

*Hakea fraseri*

# Australian Plants Society

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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## President's Message

Over the past few years I have noted that some native plants seem to grow well in particular locations, while in other locations specimens always end up 'crisp and crunchy'. I have noted that those in the latter category have usually either been 'too dry' or 'too wet'. I have also wondered at the effect of local temperatures. Up until now I have found it difficult to measure at the same time, temperature at various locations. (I do not have multiple thermometers). Currently I have access to a new 'gadget' – an infrared digital thermometer – simply press a button to get a reading, press another button to get a spot of laser light on the surface of the body whose temperature is being measured. This has been an interesting exercise. For example, when an official minimum temperature is  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  in Armidale, ground temperatures vary between  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ . There is a significant difference in surface temperature near a brick wall which is in a sunny position during the day and a position nowhere near such a wall. On the basis of this I have positioned a pot containing the soft leaved *Grevillea pimeleoides* in a 'warmer' position. To date there are no burnt tips even though we have had official minimum temperatures of  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$ . I am currently trying to collect some 'sensible' data that I will attempt to interpret for an article in a future Newsletter.

As I write this just after our 'rain event' in early June I am wondering how the clear skies we are now likely to have will affect temperatures. I guess that in my current state of mind I have a fixation on 'temperatures'. This must fit in to the gaps between my other current activity – trying to align images on a web page. This has been a somewhat frustrating experience. Sometimes (mostly) progress is slow, once a little success is achieved, it becomes a little quicker and then a single character is found to be missing – that once corrected, makes the whole page work smoothly as intended. I used to gain much pleasure from trying to write a good computer program but now find that frustration overcomes the pleasurable bits. At least with a plant growing it often survives and appears to make some progress over time.

(Continued next page)

**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*

(Continued from front page)

Over the next few months our group has some interesting activities planned. While many people will be able to attend many of those it is unlikely that few people will be able to attend them all. I suspect that the distance between 'home' and the location of the outing is an important factor influencing attendance. At a recent Business Meeting we discussed likely consequences of programming outings that involve some distance (esp. cost of fuel and time involved). It was also noted that the Committee was very pleased to receive suggestions as to where we can plan future outings. This is important as with more people attending we can share information that a large number of knowledgeable people possess. Please bear this in mind during the second half of the year when planning will need to commence for activities to be undertaken in 2007.

Best wishes to all

*Col*

## From the Sheathers

### Aquatic Plants:

We have three ponds with another under construction. Some years ago we planted exotic water lilies in our largest pond. They grew so well that the lilies filled the pond with foliage. One object of our ponds is to provide frog habitat. The surfeit of water lilies meant that the pond was no longer frog friendly.

Last summer we removed the exotic water lilies and converted them to mulch. They were replaced with less aggressive native aquatic plants.

So far we have introduced *Marsilea*, *Myriophyllum*, *Nymphoides* and *Villarsia*. The *Marsilea* is Nardoo, an aquatic fern. *Myriophyllum* is known as Water Milfoil and has two types of leaves. Soft leaves under the water and harder leaves above water level. *Nymphoides* and *Villarsia* have yellow flowers. The *Villarsia* has not flowered yet. The *Nymphoides* bloomed for a long period before the onset of the cold weather. Plants produced an average of ten flowers per day. The flowers are bright yellow and about the size of a twenty cent piece. We will be adding more aquatic natives in the future.

*Warren and Gloria*



## Visit to UNE Herbarium

On the afternoon of Sunday 26 March a small group of us enjoyed a tour of the Herbarium at the University of New England Botany Department. Ian Telford was our host and was later assisted by Lachlan Copeland.

As we found out, a herbarium is a collection of pressed preserved plants that serve as a reference for the identification of specimens found on fieldwork.

Over the years UNE Herbarium has had a chequered career especially with the disastrous fire that destroyed it in the 1950s. It has since been recollected and in the past decade housed in a new building to enhance the collection.

At present, it houses about 88,000 specimens. That is small by State and National herbaria sizes, but is significant as a repository of local flora of Northern New South Wales. Because of Jeremy Bruhl's interest in Cyperaceae it houses a large collection of these plants as well as both national and international examples of this plant group that Jeremy has built up on collecting and plant exchange programmes.

The Herbarium is temperature controlled (at about 15°C) so bring your jumper if from out of Armidale or your summer gear if from Armidale. Specimens are treated to remove any potentially destructive insects before being included and are regularly treated to prevent any potential damaging pests. Specimens being brought to the herbarium to work on are placed in the deep freeze for a day or two to kill any contaminating insects.

Pressed specimens are mounted on acid free paper to ideally display the plant's characteristics. A label detailing the name, date and site of collection with a description of the growing site features (type of soil, aspect, other plants present) as well as the name of the collector are added. As we saw, dried and pressed specimens can last for centuries and we viewed some specimens collected by Thomas Mitchell over 200 years ago that remain in good condition.

There is a ready exchange of specimens around the world between Herbaria. Ian is currently working on a plant family for Flora of Australia and had several 'type' (original naming specimens) from Kew Gardens and other Herbaria.

We had a look at several of the new species that have recently been found and most yet to be named including three paper daisies (*Xerochrysum*) and two new *Wahlebergias* from Point Lookout. The *Azothamnus* group has been dramatically expanded in recent years to over twelve species for New England. A new *Cheiranthra* (*Cheiranthra telfordii*) has great horticultural potential.

Finally we had a look at the computing for the facility. Each specimen has its site noted and a list of species collected at sites around New England can be obtained by the flick of a computer key. Ian showed us some of the National and International Web sites useful for the work of the Herbarium.

There remains a backlog of specimens to be identified, mounted and stored but inroads are being made into it. For anyone interested, the work of volunteers to assist in this work is welcomed (speak to Kath Wray or Ian Telford).

We had demonstrated to us the use of a binocular microscope in identifying plants. The *Wahlebergia* from Point Lookout had different appearing patterns on their seeds compared to the more ubiquitous *Wahlebergia stricta*.



Finally we had a look over the gardens around the Botany Department where efforts are being made to grow examples of new local flora. We saw many menthes, homoranthus and other species newly described and growing there including *Asterolasia dungowan* that Warren Sheather has proposed as a floral emblem for the Tamworth local government area.

All in all, an interesting afternoon that opened up new aspects of the work of the Botany Department and plants of New England.

Thank you Ian (and Lachlan) for showing this to us.

*John Nevin*

## Sunday Markets Report

April and May sales of 118 plants have been good bearing in mind that we've not had rain for many weeks. We sold 120 for the same time last year.

I would appreciate some help for 25 June and 30 July markets.  
Please phone 6771 2293

*Pat Urbonas*

## Bits and Pieces

Some of Jeff's tips from North shore Newsletter for May 2006

### **Habitat Gardening – Don't Fight the Site**

Access your site before you plant/dig/remove logs and rocks etc. Apart from planting native plants you will also be creating a habitat style garden where native plants will play a part of the food chain for any animals and insects etc. That is why it is important not to remove any rotted stumps/fallen timber (unless a nest for white ants) and puddles in your desire to obsessively tidy up. You should be aiming for retaining a wide diversity of habitats. As you do not want to end up with a jungle, you will need to selectively hand weed or mow at the appropriate time as well as prune... all part of becoming a habitat gardener; more so if you use indigenous plants.

### **Landscaping**

Think of the site when you are landscaping and the existing biodiversity. In paved areas water must be allowed to percolate downwards, therefore no mortared joints. Use raised wooden decks rather than concrete for areas close to the house and boardwalks rather than paths. For areas away from the house try to create bird habitats, leaving dead trees if they contain potential nesting sites.

### **Book Review – from City – St George APS Newsletter**

Successfully Growing Australian Native Plants and Colour Your Garden with Australian Natives  
by Geoff and Bev Rigby.

Geoff and Bev are members of Central coast Branch with a long held interest in Australian natives. This beautiful, self-published book contains many useful cultivation and garden design tips for the keen beginner as well as the more experienced Australian plant gardener. Highly recommended book available directly from Geoff and Bev Ph 02 4934 0450 Email: reninnapress@reninna for \$49 including postage.



## Our Ubiquitous Eucalypts

Australians abroad used to invite their relatives to send them bundles of dried eucalypt leaves which, in digs at Earls Court and other favorite haunts around London and elsewhere, were placed in a container with a Women's Weekly underneath to protect the carpet and ignited to produce clouds of acrid smoke gleefully inhaled by a circle of homesick mates. Had they been more environmentally friendly they could have dispensed with this ritual and looked out of the window because there are few places in the world where you cannot see and smell the real thing. Even in London the Blue Gum is a popular garden subject though it is mercilessly pollarded to ground level every year. There seem to be few places in the world where our gum does not grow.

The McCaigs recently visited the central and southern parts of South America. What amazed us most was the robustness of the eucalypts. South America is very different in geography from Australia. The continent embraces some of the driest deserts in the world, the highest lakes, vast high country - the Altiplano- which ranges from 2400 to 4500metres or more, tropical and sub-tropical jungles, innumerable islands, lakes and fjords and, of course, the Andes stretching the full length of the continent. We saw our gums thriving in most of these locations.

We could not get much information on how they got there. One source referred to *Eucalyptus globulus* being imported from Tasmania in the 1880's. That was the era when the British were madly building railways all around the world and they were certainly very busy in S. America. The trees might have been used also for oil or for long lengths of timber for rafters. Mud brick houses predominate in large areas of the continent where there are no trees.

We saw our first gums on the sloping hills around Santiago. From there we went to the coastal desert country around Lima. Some parts of these deserts have never officially recorded rain but, wherever there was any soak of water the gums were very much in evidence. From there we moved to the Inca territory. The Incas, much to our discomfort at times, seemed to believe that the higher you climbed the closer to the gods you were. So it seemed that settlement at 4000metres would be more rewarding in the next life than at 3 or 2000 metres. At heights like this in Australia we are looking at small species such as the snow gums or alpine grassland but at 4000metres around Cusco in Peru healthy trees 15-20 metres high are thrusting their way through the huge granite boulders beautifully sculptured by Inca masons to make forts and temples.

In the Sacred Valley of the Incas the gums were planted at spaces of about 10 metres along the bank of a stream. They were cut back to a metre from the ground each year so they are probably a source of long rafters. On a train trip over the Altiplano the eucalypts did not disappear from the landscape until just below the snowline at about 4000m. We next stayed on a catamaran on L. Titicaca which is 2810m above sea level. Here again our gums were with us. No doubt Inca maidens 500 years ago would have appreciated a few gums. In the middle of the lake are two islands, the Island of the Sun and the Island of the Moon. The first was a major Inca settlement, well treed, lots of rock-walled terraces for agriculture, and the headquarters for the Incas of that region. Within sight of it was Moon Island rather barren and, apart from a fringe of gums, it looked treeless. This was where Inca maidens were isolated until they were eligible for "marriage". The Lake is 15 degrees from the Equator so, even though distant snow-clad mountains could be seen, the days were oppressively hot. The Inca men might have liked their womenfolk well baked but what a difference a few gums would have made to their complexions.

We could not ascertain if the dense jungles along the river systems were homes to eucalypts. They were common in open woodland but the jungle growth was such as to make it difficult to identify anything. On the East coast we saw eucalypts in suburban Buenos Aires though the most spectacular sights there were the melaleucas in full colour of brilliant red that decorated community spaces and home gardens in the more affluent parts of that city. Our most southerly sighting was on Isla de Chiloe in a community park at Castro.



This was close to 44 degrees south, 2-300 kilometres farther south than Tasmania. It was not a happy specimen. Buffeted by the freezing gales from the Humboldt current and in a land of glaciers, snowy mountains and mostly overcast skies it was unlikely to achieve the height and health of its Inca cousins. South America extends south for another 8 degrees of latitude but what we saw of Patagonia was treeless dry grassland and Tierra del Fuego National Park seemed to have escaped a eucalypt invasion. One other place did not. We were told that Isla de Robinson Crusoe 640km west of Santiago is where either Juan Fernandez or Man Friday planted forests of eucalypts.

It would be an interesting, if massive, project to trace the migrations of the eucalyptus to the countries around the globe where it has been both a welcome and, sometimes, a hostile invader. *Bob McCaig*

## Arboretum Report

May & June working bees consisted of weeding, pruning, planting, watering and collecting rubbish, Thanks to Col, Andrew and Hannah Grigg, Phil and Julia Rose, Col Mulquiney, Thelma Dennis and Pat Urbonas

Next working bees for July & August will consist of spreading sawdust on existing New England Flora beds and watering of recent plantings. Please bring wheelbarrows, hoses, shovels and afternoon tea. Start time is 1.00pm. *Pat Urbonas*

## 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

## From the Sheathers

### *Grevillea juniperina*

We have also had a long association with this variable species. Our first encounter was with a yellow-flowered form growing in the St Marys area, west of Sydney. This form is a medium spreading shrub with light green prickly foliage. We have a specimen that is at least 11 years old. Preparing cuttings from this form is a painful experience. We have recently found, in the same area, a red-flowered variety.

There is an upright form growing in the Goulburn area that has yellow flowers. We came across this form when searching for a native nursery. A similar form grows west of Guyra.

*Grevillea juniperina* has colonised the old mine workings at Rocky River. This form has apricot flowers and develops into a dense, mounded ground cover with greyish foliage.

Finally there is a low growing form that is found along the Gwydir Highway, east of Glen Innes. This form has arching branches and bright red flowers. The Armidale Tree group has this form or one very similar.

All forms of *Grevillea juniperina* have horticultural potential.  
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*Warren and Gloria*



## A Pamphlet To Look At

I came across a pamphlet called 'Grow Me Instead'. It is about protecting our environment from weeds. Whilst this is written for the Greater Sydney Region I am sure that it can be adapted to our area. This Grow Me Instead Programme (formerly 'Discovering Alternatives to Garden Escapes') is co-ordinated by the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia with the express purpose of:

- Identifying plants grown and sold within the nursery industry that are considered invasive to the environment.
- Identifying suitable alternative suggestions, of both introduced and Australian species where suitable.
- Educating the community through the nursery network so that propagation and sale of invasive plants eventually cease

You should be able to get a copy of this pamphlet from  
Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT  
PO Box 3013, Rouse Hill, NSW 2155  
Phone: (02) 9679 1472 Fax: (02) 9679 1655  
Email: [info@ngina.com.au](mailto:info@ngina.com.au)

### And from that pamphlet.

#### **You Can Make a Difference**

Whether a dedicated, long-term gardener or a novice, as a resident of 'where ever' you can make a difference – and here are some ways:

- Replace any invasive garden plants with native plants that occur naturally in your area or, select non-native species known to be non-invasive.
- Share your garden space with our wild creatures. Protect even the smallest by providing lizards or frogs with some rocks as refuge from domestic pests.
- Use either Australian or non-Australian plants to provide nectar or seed for birds and thickets of foliage as protection from large marauding birds or cats.
- Compost garden waste such as grass clippings or prunings that may contain seed, or dispose then in green waste collection provided by council.
- Eliminate seed production on plants that have potential to spread by pruning before seeds set.
- Learn to recognise, or have identified at a local nursery, any plant you suspect is invasive and remove it from your garden.
- Join a local bush care group and receive 'hands on' experience as well as up-to-date information on controls.
- Report unkempt and weed infested vacant blocks of ground to the environmental officer of your local council.
- Encourage friends and neighbours to become involved in bush care as 'custodians' of their environment by following the same guidelines

*Kath Wray brought this information to my attention too.*

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.



## Species in the South and North

(Tasmania and Queensland Visits)

On a recent visit to Hobart, some interesting facts came to my attention.

At the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, there was a special Australian Antarctic display. It included information on the only two flowering plants in the Antarctic, viz.,

*Colobanthus qurtensis* (a pearl wort)

*Deschampsie antarctica*



*Deschampsie antarctica*

One of the major attractions in Hobart is "Saturday at Salamanca Market". Between the backdrop of the sandstone facades of historic warehouses and the long line of plane trees, hundreds of marketers attract thousands of shoppers. At one of the plant stalls, we purchased two specimens for Andrew's native garden:

- *Dianella tasmanica* (Tasmanian Flax Lily – variegated)
- *Carex tasmanica* (curly top)

On a visit to the Hobart Botanical Gardens, we were quite surprised to see Peter Cundall being televised for one of his episodes of "Gardening Australia".



*Peter Cundall and television crew in Hobart Botanical Gardens*

Two weeks later, this time with Andrew, we visited the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. This is a magnificent area of 52 hectares containing 20,000 plants of 5,000 species at the lower slopes of Mt Cootha.

Two of the main sections of the gardens feature Australian native plants:

- (1) The 'Australian Plant Communities' section of 27 hectares contains a large collection of Australian native plants. The native plants have been arranged in natural communities, including a dedicated area for Australian native palms.
- (2) The 'Australian Rainforest' simulates a lowland subtropical rainforest. Within this section is a self-guided 'Aboriginal Plant Trail'. With the aid of plaques, it is possible to learn how indigenous Australians used plants for food, medicines, shelter, utensils and tools.

The planning of the gardens has catered for the amateur and professional and the tree and trail markings are complemented with educational and research programs, a reference library and the Queensland Herbarium.

There was so much to see - we will be revisiting soon.

*Colin & Andrew Grigg*



# Fern Field Trip to New England National Park

On Sunday 20 May a small group of us (Phil Rose & John Nevin) met with Steve Clemesha who came up from Coffs Harbour to lead the trip. Steve had earlier visited our group to talk on ferns and had suggested April or May as an ideal time to do a field trip to NENP, looking at ferns.

Phil produced a fern list from the publication 'The Vegetation and Plant Species of New England National Park' that had been produced by the Botany Department at UNE.

We were fortunate to have a bright sunny day and, despite very very little rain in Armidale, there had obviously been plenty in the Park with moist soil conditions ideal for ferns.

After meeting at the Thungutti Rest Area and having morning tea we set off down a fire trail to the Cascades Walk. The fire trail was an ideal display area for ferns that flourished in the disturbed area along the trail.

The Cascades Walk started from the end of the fire trail and was a 3km, 1¾ hour walk. It descended through rainforest and mossy Antarctic beech forest to a gully through which Five Day Creek flowed over rocky cascades.

Once in the forest we encountered a different array of ferns to the fire trail, with many of them climbing epiphytes on tree trunks or rocks. As expected many were sporing giving us the opportunity to see what fertile fronds look like.

We completed the circuit back to the Rest Area and had lunch. After lunch we did the Tea Tree Falls Walk to Tom's Cabin, enjoying the heard, but not seen, Lyre birds. The sphagnum moss was a feature of this walk.

In all, we identified 32 ferns including *Blechnum minus*, that was not listed as a species for the park. Thank you to Steve for showing us these plants and increasing our appreciation and understanding of ferns.

Species seen included:-

*Pellaea falcate*, *Asplenium bulbiferum* ssp *gracillimum*, *Deparia petersenii* ssp *congrua*, *Diplazium assimile*, *Diplazium australe*, *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Blechnum nudum*, *Blechnum patersonii* ssp *patersonii*, *Blechnum watsii*, *Blechnum minus*, *Cyathea australis*, *Arthropteris bechleri*, *Histiopteris incisa*, *Pteridium esculentum*, *Dicksonia anarctica*, *Lastreopsis acuminata*, *Lastreopsis decomposita*, *Lastreopsis microsora* ssp *microsora*, *Polystichum proliferum*, *Gleichenia dicarpa*, *Sticherus flabellatus* var *flabellatus*, *Sticherus lobatus*, *Grammitis billardieri*, *Crepidomanes venosum*, *Hymenophyllum bivalve*, *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*, *Lycopodium deuterodensum*, *Todea Barbara*, *Microsorium pustulatum* subsp *pustulatum*, *Microsorium scanden*, *Pyrrosia rupestris*.

John Nevin

## From Me

A hint talked about at one of our business Meetings was that if you plant tree Ferns during autumn then cover the top with a plastic shower cap to protect the new fronds from our frosts.

Next do take notice that 21 June is the winter Solstice so cheer up as the days begin to get longer and longer until we can spend many wonderful hours in our gardens or out bush walking. Also come along to our Solstice Luncheon and meet up with many like minded people. Do phone Col - (6772 6012)



# Coming Diary Events

## **NB: NO GENERAL MEETING JUNE OR JULY**

- Sunday 25 June 12 for 12.30pm:*** Solstice Lunch at Trax/Railway Hotel. RSVP to Col Mulquiney ASAP
- Saturday 1 July at 1pm:*** Arboretum working bee (see page 6)
- Monday 3 July at 7.30pm:*** Business meeting at the Nevins – ALL WELCOME
- 18 – 23 July:*** ‘Orchids in Paradise’ Australian orchid conference in Port Macquarie  
Contact Greg Elliott at gregglrd@tsn.cc
- Sunday 30 July:*** Markets in the mall – plant display, sale and information
- Saturday 5 August at 1pm:*** Arboretum working bee (see page 6 )
- Monday 7 August at 7.30pm:*** Business meeting at the Nevins – ALL WELCOME
- Tuesday 15 August at 7.30pm:*** General meeting at the Woodlands Centre  
*John Hunter talking on the 3Bs*
- 19/20 August:*** Outing to Bebo National Park (see next Newsletter or talk to Pat )
- 25 – 27 August:*** ABC Gardening Australia Live at Homebush Bay
- 26 August:*** Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Festival
- Sunday 27 August:*** Markets in the Mall + Wattle Sales – plant display, sale & information
- Friday 1 September:*** WATTLE DAY in the Mall – Helpers will be needed (more information In next newsletter).
- Saturday 2 September at 1pm:*** Arboretum working bee
- Monday 4 September at 7.30pm:*** Business meeting at the Nevins – ALL WELCOME
- Tuesday 19 September at 7.30pm:*** General Meeting at the woodlands Centre  
*John Nevin to run wattle identification workshop*
- Saturday 23 September:*** Outing to Andrew Thompson’s Yarraman Valley property at Tingha  
– information and map in next newsletter
- Sunday 24 September:*** Markets in the mall – plant display, sale and information
- 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.***

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