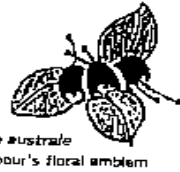


**AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY**



Syzygium australe
Coffs Harbour's floral emblem

COFFS HARBOUR GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 128 – November 2016

Next Daytime Meeting Tuesday 8th of November 10 am.
Guest Speaker Angus Moore "Plants at Sea"
Plus AGM

Angus Moore will be speaking on his travels down to the icy waters of the Antarctic. There aren't that many living plants down there but I am told this talk is going to be something completely different and very interesting. Bring along plants for the display table. There will also be plants for sale to raise money for our book re-publication and a morning tea. There will also be a very brief annual general meeting to elect a committee for the next 12 months. All current positions will be vacant so please consider putting something back into the organisation by nominating.

Christmas Gathering at Alison and Angus Moore's garden
Sunday December 4th 12pm

Christmas get together at Angus and Alison's.



Date: Sunday, December 4th

Time: 12 noon – 4pm

Where: 163 Smiths Road, Emerald Beach.

What you can bring: A BBQ will be available for those happy to cook their own meat, your own salad and drinks. Please can u also bring along your own plate, cutlery and glasses. A folding chair(s) would be

appreciated.

What we are providing: Garlic bread sticks and several yummy desserts to share plus a Christmas cake.

We look forward to seeing as many members on this day, our last activity for the year. For catering purposes please RSVP to Alison by November 27th on 0439 597 118 or email anchorsmoore@westnet.com.au

Directions: Smiths Road is on the western side and there is no direct exit from the Highway. From the south take Emerald Beach exit and turn back towards the south on old highway until you reach Smiths Road bridge, turn right and head up the hill until you come to the end of the bitumen at State Forest. We are on the left, blue letterbox with large sign saying 163 Smiths Road, Private Driveway. It is a 200m drive and parking will be limited. For those folk heading from the north on the highway, take the Emerald Beach exit on your left, continue past Fiddaman Road and two roundabouts and head south as per above for Smiths Road.

Alison Moore

A visit to Angela and Kevin's garden at Moonee Beach.

A cool breeze greeted the members as we met at Angela and Kevin's on Sunday, 23rd October and welcomed potential new members Keith and Laurel Taylor to our small gathering. Angela and Kevin are the perfect hosts with a welcome cup of tea or coffee and some delicious cake and slices to begin the proceedings. While we tucked into morning tea, Angela described the beginnings of their garden in 2006, their trials and tribulations along the way including the ravenous appetites of wallabies meaning every plant had to have a guard to protect them in their early stages, a method many of us can readily recognise in our own gardens. The garden is defined into various areas, such as shed garden, front of house garden etc. and Angela has an up to date database of which plant went where and date planted, an excellent method to keep track of the hard work done by them both over the ten years.

Of particular interest to me was the 'bush garden' to the south west of the property where the existing native bush and new plantings combine to form a natural and diverse landscape to '*Kirkcaldy*', a garden of approximately 3ha? In the garden near the shed were Mat Rush or *Lomandra longifolia* looking very healthy with several long flowering stems. Angela has many *Lomandra* scattered throughout the garden, this species is very good at self-seeding and I have been the happy recipient of hundreds of seedlings for my garden, a good butterfly attractant and hardy edge plant. *Callistemons*, *Banksias*, *Goodenias*, *Derwentia perfoliata*, *Pandanus tectorius*, *Callicoma serratifolia*,

Anigozanthus spp. were among some of the plants we saw. Gwyn Clarke with her encyclopaedic knowledge of our natives was called upon by many of us to verify or identify particular plants.

Angela had also very kindly potted up a variety of Kangaroo Paws and other plants from her garden for members to take home with a small donation going to our coffers.

We then enjoyed our lunch overlooking the rainforest garden, some people dispersed for home while others stayed on for another ramble around the garden. Many thanks to Angela and Kevin for hosting this enjoyable and informative activity.



Alison Moore

Goulburn River Field Trip September 4-9

Fifteen members of the Coffs Harbour group plus 6 members of the Canberra group met at Merriwa for 4 days of exploring the Goulburn River National Park and Morrie Duggan's adjoining family property, "Burrawong" which also has a very diverse garden at the main house. The season had been very good and the weather was kind with frosty nights and fine sunny days. There was so much to see, this brief article cannot do justice to it all. Doug Binns wrote an excellent account on the ground orchids and this is included as a separate article following. The Goulburn River Gorge is normally difficult to access for the public but Morrie got us there via the Parson's Gully track through his property. The start of our 4km walk down Tunbridge Gully to the gorge was made especially interesting when the landholder told us there was a grumpy Angus bull "somewhere" in the paddock. "The Drip" is a not an inviting name for such a beautiful part of the park. This small mossy gorge has numerous soaks and springs emanating from impervious layers in the sandstone. It is also home to some very good displays of *Epacris reclinata*. Another area of great interest was "Lee's Pinch" which had a very diverse range of dry sandstone species and spectacular views from the escarpment out to the Liverpool Plains. "Hands on Rocks" has some interesting aboriginal stencils and we also found quite a few ground orchids and lithophytes. We also visited Ted and Jenny Finnie's property which apart from its diversity at the basalt/sandstone boundary also has a very eclectic native garden around the homestead.





***Acianthus fornicatus* ? CJ**



***Boronia rubignosa* CJ**

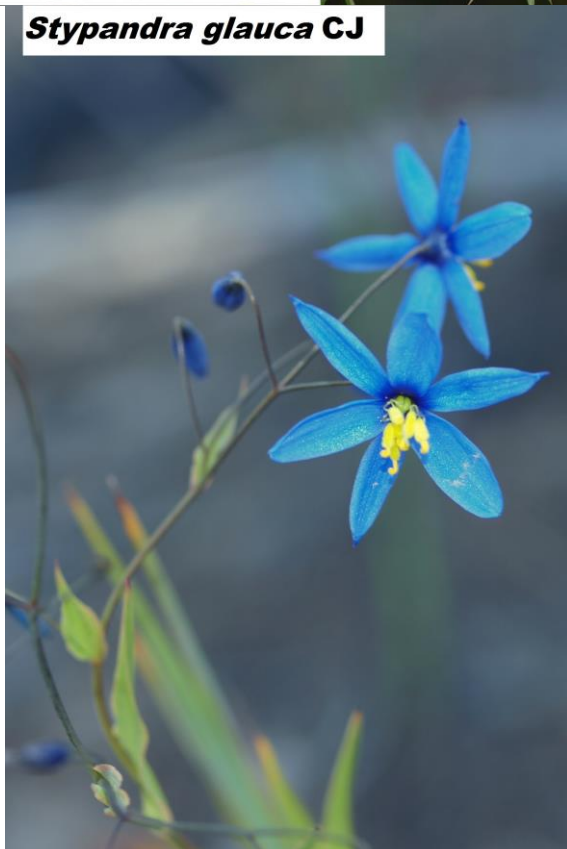


***Grevillea ramoisissima* subsp. *ramoisissima* CJ**



***Philotheca salsolifolia* CJ**

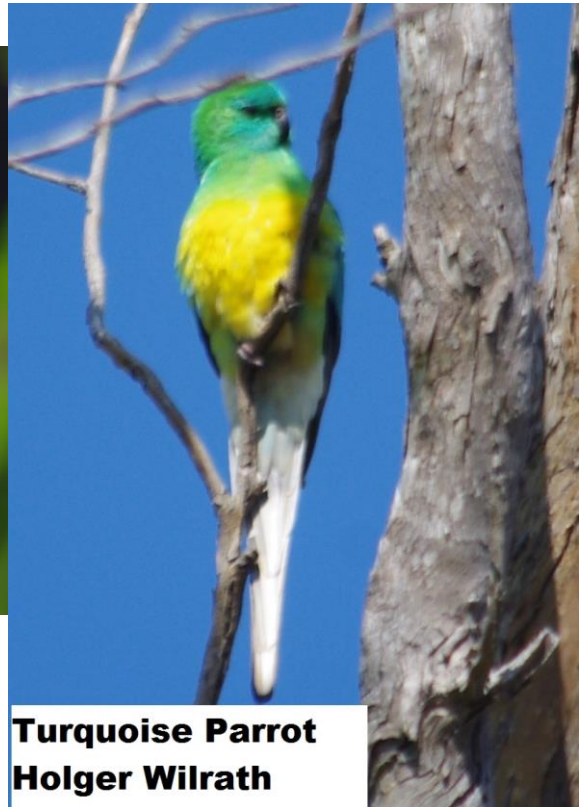
***Stypandra glauca* CJ**



***Wurmbea dioica* CJ**



Phebalium squamulosum CJ



Turquoise Parrot
Holger Wilrath



Quite a few interesting birds spotted by some including the Turquoise Parrot, Rock Warbler, a large flock of Glossy Black Cockatoos, and a pair of sleeping Frogmouths. Thanks to Colin Jeffrey for the great botanical pictures and to Morrie Duggan for this superbly organised trip.

Phil O'Shea

Orchids at Goulburn River in September 2016



Cyanicula caerulea

Courtesy of one of the wettest winters of the last decade, participants in the APS Coffs Harbour trip to the Duggan property and Goulburn River NP were treated to a great abundance of orchids. In some areas it was difficult to avoid treading on them while walking and I even heard one of our visitors from Canberra refer to an orchid 'infestation'! The two most widespread species, which we saw in all areas, though not always abundantly, were *Cyanicula caerulea* and *Caladenia fusca*.

The latter was very variable, ranging from small white flowers to larger pink ones. It is possible that other species may have been present among these and overlooked, although all variants were within the range described for *C. fusca*.

Cyanicula caerulea occurs in both coastal and inland areas but to me seems generally far more common inland. A much less common species was white-flowered *Caladenia catenata*, of which we saw only scattered individuals or small groups.

The mauve flowers of the caladenia-like *Glossodia major*

were conspicuous in most areas, but were most common in the valley just south of the Duggan home. This species is mostly single-flowered but we saw some plants with two flowers.



Glossodia major

Species of *Pterostylis* were well represented. On sheltered slopes, *Pterostylis curta* was often very abundant, with carpets of leaves covering the ground and some nice groups of flowering plants. The largest population we saw was on the Tunbridge Gully walk. There were occasional colonies of *Pterostylis nutans* growing in the same areas as *P. curta*. Another common species, but usually on more exposed slopes or in moss gardens on rock outcrops, was *Pterostylis concinna*. This species is close to the northern limit of its distribution in the Goulburn River area. In fact, PlantNET and other references record the northern limit as Mudgee, so the plants we saw are slightly beyond the generally recorded northern limit, but there is also at least one disjunct population further north, near Gunnedah. *Pterostylis bicolor*, with its distinctive blackish labellum callus,

occurred in most areas we visited, but usually only as rare individuals. We saw it commonly only in the area just south of the Duggan family home. An autumn flowering species of *Pterostylis*, most likely *Pterostylis* species B, was fairly common but none of the plants were in flower during our visit. We also saw two other species which were



Caladenia catenata



Pterostylis curta



Pterostylis bicolor

not flowering so the identities are uncertain. One was probably *P. hamata* or *P. boormanii* and the other most likely *P. parviflora*.

Other orchid species which we were able to add to our list were *Chiloglottis formicifera* (only near 'Hands on Rock') and *Cyrtostylis reniformis* (only Tunbridge Gully, but several large colonies). There were also species of *Microtis* sp. (widespread but most plants not flowering), representatives of the genera *Diuris*, *Calochilus* and *Thelymitra* (plants of these three genera only in early bud) and an *Acianthus*. On the day, I called the latter *Acianthus fornicatus*, but I didn't examine it closely and it may have been the closely similar western vicariant, *A. collinus*. The only epiphytic orchid we saw was *Dendrobium linguiforme*, common on rocks near 'The Drip' but surprisingly, and unfortunately, not flowering.



Chiloglottis formicifera



Cyrtostylis reniformis

For me, the abundance of orchids and the spectacular displays of another (non-orchid) geophyte, *Wurmbea biglandulosa*, were some of the trip highlights and I thank Morrie for his foresight in arranging such great seasonal conditions for our visit!

Doug Binns

Visit to Coolah Tops National Park

Day 5 of the “Goulburn River” trip was a brief visit to Coolah Tops National Park. This has to be one of the best kept secrets around as few people visit this spectacular park which lies at 1200 metres elevation and about 30 minutes drive from the town of Coolah. Only 5 of us made the trip but to me the highlight was the gigantic *Xanthorrhoea glauca* which, by the depth of their dead leaves, have not seen a fire in a very long time. Contrast this with the stark beauty of ancient Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) forest and waterfalls tumbling over the basalt escarpment and you have a very special environment. The numerous hollows in the Snow Gums are the reason why this area supports one of the largest populations of Greater Gliders in NSW. Thanks again to Morrie and Fiona for showing us around this place.



***Xanthorrhoea glauca*
plus Morrie and his mum**

Phil O'Shea

The Olive-backed Oriole...

Phil's talk about attracting birds to gardens has prompted me to write a short note about one of my favourite birds. Unfortunately my present pocket-handkerchief garden has limited appeal to birds, so the bird in question I now mainly see (or more likely hear) on bush outings. This is the Olive-backed Oriole, a relative of the fig bird, and it can be mistaken for a female fig bird, having an olive green back and speckled breast. It feeds on both insects and small fruits and spends most of its time foraging in the treetops, but will visit a nearby bird bath. It is an excellent mimic, not the strident mimicry of the lyrebird, but a gentle, whimsical roll call of some of the other local birds, occasionally punctuated by its own, distinctive short trill. On our bush excursions, the nature of our group means that we are naturally engrossed in the wildflowers, so what sounds like distant calls of grey butcherbird, yellow-faced honeyeater, magpie etc. does not register, but it is quite often a single oriole. Having both a bird bath and some nearby tall trees* seems the most likely way of encouraging it to visit your garden.

**For a smaller tree with lots of fruits, Decaspermum humile is worth planting.*

Barry Kemp

Grafting

Colin Broadfoot

Colin demonstrated the various grafting techniques and types of graft which he has found successful for native plants. He also discussed the motivation of why we go to the effort of grafting, which is to produce a healthy plant unaffected by soil pathogens. Although Grevilleas were most commonly grafted, other genus such as Prostanthera and Eremophila can be tried and he frequently mentioned the fun of experimentation with root stocks and scions. Rootstock for Grevilleas is usually *G. robusta* but hybrids such “Moonlight” and “Coastal Glow” can also be used depending on the scion material. He had on display a native finger lime *Microcitrus australasica* which he had grafted onto a bush lemon. The basis of grafting is that the cambium of the root stock and the scion must be in sufficient contact for a sufficient length of time for success. The types of grafting tape were also mentioned. Colin uses a type of thin surgical film which breaks down in a month or two.

The main points emphasised were

- Hygiene of scalpels and other equipment using chlorine free disinfectant.
- Getting the technique correct and working quickly when tying on grafting tape.
- Temperature and humidity control while the graft knits.
- Choosing healthy and similarly sized rootstock and scion material

Thanks Colin for a practical and inspirational demonstration.

From the Editor

Thanks to Doug Binns for his excellent article on the orchids identified during the Goulburn River National Park trip and to Alison Moore for the report on the visit to the Lownie garden (at short notice). Also thanks to Barry Kemp for his interesting article on Olive-backed Orioles and *Decaspermum humile*.

A reminder that the AGM will be held as part of the daytime meeting on Tuesday the 8th of November at 10 am. All positions will be declared vacant (including the newsletter editor) and we would like to see as many new people as possible nominate for a position on the committee.

The last book auction was very successful with many people snapping up some great bargains. Gwyn informs me that the next book auction may be held at the Xmas party. Further details will be sent by email closer to the date.

Phil O'Shea

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