

Hakea fraseri

Australian Plants Society

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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President:

Col Mulquaney – 6772 6012 (H)

Secretary:

Patti Rossi – 6772-2906

Treasurer:

Phillip Rose – 6775 3769 (H)

President's Message

Over the past few weeks Glenda and I had been a bit anxious about how much rain had fallen in Armidale as we did not have easy access to TV or radio. We did see numerous dry (i.e. 'bare') paddocks between Canberra and Cootamundra. Even on the South Coast many Golf courses looked dry with the greens looking patchy. So, it was very pleasing to see the recent rainfall figures in and around Armidale just after we returned last weekend. But this was not the end of the matter. Many of us at the Arboretum on Saturday noted that despite the high rainfall figures, the soil there was very dry at 'planting depth'. Even in small holes we had to pour in buckets of water to help the new plants survive. I would suggest that rainfall figures by themselves are not good indicators of soil moisture. Clearly the rate at which the rain falls is also a critical factor. Next time we are away from Armidale a phone call or two will help us ease our minds about the possible survival of the plants in our garden. We had just mulched our garden prior to departing, so the short heavy rainfalls did little damage through run-off, and the soil/organic mulch combination retained some water as the soil in our new garden was damp to several centimetres below the surface.

I note in the recent Grevillea Study Group Newsletter, that 'mulch' features prominently in an article by Neil Marriott, who is the Leader of the Group. Neill has been nurturing the Grevillea Study Group Living Collection near Stawell in Victoria for some time. He describes how the collection was lost during recent bushfires in the area. He noted that Grevilleas burn well while acacias do not. He also noted that where he had used a sand mulch, many of the grevilleas survived, while those in organic mulches did not. This is a further reason for using sand mulches, as do many of our rural members.

I noted in the Grevillea Study Group Newsletter that this year's Autumn Plant Sale is to be held at Mt Annan Botanic Garden on 22nd and 23rd April. We will not be able to attend this year, but did so last year. We thoroughly enjoyed it, and even bought a few plants. When we arrived, about 11am, many people were already leaving, pushing large barrows of plants, and there were many gaps in the tables of plants for sale especially where somewhat rare plants had been. My advice: if you going, try to get there early, enjoy the plants for sale (prepare a 'want-list' prior to going) take sufficient packing (boxes or bags) to hold your spoils; enjoy the talks; walk the gardens, enjoy, and on your return write of your experiences for the Newsletter.

Best wishes

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

Control Of Disease in Frogs

How we can play a role

Chytrid fungus has been identified as one of the important causes of declining frog populations. It invades the frog's skin and causes death in as much as 100% of cases.

It is transmitted through water and is susceptible to things like temperature, dehydration, salinity, light and supply of oxygen.

So frog populations are at real risk if there is a transfer of frogs or water from an infected site to a clean one. Care is needed with vehicles moving through wetlands; the use of equipment and footwear or the movement of frogs or tadpoles or transporting flora from one site to another.

Vehicles can be cleaned with 'toilet duck', otherwise disinfectants such as Chloramine can be used on equipment. Bleach at 5% concentration may also be effective against this and some other frog diseases so would seem a sensible precaution with plant material.

Equipment might be either disposable, or disinfected and thoroughly dried before use in another site.

An excellent hygiene protocol is published on the NPWS website.

Phil Rose

Don't forget the Mt Annan Plant Sale

Weekend 22/23 April.

There is a plant list on the web - <http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/greville.html>

Volunteer for 2 hours and you will get 20% off your plant purchases.

FIND LOTS OF UNUSUAL PLANTS, MEET UP WITH GREAT PEOPLE AND ENJOY THE DISPLAYS AND TALKS, **BUT BE EARLY!!!**

page 2

President's Report

(Presented To AGM 14th February 2006)

The Armidale and District Group has had another interesting year with many knowledgeable people speaking to the Group at its monthly meetings and leading the field trips. We are very fortunate to have such expertise available to our members. Speakers and leaders of outings included Suzanne Robertson who co-ordinates our flower database,; Dr John Hunter, who led an outing to the Severn River, Peter Metcalfe, who led an outing east of Armidale to hunt for autumn flowering orchids; Lachlan Copeland whose presentation "Horticultural Potential of rare and endangered plants" was extensive and eye-opening, Maria Hitchcock for her illustrated talk on Correa hybrids and her bags of well-labelled cuttings, John and Barbara Nevin for providing a venue for our Solstice function and to Pat Urbonas for his presentation, John Nevin for providing 'hot off the press' photographs of WA flowers from the tours of the ASGAP Conference in Perth, Steve Clemesha who gave a presentation on Native Ferns, illustrated by specimens from a 'magic' esky; Dr Dorothy Bell, who led an outing to Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve, and to Ian Telford who helped out; Sara Caldwell of Mole Station Nursery for her continuing help in proving plants for our plant sales; the Summerlad brothers from Tenterfield for leading visits to Curry's Gap Nature Reserve and to Mt McKenzie near Tenterfield.

This year we learned that the Glen Innes Group of the Australian Plants Society was unable to continue and we undertook to provide a 'Home' for those members who wished to continue being affiliated with a District Group. Many of the outings mentioned above were held in the northern parts of our Group's area. This year we are continuing to plan more activities that will be located close to Glen Innes.

For our Solstice Function we went to the Nevins. Our Christmas function was held at the homes of two of our members (McCaig's and Mulquiney's). Barbara College opened her magnificent garden for the St Peter's Annual Open Garden scheme in November. Many members helped set up displays and tables, and numerous visitors attended over the two days and purchased plants from our stall. Well received talks were presented by our members Peter Metcalfe, Peter Croft from Glen Innes, and Warren and Gloria Sheather. Our annual Wattle Day activities were combined this year with the Armidale Market Day in late August. This went well with many welcome comments coming from the recipients of the free wattle sprigs stapled to informative cards.

The year has continued to be a great learning experience for this neophyte president, but the task has been made easy by the hard work undertaken by members of our Group. Barbara Nevin continues to edit our Newsletter to which increasing numbers of people contribute; Pat Urbonas, despite spending a second year on crutches continues to organize the Group's contribution to the Monthly Markets in the Mall in Armidale as well as the plantings and upkeep of the Armidale Arboretum, Phil Rose looks after the financial side of things while others organize publicity and look after the new members who attend our meetings. John Nevin's wide experience is frequently called upon by me. Many thanks to these people and to other volunteers for their substantial help over the past 12 months.

During the year we lost two of our long standing members: Monica Flint and Norma Brown. The absence of both at our activities will be sorely missed. I wish to convey my heartfelt sympathy to all their relatives and friends. We also mourn the passing of Mike O'Keefe, a former president of this District Group, who was the driving force in setting up the Tree Group Nursery in Armidale. Again, I wish to convey our sympathy to his family.

I wish everyone well for 2006, and hope that it will be another great learning and sharing experience.
Col Mulquiney

Another Web Site

In Native Plants for NSW Vol 36 (1) it was reported that Howard Harvey has completed his dictionary of genus and species names of Australian plants.

This can be found at <http://homepages.picknowl.com.au/hharvey/garden.html>

The dictionary actually consists of three files. Natives. Disc (5350 entries) is a standard dictionary with the most commonly encountered botanical names. This file will be adequate for most users.

Natives2 Disc (4050 entries) is an extension containing less likely names. Many of these you will encounter occasionally.

Natives 3 Disc (53000 entries) is a further extension containing the least likely encountered names. You'll almost need to be a botanist to come across these.

Edition 2.2 (25/Jan/2001) is free for you to download. The zipped file includes a brief description of how to install the dictionaries.

Sunday Markets Report

February Markets had good crowds and hot weather. Perhaps a bit early for gardening as we sold 44 plants.

March markets were similar with 43 plants sold.

Thanks to Pam & John Rooney, Peter Brown and John Nevin for display board plants.

We are nearly out of plastic shopping bags so please bring some along to our display.

Pat

Outing to Crowdy Bay

Long weekend – 10/11/12 June

Accommodation will be at Diamond Waters Caravan park (02) 6559 9334

152 Diamond head Road, DUNBOGAN NSW 2443

diamondwaterscaravanpark@tsn.cc

(People attending will need to ring to make their own arrangements).

They have cabins, Cabins/vans with ensuites, Caravan sites, Tent sites, shop

We will meet up at the bbq area for morning tea at 10.00am on Saturday morning

We have the plant list (thanks to Pete Metcalfe) so lets hope for fine weather.

Presentation by Col Mulquiney

The main talk of the first meeting of the year (after our AGM) was given by our President. Making use of the Group's new digital projector he demonstrated the work to date that had been made on the web-site he is slowly developing aimed at letting people know about the Armidale Arboretum, with which our group is closely involved. The proposed site contains: maps designed to help those not living in Armidale to find the place; a satellite view of the gardens which allows visitors to find the location of many of the flowers included in the site. Suggestions were made as to how the site might be further developed. These included a brief history of the Arboretum and further photographs taken by others. Disks containing the whole of the draft web site were distributed to those who were able to test the site using their home computers, along with a brief survey for comments. It is anticipated that this site will be 'up and running' later in 2006.

The presentation ended with some of the photographs Col is currently taking in Armidale, with his usual skill, mainly close-ups of some of the native flowers that do not usually grow in the cold weather of Armidale.

In July 2005 Col and Glenda travelled north to Myall Park. Started by David Gordon and his wife – home of the 'Gordon' grevilleas, and now run by a trust that keep adding plants from all over Australia. The Park consists of 130 hectares containing, amongst other things, flowering hakeas, banksias and of course 'the' grevilleas.

They then travelled further north in search of flowers of the season. North of Yeppoon at Byfield National Park they found *Grevillea venusta*, at Town of 1770 was *Grev banksii* 'pink form', origins of the prostrate form. Moving onto the Bundaberg Botanic Gardens that contained a Japanese Garden, many grevilleas, an interesting bird colony on the banks of a lake and eremophila plants they continued their holiday.

Quite a lovely find when they arrived home in Armidale as Col's Albany Pitcher Plant (*Cephalotus follicularis*) had a little flower magnified as well as their *Euc. sideroxylon*

Peter Metcalfe

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.

Invitation from Peter Metcalfe

Peter is taking another trip away and has invited people from our group to join him and others. This time he is off to U S A, and if like any of the others it will be very memorable and you will make lasting friendships.

**Proposed National Parks Association Tour of N-W Nat Parks of the USA
3 – 22 September 2006**

If interested please contact Peter on 67751165

Outing To Little Llangothlin Lagoon

On Sunday 20 November 2005 we met early near the Northern Roundabout and drove in convoy to Little Llangothlin Lagoon. This is a body of water about 5km in circumference and is just off the New England Highway a little north of Llangothlin.

There was a good rollup, with Dr Dorothy Bell leading the group with Ian Telford from the UNE Herbarium. We had a couple from Wollongong tag along, having read of the trip in the State newsletter.

The area is set in the middle of extensive cleared grazing land with rich volcanic basalt soils. Originally there were many water areas like this on the tablelands but most have now been drained. Fortunately, Little Llangothlin has been preserved as a Nature Reserve and is an important habitat for water birds.

Recently several new species of as yet to be named plants have been found there and we were privileged to see many of these. One of the most interesting was a new *Xerochrysum* with large yellow paper daisy flowers. It differs from *Xerochrysum bracteatum* in having a basal rosette of leaves with flowers on long leafless stalks. It is early flowering and was at its peak in November with patches of *Xerochrysum bracteatum* just starting to bud up. I think the different flowering times explains the lack of hybridisation as both species seem quite distinct.

While there, Ian Telford was captured by the vigorous habit of a Bulbine and secured a specimen for the herbarium and to check if it was a new undescribed species.

Other plants that impressed were *Carex fascicularis* (tassel sedge), showy displays of *Hybanthus monopetalus* (slender violet-bush), *Viola betonicifolia* (showy violet), *Lomatia fraseri*, *Bulbine bulbosa*, *Nymphoides montana* (a small water lily with 50° sizes fringed yellow flower), several species of *Ranunculus* (*inundatus* and *lappaceus*)s and two new species of Eryngium (prostrate Blue Devil).

There were very large swathes of *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy), an introduced daisy that is flourishing and in some area, quit dominant.

The more fit amongst us circumnavigated the lagoon and were impressed by the bird life, plants and (fortunately) lack of snakes on the day.

After lunch we motored home impressed by an area few of us had seen before.

Thank you Dorothy and Ian.

John Nevin

Arboretum Report

At our April working bee we planted out 39 plants. In spite of the rain during the week the soil was quite dry under the surface. The plants, however, looked good and fresh.

Thanks to the helpers, Phil & Julia Rose, Colin & Glenda Mulquiney, Barbara & John Nevin, Matt & Andrew Grigg, Suzanne Robertson and Pat Urbonas.

The job for next working bee on 6 May will involve the spreading of sawdust so everyone please bring your wheelbarrows, shovels and buckets plus everything else you need for a day of gardening. *Pat*

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2006/2007

President: Col Mulquiney

Vice Presidents: Pat Urbonas, John Nevin

Secretary: Patti Rossi

Assistant Secretary: Suzanne Robertson

Treasurer: Phil Rose

Membership Officer: Peter Brown

Publicity Officer: Ingrid Kalf

Arboretum Co-ordinator: Pat Urbonas

Auditor: Peter Brown

Markets in the Mall Co-ordinator: P Urbonas

Newsletter Editor: Barbara Nevin

Newsletter Printer & Collator: John Nevin

Hospitality: Kath Wray, Julia rose

Supper Co-ordinator: Glenda Mulquiney

Supper Committee: Julia Rose, Ingrid Kalf

Monthly Plant List Collator: S Robertson

OH & S Officer: Peter Metcalfe

Northern Co-ordinator: Jean Mott

Environmental Officer: Peter Metcalfe

As you can see many of these people have held their positions for many years so if you would like to learn about what they do so that you can 'do your bit', you are very welcome to attend some of the monthly business meetings held on the first Monday night of the month or talk to them about their jobs.

A Great Tragedy

Remember the bushfires in the South West Victoria region recently? We were very saddened to hear that Neil and Wendy Marriott's property at Panrock Ridge, Stawell, has been burnt out (luckily they were able to save their home and nursery).

Therefore the living grevillea collection has been lost, but then not lost, as most are in other people's gardens so when the time comes for replanting cuttings will be taken from them to recreate the collection.

Many of us visited this garden when we visited the Grampians so will realise what a terrible loss this has been, especially for Neil and all those who spent many hours working, collecting and the cost involved.

A new collection will arise from the ashes and we wish all in the Grevillea Study Group and friends all the best for this task.

Plant Swap

Hope you are all madly propagating plants for the swap at our Christmas function – date in future newsletter. For those of you who are new to this – we each propagate about 10 or more plants and then on the day you swap with others there who usually have propagated other plants that you may like.

Outing to New England National Park

Date – Sunday 21 May

Discover the wonderful world of Ferns with Steve Clemesha

SC CLEMESHA
SILVIA CLARKE
LAWRENCE BENTON
2 x 56
6656 1937

Meet at 10.00am for morning tea at the Thungatti picnic ground- (ask John or Pat for directions).
Apart from your meals and drinks you must bring plenty of salt just in case there are some leeches around.
Wear good walking shoes that are waterproof and be prepared for any sort of weather.
Bring a magnifying glass.

The Use Of Native Grasses In Your Garden

Talk by John Aitkin to Sutherland Group, written by Ruchir Sodhani

Grasses are found all over the world in a variety of habitats ranging from rainforests to farms. They usually complement other plants in the garden due to their lower height. John's fascination with grasses came after being treated to a wonderful garden show in Hampton Court in the UK. His favourite display was a garden design based on grasses in a beach setting. There was a lot of use of sand and gravel, and unusual sculptures like the skeleton of an old Viking ship! The grasses were in flower. With the sun shining, the grass heads looked like a sea with fairy lights swaying slowly with the breeze. John decided to experiment more with grasses in his garden as well.

Grasses are used extensively in the northern hemisphere for landscape design. A lot of rushes were used as part of the plantings at the 2000 Olympic site at Homebush Bay. Some councils use *Lomandra longifolia* as a common roadside plant, but overall grasses are not used very often in garden design in Australia. Some species of grasses have some disadvantages that they deter enthusiasts – grasses can grow or die quickly; they can be a fire risk if abundant; they have a short active growing season in spring with a brown off in summer; and may be unattractive at the end of the flowering season as the stems dry off, however there is a bright side to the species as well. Grasses come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They grow rapidly; are highly adaptable; are drought resistant; propagate readily from seed; and are self-sowing. Grasses can have many colours such as fresh lime green and blue, thereby providing a contrast of hues in your garden. They accentuate the garden by breaking up flat areas into different levels and contour. They can provide a wonderful rippling effect of a mini forest as the wind passes over mass plantings.

Some grasses such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) have stunning seed heads. In summer, the spikelets are most attractive as they change from bluish-green with their black shiny awns [*i.e. the bristles that grow from the flowering parts. Ed*] to a rich copper colour. This is a versatile species and it can also be used as an ornamental grass for rockery pockets. Grass seeds attract a lot of seed eating birds. They can also provide some music by producing a rustling effect. *Danthonia setacea* (Wallaby Grass) is another promising species. This is an erect perennial grass with fine-leaved tussocks between 15 and 60cms tall. These tussocks are drought and frost resistant and can tolerate a range of soils and conditions. It remains green for most of the year, and flowers in response to rain. It has silvery spikelets with a tuft of white hairs with slender purple awns. Other grasses that John showed us were *Carex gaudichaudiana*, *Festuca glauca*, Coastal Saltbush (*Atriplex cinerea*), Cushion bush (*Leucophyta brownii*), Knobby Club Rush (*Isolepis nodosa*), Spear Grass (*Austrastipa stipoides*), *Dianella revoluta* with its purple flowers and berries, Swamp foxtail (*Pennisetum*), Common Dense Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*) and Bamboo Spear Grass (*Stipa ramosissima*) are other favourites. *Lomandra* also comes in various types, with varying flower heads and scents.

Plant some native grasses in your garden today. Use them with gravel, steps and sculptures to soften edges. Even though they are the most overlooked group of plants, grasses are easy to look after!

Coming Diary Events

- Tuesday 18 April at 7.30pm:** General Meeting at the Woodland Centre
Robert Miller will talk about Prostantheras
- Weekend 22/23 April:** Mt Annan Plant Sale (for information see John, Pat or Col)
- Sunday 30 April:** Markets in the Mall plant sale and display
- Monday 1 May at 7.30pm:** Business Meeting at the Nevin's – ALL WELCOME
- Saturday 6 May at 1.00pm:** Arboretum Working Bee (see page 6 for what to bring)
- Tuesday 16 May at 7.30pm:** General Meeting at the Woodland Centre
Mal Chaffey will talk about using natives for Bonsai
- Sunday 21 May:** Outing to New England National Park with Steve Clemesha.
(see page 8 for information)
- Sunday 28 May:** Markets in the Mall plant sale and display
- Saturday 3 June at 1.0pm:** Arboretum Working Bee
- Monday 5 June at 7.30pm:** Business Meeting at the Nevin's – ALL WELCOME
- 10/11/12 June:** Outing to Crowdy Bay (see page 4 for details)
- 26 – 28 August:** Fred Rogers Seminar on 'Knowing and Growing Australian Wattles' – at Ringwood (Melbourne)

For Arboretum Working Bees do bring all the relevant equipment, plenty of water, sunscreen and hat and afternoon tea things.

NB: *Pat (6771 2293 or mob 0427 327 719) would like some help with the Plant Display at the monthly Markets in the Mall –he would love to hear from you even if you cannot come to meetings.*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM for Australian Plant Society (ABN 87 002 680 408)

MEMBERSHIP TYPE: please tick appropriate box

	Annual Fee	Concession
Single:	\$44	\$36
Joint: (2 adults at the same address)	\$52	\$44
Concession applied for: Limited Fixed Income		Full Time Student

PERSONAL: Joint members please complete a) and b)

a) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other..... b) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other.....

Given Name (s):..... Given Name(s)

Surname:..... Surname:.....

Postal Address:..... Postcode:.....

Tel: Home ()..... Work: ().....

Fax: ()..... email:.....

PAYMENT: Payment of \$.....is enclosed by:

Cheque Money Order payable to APS Armidale Branch

Please return this completed form with your payment to :

Membership Officer APS Armidale Branch PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350