

ESTABLISHING A RURAL GARDEN IN DROUGHT

Our May speaker was Liz Wells, who told us of her trials and tribulations establishing a native garden on a rural property during the drought. For some reason (senility?, stupidity?), I neglected to include this write-up in the June edition. With sincere apologies to Liz, I include it here.

Liz lived for some years in Ballarat, and had trouble establishing a native garden there, because of the heavy soil and the cold. She was not cut out for suburban life and was keen to buy property near the coast, but eventually purchased 174 acres near Meredith. In May, 2007, it was just four paddocks and a row of large cypress in a wind-break, about forty kilometres from Geelong.

Liz's first task, after deciding where to site the house, was to lay down the driveway. In September, a few large cypress were removed for access and the drive and fence installed, and lined with eucalypts. Liz used a landscape architect to help with the design of the garden, with separate areas for native plantings, an orchard, vegie garden and a circular Western Australian garden.



First garden area is established

In October / November 2007, Liz had 75mm of rain and decided to plant the first of her native gardens,

despite the threat of summer heat. She dug holes which she filled with mushroom mulch, and added Dynamic Lifter. Tube-stock was planted, and watered once a week using a fire-control tank mounted on a trailer. Liz only lost two trees through the summer, which was a good result. This first lot was mostly large trees and shrubs... *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*, *Angophora*, *Callistamon*, *Banksia* and the like. Stumps from the cypress were used in the landscaping



The house is started, more garden planted

The next major planting was smaller trees and shrubs, laid down after another goof rain, in the following years. The soil is a sandy loam about 900mm deep and the tube-stock liked it very much. The wind coming over the cypress swirls around and is quite destructive, so a few trees suffer from wind damage. The house started in December of 2008. Liz decided on a rammed-earth structure which is efficient and will blend well with the garden once established. Liz was involved in the construction of the house, too. A very capable lady, indeed! The plan is for a dry creek bed and pond, and this area has been planted with *Gymea* lillies, which have done well.

By 2010 the garden had grown significantly, and had been watered primarily with the tank. Once the

plants were large enough, they were left to their own devices. As Black Saturday approached, Liz feared for her newer plantings and mixed some Seasol with the water before applying it to the plants.



Starting to take shape

Not only did they survive that terrible day, but kicked on, adding new growth in mid-summer. This might well be something we can all try in the hotter weather.

Weeds became a problem when the rain returned, as we all experienced. However at Liz's place it was on a massive scale. Rye grass, in particular, caused many head-aches among the denser plantings and had to be removed by hand.

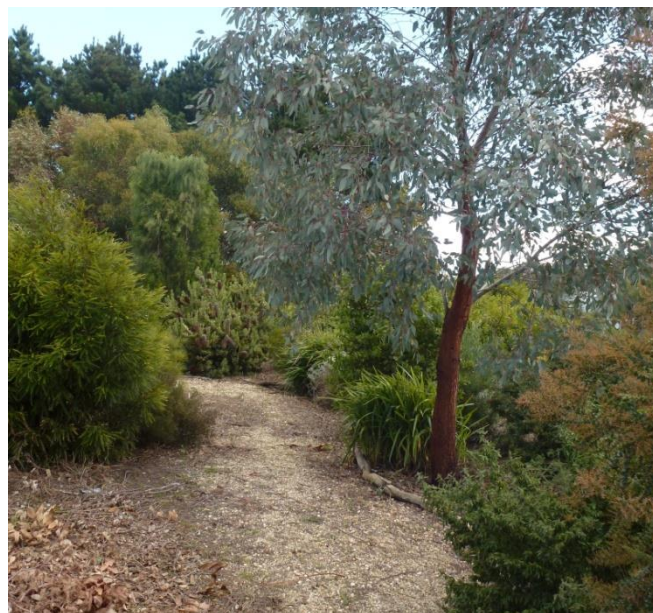
The large pines near the house will be removed, but they are a refuge for wrens and cockatoos, and an owl. Hopefully the smaller birds will inhabit the garden and the owl will move to the next plantations just a couple of hundred metres away.



Well established now, and lots of colour

Landscaping around the house has begun with retaining walls and paving making paths and a BBQ area. A little bit of lawn aids in dust control, and is nice in a dusty summer. As the garden has matured, Liz has added meandering paths with gravel and

mulch leading between the larger trees, from one area to the next, much like a bush track.



Meandering paths create interest.

The garden is a credit to Liz, who with drive, determination and a lot of hard work, has begun to realise her dream of turning a farm paddock into a native oasis.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

16th July.

Twenty four members attended the AGM and Photo Competition. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted and Harry Webb presented his President's Report. For those who were unable to attend

President's Report - APS Geelong - 2013

Looking back over the last twelve months in our group I would consider it as a period of regrouping and renewal. I am grateful to our committee for moving forward from the previous year when the myrtle rust virus cast its shadow upon us, since we had no choice but cancel our Annual Plants Sale...but we did move on, despite the setbacks of the past, and we worked together with some new members joining the committee.

Garden visits... Remember last September when we paid a visit to Brendon and Maureen Stahl's garden. It was a great turn out, when we recognized Brendon's service to our group before he relinquished membership, while staying with Colac APS, and then, how about the visit to Graham and Ros Wood's garden at Gisborne in November, with many of us sitting on the grass eating our lunch, just taking it all in! And then those great celebration times - at Christmas at the Bell's place, and the first meeting of

the year at Frank and Tina's, and it was not all eating and drinking, but browsing over their gardens. Our speakers have been varied, some of them making us aware of environmental projects, as well as our own members sharing their own "building our garden" experiences.



Lunch at the Woods' Garden

The Plant Table continues to inspire. There are the "big guns" in the club with their beautiful *banksias* still, while late starters like most of us look in envy, but we are catching up! But the consideration of members in sharing their plants with us is a tribute to each member who has made a contribution. I still have a small cutting in a tube of a *regelia velutina* which I got from the plants table last November, and I hope to place it in my own garden in spring.

We thank those who are courageous enough to do the plant table for us, because, one of the particulars of our group is the friendly bantering during these presentations, and that is not a bad thing, for it indicates the good spirit among us!

Our newsletter compiled by Ade is absolutely brilliant. I have heard someone say to me: "It is so informative... that I don't need another publication about Australian plants!" Yes, we are fortunate, with good people who have written "the plant of the month", great pictures in the publication telling their own story, and also the wonderful expertise and consistency of Tony Cavanagh's informative contributions.

We are on Facebook, thanks to Ade, so the world knows that we are here! So you tech people, look at it and give it a "like".

Phil Royce has been our rep on the APS Vic, travelling near and far to fly the flag for Geelong.

Our committee really works hard behind the scenes...doing those time-consuming tasks which are required by government, like rules for our organization. (At times, in the chair I have endured a little bit of Frank's cheekiness, but the rest of the

committee knows how to keep him in order!) Really, it has been a wonderful experience to work as one of the team with them, because each of them are so great with personal input, and have you noticed that they all get on with their roles that they take on without a fuss! Yes, we are lucky!

Our Plant Sale was a real sign of the loyalty and commitment of our group...all working together! Yes, I think that we could rightly sing the song: "*We are one*," since it again reflected the unity of our group.



'Loovley' Plant Sale Ladies

We learned a lot from the plant sale this year. A number of changes had come about because we missed out on last year's sale, and after evaluation as a committee we decided to refocus, and go back to our base, meaning that in next year's sale we will have most of the plants propagated by our own members, so it is timely to remind you of our own propagation day in September.

Our good friends Arthur and Linda have shown us their great and generous hospitality again by having the annual plants sale at their property, and lots of lovely memories have been created there!

Some of us have done our part in promoting the APS out there in the community, embracing and displaying with pride the principles of the APS.

Finally folks, I thank our committee for their wonderful support, and thank you all for allowing me to be your president during the past year. There are those who are stepping down from the committee...many thanks to you. And for those who feel we should do some things differently...Do talk to us, so that our group can be enriched and become stronger!

Congratulations APS Geelong. You contribute so well to our community and to the environment at large!

ELECTIONS for APS GEELONG COMMITTEE.

Tony Cavanagh took the chair for the election of the new committee. All positions were declared vacant and nominations were taken from the floor.

Liz Wells indicated that she would not be standing for re-election, and Harry expressed the gratitude of the club for her outstanding efforts on their behalf.



Thanks, Liz 😊

Harry Webb was reappointed as President, Phil Royce elected Vice President, Bruce McGinnis as Secretary, Frank Scheelings as Treasurer.

General Members were re-elected - Carmel Addlem, Roger Wileman, Sheila Deakin, Matt Baars and Arthur Pape, and we welcome Denise Cromer back to the fold. Congratulations to all and thanks for your on-going commitment to the club.

I was re-appointed as Editor of the *Correa Mail*, a role I take seriously. Thank you all for your kind words and thank you in anticipation of your articles in future.

MOTION ON NEW RULES

Following considerable work by Phil Royce and Bruce McGinness, the following motion was put to the meeting –

'APS Geelong Inc. adopts the new model rules for an incorporated association that conform to the new laws in the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). APS Geelong will use modified APS Victoria purposes to be inserted in rule 2 of the model rule.'

The vote was 24 – 0 in favour.

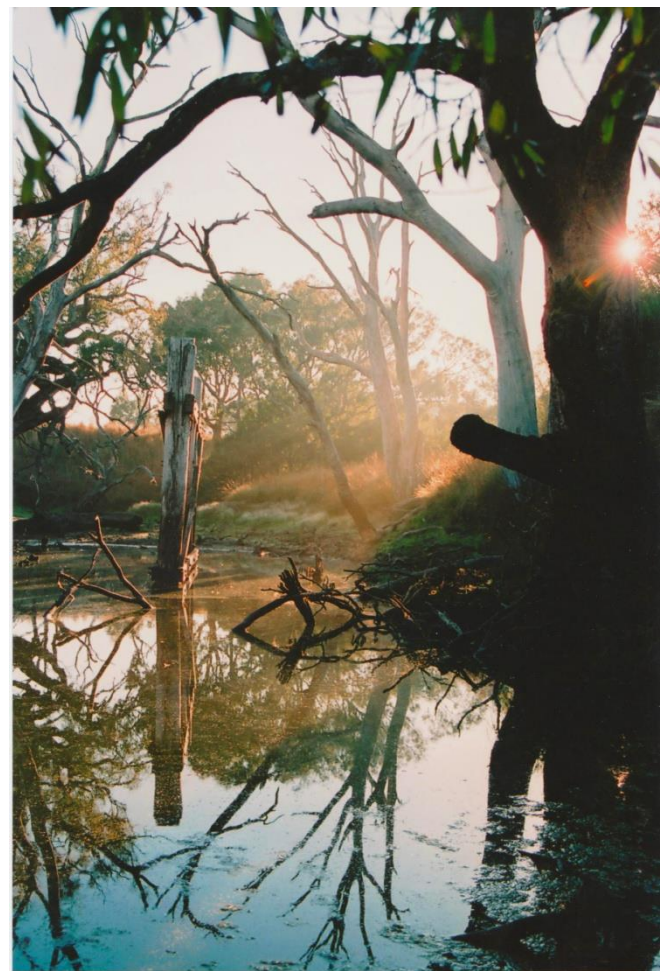
PHOTO COMPETITION - 2013.

I was very sorry to have missed the photo competition this year, but members to whom I have spoken were amazed the quality of the photographs on display. We are, it seems, a very talented lot! Here are the winners :-

Australian Scenery.



1st - Tony Cavanagh – Murray River Early Morning



2nd – Roger Wileman – Fiery Creek



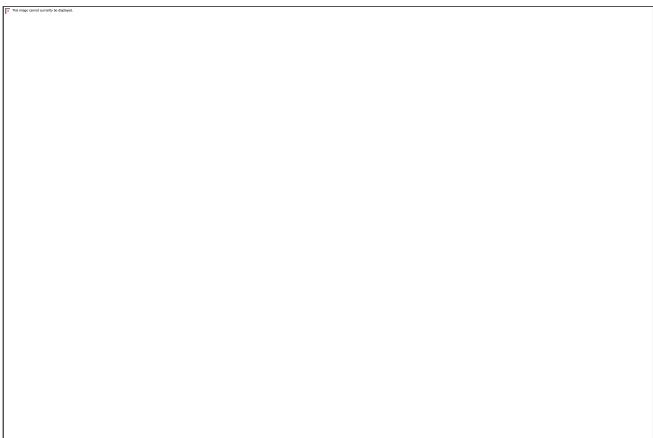
3rd – Carmel Addlem – Bicheno, Tasmania

Australian Wildlife.



3rd – Frank Scheelings – Swamp Harriers, WTP

Australian Plants .



1st – Frank Scheelings – Albatross, New Zealand



1st - Tony Cavanagh, *Xerochrysum "Dargoon Hill Monarch"*



2nd – Roger Wileman – Silver Gull, Phillip Island



2nd – Tony Cavanagh – *Grevillea lanigera*



3rd – Frank Scheelings – Brown-beak Orchid

PLANT TABLE - Hosted by Roger Wileman and Tony Cavanagh.

My thanks to Bruce McGinness for this report.

Lepidozamia peroffskana, Roger Wileman brought in this NSW cycad which he has growing in the ground. There are male and female plants. Roger brought in the male cone, from a plant grown from seed in 1975.

Hardenbergia violaceae, Tony Cavanagh has several forms, climbers and upright forms, 1-1.5m high Pink/purple/white flowered plants were on the plant table.

A number of Hakeas featured, among them *Hakea clavata* from John Bell, with pink/white flowers; *Hakea francisiana*, from Tony Cavanagh with red columns of flowers well presented on a large shrub/small tree to 5m; *Hakea multilineata* another from Tony, a large shrub with pink/red flowers in shorter racemes along than *H. francisiana*; *Hakea orthorrhyncha*, the Bird Beak Hakea, from Liz Wells. It features red flowers along the stem, and a weeping habit.

Templetonia retusa, Cockys Tongue from Harry Webb - Red flowered form. Good garden plant 2-3m high, it is versatile, and can grow in alkaline soil.

Epacris impressa, *The Pink Heath*, from Tony Cavanagh. This little plant is the Victorian floral emblem. It grows best in semi-shade and is hard to propagate. At best, a wispy shrub.

Darwinia "Coolamin Pink" from Tony Cavanagh. 1x1.5m A seedling from Doug McKenzies's garden who lived in Coolamin Drive. (See Tony's article in this issue)

And, as we all know, Tony wrote the book on Dryandras, and he had a few to show us.

Dryandra foliosissima, *Dryandra quercifolia* – An excellent cut flower, grows well in sandy soil. *Dryandra nobilis*, A favourite, with hundreds of orange/bright yellow flowers, it needs a dry spot.

Bossiaea walkeri, Cactus Pea. One of Roger's unusual plants, it is 2m high with leafless flattened stems. Red/Maroon pea flowers close when flowering stem are picked.



***Bossiaea walkeri* - photo Russell Cumming**

Acacia aphylla, Leafless Rock Wattle. John Bell says his lives for up to 6 years, Tony's is 15 years old.

It has attractive blue/grey leafless stems, and is a shrub to 3m high.

Acacia baileyana, Cootamundra Wattle from Tony Cavanagh. This is the Weeping form, with Ferny grey-green leaf. In its natural habitat, there are not many left. It is a very popular garden plant, but can be a weed in bushland.

Acacia merinthophora, Zig Zag wattle, from Liz Wells. Nice weeping habit.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Matt Baars picked flower of the month: *Acacia merallii* grown by Liz Wells. Liz writes ...

Acacia merallii grows in Western Australia in an area stretching from the Goldfields to Esperance, east to the Nullarbor Plain and north into the wheat belt. It is also found in South Australia along the Great Australian Bight. The plant was named after Edwin Merrall and doesn't have a common name.



Acacia merallii

It grows mound like from 0.3 - 2 metres high and 1.5 - 2 metres wide. It has green grey foliage and bright yellow flowers over winter and spring. It likes a well drained site but grows on a variety of soils ranging from clay, sandy clay, sand and loam. It is also found in low lying areas and near salt lakes in its native state.

I have had this plant about 3 years. It is about .9 high and about .9 wide. It appears to be quite frost tolerant. It is growing in sandy loam in full sun. It was watered in at planting then left to do its own thing. This year it started flowering late May and looking at all the new buds, I expect flowers for quite a while yet.



DARWINIA "COOLAMON PINK" AT OCEAN GROVE

By Tony Cavanagh

I brought along a flowering branch of this shrub to the July meeting and it created a fair bit of interest, mainly because of the lovely pendant pink bell flowers and their contrast with the dark green foliage. Bruce was delighted when I said I would write it up in more detail.

Darwinia "Coolamon Pink" which I understand is a registered cultivar, originated in the garden of long-time grower of native plants Doug McKenzie here in Ocean Grove. His property is in Coolamon Drive hence the name.



Doug grows a big range of Darwinias and he noticed occasional seedlings underneath several of his plants. He was interested to see how the seedlings developed so left them there but unfortunately, he also has a rabbit problem and one day came out to find most of the seedlings had disappeared. Lesson number one - *must protect seedlings with wire*. Over a period of several years, he grew a number of seedlings to flowering stage, and eventually selected the one that was to become "Coolamon Pink" as the one with the most potential. It is thought to be a hybrid between the widely-grown *D. leiostyla* with its pink bells and a plant which although also often grown in the past, is

described in the *Encyclopaedia of Australian plants*, Rodger Elliott, vol. 3 page 197 as a hybrid, with lime green bells developing red tonings. (Doug believes that this is a hybrid of *macrostegia* and *meeboldii*. The seedling came up under one of these plants). Certainly, the bells of “Coolamon Pink” are very similar to those of *D. leiostyla*, both in colour and shape.

Doug is also a pioneer grafter of native plants starting with Sturt’s Desert Pea probably over 30 years ago and progressing through the spectacular WA Hakeas, Banksias and red flowering gums to the ones which have been most successful commercially for Doug and son Pete, Darwinias and selected Verticordias. While many of the hardier Darwinias (which are mainly from WA) can be grown on their own roots, such plants are often short-lived or unreliable so grafting onto hardier rootstock, usually Eastern species from the Myrtaceae family or even *Darwinia citriodora*, can help prolong their life as garden plants.



Darwinia “Coolamon Pink” in my garden is a low growing, sprawling shrub, less than 1 metre high by 1.5 metre spread. The foliage is very dark green which contrasts nicely with the squat, deep pink bells. As the photo shows, there are truly hundreds of flower heads crowded on the bush. What appear to be flowers are in fact bracts which in most Darwinias are brightly coloured – the true flowers are tiny, with up to 12 or more crowded inside the bell-shaped bracts. They flower best in a sunny but not too hot or dry position and must have good drainage for a long life. My plant is grafted and about five years old but I have no idea how long it will live.

UP-COMING EVENTS

31 Aug / 1 Sept - Bendigo native plant group is holding a flower show and wattle spectacular, with unusual wattle plants for sale in tubestock. Held at the Rotary Gateway Park in Kangaroo Flat. 10.00am to 4.30 daily.

CLUB FUNCTIONS, BUS-TRIPS OR DRIVE YOURSELF OUTINGS for 2013

September 21st and 22nd is the ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend and Art Show at Anglesea. We have been invited to visit Bill and Olivia Clarke’s garden after the Wildflower show on Saturday 21st, with perhaps a bush-walk / orchid hunt in the afternoon. We will keep you posted.



Caladenia fuscata – Anglesea

PLANT SALE PROPAGATING DAY

We have decided that for the 2014 Plant Sale, we will propagate our own plants as a club activity. This will give us a source of quality, saleable plants for maximum profit, while getting back to basics of our club, growing Australian plants. **September 7** will be the big day.

Please make a list of plants from your garden which you think would be suitable for this purpose, and bring it to the AGM. And, when the plant is in flower, try to get a decent photo which we will use on our labels. Frank or Ade can help here, if you wish.

XMAS BREAK-UP

‘Christmas? Gee, that’s early.’ I hear you say. Well, it’s less than six months, so stick it in your diary. Saturday December 7th is the date, and Liz Wells’ place near Meredith is the place. There’ll be a lamb on the spit – BYO everything else. Campsites are available for those who don’t want to make the long drive back to Geelong in less than perfect condition.

SUE MCDONALD’S PARK-GARDEN

Most of you are aware that Sue is unwell at the moment, and we all hope that she is soon feeling much better. The Friends of Cranbourne Botanic

Gardens are visiting the Geelong area in November, and will be having a tour Sue's garden-park. We thought it would be nice to offer some help with an afternoon weeding and clearing up prior to the visit. We'll let you know more at a later date.



Sue McDonald enjoying her garden

2013 / 2014 MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for 2013/2014 are due as of July 1st. A new membership form is attached to the last issue. You'll note that there has been no increase in the fees from last year. Please fill in your form and send it to us along with your payment. You may wish to make the payment on-line. If you do, please email Bruce at apsgeelong@gmail.com to let him know that your payment has been made.

The Committee has also revisited public liability insurance for those members who do not wish to join APS Victoria. Insurance through the Royal Horticultural Society will continue as before, with the cost borne by the club.

We recommend that all members should join APS Victoria and enjoy the many benefits of that membership ... but we do not insist upon it.

WHAT'S IN THE-BUSH GARDEN -Cootamundra Wattle

I was pleased to read in Bruce's report on the flower table that someone brought in a Cootamundra Wattle. This is by far my favourite of the many Acacia species, and one with many special memories for me.

We had a huge one in our garden when I was a kid, and I loved to lie under it when it was in full flower, gazing through the blossoms that were so intensely yellow in the bright winter sun, that they hurt my eyes. I'd come out covered in pollen and bits of

flower, and Mum would shake her head in exasperation again.



The bright yellow blossoms of Cootamundra wattle.

My good friend Dennis, a Canadian who grew up in London, shared my love of this wattle, and when he was forced to move back to England to live, I sent him a piece, along with the words to John Williamson's hauntingly beautiful song "*Cootamundra Wattle*". I'm pretty sure we both cried a little bit.

On the corner of the street where I now live, in Belmont, there was an ancient Cootamundra wattle. 25 years ago it was huge and magnificent, filling the front yard, and adding a certain pleasure to the cold days of winter. Over the years, the borers attacked, it became rotten and branches fell away. But it wouldn't die. Eventually, two winters back, all that remained was a gnarled trunk with two straggly branches. Though each still bore a spray of magnificent yellow blooms, the tree was doomed. The owners removed it, and with it went a piece of me. I loved that tree!

But the removal of the tree meant sunlight on the ground and years of fallen seed began to germinate. Seedlings sprang up in profusion – over fifty at one stage. Most did not survive, but this week there are seven, all about 2 metres high, and all promising to return that little piece sunshine to my winter's days.

