

# Australian Plants Society

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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## Your President's Message

How lovely to wander through the garden after a very cold and dry winter to see all of the plants laden with buds, ready to show off as soon as the weather warms up. It will be quite painful to see which plants have been frosted and not recover.

Our solstice function was a huge success and because we are turning 30 in August we combined the two events. It was great to have so many former members attending and to hear that they are still involved with growing and promoting native plants. My thanks to former member Libby Fielding who made a lovely birthday cake that was cut by three foundation members, Maria Hitchcock, Beth Williams and Warren Sheather. A big thank you to the kitchen fairies who helped everything run smoothly.

After her talk on the first 30 years Maria Hitchcock asked if we would collect past newsletters or memorabilia so that she can compile a more complete history of the group. Please contact Maria or a member of the committee if you have anything to share - we will return anything which needs to be returned.

The ASGAP Conference 2007 is rushing towards us, early October will be here before we know it. The conference is to be held in Newcastle from Monday 1st October to Friday 5th October and will mark and celebrate 50 years of work on Australia's native flora. You will meet up with very interesting members from all over Australia (and overseas) and hear local and national speakers on a variety of topics. There is the opportunity to visit local gardens and interesting natural areas with knowledgeable Newcastle members. **HAVE YOU BOOKED YET?**

For further information contact

APS, Newcastle Group, PO Box 76 Adamstown 2290 or email [c.gillard@bigpond.com](mailto:c.gillard@bigpond.com)

AND - do not forget the pre- and post-conference tours.

**Barbara**

**Thank you authors for this month's articles and reports**

**Contributions to this newsletter are gratefully accepted at any time**

**Send to the Editor: Pam Rooney PO Box 807 Armidale 2350 or [pamrooney@bigpond.com](mailto:pamrooney@bigpond.com)**

## ASGAP POST-CONFERENCE TOUR TO NEW ENGLAND

The Armidale and District and Tamworth Groups of APS are hosting a tour to New England for the ASGAP Conference from Saturday 6th October until Wednesday 10th October. Our guests are from all over Australia. We have two excellent botanists travelling with us on our bus; Gwen Harden the editor of *Flora of NSW* and John Hoskins from Tamworth.

Members of both APS groups are invited to join in any part of the tour so they can meet these very interesting people and explore more of our country. You can choose the areas you wish to explore. Make sure you bring your own morning and afternoon teas, lunch and drinks.

Please note that on Wednesday 10th October the Armidale & District Group will be hosting morning tea for the tour at the Tree Group Nursery. We would like as many people as possible to greet our guests.

If anyone can help with the catering please contact Liisa Atherton (6779 1968)

## ASGAP POST-CONFERENCE TOUR, NEW ENGLAND: ITINERARY

### Day One – Saturday 6th October 2007

- 8.00am Depart Newcastle
- 12.00-2pm Sheba Dams, Nundle
- 3.30 - 5.00pm Baid's McIntyre's Garden. Afternoon tea hosted by Tamworth Branch, APS, NSW.

### Day Two – Sunday 7th October 2007

- 8.00am Depart Tamworth
- 9.15 – 9.45 Glen Riddle Reserve
- 10.00am Arrive at Woodsreef Gully, plant stop
- 10.20am Depart for Mine site
- 10.30am Arrive at Mine site, plant stop
- 11.30am Leave Woodsreef
- 12.00-1pm lunch at Barraba
- 2.40-3.10 Inverell
- 3.30 - 5.30pm Goonowigal Reserve, (2 hours)
- New England Motor Lodge Motel, Glen Innes ( 3 nights)

### Day Three – Monday 8th October 2007

- 8.00am Depart Glen Innes
- 9.00 – 9.45am Torrington Nomad Picnic Area
- 10.00am Mystery Face, plant stop (2½ hours)
- 12.30pm Depart Mystery Face
- 12.45 - 1.45pm Blatherarm Picnic area
- 2.15 -3.00pm Torrington Common, (45 minutes)
- 4.00 -5.15pm Emmaville Mining Museum

### Day Four – Tuesday 9th October 2007

- 8.00am Depart Glen Innes
- 8.45-9.45 Granite Lookout, Washpool National Park, plant stop
- 9.45am Waratah Trig Walk (1 hour)
- 10.45am Leave Granite Lookout
- 11.15-12.30 Coachwood Camping area, rainforest walk (75 minutes)
- 1.00-2pm Mulligan's Hut, Gibraltar National Park
- 2.10 - 4.15pm Anvil Rock Walk
- 4.55 – 5.15 Raspberry Lookout
- 6.00pm Arrive at Glen Innes

### Day Five – Wednesday 10th October 2007

- 8.00am Depart Glen Innes
- 9.15 – 10am Armidale Tree Group, Nursery and Environmental Centre. Nursery inspection and morning tea hosted by Armidale and District Branch APS, NSW
- 10.30-12.30pm Gloria & Warren Sheather's garden
- 12.30 Depart for Newcastle

## GROUP INFORMATION

(Group commenced 6th 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. 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 to our outings (page 9).

**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*

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

**Arboretum Working Bees** are on the 1st Saturday of the month except November, December and January. Do bring all the relevant gardening equipment including a wheelbarrow if possible, plenty of water, sunscreen and hat and afternoon tea things.

### Newsletters by email

Your committee would prefer to send newsletters by email to those members who have this facility.

The savings to the group would be considerable; financial - postage, paper, envelopes, printing and photocopying, and hours - photocopying, collating, folding and posting about 100 newsletters. Individual members will also benefit from speed of delivery, photos in colour and more compact storage! Approximately 50% of members received an email version in June; if possible we would like to increase that percentage.

If you received this newsletter by post and would be happy with an emailed copy in future please send an email to the Editor, [pamrooney@bigpond.com](mailto:pamrooney@bigpond.com). Members without email addresses will continue to receive their newsletters by post.

## FOR YOUR DIARY, COMING EVENTS: AUGUST TO OCTOBER

Monday 6th August, 7.30pm	Business meeting at the Nevin's – ALL WELCOME
Saturday 18th - Sunday 19th August	Join NPA, Car camping to Pilliga, staying at Pilliga Pottery, Contact Peter Metcalfe. Ph 6775 1165 for details
Tuesday 21st August, 7.30pm.	General Meeting, Guest Speaker: Jock Coventry from 'The Great Outdoor' 'The GPS and how to use it.'
Saturday 25th August	Outing to Hardaker's property 30 km west of Armidale, uncleared virgin scrub. Leader: Brian Hardaker Contact: Phil Rose 6775 3769.
Sunday 26th August	Markets in the Mall, wattle sales to celebrate Wattle Day
Saturday September 1st	Wattle Day: handing out of wattle sprigs in the morning & at 1pm Working Bee at the Arboretum
Monday 3rd September 7.30pm	Business meeting at the Nevin's – ALL WELCOME
6-9th September	Flora Festival, Gosford (Central Coast Group)
Sunday 16th September	Visit from Tamworth APS, details to be announced at August Social Meeting.
Tuesday 18th September 7.30pm	General Meeting, Guest speaker: Gwen Harden on her work 'Flora of NSW'
Sunday 30th September	Markets in the Mall
Monday 1st October 7.30pm	Business meeting at Nevin's. - ALL WELCOME
Saturday 6th October 1pm	Working Bee at the Arboretum
Tuesday 16th October 7.30pm	General Meeting, Guest Speaker Colin Broadfoot speaking about his setup at Boggy Creek Nursery, Bellingen.
27-28th October	Mole Station weekend, more information in next newsletter
Sunday 28th October	Markets in the Mall

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

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE:** please tick appropriate box

**Single:**

**Joint:** (2 adults at the same address)

**Concession** applied for:

Limited Fixed Income

**Annual Fee**

**Concession**

\$44

\$36

\$52

\$44

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



## Solstice Function:

Over thirty members and friends celebrated 30 years of the Armidale and District Group, APS at Barbara and John Nevin's on the 23rd of June. Barbara had efficiently organized a wonderful 'Pot Luck' luncheon with members contributing; a great meal followed by ceremonial cutting of the birthday cake made for the occasion by Libby Fielding. And those of us who braved the cold were treated to a tour of the garden led by John.

Maria Hitchcock had searched her memory and the archives to put together a very interesting and amusing talk about the history of the group which she illustrated with photos from the past. She facilitated a lively discussion with reminiscences from Warren Sheather, Beth Williams and others.

Thank you John and Barbara for hosting such a successful day.

**Pam Rooney**



Three founding members, Warren Sheather, Beth Williams and Maria Hitchcock, cut the 30th birthday cake.

June 23rd 2007

**ASGAP Conference Newcastle 2007. Celebrating 50 years.**

*From Gums to Gullies; Flora in Transition.*

Monday 1st to Friday 5th October Newcastle City Hall

**<http://asgap.org.au/whatson.html> for registration forms, details of the venue, conference program and costs and details of pre- and post-Conference Tours**

## Australian Plants Society Armidale: the first year.

Our inaugural meeting was held on the 6th August, 1977. I remember it well because I was very pregnant with my son Ben, who was born 2 weeks later. Brian Hansford reminded me that it was a bitterly cold night and he was amazed that anyone turned up. Lyn Parry of Floraland and Vice-President of NSW Region had come to Armidale to establish a New England Group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants. The meeting was held in the West Common Room of the UNE Union at the University of New England.

The first office bearers were:

President: Bob Hardie

Vice-presidents: Ken Hill and Alan Richards

Secretary: Phil May

Treasurer: Mike Richardson Publicity: Ken Hill

Steward: Warren Sheather

Foundation members who attended included: Beth Williams, Warren Sheather, Bob & Gwenda Hardie, Ken Hill, Dick Windsor, Alan Richards, Phil May, Mike Richardson, Maria Hitchcock, Bernard Ellem, Mike Brennan, Brian Hansford and Harry Harris. You needed 12 SGAP members to officially start a group so Don Hitchcock who was home baby-sitting at the time became the 12th member.

Local Group subscriptions were set at \$1.50 per family. A raffle plant was donated by Lyn and won

by Harry Harris and we decided to meet on the 2nd Monday of every 2nd month at 8.00 pm. The only native plants available in Armidale at that time were at Coles Variety Store in the mall (approximately where Caffiends is now). Mike Brennan started up Protea Park Nursery around that time selling tubestock of native plants. One of our first tasks was to get a list together of suitable native plants for the area based on the experience of our members. We gave the list to Alan Chappell who was fairly negative about native plants in general as were most of the general public at that time.

Our first outing was a garden visit on 18th September. By October we welcomed Sue Bowen, Marie Simpkins and Les Green. We decided to have a native plant display at the Show in March '78 as a way of publicizing the group. Warren became our seed bank officer and we started to offer free native plant seed to the public. Propagation was an important issue because of the lack of plants so we focused on that. We planned a trip to Howell where some of us collected seed and cuttings and at the meeting Bob Hardie demonstrated his fish tank method of striking cuttings while Hans Wissman showed us his home-made igloo method. Marie Simpkins won the raffle that night. The concept of a raffle at meetings has continued to the present day. The proceeds from raffles have been used for a variety of things over the years. For some reason our December meeting was held at the Community Health Centre. This was our Christmas meeting and we had a problem corner on 'Pests and Diseases of Native Plants'.

The February 1978 meeting was held in the West Common Room at the UNE again. We were starting to attract new members and develop our gardens, learning techniques from each other. I remember Bob Hardie gave me two correa plants at this time, *C. alba* and *C. 'Dusky Bells'*. I still have progeny of both plants growing in my garden today. It was this kind of sharing and generosity which characterized the group. We weren't in competition with each other, like you see in many other garden clubs – we were out to help each other and in the process enrich the community. That attitude attracted like-minded members and continues to this day with the current membership. At that meeting we planned garden visits on 5th March to the Richardson, Hardie, Wissman and May gardens. I don't remember much about the Hardie or May gardens but I recall that Hans had a suburban block which was very neatly planted out. Mike Richardson's garden was a revelation as his north Armidale backyard was superbly landscaped. He used native grasses to add texture and contrast and he had plants which I'd never seen before. He also used sweeping curves for his garden beds. Phil May had a large hybrid grevillea which some of us took cuttings from that day. Mine grew in my garden for many years and we always referred to it as *Grevillea 'Phil May'*. I ended up chopping mine out after it died in the drought but it would be nice to know if anyone still has it growing. It was a very robust plant, about 2-3 metres tall and wide with toothbrush flowers and bushy down to ground level.

Peter Brooks, Harry & Naomi Bell and Robert & Joan Boyd joined us in April. I'm guessing here as their names appear in the minutes for the first time. Phil May resigned and I took over as Secretary/Publicity officer. Harry and Naomi Bell had come to Armidale from Canberra. Harry was completing a PhD on thornbills and Naomi had a clerical job with the UNE. Harry

inspired us to think about putting on a small Flower show in October so we applied to the Council who subsequently gave us permission to use the library foyer for our first Flower Show. Colin Grigg advised us to hold it during the Armidale Arts Festival from 4-7th Oct. It's amazing how things turn full circle as Colin is

The general attitude in the community towards native plants was fairly negative at the time due to several factors, frost being one of them.

a current member and his teenage son Andrew is a native plant enthusiast. When you look at the Library foyer, you realize what a humble show that was compared with our later attempts. Still it was a start and a way of getting the native plant message across to the general public.

It was pretty well imperative to develop a range of frost hardy plants which would inspire confidence in the public to try them in their gardens. Harry and Naomi Bell were living in a small rented house on the corner of Cynthia Crescent and O'Connor Rd. Harry had converted the whole small front yard into the most exquisite native garden with beautiful banksias and a range of plants that none of us were familiar with. They became very active members, holding office and being involved in every activity. Harry didn't suffer fools gladly and his blood pressure would rise when people got on his nerves. Despite this he was much loved and very inspiring. He was a master propagator and taught me many techniques which I have tried to pass on since. Sadly Harry developed cancer and died a few short years later. His widow Naomi returned to Canberra where she still lives today.

The Boyds lived in Markham St and took a particular interest in the large reserve across the road. They were instrumental in developing a large public native garden which they called Neighbourhood Park. We visited the Park and saw sawdust used for the first time as mulch. My memory is fuzzy here as I know that around that time we also started using milk cartons as frost protectors but I can't remember if it was the Boyds or Harry who introduced us to the concept.

Sawdust is now almost unprocurable so we have switched to the recycled greenwaste mulch from the tip which does a similar job. You can still buy milk in cartons but that might change as plastic bottles take over market share. Whatever happens someone will come up with a suitable alternative as the principle remains the same. Young plants need the base stem enclosed in order to increase humidity around the plant which is a protective factor. Mulch inhibits weed competition allowing young plants to develop in those first few years. I have seen local Eucalypt species which were planted out in open ground without mulch and protectors and still under a metre high 10 years later.

Both of these techniques transformed my own gardening. My garden is situated on a band of floating basalt rock which provided good drainage but very little soil. All of my attempts at gardening had failed up until then so I ordered my first load of hardwood sawdust from Kenross Sawmill and plonked it down in a round bed in the middle of my circular drive. I then planted into it about 6 *Acacia dealbata* seedlings which I had propagated and away they went. We were lucky with the weather that year and the Acacias grew in the spring at an alarming rate. They became the talk of the group and everyone had to come and see.

By June 1978, 30 people were attending the meetings. At that time many SGAP groups had their own floral emblems so we discussed the idea and came up with an emblem for the group – *Helichrysum bracteatum*.

We decided to ask Protea Park if they would supply plants at cost for sale at our Flower Show and we planned trips to Long Point and the UNE Herbarium.

It had been an exciting and inspiring year and one which set in train ideas and concepts which would influence the Society for many years to come.

Maria Hitchcock

The use of cheap sawdust mulch and milk carton frost protectors allowed hundreds of thousands of native plants to survive over the ensuing years.

The techniques we developed in those early days were borrowed several years later when eucalyptus dieback became a big issue.

## TWO BIPINNATE ACACIAS

Peter Metcalfe reported some interesting observations in the last newsletter from an Honour's project on the effect of Noisy Miners on other small native birds. The research indicated that the inclusion of some bipinnate wattles was necessary to create a Miner deterrent environment. We try to include some bipinnate wattles in our planting programmes and at present we have about 13 species surviving and thriving. The following two species are at least eight years old:

*Acacia filicifolia* is a typical tall Black Wattle with dark bark and light green leaves. The ball-shaped flowers are bright yellow and appear in spring. *Acacia filicifolia* will sucker and form dense clumps particularly if the roots are disturbed. *Acacia filicifolia* is common in the Invergowrie area, west of Armidale. In spring this rural subdivision becomes a blaze of colour as these wattles burst into bloom.

*Acacia polybotrya* is a native of the Coonabarabran area. This small to medium, bushy shrub has blue-green, bipinnate foliage and in spring plants become covered with bright yellow, globular flowers. This is another species that suckers. One of our specimens has sent up suckers some metres from the parent plants. *Acacia polybotrya* is common along the road between Gunnedah and Coonabarabran and also along the Renshaw Parkway in the Warrumbungle National Park.

These two wattles, together with other densely planted native shrubs, could be used in Noisy Miner unfriendly gardens.

### *Eucalyptus magnificata*

*Eucalyptus magnificata* is a rare species from the eastern gorge country around Metz. Some time ago this species was split from *Eucalyptus baueriana*, the Blue Box. This latter eucalypt is a native of the Central Coast, South Coast and Victoria. *Eucalyptus magnificata* grows into a tree that may reach a height of 15 metres. The leaves are almost oval in shape and dull green in colour. The leaves are used for dyeing wool and are said to give a red colour. Buds are carried in clusters of seven. The flowers are white, profuse and conspicuous. Summer is the flowering period. The capsules are an unusual conical shape. We have a specimen that has reached a height of five metres, is about six years old and commenced flowering three years ago and has bloomed every year since then. *Eucalyptus magnificata* is a handsome small tree with attractive foliage, flowers and distinctive gum nuts.

### *A Western Melaleuca*

Western Australia is home to at least 100 Melaleuca species. Not many are in general cultivation so there is plenty of scope for experimentation. *Melaleuca macronychia* is a western species that we have been growing for a number of years. This is a medium, open shrub with oval, greyish-green leaves. The large bottlebrush-shaped flowers are six centimetres long, bright red and appear, in large numbers, between October and February. *Melaleuca macronychia* has eye-catching flowers and our specimens have proved to be very hardy, free-flowering, drought and frost tolerant. Pruning promotes dense growth. Cuttings produce roots promptly.

As well as the 100 or so melaleuca species, Western Australia used to be home to only two bottlebrush species, *Callistemon phoeniceus* and *Callistemon speciosus*. Now there are no Western Australian callistemons as these two species now come under the melaleuca banner.

### *Two Olearias*

The Olearias or Daisy Bushes are members of the Asteraceae family. There are 130 endemic species with 18 of these native to the Northern Tablelands.

*Olearia elliptica* is common throughout the Northern Tablelands and is known as a Sticky Daisy Bush. *Olearia elliptica* is a small to medium shrub with bright green, very sticky leaves. The daisy-like, white and yellow flowers are carried in terminal clusters. Spring and summer are the flowering periods. Sticky Daisy Bush is a "double-barrelled" plant, both foliage and flowers are eye-catching features. Light pruning, after flowering, is appreciated. This species, in common with most Daisy Bushes, strikes readily from cuttings.



*Olearia tenuifolia* is a native of southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria. This Daisy Bush will reach a height of 1.5 metres. The narrow leaves are linear and about two centimetres long. The flowers are carried on the end of branches either singly or in loose clusters. They are blue to mauve and carried throughout the year. We first saw this Daisy Bush in John and Barbara Nevin's garden. Thanks to their generosity the progeny from their plant have taken up residence in our garden. A light annual pruning will keep plants dense and blooming bounteously. This is another Daisy Bush that is easy to propagate from cuttings.

The genus is probably named after a 17th-century German botanist not, as we thought, after an Irish landscape gardener.

Most of the plants we discuss have photos and fuller descriptions on our web site: [www.yallaroo.com.au](http://www.yallaroo.com.au)

Warren Sheather

## Uniting Church Garden

A week ago I had a look at how plants are progressing alongside the drive to the rear of the Uniting Church Hall. Many of the grevilleas will need a prune this spring, especially the larger species such as *G. rosmarinifolia*, *G. Poorinda Constance*, *G. towera* and *G. Poorinda Peter*. Of the 3 *Acacia covenyi* (seed grown) planted, two are weeping green hybrids, not unlike *A. vestita*. I'm not sure if they will need pruning or how big they will grow. Perhaps members who are passing by may like to have a Captain Cook! There is a problem with half a dozen or so plants at the southern end of the garden whose leaves are quite yellow and the plants are obviously not thriving. Perhaps a dose of iron chelates may help. Other plants that are growing well are *Banksia marginata* (miniature), *Correa* species and *Micromyrtus ciliata*.

Pat Urbonas

## Hailstorm 2006

The response of established trees and shrubs here at Kirkwood St after the hailstorm has been interesting. All the eucalypts put on masses of new shoots and leaves just as they do after a wildfire. The old *Acacia baileyana*s also did the same as did the leptospermums. *Casuarina cunninghamia* didn't replace the 'leaves', instead they have put on new growth on the undamaged side of their branches. Callistemon species, *Correa reflexa* and *Prostanthera rotundifolia* all put on new growth from the undamaged wood.

Pat Urbonas

## Bi-Centennial Arboretum

During June and July, members planted out a total of 90 plants. In some areas, subsoil moisture was almost absent and probably affected by existing trees and large shrubs such as wattle. It was interesting to note that an unusual form of *Eremophila maculata*, planted in three totally different locations was eaten almost to the ground - possums?? No other *eremophilas* have been touched.

I mentioned last month about the local mistletoe growing on wattles as well as eucs. It's also growing on a callistemon and an *Allocasuarina stricta*!

*Grevillea victoriae* and 'Scarlet Sprite' were putting on a lovely display of flowers as was *Spyridium (Stenanthemum) scortechinii*.

Thanks to John and Barbara Nevin, Phil and Julia Rose.

Pat Urbonas

## Sunday Markets

We had average sales (44) for May and June. Only keen gardeners are out during the middle of winter and our sales are comparable to the same months for last year. Our regulars keep up our sales but it's difficult to predict what people will buy. For example in May every plant of *Acacia baileyana* purple leaf form sold but in the following month we couldn't sell one. I might have to put Richard Single through a sales course!!

Pat Urbonas