artist, but also engraver, colourist and publisher at a time when most illustrations were drawn by professional artists, many with no botanical knowledge. His first publication was *The Botanists Repository*, issued between 1797 and 1812 in ten volumes at a half-crown an issue, thereby making images of plants accessible to the growing number of amateur gardeners in Britain. (I found his illustration on the internet). The *Repository* was a serious rival to the Kew Gardens publication of the time, *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. Naturally, the Kew establishment was very critical of Andrews' publication, noting that the drawings "are often inexact and generally inadequate to be of any use botanically."

Plant of *P. linearis*



But to get on with *Persoonia linearis*. The Type specimen was collected 'in the East of New Holland, on the banks of the river near the mouth of Port Jackson'. The *Australian Plant Name Index* cites the Type, quoting Andrews, "J. Robertson ... raised this species from seeds in the year 1794; with whom it flowered last year [1799], for the first time in England; and for whose kind communication of a specimen in flower (from which our drawing was made) we beg our grateful acknowledgement."

The flowers of *Persoonia linearis* are single, golden yellow, and hairy on the outside, less than 2cm long. The species is said to be auxotelic (in botanyspeak, meaning that the flowering shoot grows on to a leafy stem. Like, for example, *Callistemon* and *Melaleuca*). The fruit (drupes in botanyspeak) are green and globular, edible, enjoyed by Indigenous people, and swamp wallabies.

The bark of *P. linearis* is a really interesting feature. Pale to dark grey in colour, it is light and flaky in texture; but peel off the layers and underneath is a glorious dusky dark red base. The unusual colours and qualities of this bark make it a favourite for the construction of bark pictures.

In their *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, Rodger Elliot and David Jones say that it is rare to have success with germination from seed – it may take up to four or more years. This leads to the question: what method did J. Robertson use to germinate plants for Henry Charles Andrews? It is not likely that rooting hormones were available then, so how did he manage it? Regarding propagation from cuttings, Elliot and Jones say that success here is also variable. They advise not to remove the tips of the cuttings if they wilt, as this will be quickly followed by blackened leaves.

Flowering branch of *P. linearis*



Persoonia linearis hybridises sporadically with several other members of the genus. The hybrids are found scattered in areas where both grow. The renowned botanist, Robert Brown, collected a specimen in the Lane Cove Valley that he considered to be a hybrid between *P. linearis* and *P. levis*. He named this hybrid *P. lucida*.

REFERENCES

Australian Plant Name Index, IBIS database, Centre for Australian Biodiversity Research, Australian Government, Canberra; viewed 18 Jan 2016

Elliot, Rodger, and Jones, David L. *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, v. 7, Lothian, Melbourne: 1997

Wikipedia. Henry Charles Andrews (1794-1830); viewed 18 Jan 2016

Jenny Liney

Garden visit – Milton, South Coast April 2nd 2016

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. While the national park and much of the surrounding bush is classic Sydney sandstone country, this garden is on the rich soils of former rainforest pockets, and once used for dairy farming and cedar cutting. The volcanic soil is known as Milton monzonite. The garden comprises two hectares, the steep slopes near the creek running through the back of the property remaining original rainforest while the relatively level areas nearer the house are gradually being developed, with gardens replacing extensive areas of lawn dominated by kikuyu grass, previously introduced for cattle.

I now let Catriona relate their story :

“We chose this property because it seemed to be able to support native plants (demonstrated by the number of healthy *Hakea salicifolia* trees), had good rainfall (we were sick of the drought in Canberra), was large enough for our purposes but still manageable, and had an area suitable for creating a garden which did not require the destruction of existing bush. In addition it had a suitable existing house, and was no further away from family than Canberra had been.

In terms of climate, the Little Forest locality has around double Canberra's rainfall (around 1,200mm a year), more moderate temperatures, and no frost. Winter temperatures may be as low as six degrees overnight in winter, but in summer can reach the forties although high twenties and early thirties with humidity are more typical. It differs from the coastal climate of nearby Ulladulla in being less influenced by easterly weather patterns although we do experience east coast lows which usually deliver large amounts of rain in a short period. A major influence is the strong westerly wind which comes in over the escarpment in the winter months. We have also noticed that our climate appears to be more moderate than south coast towns such as Batemans Bay.

This garden has given us the opportunity to further pursue the growing of native plants after outgrowing our suburban block in Ainslie, Canberra. It is now about six years old, and is constantly evolving. There were many practical considerations which influenced the design, such as prevailing winds, slope, and drainage. While there was no overall design, we wanted to achieve a relatively informal garden that:

- celebrates and displays Australian native plants
- is filled with a wide range of plants we love such as banksias, dryandras, grevilleas, isopogons, waratahs and eremophilas; and allows for the study and reporting of their progress in cultivation
- allows for growing trials of grafted plants, many of which are endangered in the wild
- is attractive to native birds and insects
- provides us with privacy
- requires relatively low maintenance
- complements and enhances the sea and escarpment views
- is a sustainable landscape, structurally and botanically diverse



Before (2010)



and after (2014).

Our first aim was to progressively clear the existing exotic garden which was high maintenance, overgrown and weedy. It was dominated by plants which spread aggressively via suckering, bulbs and tubers as well as seed – a long-term elimination challenge. We also had many plants in pots brought from Canberra, which needed to be planted out. Some of these were precious grafts dug out of our Ainslie garden and transplanted as advanced plants. We quickly planted a screen of *Grevillea johnsonii* beside a neighbouring garage for privacy (now at least five metres tall). Plants are easier for us to maintain once they are in the garden, as they do not usually require watering after planting.



We first tackled the existing garden around the house, then along the driveway, at the same time developing a large new garden area on the level space on the south of the block. We extended the beds around the house down the existing slope for good drainage. Along the driveway we raised the beds with additional soil and/or larger edging rocks.

The garden incorporates curving paths to create different vistas. The rock naturally occurring on the property has been used extensively

for garden edging, to build height in garden beds, and for rockeries. A visit to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens in Victoria inspired the use of the smaller rocks in bands about a foot wide for garden edging. The gravel used for the paths is sourced locally and has a range of sizes and shapes which has a less formal effect. We are also planting out the sight of the fence line and road to incorporate the wider view of the ocean into the garden.



Extracts from an article in the Garden Design Study Group Newsletter NL89, February 2015.

This is a garden to inspire, and we welcome everyone to come along and discover just how well Australian plants can grow when conditions suit.

The map on page 10 shows how to get there. Allow up to an hour to get there from Batemans Bay.

Grevillea georgeana

The coming months present many opportunities to get out and experience the treasures of the south coast.

The Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens are hosting the annual Easter Fair, which includes a giant plant sale. A great chance to get some local plants into your garden while the soil is still warm.

Giant plant sale and Easter fair



plants 25-50% off



jumping castle, cake & craft stalls, buskers, 2nd hand books, face painting, kids Play Space, gnome painting, Shop bargains, sausage sizzle, eat at the Gardens Café or bring a picnic

9am-2pm

26 March

expert garden advice

Members with an interest in the Arts are well catered for. APS member Carolyn Killen, of



IVY HILL GALLERY

1795 Tathra Bermagui Road Wapengo 2550

hosts the exhibition *“Look at Me”*

*With paintings by Wanda Akkerman, Tim Moorhead and Dianne Williams
ceramics by Jenni Young Bourke*

17 March to 17 April 2016

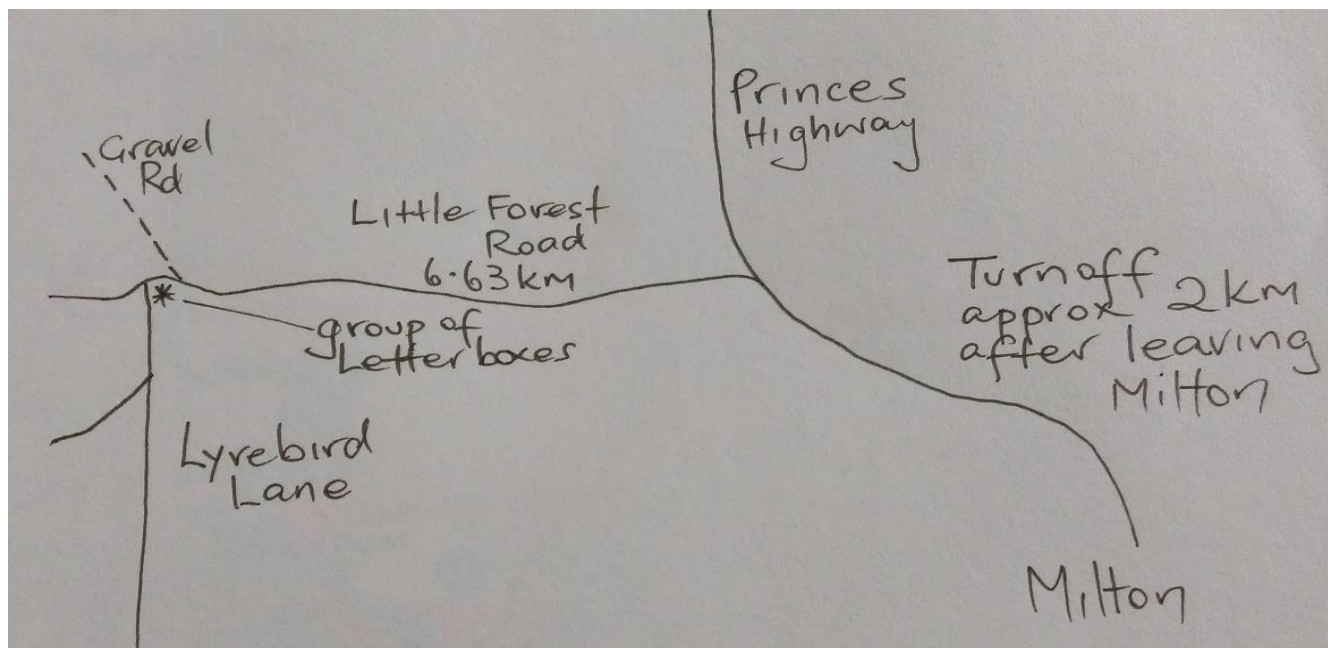
Open Thursday to Sunday 10 – 5

Ph. 02 6494 0152 for details

**Bega Valley Regional Gallery,
Zingel Place Bega,
in conjunction with the
Art Gallery of NSW
presents FLORA AUSTRALIS,
featuring Australian artists and the floral
still life, till 11th June 2016.
Gallery hours Tuesday to Friday 10 till 4,
and Saturday till noon**



Margaret Preston Still Life with National Flowers 1957



Directions to Catriona and Phil's

Take the Princes Highway north, travel through Milton, look for the turnoff to Little Forest Road (signposted) on the left, about 2km after leaving Milton. Travel on Little Forest Road for 6.63km,

Nearing the turn into Lyrebird Lane, Little Forest Road veers left.

On the right is a gravel track. Do not take this ! On the corner of Lyrebird Lane is a group of letterboxes. Here, turn left. The garden is at the end of the bitumen, on the right hand side. You will know you are at the right house site, because the garden features native plants.

COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

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