



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 273 – April 2012

MARCH MEETING at THE BALLROOM.

The first meeting at our new venue was well attended, with thirty members present. It was nice to see some old faces returning, and to welcome Trevor as a new member. We were also joined by a rather large and inquisitive rat, which has a few of the ladies less than impressed ☺

PLANTS USED BY ABORIGINES

Liz Benetto

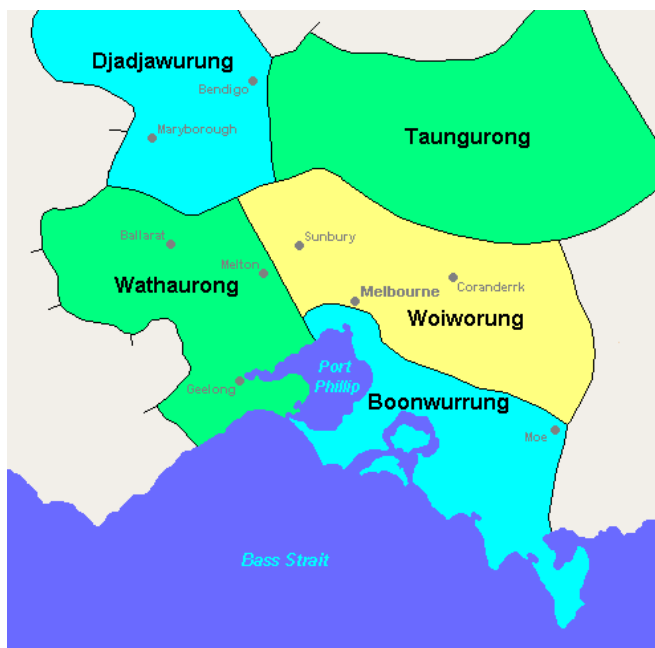
We were treated to a very informative talk by Liz Benetto, about the plants used in various ways by the aborigines. Liz is a voluntary guide in Geelong Botanic Gardens, and in this role has researched the history of the Wathaurong people and the importance of plants to their survival.

The Wathaurong people were a part of the Kulin nation, and their lands take in the eastern side of Port Phillip, up as far as Ballarat and down towards Lorne.

Although plants made up about 70% of the Wathaurong's food supply, there were surprisingly few that were edible in this part of the country. Many of those that were suitable required a great amount of work to make them safe, if not palatable. Liz covered important food plants from farther north, as well as those used by the local aborigines in this part of the world.



Liz Benetto displaying indigenous foods



The Kulin Nation Lands – courtesy Wikipedia

The Wathaurong were not as nomadic as some other aborigines, given they had food supplies from the sea and the rivers as well as animals and plants from the land. They had semi-permanent and even permanent dwellings, including some made of blue-stone in the Bannockburn area.

Plants were used for a variety of purposes – food, medicine, tools, weapons, containers and more. The Wathaurong were careful managers of the land, using plants in a sustainable way that would allow them to continue to grow and be used again.

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Cooking was done in earth ovens – holes in the ground lined with stones. A fire was placed in the hole, which heated the stones. The coals were removed and the wrapped food placed on the heated stones, and covered with coals.

Each clan had a 'taster', an elder who was educated in what plants could be eaten and how they had to be prepared. He would try tiny amounts of the prepared foods to ensure that they were safe.

Acacia seeds were an important source of protein, fibre and fat, the leaves were used as a wrap for cooking, the roasted gum was eaten or mixed with nectar to make a sweet drink.

The saltbushes, *Atriplex*, *Chenopodia*, *Enchylaena*, *Rhagodia* were important plants used for a variety of purposes. The seeds, fleshy leaves and fruits were eaten. The leaves were also used as a poultice.



***Enchylaena tomentosa* – Ruby Saltbush**

Tubers were a very important food and source of carbohydrate. The roots and tubers of bulbine and chocolate lilies, orchids, convolvulus and daisies were carefully extracted and eaten raw, roasted or ground and made into cakes. The Yam daisy, *Microserus ssp.* was probably the most important plant food for the Wathaurong, and was almost wiped out when European settlers introduced grazing stock to the plains. The tubers were eaten raw, like a radish or baked in the earth ovens. The juices produced in the cooking process were sweet and caramel-like. Eremophilas were used to combat infections. Clinical studies are underway at the moment to test the

eremophilas anti-bacterial properties to combat dental caries and golden staph.

Pigface, *Carpobrotus sp.*, was used as a food and medicine. The red fruit and young leaves were eaten raw as salads or cooked as vegetables. The sap was used to take the itch out of insect bites.

Hop-bushes, *Dodonea sp.*, had a variety of uses. The leaves were brewed to make an alcoholic drink, or chewed as an analgesic for tooth-ache, while the juice treated bites, burns wounds and rashes.

Indigofera roots were beaten and the juices used to stun fish for easy capture.

Melaleuca was widely used for a multitude of purposes. Leaves were used as flavouring in food and drinks, while the oils had application for treatment of coughs, colds, aches, pains and constipation. The bark was used for bandages, sleeping mats, rain protection baby wraps and as shrouds.

Xanthorrhoea was another plant with a wide range of uses. The nectar was extracted by soaking in a bark trough to produce a sweet drink, was sometimes fermented and flavoured with the acidic tang of crushed ants. The tender white bases of the leaf were chewed, and succulent roots were eaten as a vegetable. The seeds were collected and ground to a meal to make damper. There were also edible grubs in the bases of trunks, and honey from carpenter bee nests in the flower stalks. The gum was an important adhesive for spear heads and the like.



***Xanthorrhoea australis* – Grass-tree**

Tetragonia was used as a living roof over more permanent shelters, and could be harvested for the green leaves which were eaten. *Tetragonia tetragonioides* is used today in many bushfood recipes.

There were many other plants used for a wide variety of purposes by the aborigines, and being used now as bush-foods and on the menus of some of the 'trendier' restaurants.

PLANT TABLE

There was plenty of colour on the table, but members seemed a little shy, with Frank, John and Tony bringing the vast majority of specimens along. Most gardens have very little flowering at the moment.

Callistemon citrinus is not an uncommon plant on the table, but Tony's sample, flowering in March was a bit unusual.

Spyridiums produce a good show all year with their bracts, rather than their flowers

Crowea saligna also flowering a little early is a very pretty little plant which will grow well in most soils and in full-sun to semi-shade.

Acacia were represented with *A. iteaphylla* ,, the Flinders Ranges Wattle, is lovely plant with cascading foliage and *A. baileyana*, the Cootamundra wattle. Most of which are positively bulging with bud at present.

John brought along a beautiful *Gossypium sturtianum*, Sturt's Desert Rose. This plant is the NT floral emblem a small shrub with attractive bluey-grey leaves. John grew his plants from seed obtained from the APS Vic seed-bank.



***Gossypium sturtianum* – photo Brian Walters**

Eremophila polyclada is a large shrub or small tree in Frank's garden at about 4 metres in height. It has bright green foliage, delicate pink/white flowers. There is a common hybrid sold in nurseries called *Eremophila* 'Summertime Blue'. Also among Frank's offerings was a lovely deep salmon flowered, grey-

leaved specimen which Frank calls *E. 'Lost Label'*, and a beautiful *E. maculata* hybrid and a small shrub, *E. purpurescens*.

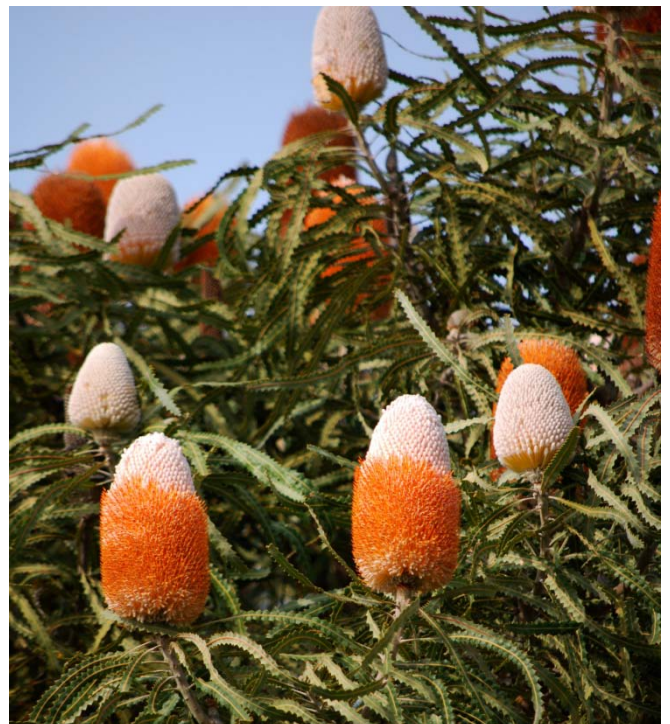
Banksia prionotes from Frank's garden has been growing for 20 years or more, but is infested with borers and is on its last legs, with large branches coming down each time there is a strong wind. See plant of the month.

There was a good selection of the *Grevillea banksii* hybrids on display. These are great plants that have flowers for most of the year.

G. 'Billy Bonkers' is a lovely metallic pink flower growing low and in interesting shapes. *G. 'Peaches'n'Cream'* has delicate yellow/pink flowers and is another smallish shrub at 1.5 metres. *G. 'Moonlight'* is a large shrub to small tree with gorgeous pale lemon flowers. All these cultivars respond well to hard pruning after flowering, and simply removing the 'dead-heads' will encourage prolific flowering.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

As Frank told us during the Plant Table discussion, his Frank's *Banksia prionotes*, is not long for this world. I thought we should have an article about it as a tribute to Frank's 'fallen comrade'.



Commonly known as Acorn Banksia or Orange Banksia, *B. prionotes* is a shrub or small tree, native to the southwest of Western Australia and can reach up to 10 m (30 ft) in height. It can be much smaller in more exposed areas or in the north of its range. This species has long, serrated, dull green leaves and large, bright flower spikes, initially white before opening to a bright orange. Its common name arises from the partly opened inflorescence, which is shaped like an

acorn. The tree is a popular garden plant and also of importance to the cut flower industry. It needs a well-drained soil in full-sun to do well.

Banksia prionotes was first described in 1840 by English botanist John Lindley, probably from material collected by James Drummond the previous year. There are no recognised varieties, although it has been known to hybridise with *Banksia hookeriana*. Widely distributed in south-west Western Australia, *B. prionotes* is found from Shark Bay in the north, south as far as Kojonup. It grows exclusively in sandy soils, and is usually the dominant plant in scrubland or low woodland. Pollinated by birds, it provides food for a wide array of vertebrate and invertebrate animals in the autumn and winter months. It is an important source of food for honeyeaters, and is critical to their survival in the Avon Wheat-belt region, where it is the only nectar-producing plant in flower at some times of the year.

APS VICTORIA QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

We are hosting the APS Vic Quarterly Conference over the weekend of June 16th and 17th. It is a major event on our calendar and we will need lots of help over that weekend to ensure a successful conference. There will be a concerted effort in the near future to recruit volunteers for all the roles required.

Members will need to register if they wish to attend. Please see the registration form attached.

Meanwhile, we need a couple more gardens to visit on the Saturday, preferably in the Belmont, Highton, Grovedale area, or Mt. Duneed / Torquay. If you have a garden that you would be prepared to offer, or know of someone who does, we need to hear from you urgently. Please contact any of the committee members if you can help out here.

INVERAWE NATIVE GARDENS

Debbie Gaskill

The gardens address on an ad we found by accident on a recent trip to southern Tasmania was "behind the Margate train"!

Margate is a small place south of Hobart on the road to Bruny Island where we were going for a few days. The train is in fact an actual train, marooned on the side of the road, where each carriage houses a small business. It is a destination in itself.

The garden is the brainchild of Margaret and Bill Chestnut who took early retirement from jobs in Sydney and commenced building their garden in early 2001. Intending to look for a small block (5 acres or so) they ended up with 22 acres covered in weeds as well as some native vegetation. The shape of the block is long and thin, widening towards the south

end where it runs into a local creek and includes an extensive grassland area. The whole block faces east towards North West Bay and boasts excellent views to as far away as North Bruny Island. Since their arrival Margaret and Bill have planted over 8,500 native plants and the garden is now quite mature.



The view from Inverawe Gardens

Not surprisingly in a native garden there is a great diversity of wildlife. Over 90 bird species have been sighted and the garden now also plays home to a family of paddymelons. A number of genera have been given their own specific area in the plan - hakeas, acacias, correas, banksias plus a rainforest area. There is also a sculpture garden featuring a number of large pieces, mainly constructed out of local materials.

Unusually for a private garden all the plants are named and there are a number of metal display signs of a very professional standard which must have cost an arm and a leg to have made. These feature information and photographic reproductions about different parts of the property, various botanists who did a lot of work in southern Tassie (eg Brown and Labillardière), and a number of navigators, many of them French, who have contributed their names to various parts of the southern coasts.

The gardens are open 7 days a week from 1 September to the end of May. Margaret produces an electronic newsletter which she will send free to interested people (her email address is gardens@inverawe.com.au). There is also a website on which past newsletters have been archived (www.inverawe.com.au). There is an entry cost to the property- \$12.00 per head but various concessions apply.

I would thoroughly recommend a visit to this wonderful and picturesque garden to anyone wondering how to fill in time in the Hobart area. The Chestnuts are generous with their time and their knowledge and obviously enjoy the company of their many visitors.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Tony Cavanagh

Tony's great series about plants named after people continues

Whereas some genera named after people contain hundreds of species eg. *Banksia*, *Dryandra*, *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, others have only one or a few species. The four I look at here all commemorate early botanists of the late 18th, early 19th century who contributed substantially (in the case of Robert Brown, he is sometimes regarded as the greatest botanist of Australian plants) but do not have major genera named after them, although Brown, William Baxter and George Caley have numerous species, especially in the Proteaceae family.

Baxteria. I have never seen this plant (*B. australis*) but it is apparently common in the south of WA where it grows mostly in sandy soils, often on the margins of swamps. It is a clumping herb with insignificant "green-purple-brown" flowers, a member of the same family as *Lomandra*, hardly spectacular and certainly not a fitting commemoration of William Baxter after whom it was named.



Photo courtesy of Florabase

It was named by the English botanist Sir William Jackson Hooker in 1843 after the plant and seed collector William Baxter believed to be a Scottish Highlander who was also gardener to the Comtesse de Vandes in London. It is thought that he died around 1836. Baxter arrived in Australia in the 1821 to collect plants and seeds, initially for private English nurseries and later the Sydney Botanic Gardens, and many plants were raised from his seed during the 1820s (eg

he is reported to have collected "sacks" of banksia cones). He ranged across southern Australia, often travelling with whalers and sealers, and made two major expeditions to WA, in 1823 and 1828-29, and was paid the enormous sum of 1500 pounds by an English nurseryman in 1831 for a large collection of seeds and possibly plants. He does have several hundred species named after him but the genus *Baxteria* is, in my opinion, inadequate. No picture of him is known.

Brunonia (Latinised form of the name of Robert Brown). *Brunonia australis* is the only species in its genus. It is a small clumping plant with the leaves around the base, with dense flower heads of vivid blue (hence its common name of Blue Pincushion or Native Cornflower) on long stems up to 40 cm high. It grows in all Australian states but is generally short lived in the garden and best treated as an annual. It is not fussy about conditions but flowers best in sun. Propagation is by seed (which needs to be collected and sown fresh) and I have found that seedlings can appear in the garden after a plant has died.



Bauer's Brunonia australis

The name has an interesting history. The original specimens were collected by Robert Brown during the 1801-02 voyage of *HMS Investigator* on which Brown was the botanist. By 1810, when members of the Linnean Society in London wanted to name a genus in Brown's honour, this plant was chosen because of its

unusual botanical characteristics. James Edward Smith prepared a description and read a paper to the Society in February 1810, using the name *Brunonia* because there already was a genus *Brownea*. Later that year, Brown published his account of the Australian flora, *Prodromus florae Novae Hollandiae*, and used Smith's name and description. But Smith's paper was not published until 1811, meaning that Brown was given priority as the author of the name *Brunonia* because of his earlier publication, and (inadvertently) had violated one of the unspoken botanical taboos of naming a plant after himself!

Who was Robert Brown? He was born in Montrose, Scotland on 21 December 1773 and died in Soho Square, London on 10 June 1858. He studied medicine and became an army surgeon in 1795 although botanical work and research always interested him. Joseph Banks offered him a position in 1800 as naturalist on board *HMS Investigator* which under Matthew Flinders was to explore the coasts of Australia. Brown was to remain in Australia until 1805 and collected several thousand botanical specimens, many of the best of which were lost when the *Porpoise*, on which Flinders was returning to England, sank in 1803. Between 1806 and 1810, Brown worked on the collections and published his *Prodromus*, the first systematic account of the Australian flora.



Robert Brown

He later became Banks' librarian and curator and on Banks' death in 1820, inherited the Library and his vast herbarium. This was transferred to the British Museum where Brown became the first Keeper of the Botanical Department in 1827. He continued his interest in Australian flora until his death in 1858, his legacy being the huge number of original descriptions of our plants. And yes, the phenomena known as "Brownian Movement" ("rapid oscillatory motion observed in minute particles suspended in liquid due to molecular bombardment") was named after him and resulted from his studies of pollen grains and spores of mosses suspended in water under a microscope. The picture of Robert Brown was painted by the artist Robert Pickersgill and engraved by Charles Fox in 1837 when Brown was Vice-President of the Linnean Society. The beautiful painting of *Brunonia australis* was made by the botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer around 1810.

Burtonia. I'll reverse the order and first outline who Burton was and what was his connection with Australian botany. The reason for this is that as far as I can see, he is no longer commemorated in an Australian plant genus nor in any plant species although he is honoured as the collector of the type specimen of the *Eucalypt*, *E. paniculata*. David Burton is thought to have been born in the 1760s and died at Parramatta on 13 April, 1792 from a gunshot wound sustained while duck hunting (climbing through a fence with a loaded gun). He was a gardener on Cook's third voyage in *HMS Resolution* and collected plants at Adventure Bay Tasmania in January 1777. He came to Botany Bay in 1791 as a superintendent of convicts, gardener and plant collector for Joseph Banks and in both 1791 and 1792, sent back tubs of live plants to Kew. He was highly regarded in the Colony for his skills as a botanist, surveyor and evaluator of land. He was commemorated in the genus *Burtonia* but this no longer exists.

The name *Burtonia* was first used by the English botanist Richard Salisbury in 1807 for a plant which he later placed in the genus *Hibbertia*. Then in 1811, Robert Brown named a new pea species from the Kew gardens *Burtonia scabra* and up to 1987, about 12 species were included in the genus. However, in 1808, Smith had used the name *Gompholobium* and later Australian research concluded that *Burtonia* should be included in this genus. So poor David Burton missed out twice and has no Australian plants named after him. There are no pictures of him but I have included a picture of the best known "Burtonia", "*Burtonia scabra*", sometimes called "Painted Lady", from a magazine of 1857.



Burtonia scabra – The Painted Lady

Caleana. *Caleana* commemorates George Caley, born 10 June 1770 in Craven, Yorkshire, died 23 May 1829 in Bayswater, London. Caley, with the help of Joseph Banks, was trained as a gardener at Kew and was later chosen by Banks to be a botanical collector in New South Wales from 1800 to 1808. He was also Superintendent of the Parramatta Botanic Garden. Although he had a reputation for being “difficult”, Caley worked with visiting botanists such as Robert Brown and Francois Peron who both spoke highly of him, and was noted for his diligence in collecting botanical specimens and plants which were sent to Banks at Kew as well as preparing detailed information on them. He left Sydney around 1810 and returned to England. In addition to *Caleana*, he is remembered in species in *Acacia*, *Banksia*, *Dodonea*, *Grevillea*, *Persoonia* and *Prostanthera*.

Caleana major, the flying duck orchid, is found in all Australian states except WA. It is rarely cultivated as it has proved impossible to keep alive for more than a couple of years.

Editor’s Note: *Caleana major* seems to have become increasingly common in recent years in the Anglesea Heath and Brisbane Ranges. A few years back, when Frank Scheelings introduced me to the pleasures of orchid-hunting, we encountered them rarely, and then in ones and twos. Last year there were hundreds of them ... a lovely sight to see.



Caleana major – Flying Duck Orchid

STRATFORD WOODLAND RESERVE ... A Brief Update

Thanks to Bruce McGinness for bringing this to my attention. Stratford is in Gippsland, on the banks of the Avon River, on the Princes Highway between Sale and Bairnsdale.

Stratford Woodland Reserve is classified as a ‘Gippsland Plains Grassy Woodland - Gilgai Wetland mosaic’ and is approximately 10 hectares. The Gippsland Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation type is classified as an endangered ecological community under the *Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1994). There is less than 1% of this vegetation community remaining on the Gippsland Plains.



Gilgai wetlands are depressions in the surface that are clay based. These collect rainfall and as they dry out, the surface cracks. Loose soil moves into these cracks, thus pushing out the perimeter of the depression. These wetlands are not common throughout the Gippsland Plains bioregion.

The reserve supports a number of threatened plant species, including the Purple Diuris (*Diuris*

punctata spp. *punctata*) and Matted Flax Lily (*Dianella amoena*). Purple Diurius is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988) and annual monitoring is under taken to ensure the population continues. Matted Flax Lily is also listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988) and was introduced into the reserve in the Autumn of 2010 to establish a population within a permanently protected area.



Purple Diuris - *Diuris punctata* spp. *punctata*

Other plant species present include Scaly Buttons (*Leptorhynchus squamatus*), Common Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*), Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*), Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*), Narrow Rock-fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi*), Golden Moth (*Diuris* spp.), Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*), Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Sundew (*Drosera* spp.). All the Gippsland Red Gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis* subsp. *mediana*) that can be seen on the property have regenerated naturally.

The reserve also supports populations of Swamp Rats who use the fallen timber and stumps as shelter. Their many weaving paths can be seen through the Kangaroo Grass tussocks.

Ecological burning is undertaken on the reserve to assist with the promotion of biodiversity, reducing the biomass of Kangaroos Grass and promoting favourable conditions for orchids and other species to grow. This is especially important as the reserve is not currently used by kangaroos or other browsing species.

Other actions that are undertaken on the reserve include planting of understorey species, weed management and threatened species protection. Picnic tables have also been constructed by the Trust and members of the local community, to engage greater community engagement in the reserve.



Grey Parrot-pea - *Dillwynia cinerascens*

Many events have taken place on the reserve since its opening day celebration on 13 October 2006, including planting days, guided tours, informative talks and Trust for Nature presentations.

Trust for Nature's East Gippsland staff are pleased with how the area, which was historically grazed by horses, cattle and sheep, is regenerating and are proud of their work. The Trust believes that our management of the reserve is best practice for this vegetation community, and is an example to other land managers.

Trust for Nature acknowledges the support of the Australian Plants Society (Victoria) in enabling the purchase of this valuable property, and invites members of the society to enjoy the property at a mutually convenient time.



***Dianella amoena* – Matted Flax Lily – L. Woodward**

UP-COMING EVENTS

OUR NEXT MEETING

17th April

Our speaker for the April meeting will be Graeme Woods, who will talk to us about Grevilleas. Graeme is a keen collector of Grevilleas with around 250 true species on his 3 ½ acre property in Gisborne. He also provides cuttings of the rarer Grevilleas to various grafters so that these scarce plants can be saved into the future. He is passionate about Grevilleas and their cousins Hakeas & Banksias, and has a reputation as an interesting and enjoyable speaker.

PLANT SALES

6th May – APS Yarra Yarra Native Plant Sale & Propagation Demonstrations, 10 am to 3 pm, cnr Main Road and Brougham Street, Eltham

12th May – APS Melton & Bacchus Plant Sale, Cnr Lerderderg St & Gisborne Road, Bacchus Marsh

FUTURE SPEAKERS

All Positions Filled!

Thanks to some sterling work, mostly from Liz Wells, we have a speaker booked for every meeting for the rest of the year.

May: Dierdre Murphy – Barwon River Aquatic Life

June: Tim Solly - Barwon Water Nursery

July: AGM and Photo Competition

Aug: Clare Moxham - Moonah Woodlands

Sept: Trevor Proud – Grasslands of Western Vic.

Oct: Members' Night

Nov: Jason Caruso - Eucalypts

Dec: Xmas BBQ Break-up

AUSTRALIAN OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

Apr 14-15: Attila Kapitany's Garden, 1 The Lough Crt, Narre Warren North. Extraordinary range of architectural agaves, aloes and yuccas amid colourful ground covering succulents. Some unusual Australian plants e.g. varieties of *Brachychiton* and vertical stone installations. 0.4ha. Entry \$7.

May 12-13: Ford & Adams Garden, 141 Pitt St, Eltham. Designed and landscaped by Gordon Ford, both of these Australian plant gardens feature beautifully designed and integrated waterfalls, pools and rocks. Ford 0.7 ha and Adams 0.1 ha. \$10 for both.

May 12-13: Sam Cox's garden, 12 Lorimer Rd, Wattle Glen. Garden designer Sam Cox's own welcoming natural-style garden where endemic species and more traditional natives embrace the mudbrick house and open to vistas beyond. 0.4ha.

IS NECTAR EXPENSIVE?

In last month's 'What's in a Name?' Tony Cavanagh told us about Blandfordia – the Christmas Bells. I came across this article about Blandfordia nobilis in a BBC Wildlife magazine and thought it may be of interest.
Ed.

Perennial Balancing Acts.

Stephen Young

Nectar is one of the most ingenious inventions to grace the plant world. Sweet syrup, packed with energy, it makes an ideal currency with which to pay insects and other creatures that act as pollinators. Yet biologists are beginning to recognise that nectar can be a major drain on a plant's resources.

According to recent estimates, some plants may be spending more than a third of their available energy reserves on payments to pollinators. Can they simply shrug off these costs, or is there a further price to pay in terms of slower growth and lower seed production?

In an attempt to answer these questions, Graham Pyke, of the Australian Museum, Sydney, turned to *Blandfordia nobilis*, the Christmas Bells, a perennial herb of eastern Australia. The flowers of the Christmas Bells attract both honey-bees and honeyeaters, that group of birds that lap up nectar with their brush-like tongues.



Pyke found that he could imitate the actions of the foraging birds and bees, by removing nectar from the flowers by way of slender glass tubes. The plants reacted by secreting a richer supply of the precious syrup – a response which amply confirmed their hospitality in the face of rising costs. He set out to determine whether these flowers would grow more slowly set less seed than those whose nectar was left

un-tapped. To make the comparison a fair one, both sets of flowers were pollinated by hand.

The result was an extraordinary insight into the high cost of nectar production. Although growth was unaffected, flowers that had been persuaded to secrete and abundance of nectar set significantly less seed than flowers with a more leisurely rate of secretion. The research provided the first direct proof that provision of nectar by a plant imposes a penalty on seed production (*Nature*, Vol 350, pp 58-59).

This conclusion does not mean that nectar is a handicap. The plants actually make a net profit from nectar, simply because the benefits from attracting insects and other pollinators out-weigh the costs. What the research suggests is that nectar production must be at just the right level, if that profit is to be maximised. Under-production is penalised by a lack of insects and other visitors to transfer pollen: over-production pulls in the crowds, but diverts vital resources from seed production.

WORKING BEES

Kevin Hoffman Walk

Lara.

Kevin is not enjoying good health at the moment and his wonderful garden project is suffering as a result. We would like to arrange a working bee to go out there and do a bit of weeding and tidying up. Please give some thought to helping out here, the dates and times will be available at the next meeting.

Vaughan's Native Garden

Phillip has kindly offered his garden for the quarterly conference as one of the gardens to be visited by delegates. Phillip has had shoulder surgery recently and we thought it would be a nice to give him a hand with a bit of maintenance prior to the conference. Those who are able to help can meet at the garden on Easter Monday at 10.00 am. 1060 Portarlington Rd, Curlewis Melways Map Ref. 469 D1



Vaughan's garden in spring

EDITORIAL OPINION

Ade Foster

I was asked almost two years ago to edit the newsletter for the APS Geelong. I conceived the Correa Mail, and I am proud of it. I have included articles written by me, articles submitted by others, articles gleaned from newspapers, magazines or the internet, and editorial opinion. This last is just that ... Editorial OPINION ... MY opinion. I consider it my role, and my right, to editorialize when I see fit. Very occasionally, I do just that.

I copped a little flak after the March Correa Mail for the phrase "It is the most informative and least hysterical bit of information I have read to date." This was written to introduce a very educational article about Myrtle Rust, which was taken from a CSIRO published magazine. I felt then, and still feel, that this was an accurate description of that article, with reference to some less than accurate stories I had also read. There have been articles and news stories published about 'huge tracts' of native forest devastated by Myrtle Rust; about the 'imminent demise' of entire plant species or the 'extinction' of koalas. These things may happen, but are so unlikely as to border on fantasy.

They are, in my editorial opinion, hysterical, alarmist nonsense. They do nothing to further our understanding of the real issues of dealing with the threat of myrtle rust. Those who continue to promulgate outrageously exaggerated claims do not assist or educate the public, they just spread unnecessary angst and trepidation. The cancellation of our own plant sale is a perfect example of this.

If you don't agree with my opinions, please write to me and say so. I guarantee to print any letters, emails or contributions which take a contrary view to my own. This is your club's newsletter, so please, feel free to have your say.

In future, Editorial opinions will always be in italics and signed 'Ed.', so that those not interested in my waffling can avoid it. ☺

Ed.

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the Editor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Committee or members of the Australian Plants Society Geelong Inc.

