



**AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY**



Coffs Harbour Group

NEWSLETTER No 133 –September 2017

Next Daytime Meeting
Tuesday 12th September 10am. NCRBG

The state APS get together was successfully run by our group on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of September. There were many positive comments from the attendees, and all of the organisers and helpers should feel very proud of their efforts. The theme of this next day meeting will be a discussion about the APS state get together and anything else that comes up. It promises to be an interesting morning. Members and guests are also invited to bring along plant specimens for the display table and a light morning tea will be available.

Next Outing Sunday September 24th
10 a.m. Mary Gibson's Macksville Property

We will be visiting Mary Gibson's garden and native bushland near Macksville. Her property borders the Taylors Arm River and has a house garden, a diverse native garden and for the energetic, a riverine rainforest. Mary has had the riverine rainforest listed as a conservation reserve. We will meet at the house at 10a.m. for morning tea in the native garden. Mary tells me there will be some home-made finger lime jam treats on. There is plenty of off street parking. BYO lunch/ morning tea and a folding chair.

Directions: Coming from the north: After crossing the bridge at Macksville you turn right at the 3rd set of traffic lights and follow Taylors Arm Road for 4 kms. Then cross Congarinni Bridge which is a right hand turn and then left into Talarm Road. The property is No. 141 Talarm Road which is on the left hand side. From the south you turn left from the Highway at the first set of lights. (Let me know if you need further directions or help finding the place)

The Bloodwoods...

While planning ahead for a January car tour to view the larger local members of family Myrtaceae, it occurred to me that an article on **Corymbias** (bloodwoods) may be of interest to some. The group of trees called "Bloodwoods" (because some of them weep a blood-like sticky gum), were previously regarded as a sub-genus of Eucalyptus and common names include "Spotted Gum", "Lemon-scented Gum" and "West Australian Flowering Gum". These common names are unlikely to change, but DNA analysis resulted in a 1995 scientific paper which promoted the bloodwoods to genus status, as **Corymbias**. This caused a fair amount of teeth-gnashing, but the dust has now settled and the change is largely accepted.

There are more than 100 *Corymbias*, most commonly found in the drier parts of tropical and central Australia (the “ghost gum” of many paintings and calendars is now *Corymbia aparrerinja*), with some notable ones in south-west W.A., and a small number restricted to the East coast, as far south as Eastern Victoria. The fruits of bloodwoods, some quite large, are mostly more or less urn-shaped. Some species have rough, tessellated bark, others shed to a smooth or spotted surface and a few are rough at the base but smooth above.



Two of the “tessellated bark” type, *C. intermedia* (“Pink bloodwood”) and *C. gummifera* (“Red bloodwood”) are common around Coffs Harbour. The vernacular names refer to timber colour – the flowers are white. Just a little further north there are two of the “spotted gum” group, *C. henryi* and *C. variegata*. These shed their bark to reveal smooth trunks with metallic grey blotches.

The flowers of bloodwoods are usually produced on the outside of the foliage in a showy arrangement called a **corymb**, hence the name. Some of the W.A. ones are very attractive in flower, particularly *Corymbia ficifolia*, which has flower colours ranging from white to bright red or orange, and it has been grown very successfully in southern parts of Australia for many years, but in Coffs Harbour it doesn’t live long enough to flower. Grafted ones, some of which are hybrids like “Summer Red” and “Summer Beauty”, do better, but still perform erratically and they have not really caught on here. Worth having for a few years though.

Corymbia ptychocarpa (“Spring bloodwood”), which grows near springs in the Kimberley and NT “top end”, is often successful locally and is usually a small, straggly tree, but its large leaves and (usually) bright red flowers are occasionally seen. It is a parent of the above hybrids. “Lemon scented gum” (*C. citriodora*), is a Queensland tree which has been planted here for many years. The leaves are strongly lemon-scented, even when dry. “Cadaga”, “Cadagi”, “Cadaghi” (*Corymbia torelliana*) is a more recent introduction, but as it is spreading seedlings, it is becoming an environmental weed, so is not recommended. *Corymbia eximia* (Yellow bloodwood) grows mainly from the Hunter region southward (with an anomalous record in the lower Clarence), but would probably be OK here. A relatively small form (to about 10metres) is available commercially. Flowers are white or cream.

Barry Kemp

Meeting Report August

The meeting was well attended with quite a few new and old faces turning up. The plant display tables were very popular with a lot of flowering Proteaceae and specimens of leaves.

John Ross gave a thorough and eclectic talk on Proteaceae covering, their evolution, plant taxonomy, discovery, uses and nomenclature. The family was named after the Greek god Proteus who was able to change into many different forms. The sheer diversity of this family is mind blowing with genera and species being found on every continental mass which once was part of Gondwana. In Australia representatives can be found in all habitats from cool temperate rainforest to desert and the tropics.

John illustrated the talk with numerous examples local to our area, including a few which are endemic to this region, (*Grevillea mollis*, *G. masonii*, *G. banyabba*). A particularly interesting one, *Triunia youngiana* occurs near the main walkway in Dorrig National Park. It is shrub to about 4 metres and has sweet cinnamon smelling flowers, hence the common name of "Spice Bush". Unfortunately its bright red fruit is highly toxic and John recalled getting a bad reaction just from handling the fruit many years ago at Binnaburra. He illustrated this with an "a capella" rendition which went something like



***" Spice Bush very pretty and the Spice Bush flower is sweet
But the fruit of the poor Spice Bush is poisonous to eat"***

Thanks John for another well researched presentation.

Upcoming Meetings and Outings

Tuesday 10th October 7pm "Economic uses of Australian Plants"
Organised by Angela Lownie, 3 speakers, NCRBG

Sunday 24th October Outing to Conglomerate State Forest
Lead by Craig Henderson, Meet 10 a.m. Cnr Bucca and
Sherwood Forest Road. Carpooling recommended for the
gravel roads.

Tuesday 14th November 10 a.m. Plant
Photography, Open Forum plus AGM

From the Editor

This is a very short newsletter as I was away and many members were busy organising the APS get together. Thanks to Barry Kemp for his excellent article on Bloodwoods.

The photo of the *Triunia youngiana* was supplied by Wayne Jeffery.

Articles for the next newsletter should be sent to me by October 30th. I will send out reminders by email for the October outing and meeting.

POSITION VACANT **NEWSLETTER EDITOR 2018**

Newsletter editing doesn't require great botanical knowledge. All you need are reasonable English language and computer skills and be able to check the occasional plant name spelling using the internet. I have a template which I use in Word but there are hundreds of other newsletter formats available. Contact me if you think you would like to give it a go. I can give some training and advice if need be.

Phil O'Shea

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