



**AUSTRALIAN  
PLANTS SOCIETY**



## Coffs Harbour Group

### NEWSLETTER No 134 –November 2017

#### Next Meeting 10a.m Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November Plant Photography

This meeting will take a slightly different format. Members are invited to bring along any of their plant photos to show and discuss. So far we have six people who have put up their hands. Contact Janice Fitzpatrick if you want more information. This will be the last meeting of the year and promises to be very a very interesting one, as it will allow for a lot of discussion from members plus a chance to share information. As usual there will be a morning tea and members are encouraged to bring along interesting plants for the display table.

#### AGM Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 10a.m.

Most members are aware that the Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> day meeting also includes the **Annual General Meeting**. Consequently at the beginning of the meeting all formal positions are declared vacant, a returning officer appointed, and nominations are called to fill the positions for 2018. At this meeting all persons can fill any of the positions. The positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter editor and Publicity Officer. Under our rules, these persons have the right to be members of the Committee if they so wish and the AGM can elect further members, or the Committee can co-opt further members, if it feels necessary during the year.

At this stage, we have had communications from Angela Lownie who has asking to be relieved of her current duties of **Web administrator** and **Publicity Officer**. If there is anyone who has some background with Web administration we would like to hear from you. There is an additional position of Publicity Officer. While this was in 2017 a big job because of the AGT, it really now involves communicating with the local paper (*Advocate*) and keeping them informed of our meeting dates and guest speakers, and our outings venues.

We have also the need to find a **Newsletter editor**. The editor doesn't necessarily require great botanical knowledge but does require reasonable English language and computer skills. There is virtually unlimited creative potential here within the realms of Australian plants and Phil can give advice if required.

There is also another very important volunteer position, which involves purchase and set up of refreshments for each of the day and evening meetings. Elaine Dalrymple has been undertaking the **refreshments** for some time but things are now more difficult insofar as she cannot make the day meetings. We are looking for someone who could take some or all of this on.

**Rob Watt**

## September Outing Report Mary Gibson's Garden Macksville

A good turn-out of about 20 gathered on a hot spring day to have a good look at Mary's peaceful piece of paradise which borders the Taylors Arm River west of Macksville. Mary has been there for 40 years and for some time grew and harvested a plantation of *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* "NSW Christmas Bush" for the



cut flower market. Most of the Christmas Bushes have gone now but in their place a fascinating and diverse native garden has been planted with specimens from a wide area of Australia. Mary and her helpers have built a sculptural deck called "the Folly" which overlooks the garden to the east.

Lunch was in the shade of the "House" garden where we watched honeyeaters in the grevilleas.

Mary planned the garden with several structural layers and "rooms" and this has evolved over time. From the vantage point on the deck we looked out on a stand of *Banksia plagiocarpa* a tropical species from the Hinchinbrook area of North Queensland. This blue-grey flowering species also has very attractive red-brown new growth. Behind this is a taller stand which includes, amongst many others, *Elaeocarpus grandis*,

*Aleurites moluccana*, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, and *Grevillea banksii*.



***Asteromyrtus Brassii***

An outstanding plant is *this specimen of Asteromyrtus brassii*. This is a small tree which comes from Cape York and New Guinea. (The *Asteromyrtus* were formerly included in *Melaleuca*. There are seven species and six occur in Northern Australia.) The striking scarlet flowers grow in clusters and form on older branches. The capsules are fused together similar to some *Melaleuca*.



***Asteromyrtus brassii***





At "The Folly"

*Grevillea banksii*  
A. Moore



*Wilkiea huegeliana*  
Alison Moore



*Jagera pseudorhus*  
A. Moore





### Examining a healthy *Wollemia nobilis*

There is a wide variety of *Grevillea* and *Eremophila* which also adds a lot of colour to the garden. It was interesting to see a large and healthy *Angiopteris evecta* thriving well outside its normal shady habitat.

After cool drinks at "The Folly" we headed down to the river bank. Mary had planted a Eucalypt plantation on open ground on the river flat about 17 years ago and it looked to be doing very well. Our walk took us through a moist sclerophyll forest which had pioneer rainforest species such as *Jagera pseudorhus* and *Wilkiea huegliana* in the understory and several large *Ficus* (*rubignosa*?). Dave Lea, a retired forester and friend of Mary's has had a lot to do with the garden and is also very knowledgeable about these trees in the forest which borders the Taylors Arm River. Canopy species include *Eucalyptus microcorys*, *E. saligna*, *E. acmenoides*, *E. propinqua*, *E. grandis*, *Lophostemon confertus* and *Syncarpia glomulifera*.

The day was getting hotter so we headed up the hill for lunch in the cool shade of the house garden. Thanks Mary for showing us around this fantastic place.

PS

We were all very impressed with the scones and *Citrus australasica* (Finger Lime) Jam on offer and Mary has kindly let us in on her secret.

### **The recipe for Finger Limes** [Recipe by Manda Gentle.]

Ingredients. 1kg finger limes. 990g white sugar. 1.1 L water.

Finely slice finger limes and remove ends Add all ingredients to a large saucepan and simmer stirring frequently Keep checking for readiness.

I will now add my variation. I use No1 blade of food processor to slice. I only did the slicing by hand once. Not necessary. Manda does recommend any colour of finger lime but yellow.

I hope this works for those who try it.

## For those interested in Volunteering at NCRBG

Volunteering roles for Monday and Wednesday and Friday mornings only

### Seedbank

- seed collectors
- stocktake of collection, updating seed list, emailing list out
- germination tests on old and new seeds
- seed processing and preparation of seed orders after new list has gone out

### Propagation

- cuttings taken from existing living collection to grow on to provide replacement plants
- seed germination for living collections and plants for sale (limited)
- growing on of germinated seeds from germination tests
- assisting with identification and labelling of plants in the Friends nursery - plants going up for sale at the front

### Planting

- small team for planting in the Gardens in all areas except the Prime Display Area and Sensory Garden

### General

- always welcome to take part in Wednesday and Friday working bees 8.00-11.00
- Information office is always looking for volunteers with openings to suit the volunteer (7days a week)

### Café

- particularly looking for people available on Sundays

All are welcome to give it a try and they can have a go in different areas. All must join the Friends so they are covered by insurance.

Cheers Lindy

Contact Lindy Hills [lindyhills@gmail.com](mailto:lindyhills@gmail.com) at NCRBG.

## October Meeting Report

The meeting was well attended and there were a few new faces there. The theme of the evening was "Economic Uses of Australian Plants" and Angela had organised three speakers before she jetted off to Africa.

**Paul Grant**, who incidentally is a son in-law of the late John Wrigley, spoke about the problems and solutions in growing and harvesting foliage plants for the florist market. These are native plants with interesting colours and shapes which can be used in floral arrangement. This foliage must also have a long "vase" life and be sufficiently robust for packing and transport. His foliage plantation is on a 25 acre south facing block which can be readily irrigated and accessed. Trees are kept to a manageable height to facilitate harvest and they are pruned to encourage new growth. A list of his favoured species is below.

### **Foliage Plants**

<b>Varieties Used</b>	<b>Common Name(s) and characteristics</b>
<i>Opisthiolepis heterophylla</i>	Blush Silky Oak, Gold Back (lobed foliage with a shiny smooth bronze surface beneath. Showy white flowers)
<i>Lomatia fraxinifolia</i>	Black-leaved Silky Oak
<i>Athertonia diversifolia</i>	Atherton Oak, and specific name derived from Latin <i>diversi</i> - "different" and <i>folium</i> "leaves" from the fact that different shaped leaves may be found on the same plant
<i>Grevillea baileyana</i>	White Oak, covered with creamy cylindrical flower spikes, with large

	glossy leaves divided when young, underside is gold changing to silvery grey.
<i>Stenocarpus davallioides</i>	Fern-leaved Stenocarpus; “the juvenile foliage of this tree is fern like and stunningly lobed. It also bears attractive cream flowers.”
<i>Darlingia darlingiana</i>	Brown Silky Oak: “Large glossy green lobed leaves and prominent spikes of fragrant, cream flowers...”
<i>Darlingia ferruginea</i>	Rose (Rusty) Silky Oak
<i>Neorites kevedianus</i>	Fishtail (Silky) Oak: “Stunning foliage”.
<i>Prumnopitys ladei</i>	Mount Spurgeon Black Pine: “... very attractive. Slow growing conifer...the glossy green foliage is stiff and fern-like with leaves approximately 2cm in length and borne in two rows along the horizontal stems”.
<i>Agathis robusta</i>	Kauri Pine: “...while most pines have needle-like foliage, this has broad, thick, leathery foliage...”
<i>Placospermum coriaceum</i>	Rose Silky Oak: “A hardy tree that changes leaf habit as it gets older – starting with bushy pink-tipped strongly lobed pale green leaves up to 1m long to shorter unlobed 20cm leaves as it ages.”
<i>Grevillea hilliana</i>	White Yiel Yiel; White Silky Oak “Juvenile leaves are lobed (pinnatifid or pinnatisect) and about 25cm-40cm long...Adult leaves are usually undivided and lanceolate to elliptical and about 9cm – 24cm and 1.5cm – 6cm wide...The underside of the leaf is silky.”” Threatened.
<i>Davidsonia pruriens</i>	Davidson’s plum. “It’s decorative foliage has made it a popular plant for a large container...”
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Basket grass. “Leaves are gloss green, shiny, firm, flat. They can grow from 40cm up to 1m long and 8-12mm wide..Leaf bases are broad with yellow, orange and brownish margins and the tips of the leaves are prominently toothed.”
<i>Doryanthes excelsa</i>	Gynea Lilly. Plant forms a large clump with numerous sword-like fibrous leaves, to 1m in length and up to 100mm wide, but has spectacular flower head.”The red [RHS Colour Chart shows close to red group 46C] trumpet-like flowers each 100mm across are borne in a compact terminal head 300 mm in diameter on a leafy flowering stem 2-4m high. For this reason, and because they are surrounded by brown bracts, the flowers are not clearly seen from the ground.”

**Andrew Stirling**, a recently retired forester, spent his professional life working in NSW forests. He spoke about really big Australian plants and the many sustainable products sourced from Australian native forests. Concrete, steel and brick require a huge amount of energy to produce. Houses made from concrete, brick and steel require up to 5 times more Carbon Dioxide to be released to the atmosphere than a similar sized house made from timber. In addition wood will sequester or store over 50% of its weight in Carbon over its lifetime. (*Wood is basically cellulose and lignin and this is mostly made up of 50% Carbon, 42% Oxygen and 6% Hydrogen. Whether dead wood rots, burns or is eaten by insects, it still produces the same amount of carbon dioxide ed.*)

Timber grown in plantations today has an age of only 20 to 40 years. Timber grown in native forests is much older and generally has higher density. In NSW the bulk of native timber plantations are *Eucalyptus pilularis* (Blackbutt), with lesser amounts of *E. grandis* (Flooded Gum), *E. dunnii* (Dunn’s White Gum), and *E. maculata* and *E. variegata*, (Spotted Gum). Blackbutt is the economically preferred species because it is fast growing, produces reasonably durable timber, has straight form and has evolved to withstand moderate bush fire. Other renewable products sourced from native forests include brushwood fencing, charcoal and eucalyptus oil.

**Morrie Duggan**, together with his wife Fiona, has a Ti-tree oil plantation near Braunstone south of Grafton. The *Melaleuca alternifolia* is cut to ground level every year using a mechanical harvester / mulcher. The mulched material is then steam distilled to extract the pure oil which is mainly made up of Terpinols but



with a minor amount of Cineol, depending on the season. It takes about 1 cubic metre of Ti-tree leaf to produce 5 litres of oil. The *Melaleuca alternifolia* is a pretty tough plant as evidenced by the floods, fires and insect attacks it has withstood. Floods do cover the leaves in mud and this makes for a dusty harvest. A hazard reduction burn gone wrong (courtesy of a local RFS) resulted in part of the plantation being burnt. This did not kill the plants but there was no production from them that year. A few insects do munch on the leaves but they are generally not a problem if there is a cold winter. The other problem of competition from weeds and grass can be partly reduced by covering the inter-rows using last season's Ti-tree mulch.

Thanks to our three excellent speakers for their interesting and individual takes, on "Uses for Australian Native Plants". Thanks also to Angela for the organisation.

## Outing Report Conglomerate State Forest

Plum Pudding road, (which probably takes its name from the old name for Conglomerate Rock, Plum Pudding Stone, runs roughly north-south and transects a variety of environments. The conglomerate rock outcrops just before the intersection of Plum Pudding Road and Sherwood Road. It is the lowest part of a relatively young Mesozoic sandstone sequence and is easily distinguishable by its water worn pebbles which have been cemented together and its relatively flat lying beds. These sandstones and conglomerates weather to very poor soils and this is reflected in the vegetation types.

*Olearia stillwellii*, (Red-leaved Daisy-Bush) a rare and attractive but short-lived herb was found growing on the side of the road. "This rare daisy grows mostly in forest areas on sandstone from west of Woolgoolga to the Fortis Creek area, north of Grafton. The fleshy, elliptic leaves are reddish-hairy underneath, on margins and on new buds. The flower heads are solitary on long stems and have up to 12 white or slightly bluish ray petals and a small group of yellow disc florets." (**Wildflowers of the North Coast of NSW Barry Kemp 2004**)

Like others in its genus, such as *Olearia flocktonii* (Dorrigo Daisy Bush) it probably requires disturbed ground to rejuvenate, hence its appearance at the edge of the graded gravel road.



Plants flowering in heathy areas which periodically get burnt include *Lambertia formosa* and *Isopogon petrophile*. Here the main trees are *Eucalyptus planchoniana* and *Corymbia gummiifera*.

By the roadside there was also *Boronia umbellata* in flower. A very attractive form of *Trocharpa laurina* (Tree Heath) with bright pink new growth has potential to be developed as a cultivar.

In lower areas where the sandstone was absent (the older Palaeozoic rocks) there was moist sclerophyll forest with an overstorey of mainly *Eucalyptus pilularis*, *E. microcorys*, *E. intermedia*, *E. grandis*, *Syncarpia glomulifera*, and *Lophostemon confertus* with an understorey of pioneer rainforest plants including *Baloghia insipida*, *Jagera pseudorhus*, *Omalanthus populifolius*, and *Taberaemontana pandacaqui*.



*Isopogon petrophile*



Moist sclerophyll forest *Eucalyptus pilularis*

*Lambertia formosa*



Thanks to Craig Henderson for organising this great day out.  
PO'S.





**Alison Moore, doing a little promoting for APS at the inaugural Corindi Fair.**

## **From the Editor**

Thanks to Rob Watt and Alison Moore for their contributions to this newsletter.

As I am stepping aside as editor this year, your new editor will have the next newsletter out when next year's program is finalised.

Contact me if you think you would like to give it a go. I can give some training and advice if need be. I would like to thank the members for the high quality articles they have contributed over the past nine years.

## **Phil O'Shea**

## **Committee**

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