



June Outing – Bywong Plant Nursery

10 members travelled to Bywong for what was a relatively good day weatherwise and an extremely interesting day for those wanting to know how those fantastic native flowering plants you see in retail nurseries are produced.

Peter and Jennifer Ollerenshaw met the group on arrival and whilst we were treated to a cup of tea and scones Peter outlined the background and history to their operation. Peter originally worked in the Australian Botanic Gardens until 30-40 years ago when they had built up the nursery at Bywong with a focus on garden plants. The initial nursery retailed mainly exotic garden plants raised from cuttings and seed. Also, Jojoba seedlings in later years were raised in very large numbers for broadacre plantings in various locations across Australia. Gradually the focus moved to native Australian plants and has now reached the stage where the focus is almost exclusively on developing unique varieties of Australian plants for gardens. Nowadays Peter and Jennifer are reducing the range of activities and have reduced back from 6 fulltime staff to just themselves doing all the work. Peter explained that most of their income is derived from the small fee paid under the Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) licensing system for every plant sold of the varieties they have developed. The other income is derived from the sale of their labels which have been carefully designed and patented before being attached to the thousands of plants sold at the retail level. When you purchase a "Lady O" or "New Blood" Grevillea from Gehls, Bunnings, or Mitre 10 you will be able to see the Bywong name on the back of the label. The name can also be protected by trademark and must not infringe other registered names. The nursery has produced about 67 cultivars from a wide range of native species and has several more going through the development stage.

Peter took us on a tour of the various hothouses and shade houses which have been built over the years and are still in

use for propagation and growing out of plants. On the tour Peter elaborated on the complex and time-consuming process one goes through to end up with a commercially valuable new variety. The whole process can take up to 15 years or more starting with the original decision to cross pollinate two different species/varieties to successfully registering a variety under the PBR scheme. In summary Peter and Jennifer develop the variety over a number of years and have it registered which includes rigorous and expensive comparison trials to ensure it is unique. During the final stages of this process, they create a name which is also unique and doesn't contravene other trade names. Plants are grown out for supply to the next stage propagators who scale up plant numbers by propagating cuttings these operators then supply plants to growers who vastly increase the numbers which when ready are supplied to retailers in locations suitable for the plants to be planted in gardens.

The above is a simplification of what was a complex and painstaking process requiring skill perseverance and a good knowledge of plant characteristics which will appeal to the average gardener.

Next time you are browsing through the plants at your favourite retailer spare a thought for the skill and persistence of the breeder.



Leptospermum Aphrodite



Leptospermum Mesmer Eyes



Grevillea New Blood

Great Eastern Ranges Project

Three members checked Redground TSR and Redground Heights Road for possible seed collection in spring on 23 June. Again there was only a very small amount of ripe seed available on the day. Please remember that it is illegal to source seed from TSR's, South East Local Land Service have kindly given us permission to collect from some TSR's in support of this project. We also have permission from Upper Lachlan Council for the same purposes along roadways.

Calendar of Events

- 2 Jul Forum at Goulburn Workers Club
- 6 Aug Bangadilly National Park , Canyonleigh
- 2-4 Sep Weekend trip to Cowra – cancelled - an alternative walk will be found for the Saturday
- 1 Oct Mt Gray Goulburn
- 5 Nov STEP Garden Canberra Arboretum
- 3 Dec AGM

July Forum

The July Forum is on this Saturday 2nd of July. Kaye had to have numbers in to the Goulburn Workers Club by the Tuesday before. Unfortunately, numbers are well down on our last Forum in 2019 and we only have about 30 people attending.