

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HOLIDAY

Ade Foster

In another life, I'm involved with gymnastics as the announcer at most of the major competitions around Australia. I was invited to do a big competition in Perth in October, so we took the opportunity to take a few extra days and have a look at the wildflowers that we had heard so much about.

We booked accommodation in Toodyay, about 90km north-east of Perth. Toodyay is in the Avon Valley on the edge of the escarpment. Head west and you're in the hilly red laterite soils. East takes you into the sandy wheat-belt country, and north west is the coastal heathland. The plan was to make day trips into other areas to experience the different plant communities they offered, while being close enough to Perth to commute for the competition.

Our cabin was tiny, but the rear deck with wood fired BBQ and an outlook over the dam was a delight. We were visited daily by Ringneck parrots, Galahs, Rufous treecreepers, Wood duck, Black duck, Magpies and Henry, the camp's magnificent Peacock.



*Penny feeding the ringneck parrot*

There were a few interesting little flora reserves within 15 minutes of Toodyay, so, each morning I would be up before the sun exploring these while Penny had a sleep-in, like normal people.

Morangup Nature Reserve was once part of a steel company's holding's. Much of the timber was cleared for the manufacture of charcoal, and slag heaps were piled around the area. Declared a reserve in the 1970s, there is still evidence of the industry and the area has been allowed to regenerate itself. The disastrous bushfires of last summer ripped through this area, and though there was a lot of regrowth, the landscape has been changed yet again.

The open areas were fields of blue *Leschenaultia boliba*, and several different Dampieras, or white from an interesting *Conospermum*, *C. glauumaceum*, or yellow from the *Verticordia citrella*, found only in this reserve.



*Leschenaultia boliba*

There were many interesting and for me, new plants to see including Dryandras, Petrophile, Hakeas, Isopogon, Conospermum and Grevillea.

Wongamine Nature Reserve on the Goomalling road was an interesting area on a hillside with soil types and plant communities changing drastically as you moved up the hill. There were several species of large Eucalypts around the base of the hill with grasstrees, callistemon, kunzea, and dryandra on the slopes. Dampieras, Calytrix and Leschenaultias were common here. I was delighted to find a large stand of *E.*

*macrocarpa* on the sandy summit. I determined to come back and explore this sandy area later, but never quite made it .



***E. macrocarpa* - Mottlecah**

There was another little reserve across the road from camp, the Mavis Jeffrey Reserve, which was burnt in the bushfires. This was on the red, rocky soil and had a completely different plant community. *Goodenia scapigera*, a 1.5 metre high plant with masses of white flowers was everywhere and the ground was covered with tiny plants in a variety of amazing colours – most of which I could not identify! There were some lovely trigger-plants in pink, white, yellow and mauve, and a very interesting and delicate little plant called *Triptococcus brunonis*. It was so delicate that I doubt you would notice it when the bush has regenerated, but would be a delight in a pot. And, it was here that I saw my first ‘wild’ *Anigozanthos manglesii*, including a pure yellow one, obviously an aberrant colour form. This beautiful kangaroo paw is what I think of when someone says WA wildflowers.



***Anigozanthos manglesii* – yellow form**

We took a road trip north and east through Goomalling, Dowerin, Daroux and up as far as Burakin, then across to Wongan Hills and home. The roadside reserves along the northern part of this route were a blaze of colour, and it was great to see plants that I have in my garden growing in their natural state. In one place, that I call the grevillea strip, there was *G. armigera*, *G. excelsior*, *G. pterosperma*, *G. paradoxa*, and *G. petrophiloides* all growing in a 50 metres strip of sand beside the gravel road. I could have spent the entire week in that region without seeing half of what was on offer.



***The Grevillea strip – near Cadoux***

The changes were quite startling as we drove further north, then turned west and south again. Some roadsides were masses of yellow, with *Verticordia*, *Senna*, *Calytrix*, *Hibbertia* and *Glischrocaryon* or shades of blue. mauve and purple with *Dampiera*, *Leschenaultia*, *Cyanostegia* and *Pityrodia*. In one spot a slab of granite was exposed in the sandy soil. It was surrounded by a mass of red, mostly *Kunzea pulchella* and *Callistamon* sp.

Closer to Wongan Hills the scenery changes again with areas of dense heath, impossible to walk through, while the roadsides were lined for miles with *Grevillea petrophiloides*. Our road-trips were curtailed by an unexpected illness, but my appetite is certainly whetted, and we’ll certainly be back in W.A. in future.



***Yellow roadside – Calytrix and verticordia - Burakin***



## PLANT TABLE

Frank Scheelings

The plant table was a little depleted this month, but what it lacked in numbers it made up in colour and form. What a delight this part of our meeting is. And no less for the plants than the friendly jibing that goes on amongst the more rowdy of our members.

There were some startling red flowers from *Calothamnus quadrifidus*, the One-sided Bottlebrush, *Banksia coccinea*, the Scarlet Banksia, *Melaleuca eximia* and plant of the month *Regelia valutina*, the Barrens Regelia.

There were a host of grevilleas including the rich orange, *G. juncifolia*, the Honeysuckle grevillea, and bright golden hybrid of *G. juncifolia* x *G. spinosa*. *Grevillea excelsior*, again a gorgeous rich orange/gold or *G. eriostachya* with its bright egg yolk yellow flowers. John brought in a specimen of *G. leucopterys*, known as 'Old Socks – offensive to some, rich honey to others.'

Strong scents, too, from the delicate pink *Goodenia macmillanii*, and another white-flowered goodenia of uncertain identity. Both were a little unusual in that most goodenias are yellow. Apparently *G. macmillanii* was used in medicine by the aborigines of Gippsland, where it occurs naturally.



***Goodenia macmillanii* – photo Brian Walters**

There were many eremophilas from deep purple to blood red to delicate pink/mauve, and chameluceums from white to deep purple, and every shade in between.

There were a number of kunzeas and melaleucas, including a very pretty mauve one *M. pulchella*. *Melaleuca fulgens* was present in two colour forms, purple, and pink. It also comes in salmon pink and orange COLOUR FORMS.

Bruce also brought along a beautiful orchid, *Sarcophilus hartmanii*, a native of New South Wales and Queensland, where it grows amongst leaf litter in a variety of locations, or as a lithophyte on rocks.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

***Regelia valutina***

*Plant of the month chosen by our raffle winner, Pam Baars, was Regelia valutina, from Philip Vaughan's garden. The following information is from the ANSP website*

*Regelia* is a small genus of 6 species, 5 of which occur naturally only in south Western Australia and one species in Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory. All species occur in well-drained sites - on sand plain, woodland or rocky hillsides or escarpments.

The genus is closely related to the more familiar *Melaleuca*, both genera having stamens which are joined into clusters. The difference between the genera is in the arrangement of the anthers (the pollen bearing structures of the flowers). In *Regelia* these are attached to the stamens at their bases (basifixed) whereas in *Melaleuca* the anthers are attached along their sides (versatile). Other genera closely related to *Regelia* include *Beaufortia*, *Calothamnus* and *Eremaea*.



***Regelia valutina* [Image © John Colwill 2012]**

*Regelia valutina* is reasonably well known in cultivation. It is a large shrub to about 3 metres with attractive, greyish green, velvety leaves to about 13mm long. The large clusters of brilliant red/orange flowers (occasionally yellow) open in spring and are well displayed towards the ends of the branches. Following flowering, seeds develop in woody capsules similar to those formed with *Melaleuca* species. The seeds are retained within the capsules indefinitely.

*R. valutina* is a very striking plant in both foliage and flower but it is not common in cultivation, particularly in areas of summer humidity and rainfall. Under these conditions all species can be short lived even in well drained soils. In drier climates the plants are desirable garden subjects, the colourful flower clusters being attractive to birds. The species should be grown in well drained conditions in full sun or dappled shade and it is tolerant of at least moderate frost.

Propagation is easy from seed but cuttings can be difficult to strike, particularly in mist propagation systems as the hairy foliage retains moisture and can rot.

## SOME UNUSUAL GARDEN TOOLS

By Tony Cavanagh

Last weekend, my wife suggested that it was about time we repotted our pot plants as some had not had any attention for a couple of years. As many were large pots and not easy to manage, it fell to me to do all the big ones but I was unwilling to go to a larger pot size as I would not be able to shift them. Some plants were quite pot bound so I needed to remove a lot of soil/roots from around the sides and bottom to get them back into the same pot. Others needed to be divided up, generally cut in half and throw one bit away. (I hasten to add that those which received most of this drastic treatment were not natives). What to do?

I looked at my tool supply and decided that I needed to be a bit lateral in my thinking. I had an old, rusty hand saw and a hatchet (what we as kids called a “tommyhawk”). These were great, the saw could be used to divide plants or even to cut, say, the bottom 6-8 cm off a pot bound plant. The hatchet was ideal for taking off 4 or 5 cm all the way round a plant, a little light trimming of the roots! The attached pictures tell the story and so far everything is looking fine and I can still shift the pots.



I should also mention two other unusual items in the garden tools. The first is what my children laughingly call “Dad’s teaspoon”. This is a garden spade I have had since the early 70s and it is still my favourite planting and edging tool. It was an English Skelton, one of the best you could buy at the time, with high quality steel that could be sharpened to a fine edge. It has had so much use that it is now less than half its original length, but every plant that has been put in on this and many other properties has had the holes dug with this spade. And its sharp blade also makes it

ideal for skimming weeds and garden edging. It might even become a family heirloom!



The other is a home-made digging tool fabricated from a piece of electrical conduit tubing from the days when they made them of decent gauge steel. It was made by an old electrician who fitted a wooden handle and flattened and sharpened the tubing so that is ideal for cutting the roots of weeds and digging them out and also for making small holes in difficult areas for planting.



**Tony’s digger – a bit of ingenuity**

## BUS-TRIP to Gisborne, Bullengarook, Bacchus Marsh

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November promised to be fine and warm, as we gathered at the Harvey Norman Corio car-park to begin our trip visit Graeme and Ros Woods’ garden in Gisborne. Graeme spoke to us about Grevilleas sin April, and invited us to come and visit his garden for a first-hand look at his collection.

Graeme’s beautifully tended garden is 3.5 acres in extent, and has 250 grevilleas as well as a large collection of banksias and hakeas, with a few lovely exotics thrown in. The plants are mostly in raised beds and arranged in groups and clusters to encourage the visitor to wander and explore. There were delights around every twist and turn. And the aromas, especially from the grevilleas, ranged from honey, through chocolate to old socks.



Graeme and Ros very kindly offered us the use of their extensive verandah for lunch, but we sat on the benches or on the grass, drinking the tea and coffee that our hosts also provided.



***Grevillea eriobotrya* – Woolly Grevillea, in full flower**

After lunch we visited David and Barbara Pye's Sun-Tuff Natives nursery at Bullengarook, but not before some idiot got us lost in Gisborne. A three point turn with a 20 seat bus and trailer in a suburban street is quite fun, really.

The Pye's house is on a little plateau with extensive, magnificent views across the rugged hills of the Lerderderg State Park. Their garden is a delight with many unusual and interesting native species and hybrids. The trailer was quite full once we had ~~raided~~ visited their little nursery. Again we were graciously offered tea, coffee and iced water before making our way to Bacchus Marsh.



**Lunch in the Gisborne sunshine**

In 1993 funding was obtained to commence the establishment of an Australian native plant garden in Darley Park, Bacchus Marsh. The intention was to develop a unique collection of Australian native plants that would be able to survive in an area of low rainfall. At that time the park was used for sporting facilities only.

The original concept was to establish gardens on all borders of the park, but funding was sufficient only to establish the north east area of the park. In 1995, the Darley Gardeners Group was formed to maintain the gardens. Since then, this small group of volunteers has continued to not only maintain the gardens but to expand them, with the aim of establishing gardens on all park borders. Considerable progress has been made towards this aim.

This little park is an absolute gem, and is a 'must visit' if you are ever in Bacchus Marsh.

## **WHY EUCALYPTUS IS NOT AROMADENDRON**

**by Frank Scheelings**

The genus *Eucalyptus* was first named and described by a Frenchman from a living specimen that he saw growing in England. Charles Louis L'Heritier de Brutelle wrote a compendium of rare plants grown in English gardens around London in the years 1786 and 1787. The book, titled the '*Sertum Anglicum*', was published in Paris in 1788.



***E. obliqua* – A plate from '*Sertum Anglicum*'**

These distinctive aromatic trees were quite new to science. Other species of the same genus were collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander at Botany Bay in 1770, and the seed of the tree described by L'Heritier had been collected by David Nelson, botanist on Cook's last voyage in 1777, from Bruny Island. L'Heritier's was the first scientific description of this new genus. Dr William Anderson, the surgeon on Cook's last voyage proposed the name *Aromadendron* but neither he nor Banks ever published a formal description.

L'Heritier proposed the name *Eucalyptus* meaning 'well-covered' referring to the cap of the unopened flowers and by the rules of scientific nomenclature is the accepted name.

**Editor's Note:** A google search for Charles Louis L'Heritier de Brutelle turned up some interesting sites including the Project Gutenberg's E-book version of 'Sertum Anglicum'. Although the text is in Latin (OK for Frank) it's still most interesting.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38937/38937-h/38937-h.htm>

#### THE LARGEST *LYSIOSEPALUM INVOLUCRATUM* IN CAPTIVITY?

by Tony Cavanagh

Late winter early spring in our garden is what we describe as our "purple and pink" period. Many of our mint bushes (which are usually purple or blue) flower now as do many of the *Thomasia* family, the *Sterculiaceae*. One of my favourites for its hardiness, attractiveness and reliability is the Western Australian *Lysiosepalum involucratum*. It does well in near full sun or dappled shade and can stand extended dry periods once established.



*Lysiosepalum involucratum* in Tony's garden.

According to Rodger Elliot's *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, its usual dimensions are 0.6 – 1.3m by 1 – 1.5 m high, i.e. a low spreading shrub. As the picture shows, if it finds a situation it likes, it can grow much bigger. I paced it out at 3.5 by 3 m spread, while

its height is less than 1 m. It stays flowering for nearly two months and then the new growth in spring appears, densely hairy leaves of a pleasing soft brown. All in all, this is definitely a plant worth having in the garden.

#### CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

December 8<sup>th</sup>

The Christmas break-up this year will be at John and Barb Bell's house at 1050 Horseshoe Bend Road, near Torquay. Arrive at 5.00 pm. We are grateful to John and Barb for their hospitality, and look forward to another great night. BYO chair, cutlery, crockery and glass. The club will provide meat and bread, wine, beer and orange juice. Please bring a salad or dessert to share.

Annette and Robert Packett, who live in nearby Torquay/Jan Juc, have offered her garden for a visit in the afternoon before the BBQ. Drop in around 4.00 pm for a look at a delightful native garden. Annette's descriptive directions :- *To get to our place you need to come through Torquay--across the roundabout and turn right into the Ocean Views estate. (Just past the RACV monstrosity!!)*

#### MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Editor

Firstly, a big thank-you to those who have contributed articles this year .... Tony Cavanagh, Deb Gaskill, Frank Scheelings and Kaitlin Biro.

Thank you all for being such wonderful company at meetings, on outings, at sales and gatherings. I very much enjoy the fun and good humour displayed by everyone, and the knowledge that you all have and are willing to impart to others.

We will have a newsletter in late January with details of our February meeting place, time and format. Stay tuned.

So, from Penny and me, have a wonderful and safe Christmas, whatever you perceive it to be, and that you all come back next year for more fun and frivolity at APS Geelong.

Merry Christmas, Nollaig Shona Dhuit and a very Happy New Year to you all.



*Merry  
Christmas*