



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY



Strygium australe
Coffs Harbour's floral emblem

COFFS HARBOUR GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 125 – May 2016

Next Meeting Tuesday 10th of May 10 a.m.

**Gwen Harden: "Rainforest Plant Identification using a
Computerised Key"**

Gwen Harden will be talking to us about 'How to Use the Computer Rainforest Key in a practical workshop'. She will give us an overview of the Key and how it works, and then a practical demonstration with keen members (who may have already purchased the Key) using their own computers. Afterwards members may like to stay on for lunch and enjoy a short walk with Gwen in the gardens where they can experience hands on identification of rainforest species with their newly learnt skills.

TIPS:

1. If bringing your own computer please ensure it is fully charged as we have limited power points.
2. Bring your Rainforest Key (the USB) if you have one, otherwise Gwen will have USBs that you can borrow, or purchase on the day for \$70). If you have had problems with your USB, please bring it and Gwen will replace it.
3. If you have a magnifying glass or X10 hand lens, please bring it. Gwen will have some hand lens (with LED light) for sale, \$20
4. The Display Room will be open from 9.30am for people to set up the USB on their own computers.
5. If staying for lunch and the walk, please bring your own food and drink, practical shoes etc.

Next Outing Sunday 22nd of May

Coramba Nature Reserve and the Star Creek Area

Coramba nature reserve adjoins the Orara River and is one of the few intact examples of riverine rainforest in this area. For those coming from the south, we can meet outside the Coramba pub at 10 a.m. For those coming from the north it is about 4km north of Coramba Township between the Coramba sports ground and the Orara River. There is a sign on the right "TOFOG" advertising the local football team. Take the road through the sports ground past the buildings down to the river. Being very familiar with the flora here, Rowan McCabe has offered to lead this part of the day. Afterwards we will head to Star Creek where Craig Henderson will show us around. As usual bring lunch, drinks and a folding chair.

Next Night Meeting **Wednesday 8th June 7:30 pm**

This meeting at the Coffs Harbour Regional Botanical Gardens will have guest speakers Rob Watt, Angela Lownie and Phil O'Shea each speaking briefly about a favourite or interesting plant. There will also be an auction of the late John Wrigley's collection of books. A list of these will be circulated closer to the date. Bring along plants or flowers for the display table and there will be some member's plants for sale, a plant raffle and supper.

Wayne and Jean Jeffery Moving

Wayne and Jean have sold their beautiful property on the western fringe of Bellingen and are moving to Wauchope. From the early 90's they converted a steep 3.5 acre property from weeds to native garden and rainforest. The diverse rainforest with many rare species from this state and Queensland has matured over the years and has been the subject of numerous visits by our local APS group as well as groups from all over Australia. It is a brilliant example of how, with good planning and species selection, canopy closure in a rainforest can be achieved in a relatively short time. They have been enthusiastic supporters of the group and Wayne has held committee positions for much of this time, including being our longest serving secretary. He has been the guest speaker on a wide range of topics at many of our meetings and always willing to share his knowledge and practical experience.

We will miss our visits to their property and hope it is in good hands.

These steep blocks can be hard on "baby boomer aged" joints (as I know) and Wayne and Jean are going to spend more time on the gentler slopes found on golf courses.

We wish them well with their new smaller garden and remind them that Wauchope isn't that far away.

Meeting Report April

Alison Moore spoke about the three months she and her husband, Angus spent as voluntary lighthouse caretakers on Deal Island in Bass Strait. This lighthouse was built in 1848 and even though it is only 20 metres tall it is the highest above sea level in the southern hemisphere and was once an important navigation point for shipping between the mainland and Tasmania. The island, which is only accessible by boat or helicopter in good weather, is now managed as a national park and is home to a diverse assemblage of flora, fauna and fungi. Their time on Deal Island went faster than they thought it would but they managed to investigate and record a lot of the flora and fungi which has adapted to this cold wet and windy environment. Thanks Alison for an entertaining presentation on a place that very few people visit.

Heather Mills, the secretary of APS NSW gave an overview of where the state group stands regarding finances and membership numbers. The bottom line is the APS as a state-wide group has a slowly diminishing membership and with it diminishing finances. Head Office has sent out a survey to canvass ideas and opinions of members. Colin Broadfoot has volunteered to attend a special meeting in Sydney in May to put forward the ideas of this group. A summary is included later in this newsletter and your opinions are welcome.

March Outing Report Flaggy Creek

We had a good turnout of 20 members and friends to this frequently visited area of sandstone ridge country north east of Glenreagh.

There is a good diversity of vegetation ranging from moist sclerophyll forest along the creek to dry forest with an understorey of heathland plants on the ridge. Gwyn and Geoff Clarke provided copies of the plant list of about 180 species plus an additional 70 species that they have identified at their nearby property at Lanitza which is in similar terrain. Several species new to the list were identified on the day, including the uncommon but widespread fern *Schizaea dichotoma*, an ancient species found in Australia, New Zealand and parts of the Asian continent.



Macrozamia fawcettii, a low growing species characterised by its long whorled leaves and underground trunk is endemic to north eastern NSW but is not considered threatened. According to the Palm and Cycad Society of Australia, the principal characteristics of *M. fawcettii* are as follows:

- a subterranean caudex

- a more or less straight rachis, which remains straight despite turning through multiple spiral twists
- glossy, mid to dark green coloured fronds
- broad, normally flat-surfaced pinnae usually with apical toothed edges on adult plants
- pinkish-red callouses at the point where the pinnae join the rachis
- seeds with a finely ribbed outer shell.

http://www.pacsoa.org.au/wiki/Macrozamia_fawcettii





Persoonia tenuifolia



Banksia Oblongifolia
image Alison Moore



Lambertia formosa

image Alison Moore

Lunch was at the Glenreagh Park by the Orara River with a good view of the local Grey-headed flying fox colony. Thanks to Gwyn and Geoff Clarke for organising another great excursion.

Open Native Garden Armidale

Maria Hitchcock is opening her garden under the Botanic Open Gardens scheme on Sunday May 29th. Address is 16 Hitchcock Lane Armidale (about 4km west of UNE on the old Inverell Rd). It features the national Correa collection, Waratah collection, Banksias, Grevilleas and Wattles. There will also be plant sales and a stone wall building demonstration. Admission is \$5 for adults and children are free.

We have visited this garden before and it is well worth the trip.

From the Editor

Karlo Taliana from the Eastern Hills APS group has written an article on banksias for suburban gardens; follow this link for an excellent read.

<http://gardendrum.com/2016/04/26/glorious-banksias-perfectly-sized-for-your-garden/>

Contributions relevant to native plants are always welcome. The deadline for the next issue is the 30th of June.

From the President

"This is an abbreviated version of the document Col will be taking to Sydney for the APS Workshop at the end of May. Please read and if you would like to raise any other ideas for consideration and/or comment on the document, contact Alison or Rob ASAP by email or telephone. We hope you will bear with us upon this request as at our next meeting on the 10th May, Gwen Harden will be explaining and leading a workshop activity about using her Key to identify Rainforest species, and there will just not be enough time to discuss the workshop document as well. "

Background

The Coffs Harbour Group warmly welcomes the opportunity to participate in the APS NSW Strategy Planning Workshop.

We have a great natural environment where a huge range of plants are found in the wild, and our climate allows us to grow a wide range of natives. We also have a long productive association with the local Botanic Garden. But our membership is spread over a large geographic area and people often travel long distances to attend meetings and outings. We face many challenges locally as well as at the state level. We have put together some ideas that we think will make APS more successful.

Proposed Strategic Ideas

1 Release More Funds to Local Groups for Projects

We think as a local group we can be more successful if we had access to more APS funds to take on projects and other ideas described below. We currently retain a mere 25-30% of membership fees for our use.

2 Increased Awareness of Australian Plants

Our group proposes the group engage more widely with the general community through a series of selected projects to do with planting, propagating and preserving plants. Examples of possible projects are:

- Projects at schools and/or where children can learn more about plants. In particular we would use existing school-based initiatives such as bush tucker programs in schools.
- Plantings around Coffs Harbour Airport to advertise the diversity of the local native flora
- Planting and maintaining a native plant area at the local botanic garden promoting local native alternatives to common exotics
- Propagating rare and endangered plants for the botanic garden.

3 Transfer Knowledge

There are several ideas here:

- Actively encourage publication of existing APS/SGAP books and guides that are now out of print.
- Encourage local groups to produce/reprint local flora guides, perhaps working with local National Parks.

- Provide small grants or awards for local students or young workers in bush regeneration, horticulture or landscaping to purchase reference materials, like software keys, books, database.

4 Administrative Improvements

We understand a range of changes are already in progress. We support the following ideas:

- Move to on-line publication/journal delivery – no more mail outs
- Online banking for financial transactions the norm not the exception.
- Get rid of plastic membership cards – we don't use them and no-one locally gives us discounts!
- Local group presence on Website- Establish regional admin web pages with common look and feel for region committees to maintain their records. There could also be a HO web page for board communications to committees etc.
- Website - Update the APS website to be easier to navigate and search, and more accessible for sight-impaired (bigger fonts).
- Consider membership for members who live too far away for attending meetings and outings at a local group but who can contribute in other.

Conclusion.

We believe the success or failure of the Australian Plant Society depends more on the 20 regional Groups rather than a stronger corporate structure. We as a local group need more assistance from APS NSW. While this can be financial, APS NSW should provide an overarching State structure that eliminates duplication at a regional level where it makes sense to do so. These ideas are presented in order to reach a balance between these two.

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