



**Australian
Plants**
SOCIETY NSW

Coffs Harbour Group



NEWSLETTER No. 136: May 2018

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Newsletter Contributions

Thanks to members who have sent in material for this edition. If you have something of interest to share, please contact the Editor, Jan Whittle.

Website and FaceBook

Keep up to date with news, outings and meetings by visiting our online sites:

www.austplants.com.au/Coffs-Harbour

www.facebook.com/nativeplantsCH

New Members

We warmly welcome new members Rosemary & John Jeffreys, and Dawn Thornton.

Membership Renewals

Renew online via APS website:

www.austplants.com.au

Payment is also available by cheque or credit card to the Treasurer, Janice Fitzpatrick. Please contact her if you need assistance.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 8: 10am – 1pm *

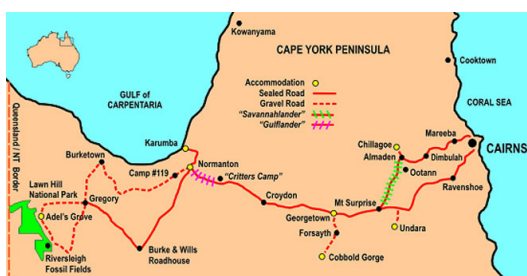
Guest Speaker: Philip O'Shea

Topic: *Some Plants of Dry Tropical Queensland*

A talk about a trip we did last year across the Queensland Gulf country which took in Lawn Hill National Park south west of Burketown, Cobbold Gorge near Georgetown, the Undarra lava tunnels, and the 40 Mile Scrub near Mt. Surprise.

Morning tea: Please bring a plate to share. Tea and coffee will be provided.

* Following our Meeting, at 1pm, there will be a **Photography Workshop on Plants** conducted by the Coffs Camera Club in the Display Room. There is a \$5 charge for participation; tea and coffee provided.



Next Field Trip: Sunday May 20

Leader: Barry Kemp

Location: Norm Jolly Memorial Grove, Dorriggo Plateau

Two alternative meeting spots:

(a) Meet at 9.15am - Yellow Shed, Bellingen, leave 9.30am

(b) * Meet at 10.15am - Dorriggo pub, Dorriggo, leave 10.30am

Some consolidation of vehicles to 4WD or high clearance would be advisable as there are a couple of dodgy cattle grids and the last five km could be doubtful for 2WD after rain.

* Please let me know if you plan to meet at Dorriggo: Barrykmp06@gmail.com ; 0266 902557 or 0448 515184.

Proceed to Norman Jolly Memorial Grove 11am – noon; Lunch: Platypus Flat 12.40pm

The Norman Jolly Grove was reserved to commemorate an early 20th Century forward-looking forester and contains one of the few patches of old growth Eucalyptus forest remaining on the plateau; mainly Tallowood (*E. microcorys*) as well as some nice Brush Box, Coachwoods and other rainforest trees. There is an easy loop track, pit toilets and a couple of picnic tables. Bring your own water. It could be cool on the plateau in May, so bring a jumper or jacket.

Lunch is planned at Platypus Flat camping area on the Nymboida River, about 30 minutes further north. A folding chair may be handy, and again, bring your own water. From there, it is possible to return via Cascade and Megan, but slow going and through heavily logged areas.

Meeting June 12: 7pm – 10pm

Guest Speaker: Jan Whittle

Topic: Myall Park Botanic Garden

Situated in a natural bush setting, Myall Park is a 132-hectare botanic garden designed to conserve Australian native flora from arid, semi-arid and dry-subtropical regions. In 1985, the Garden was recognised as one of the *Botanic Gardens of the World* in ex-situ cultivation of rare and endangered plants. I visited Myall Park for 3 days in 2017, staying in one of the restored worker's cottages. This presentation aims to provide an overview of this fascinating botanic garden, and the remarkable man who created it.

Photos: Jan Whittle



Report by Philip O'Shea on visit to Robert Watt and Helen Lucas' Kalang Property: March 25, 2018

The outing to this property was well attended with 20 members and friends making the delightful journey, in perfect autumn weather, up the Kalang Valley south west of Bellingen. Rob and Helen purchased the 270 acre of cleared and remnant rainforest in 1981 and for many years it was their "bush getaway" while they were still working in Sydney. The property includes a loop of the Kalang River and overlooks part of Scotchman State Forest to the north.

They have done a huge amount of work over the years clearing the lantana, privet and other weeds and planting the riparian areas with natives such as *Grevillea robusta* (Silky Oak) particularly where the almost annual flood(s) puts pressure on the fragile banks. They have also cleared weeds from the regrowth forest and enhanced the regeneration with judicious plantings of native understorey species. To reduce the fire risk, which occurs in winter and spring, they have kept most of the area downslope from their house free of woody vegetation.

Morning tea was on the deck which is flanked by a mass planting of grevilleas, mainly *Grevillea* "Moonlight", then in flower, and *Callistemon citrinus* "Splendens" previously known as "Endeavour", and that would be in full flower only days later.



Photo: Annette & John Houseman

On a steep slope about 100 metres south east of the house, Rob has designed and planted an ingenious alternating block sequence of ground cover grevilleas, principally *Grevillea* "Bronzed Rambler" and G. "Royal mantle". They fulfil the dual purposes of weed suppression (via weed mat) and slope stabilisation. Rob had purchased many of the plants from *Boggy Creek Natives* but Colin eventually coerced him into learning how to propagate from cuttings. The problem of grass incursion has so far been solved by hand weeding although Rob is also investigating the possibility of a "grass only" selective herbicide to solve the vexed problem of an invasion of blady grass in part of the planting.

At the gate is another attractive collection of grevilleas, principally "Peaches and Cream" and, also found throughout the property, 'Robyn Gordon' and 'Superb'. This latter combination is an ideal combination for Rob who, with a red/green colour blindness, finds that the yellow touches within 'Superb' allow him to more likely see the totally red flower of 'Robyn Gordon' among the green leaves.

The garden on the southern side of the house edges a deep remnant rainforest gully includes an eclectic variety of plants in well-drained beds including *Alloxylon flammeum* (Tree Waratah), *Buckinghamia celsissima* (Ivory Curl) and *Callistemon* 'Orange Marmalade'. Within the deep wood chip mulch have since appeared *Jagera pseudorhus* (Foambark), *Polyscias murrayi* (Pencil Cedar) and *Persoonia lanceolata* (Geebung).



Photo: Annette & John Houseman



Photo: Rob Watt

The garden on the west side of the house has been constructed with a number of levels of beds that have increased the garden area. This also includes a delineating hedge of *Austromyrtus dulcis* 'Copper top' kept finely trimmed, an area for a collection of various *Anigozanthos* and another suitable for smaller native plants including *Goodenia paninulata*, *Melaleuca thymifolia* and *Lechenaultia biloba* – known locally as Clarke Walk. This area also has a very productive finger lime, (*Microcitrus australasica*), a grafted specimen thriving in full sun.



Photo: Rob Watt



Photo: Annette & John Houseman

The regrowth native bush includes *Trochocarpa laurina* (Tree Heath) an attractive shrub or small tree with distinctive parallel veining and bright lime green or pink flushes of new growth. Although we are a native plant group I feel I have to mention the grove of Magnolias planted in a geometric pattern at the top of a low rise. I am not sure what else is planned for here but this will be very interesting when it matures.

Back at the house we enjoyed lunch on the deck and it was good to catch up with some old members and also to meet some new ones. Thanks Rob and Helen for opening your beautiful property to the group. This is a dynamic garden with plenty of work in nearby gullies and it will be good to see how things have grown in a few more years.

Report by Alison Moore on talk by Dr Symon Dworjanyn: Bonsai and Australian Natives

Can you use Australian Native Plants for Bonsai?

The short answer is yes but what native species work best for this Japanese art form and ancient practice of “tray planting”? Similar practices exist in other cultures, including the Chinese tradition of *penjing* from which the art originated. At their April meeting the Coffs Harbour district group enjoyed an informal presentation by Dr. Symon Dworjanyn who has made Bonsai his almost all-consuming passion when he is not doing his day job as a Marine Ecologist.

Symon had brought along three large specimens from his collection:

1. A Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*) - a handsome straight tree to 50m with smooth white bark.
2. A Black Wattle (*Callicoma serratifolia*) - a tall shrub or small tree used by early settlers in making their wattle and daub houses. (Note: The common name, Black Wattle, is now ascribed to *Acacia mearnsii*.)
3. A Jackwood (*Cryptocarya glaucescens*) - a tall rainforest tree to 30m. (Note: this species is also commonly known as native laurel, brown beech, and silver sycamore.)



Photos: Rob Watt

Nothing like taking on a challenge with such tall growing species! An important part of the bonsai process is of course choosing the right container and Symon described how the colour of the pot is crucial but also its shape whether rectangular, oval, round or square. The pot's dimensions are essential from a practical point of view, its root mass needs careful consideration, also choosing a container which will complement the plant's size and positioning and, set it off to best artistic advantage.

For the purposes of the demonstration Symon had left some of the leaves on the Black Wattle at their natural size which meant that people could see how to prune the stems to achieve the desired size and shape which then initiated smaller fresh growth. He explained the important matter of choosing a well-drained medium so as not to waterlog the plants with the necessary watering regime that these plants need. Bonsai plants are best suited to an outdoor life, they can of course be brought inside for limited periods to enjoy, but otherwise be placed outside in the sunshine with reasonable shelter from strong winds, which would otherwise dry them out.

Some members were surprised to learn that specialist tools are not precursors to engaging in Bonsai gardening. The art form can be seen as requiring expensive items; however Symon's toolkit, apart from a particular type of curved secateur, was simple and found in most gardeners' toolsheds, sharp scissors and a small tool for teasing out the roots when required. The curved secateur ensures a 'hidden' cut when pruning, an important characteristic integral to the philosophy and practice of Bonsai.

Lots of questions were asked, the plants admired and perhaps, possibly some new converts to this ancient art form. Symon's only warning being, that similar to having pets when you decide to go away on holiday there is much angst about your darlings and wondering how they will survive your absence.

Saving our Species Project

Brent Turner has taken over coordination of the Saving our Species project, and will be meeting the National Parks Ranger, Mark Watt, this weekend to finalise the plans for us to start monitoring plants at some of the 4 regeneration sites on coastal headlands that NP is managing. Brent will be assisted by Rowan McCabe and Ben Henderson – all three work in bush regeneration and have a strong interest in plant conservation.

Can you help? Calling all budding journalists, editors, photographers and Jill and Jacks of all trades!

The Committee and Working Group are busy with our project, the republication of *Growing Native Plants on the North Coast of NSW* book. We would love your assistance in progressing this project and are keen to hear from anyone who could help with some of the various tasks.

Further down the track we will be looking for Proofreaders but initially it would be great if you can contact a member of the Committee (details are at the beginning of newsletter) and ask how you may be able to help.

Notice of NSW Events

26 May

The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Plants Society NSW Limited will be held at 1pm on 26 May 2018 at Gumnut Community Centre, Gumnut Place, Cherrybrook, NSW.

September

Memo from Barbara Nevin, President of Armidale district group: "We are having a special Open Forum in September when we are having a guest speaker from Canberra. Our guest speaker is Ben Walcott who is leader of the Garden Design Study Group for ANSPA who will talk about Garden Design Using Australian Native Plants. Further information will be provided at the end of July. "