

*Hakea fraseri*

# Australian Plants Society

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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**President:**

Col Mulquinney – 6772 6012 (H)

**Secretary:**

Kristine Gow

**Treasurer:**

Phillip Rose – 6775 3769 (H)

## President's Message

When one returns from a two week break it is always interesting to see what has happened to one's plants. Usually in my garden there are casualties from a lack of water but only one this year despite a breakdown in the 'automatic' watering system. I'll have to admit to getting a kick out of seeing flowers and new shoots on plants that have never flowered or grown previously. *Hakea decurrens* pendulous 'Pink Lace' has delicate small pale pink flowers for the first time while the several helichrysum plants have magnificent blooms of various colours. *Crocea exalata* 'Pink Blush' is also quite stunning. One plant that I have high hopes for, *Eucalyptus* 'Living legend', a grafted plant originally from Toowoomba Nurseries has put out many new shoots but no buds yet. *Eremophila sargentii* seems to have gone to plant heaven through lack of water.

I am looking forward to Suzanne's talk at the AGM in February. Suzanne has been collecting information from our monthly flower displays. It will be interesting to see how and when individual plant species flower in our local region. For those wanting to have plants flowering at a specific time of year, the information could well be very useful. As yet I have not seen a native garden where most of the native plants are flowering at the same time. I assume that one exists somewhere.

Glenda and I enjoyed our Christmas 'do'. Wal Whalley's talk and the excursion were great. I have decided to take some close-up photos of some of these flowering grasses but as yet have not had an opportunity to start. Wal and Pam wrote us a nice letter saying how much they too enjoyed the day.

Don't forget the AGM in February. It's your chance to have a say in the future of the Society in Armidale and the activities undertaken. The current committee is still trying to determine a diary of events for the year and some interesting ideas are being considered. One such idea involves a 'Propagating Swap Day' where members propagate cuttings from some of their plants to swap with others. This Swap Day is being considered as part of our next Christmas function.

Cheers

Col

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSLETTER ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED at ANY TIME**

Postal address as above or email – jrnevin @ northnet.com.au

## GROUP INFORMATION

*(group commenced August 1977)*

We are a very friendly and helpful group who enjoy monthly meetings, garden visits and field trips to help members to enjoy the search for knowledge about our native flora. Most of all we range from raw beginners to others who have been at the game for many years - all willing to share their knowledge.

**General Meetings** are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except December, January, June and July) at The Tree Group Woodland Centre where a display of flowers is presented by members.

Old and new members and visitors are very welcome to these meetings and any outings that we organise.

**Committee Meetings** are held on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm – see diary for where - members are welcome to these meetings too.

**Annual General Meeting** is held in February.

**Solstice Function** is held in June.

**Wattle Day Function** is held on a day closest to 1 September.

**December Meeting** is taken up by an end of year function, usually a BBQ or picnic.

**ALL YOU NEED TO JOIN OUR GROUP IS A GREAT LOVE OF OUR NATIVE PLANTS**

*Cover: Background is adapted from a drawing of Hakea fraseri in Forest Flora, NSW*

### Living With A Gardener by *Maureen Stahls*

If I had buds on my extremities  
And grew leaves instead of hair  
If I flowered every spring  
And shed seeds, which needed care  
*Maybe you would look at me.*

If I belonged to the Banksia family  
Or had been plated "by the moon"  
If bugs crawled on my trunk  
Or I needed a good prune  
*Maybe you would be interested in me.*

If I grew inside a pot  
And had soil around my roots  
If birds perched on my limbs  
And I gave out brand new shoots  
*Maybe you would talk to me.*

If I was a rare botanical specimen  
Or a plant that was self-sown  
If I blossomed in a swampy patch  
Where no other plant had grown  
*Maybe you would love me.*

*We visited the Stahls' garden in Colac when we went to the Fred Rogers Seminar in Victoria last year.*

### *Myoporum floribundum*

Reading your Dec/Jan newsletter I was attracted to the item by "the Sheathers" dealing with *Myoporum floribundum*. Two or three years ago I purchased M. Bateae, the pink flowering variety and was awe struck by the prolific flowering and beauty of the species.

At the time of the last "Botanica" Art exhibition at the Botanic Gardens Sydney I visited the native plants section of their plant sales and found *M. floribundum* – give it a "go" I thought and bought one (amongst other items) – at this time (Dec 04) it has reached 0.9 meter in height and during the recent flowering season was completely covered in white flowers (almost "frosted" white) – a sheer delight!

I agree with "the Sheathers" and suggest that everyone should have this plant – (several of them!) in their garden.  
*- a letter from Kyrill Taylor (Hon. Sec. East Hills Group APS)*

## AGM – 15 February 2005

We need your help to revitalise the group and make it more interesting for you, the members, and potential new members.

All positions will be made redundant so anyone can become involved in an area they are interested in or wish to find out more about.

If you are interested then please let one of the present committee know or come along on the night and nominate yourself from the floor.

If you think you may like a position but not really sure of what it entails then ask one of the present committee.

### Positions to be filled are:

President

Vice Presidents X 2

Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Officer

Auditor

Publicity Officer

Arboretum Coordinator

Markets in The Mall Coordinator

Newsletter Editor

Newsletter Printer & Collator

Hospitality X 2

Supper Coordinator

Company Delegate

Monthly Plant List Collator

Occupational Health & Safety Officer

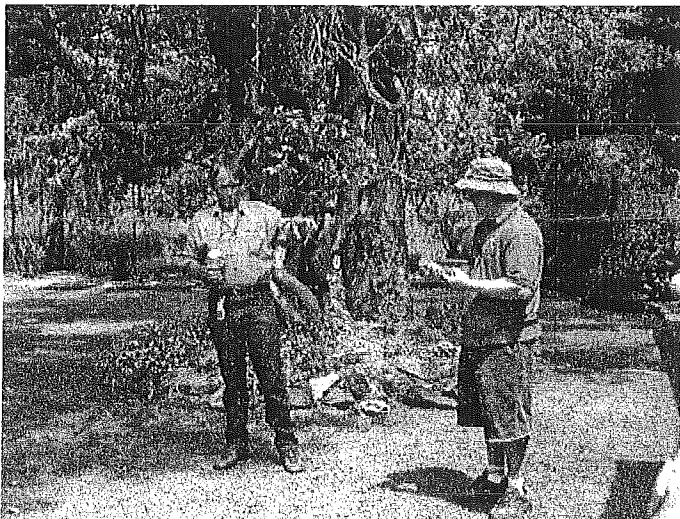
Environmental Officer

Do come along to the meeting on Thursday 15 February to show your support for the successful running of our group.

Check your label to see if your subs are due. A red dot means that you are overdue and two red dots mean that this is your last newsletter. Please ignore this if you have already paid your subs.

## Reptile Display at the Open Gardens for St Peters

Reptiles in the garden can be quite a challenge for most of us. Wildlife carers everywhere see many situations when it is safer for the reptile and caller if the 'visitor' is caught and relocated. Those reptiles which are friendlier can be very helpful by eating a wide variety of bugs and ants. A safe lizard lodge is all they require, something easily included in rock walls. To enhance the native garden theme Northern Tablelands Wildcare presented a few of the more common reptiles likely to be uncaptured in gardens. Encouraging information was provided in copies of the new 'Backyard Buddies' leaflets from NPWS and information display. Local reptile relocators, Shannon Cobley and Michelle Clayfate (Wires) gave valuable information on safety, habitat and lifecycles of likely inhabitants with some live examples. A large carpet python which had recently been removed from side panels of a 4Wdrive, made quite an impression as did the very slippery brown snake. Also on display was a blue-tongue lizard, very much at home on the Nevin's back patio sitting on top of his home under the nice warm pavers. A fine example of living with wildlife.  
*by Julia Rose*



Michelle Clayfate and Shannon Cobley



*Aren't I just beautiful? I live at the Nevin's.*

## End of Year Function

On Sunday 5 December a large group of members attended the Christmas function at Col and Glenda Mulquinney's home in Eulahbar Crescent, Armidale. Wal Whalley presented an excellent talk on Native Grasses. He led us through the identification process that involves a systematic series of steps;

- a preliminary recognition of the plant
- b reference to keys and comparison with herbarium exhibits
- c assessment of growth habit, height, colour, type of inflorescence and special structures.

Next, an easy to understand naming of different parts of the plant. Then a description of the different growth habits which include tussocks, mat,, cane and hummock grasses. Finally a consideration of the varieties of inflorescence and seeds.

Wal provided us with an easy to understand set of notes for permanent reference. Then it was out into the field for some practical identification in the Apex Lookout Park. Despite the mountain bike races in the background, we had no trouble in finding an astounding number of grasses. Wal gave us a species list that shows over 100 identified plants in the park, although not all were native varieties. We found good representations of *Austrodanthonia*, *Bothriochloa*, *Chloris*, *Cynodon*, *Dichanthium*,

Elymus, Poa, Sorghum, Sporobolus and Themeda species. In addition we also identified over 20 other native species. These included Ajuga, Asperula, Bracteantha, Dianella, Hydrocotyle, Hypericum, Lissanthe, Lomandra, Velleia, Vittadinia, Wahlenbergia species.

Having completed a good circuit of the park we returned for a very enjoyable late lunch out in the garden. Col and Glenda then treated us to a walk around the garden with many members armed with plastic bags just in case slips of foliage might fall into their hands. There was serious discussion about the *Grevillea alpina* and the extent to which it should be pruned. Gloria Sheather's suggestion showed just how timid some of us were when it comes to pruning.

Everyone agreed it was an excellent day and just how lucky we are to have such a pool of expertise within our town.

Thank you to Wal and to Glenda and Col for your help in making our end of year function such a success.

For those wishing to buy supplies of *Microlaena* seed, we understand that this can be purchased from Native Seeds in Melbourne.

by *Phil Rose*

## Another Nursery

Strictly for those who enjoy a Nursery Crawl and a bit of a challenge – taken from the *Melaleuca* and allied Genera Study Group Newsletter.

One of their members – Liesbeth Uijtewaal just happens to live in the Netherlands and she and her husband (Bert) have "Open Garden" quite regularly and have established a small nursery, under the name of "Merrigum", to sell Australian plants.

I am sure that if anyone is just passing that way they could get the exact address from Colin Crawford at 16 Eldorado St, Bracken Ridge, Qld. Or ring (07) 32698256

### HELP NEEDED

**We need a garden to be entered in the St Peter's Open Garden weekend (1<sup>st</sup> weekend in November) so that we can hold a Native Plant Sale. This is our major fundraiser of the year. Please let the committee know if you are prepared to enter your garden or have a suggestion of someone that we can approach.**

## Arboretum Report by Pat Urbonas

Our final working bee for the year was 4 December. It was a very pleasant afternoon for gardening and so we did some weeding, spraying, pruning, watering and rubbish collecting. We only lost 3 plants during the year and that was due to them drying out after being planted out. Members on the watering roster can take credit for the low losses.

Thanks to the following: R Boyd, V Ford, J & B Nevin, S Robertson and P Urbonas.

## MOLE STATION WEEKEND – 30/31 October 2004

On Saturday morning 13 members and visitors met for morning tea at the Torrington Hall. After a drink and a chat we found the missing John and Vanessa Hunter family and John Williams just up the Silent Grove road and close to our first stop. This was a granite outcrop on private property which was rumoured to have lots of *Prostanthera teretifolia* growing on it and I was hoping to find a pink form of this plant. No luck, as the plants had finished flowering, apart from about half a dozen which had the normal blue flowers. We did see *Micromyrtus sessilis*, *Calytrix tetragona* and *Kunzea parvifolia* or obovate in full flower plus flowers on *Boronia ledifolia*, *Stylidium laricifolium*, *Dillwynia sericea*, *Brachycome sturtii*, *Kunzea bracteolata* and *Leucopogon melaleucoides*. Other plants seen were *Eucalyptus prava*, *Leptospermum novaeangliae*, *Actinotus heliantha*, *Brachyloma saxicola*, *Leucopogon neoangliae* and *Acacia granitica*. On our way down off the granite outcrop Phil and Julia Rose joined us after being delayed by having to gather food for a koala in their care.

We turned off the Silent Grove road and got lost. However it was fortuitous as we had lunch amongst *Boronia microphylla*, *Poranthera corymbosa*, *Aotus subglauca*, *Daviesia latifolia*, *Dampiera lanceolata* and good colour forms of *Grev. linearifolia*. The Caldwell's found a lovely pure white form of *Boronia microphylla*.

After lunch the Hunter family and John Williams left us to have a look at the re-discovered *Prostanthera staurophylla*, whilst we consulted the map. We found the right track and eventually came across the disused Bismuth Mine which must have been a big operation years ago. Time prevented us from exploring around the mine so we continued past the mine and to a dead end. There were tracks and David Caldwell's sense of direction guided us in the correct direction. Being on crutches, I was unable to negotiate the huge granite cliffs and cutting but by all accounts the Falls and water

hole were quite spectacular. Some plants growing in this area were *Styphelia viridis*, *Gompholobium huegeli*, *Westringia aff. amabilis*, *Pratia purpurascens*, *Hakea macrorrhyncha*, *Persoonia terminalis*, *Boronia anemonifolia*, *Patersonia sericea* and *Lomandra longifolia*. Thanks to members for keeping an eye on me.

On our way to Mole station we passed through massed flowering of *Boronia microphylla* on the side of the road in various shades of pink and the less spectacular *Boronia algida*.

That night at the Shearers Quarters David and Sarah Caldwell joined us for drinkies and BBQ tea and much plant discussion, of course!

Sunday morning after breakfast we meandered up to THE NURSERY! Sarah and David showed us the plantings around the nursery, dominated by one of Sarah's favourite group of plants, the Callistemons. They were in their glory, free flowering plants in colours from white, orange, all possible shades of pink, reds, purples and greens. The new pink flowering species the Caldwell's found nearby looked superb.

We then wandered through the poly houses and the hardening off areas and were treated to some magnificent flowering displays. The addiction to native plants was obvious as members came away with more plants than those they intended to buy. Fortunately they left enough room to also take back the 500 odd plants needed for sale at St Peters the following weekend.

As in past years, we had a wonderful weekend both socially and botanically and we look forward to next year. Special thanks to our hosts David and Sarah once again.

by Pat Urbonas

## APPEAL FROM JOHN HUNTER – ph 6775 2452

- 1 Seeks a person with computer skills to assist with putting together his new book on Eucalypts of the Tablelands. Will include an acknowledgement of this persons name in the book.
- 2 John will be doing field work at Severn River Nature Reserve during the next 4 weeks. If anyone would like to join John, please give him a ring. Severn River nature Reserve is near Pindari Dam, Ashford area.

## In Search of Acalphya Sp

Approximately 18 months ago John Nevin and I were taken to private property at Enmore by the owner where a recent discovery of *Grev. beadleana* had been made. The owner was keen to sell his property to national parks as it borders the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, along the cliff edge.

It was during this trip that I collected some cuttings of a new species of Ziera (which Lachlan Copeland had already discovered) and also cuttings of a small, fine leaved variegated shrub, that was unknown to me.

After presenting Lachlan with a live plant of this fine leaved shrub for identification, I was informed that it was a new species of Acalphya (in the Euphorbiacea family).

On Wednesday 5 January 2005, Lachlan, myself and 2 National parks rangers, Alan Hill and Peter Metcalfe, set out to find and officially record this new species. I only thought this plant was interesting because of its compact shape and variegated foliage, being perhaps suitable as a border or rockery plant.

Unfortunately, after much searching, we were unable to find this plant. The area had changed with prolific growth of grasses, tea-tree and other shrubs. It may have died or been eaten out.

Perhaps we might have another go at looking for it later in the year. John Nevin has suggested it as a possible APS outing. Incidentally, the *Grev. beadleana* looked superb. by Pat Urbonas

## From the Sheathers

### Solving a 25 year Mystery

Some of our senior members will remember Ken Hill and Dick Windsor who were foundation members of the Armidale Group. Many years ago Ken & Dick came to visit us when we lived at Invergowrie. They had been collecting plant specimens along the Gwydir River. Amongst their specimens was some Flannel Flower material. For many years, when we had the opportunity, we searched along the Gwydir for the Flannel Flowers. We had no success until the last day of December 2004 when our son Lachlan was involved in an orienteering event

near the Gwydir and we took the opportunity to resume our search. This time our search was successful and we found a healthy population of Flannel Flowers growing on rocky outcrops above the river. Many specimens were in flower interspersed with plenty of seedlings. Lachlan found another population as he competed in the orienteering event. Some other plants of interest were very healthy specimens of *Grevillea floribunda*, the green flowered form of *Correa reflexa* and the white-flowered *Olearia microphylla*. (W&G)



## *Acacia diphylla*

Dick Windsor's in-laws used to have a nursery on their property near Enmore. At one time Dick brought some soil from the property for our garden at Invergowrie. Some wattles germinated in the pile of soil. We thought they were *Acacia implexa* but as they developed we realised that this was a case of incorrect identification. The tall, vigorous plants were *Acacia diphylla*. They were the parents of the *Acacia diphylla* that are growing just inside our gate at Yallaroo.

*Acacia diphylla* grows around the gorge country, east of Armidale, and grows into a tree about 15 metres tall. This wattle is unusual because it has two different types of phyllodes. The juvenile phyllodes are elliptical and glossy whilst the adults are elliptical or lanceolate, sickle-shaped,

dull and greyish-green. In late spring the branches become covered with rod-shaped, yellow flowers. Both foliage and flowers are attractive features.

*Acacia diphylla* is probably too large for the smaller town garden but would be at home on rural properties. There are some magnificent specimens near the parking area at Bakers Creek Falls and can also be found along Thunderbolt's Way, west of Gloucester.

Botanists have relegated this wattle to a subspecies of *Acacia blakei*. *Acacia bulgaensis* is a similar species that grows near Bulga, on the Putty Road.  
(W&G)

## More Gorgeous Plants

Most of the extensive Gorge system, east of Armidale, has been incorporated into Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and is home to numerous rare and interesting native plants.

*Acacia ingramii* often grows in company with *Acacia diphylla* and is a tall spreading shrub or small tree. Phyllodes are long and narrow and the golden ball-shaped flowers appear in spring. *Acacia ingramii* is common around Dangars Falls and in the gorge. In spring the area becomes a blaze of colour. Many *Acacia ingramii* manage to survive and thrive on the steep sides of the Gorge. *Acacia ingramii* is closely related to *Acacia neriifolia* that has broader phyllodes and much wider distribution.

*Bulbine vegans* also grows around Dangars Falls. We are familiar with *Bulbine bullosa*, the Bulbine Lily. In spring literally thousands of plants carpet the ground at Yallaroo. *Bulbine vegans* is a perennial herb that grows to a height of 50 cms. The fleshy light green leaves are about 30 cms long. In cultivation the plants form large clumps and in spring and summer produce numerous flower spikes that carry up to 40 bright yellow flowers. The Armidale Tree Group is propagating this splendid native lily. In mid-summer the entrance to the nursery glowed with colour from the potted specimens of *Bulbine vegans*. *Bulbine vegans* could be cultivated in a container or as a colourful addition to native cottage gardens and rockeries. The species grows north from the Gorge system in rock crevices and extends into Queensland.

*Babingtonia crassa* used to be known as a form of *Baeckea virgata*. *Babingtonia crassa* is said to be a shrub reaching a height of 2.5 metres. We have seen shrubby specimens growing above Dangars Falls. The plants in our garden are developing into shorter shrubs with spreading branches. In the fullness of time they may reach greater heights. The leaves are small, elliptic, aromatic and tightly clustered along the branches. Small white five-petalled flowers appear along the branches in spring. *Babingtonia crassa* is another interesting native plant that is available from the Armidale Tree Group. The species propagate enthusiastically from cuttings and occurs east of Armidale to the southern Barrington Tops. (W&G)