



**Australian
Plants**
SOCIETY NSW

Coffs Harbour Group



NEWSLETTER No. 142: July 2019

2019 COMMITTEE

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APS Coffs Harbour Membership

We currently have 68 members.

Membership Renewals

Is yours overdue?

Please renew online via APS website:

www.austplants.com.au

APS Website

Keep up-to-date with news, Program of outings and meetings via our website:

www.austplants.com.au/Coffs-Harbour

Members Celebrating 25th Anniversary: Photo by Angela Lownie



MEETINGS

*Meetings are held monthly on Tuesdays in the Display Room, North Coast Regional Botanic Garden.
Please bring a plate of food to share. Tea and coffee will be provided.*

Tuesday, July 16: 10am – 1pm

Guest Speaker: Tim Bekis, Coffs City Council Weeds Inspector & Biosecurity Officer

Topic: *Weed Identification*

Tim will bring a selection of local weeds to discuss. Members are invited to bring their own weeds for identification, but please seal them in a container to prevent seeds being released in the Botanic Garden.

Tuesday, August 13: 7pm – 10pm

Guest Speaker: tba

Topic: *Garden Design*

Tuesday, September 10: 10am – 1pm

Guest Speaker: Phil O'Shea

Topic: *Palms of Australia*

Australia has about 60 species of palms in 22 genera, of which 48 are endemic. This presentation will cover the classification of Australian palms and look at some of the more interesting species.

FIELD TRIP

Sunday JULY 28: 10.00am

Garden and Tea Tree Plantation: Morrie and Fiona Duggan

Location: 519 Mulquinneys Road, Braunstone

Conditions permitting, Morrie will demonstrate the tea tree harvesting and oil distillation process. While this is in progress, or later, there will be ample opportunity to wander around the garden and adjacent arboretum and stroll through the area of uncleared bushland on the property. Morning tea/coffee will be available and bring your lunch to enjoy on the sunny verandah.

Directions from Coffs Harbour: follow the Orara Way north through Coramba and Glenreagh towards Grafton. You will pass a Neumann service station on your right at Lanitza. Continue north for about 5.5km, crossing Fiddlers Creek and Bald Hill Creek until you reach School Lane (well signposted) on your left. Follow School Lane to the T-junction, then turn left onto Mulquinneys Road and follow across Fiddlers Creek. No. 519 is the first house on the **left** after crossing the bridge.

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(L) Gwyn Clarke demonstrating propagation      (R) *Zieria prostrata* 6 weeks' after propagation

## Rob Watt: Claire Cottage - a tale of two visits

Photos Rob Watt and Jan Whittle

A visit to the Dorrigo area, or anywhere on the escarpment, is always one where the weather has to be taken into account. In selecting the 24<sup>th</sup> March we were sure that the cooler autumn weather would just be just right. As it turned out it was hot. The jumpers that are always packed were cast aside and hats, fans and sunglasses were the order of the day.

Our hosts, Carol and Trevor Deane, had made it simpler for us by providing a map of their property and a short history of what they had done in the various areas. The highlights were that they had only been there since mid-2005; that it was 20 acres and had, for the previous 70 years been part of a much larger cattle property. The acreage is split pretty well evenly between 10 acres of remnant rainforest and two 5-acre lots that were, and still are in many places covered with kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*). It is this latter area, containing only four original trees that the Deanes have revegetated with over 2,000 new trees.

After a pleasant cuppa on the deck of their home, we set off to see their work. The property borders on rainforest and it quickly becomes apparent that they are carefully protecting and highlighting some of the more important specimens that have been preserved. Their proximity to the adjacent Junuy Juluum National Park (<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/junuy-juluum-national-park>) means that they are protected from incoming weeds and that the spreading of National Park flora by birds has aided their task of protecting the remnant rainforest.

As we walk up past the dam, frog habitats are identified and soon signs are also apparent next to the path of butterfly and moth species that are attracted to various plants. As we approach a section under the power lines that cut through the rainforest, it suddenly becomes a sea of yellow as we enter the scaly button (*Leptorhynchos squamatus*) area. Here we see the tiny Barred Skipper butterfly everywhere. Beautifully produced coloured photographs of a butterfly set into plastic stands were every few metres along the track to note the flora and assist in identifying the butterfly that maybe found there. So much care has gone into making this a user-friendly site that would gladden the heart of any lepidopterist.



Our return to the house took us part of the property where the couple have been doing a great deal of recent planting. Adjacent to a small stand of *Araucaria cunninghamii* (Hoop pine) (where even more are being collected and planted thus increasing the number which are endemic to the area and tower from the adjacent National Park) is a spectacular planting of various pioneer trees in a grid of 5 adjacent rows. With over 700 trees that are being used randomly to quickly create a bush corridor between the National Park and their remnant rainforest, it shows both their determination and aptitude for hard work. Like so much of their plantings, they are planting into the kikuyu grass, clearing only immediately around the new plant and protecting from the wildlife with plastic sleeves. On this particularly hot day I could only admire their fortitude. I escaped back to the deck and had a cool drink.



Three weeks later, I made another visit with Wayne Hartridge who presented the Deanes with a tray of cuttings from his property. The day was far more in keeping with what we expect from an April Dorrigo day and so with jumpers now at the ready we were shown the property.

I was able to spend time in areas that I had previously missed. One was the long planting that was marked on the map as the Arboretum Walk. This was part of the original, early plantings of rainforest trees as the Deanes set out on their mission nearly 14 years before. Now as an avenue of young plantings, again beautifully labelled, going from the Bush Connect area to the house, we see how the plan is coming to fruition. Appropriate signage for birds and butterflies appears here. I was also more aware of Carol's home garden, awash with many plants that are all within our reach if we want butterflies to be attracted to our garden. There were all of the regular garden plants that you would expect: Alyssium, *Geranium homeanum* and *Leptorhynchus squamatus* all for the smaller butterfly. For the larger butterflies the sturdier flowers of *Abelia* or *Buddleia* are preferred.

Carol and Trevor Deane's website is definitely worth a visit: <http://butterfliesdorrigo.weebly.com> Here you will find all the native plants needed to attract the specific butterfly into your garden and with beautiful pictures as well. I dare you to get started and maybe you too will become a lepidopterist!



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Tall Trees: Barry Kemp

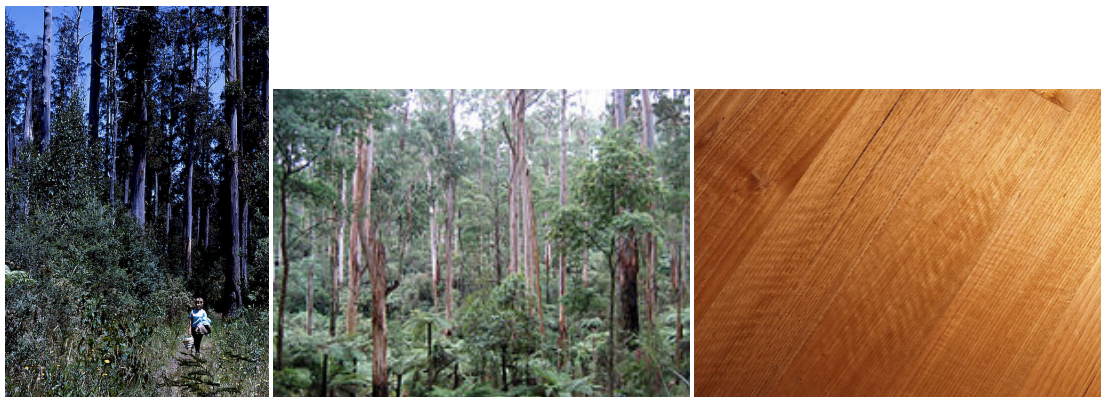
Last year, we visited a small patch of "old growth forest" not far from Dorrigo, known as "The Norman Jolly Memorial Grove", dedicated to a forward-looking, early 20th Century forester. An impressive feature is several *Eucalyptus microcorys* (tallowwood) up to 55 metres tall. This is about twice the height of the tallest trees in the botanic garden.

At present, the accepted tallest tree in Australia (and most likely in the Southern Hemisphere) is in Tasmania, a 100 metre high *Eucalyptus regnans* (called "swamp gum" in Tasmania, "mountain ash" in Victoria). This species, certainly the tallest flowering plant in the world, is susceptible to fire, but depends on fire for its continued existence, with thousands of seedlings appearing in the ash bed beneath the trees after a fire which has killed the parents, but which has enriched the soil and allowed sunlight to reach the forest floor. Seed, which drops between fires is taken by ants, and occasional struggling seedlings are quickly eaten by wallabies. When it has the chance, it is fast growing, with not a lot of top growth, and up to 60 metres to the first branch. The tree's habitat is sheltered, high-rainfall mountain areas with rich soil where the average fire frequency was originally about once a century. Another tall tree, *Eucalyptus delegatensis* (alpine ash), which grows at higher elevations, has been almost wiped out over most of its range due to too-frequent fires.

In the 19th century, there was awareness that there were unusually tall trees in eastern Victoria and parts of Tasmania, but any thoughts of conservation, as we now use the word, were a long way off. In southern Victoria there is a tall pole with a sign proclaiming this to be the site of the "World's Tallest Tree" at 375 feet high (114 metres). In 1881 this tree was first measured by a qualified surveyor, and then measured on the ground after being cut down for fence palings. Unfortunately a dead tree doesn't qualify. More than a century later, there is a belated attempt to attract tourists to the area and the present owner of the field has planted a few mountain ash seedlings in the hope that one day they will

reach great height. However, history shows that an isolated stand of tall trees, without the mutual protection of a dense forest, will have the tops broken off in storms.

Almost all of the previously surviving very tall mountain ash trees have been killed by the catastrophic fires of the last twenty years. Trees a hundred years old are growing fast, but with climate change and human activity, their chances of reaching the sort of heights once recorded are slim.



Eucalyptus regnans

Botanical Matters: Jan Whittle

Below are summaries of botanical material I have read recently. If you have something to share with our Membership please send it to me (jan64garden@gmail.com) for our next newsletter.

Seagrasses are the only group of flowering plants that have adapted to the marine environment. They differ from seaweeds, which are comparatively simple organisms or macro-algae with no vascular tissue. In comparison, seagrasses have leaves, roots and rhizomes, and have flowers, fruits and seeds for reproduction. There are nearly 60 seagrass species, which grow mainly in tropical and temperate regions. They provide food for dugong and green turtles and sequester huge amounts of organic carbon.

Zostera muelleri (Eelgrass) is a dominant meadow-forming seagrass in southern Australia that is being studied by Valentina Hurtado-McCormick (UTS, Sydney). She is concerned about the diminishing areas of seagrasses (7% per annum) and the loss of this vital marine habitat. She argues “the ocean is not healthy without seagrasses ... as they keep waterborne pathogens in check, and neutralise harmful bacteria ...”



The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, now in its 203rd year, has appointed its *first female* Executive Director. **Denise Ora** said that one of her top priorities is the delivery of a new purpose-built National Herbarium of NSW at Mount Annan. The existing Herbarium of 1.4 million specimens (which include plants collected by Banks and Solander on Cook’s 1777 voyage) is currently at risk of damage in an old building. This project includes the digitisation of the entire collection to provide an additional safeguard to preserve this valuable botanical databank.



The *Central Australian Plants Society* has produced three flora brochures

- (1) Forbs and Small Shrubs
- (2) Trees, Large Shrubs, Grasses and Sedges,
- (3) Flora of Katherine Area

For sale at \$5 each, they may be obtained at

apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au.

Canterbury-Bankstown Council: free 92-page guide available

Your Native Garden: A guide to bring native plants and animals back to your garden is available for download at: <https://www.cbcity.nsw.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/native-plants>

Eucalypt Photo Competition

Threatened Species Recovery Hub is undertaking a nation-wide assessment of Eucalypts (*Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia* and *Angorophora*). The project (<http://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/projects/developing-a-national-action-plan-for-australian-eucalypts>), led by the University of Queensland's A/Professor Rod Fensham, seeks photographs in three categories: trees, flowers and nuts, features such as bark or foliage. Entries close on July 22, 2019. Details at <http://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/news/eucalypt-photo-competition>, or contact Teghan Collingwood: t.collingwood@uq.edu.au

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## EVENTS

**August 17 – 18**

**2019 APS Get Together, Newcastle**

Register by August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cost is \$40

Maree McCarthy (0410) 405 815

[secretary.aps.newcastle@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.aps.newcastle@gmail.com)

**September 29 – October 4**

**2019 ANSPA CONFERENCE in ALBANY, WA**

<http://www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au/anpsa/>

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This narrow leaved acacia is in flower near the Seed Bank and Herbarium at our Botanic Garden.
Can someone please identify it for me?
Thanks, Jan