

NOVEMBER MEETING

Graeme Woods

I was unable to attend the November meeting due to work commitments, so I am grateful to Frank Scheelings for providing us with the following report:-

At our November meeting, Graeme Wood graced us with his presence for the second time, following up on last year's talk on grevilleas. This time he spoke to us about his second love, hakes of which he feels there are not enough in common cultivation. "When in doubt, plant a hakea." was the refrain.

This genus shows great variation in form from leaves and fruit through to habit. Graeme described the similarity between hakea and a grevillea and showed two slides side by side, challenging us to tell which was which. Liz won a box of chocolates for correctly identifying *H. purpurea*, which was felt to be the rest of us to be a pre-arranged "Dorothy Dixie". Graeme has grown about 140 of the 160 or so species, all from seed.



Fruit and seeds, *H. gibbosa*. - Photo: Peter Macinnis

The most notable differences between the 2 genera were :-

1. Woody nuts in the hakeas as opposed to thin leathery fruits in the grevilleas
2. Hakea leaves are similar on both surfaces
3. Seeds are eccentric (with regards the wing) in the hakeas, central in grevilleas
4. Flowers tend not to be hairy in hakeas

Graeme then described his method of growing hakeas from seed by the "wet paper towel" method, in which the seeds are placed on a wet paper towel which is then folded over, kept moist and inspected regularly until the right stage of germination is reached for potting on; not dissimilar to our primary school days when we grew wheat seeds on cotton wool.



H. bakeriana – Photo: Anna Calvert

Growing from cuttings is rarely done due to the ease of growing from seed. Grafting of difficult to grow species or particular cultivars is done using *H. drupacea* which has replaced the more common *H. salicifolia* as the root stock. Hakeas are very hardy, and once planted Graeme NEVER waters or feeds them.

Graeme then presented a series of slides of some of his favourites which included *H. cravat*, *lissocarpha*,

auricular, myrtoides, erinacea, scoria, obtuse, bakeriana, tubercular, corymbosa, acuminata, rhombuses, cucullata, petiolaris, bucculenta, neurophylla, cinerea, nodosa, verrucosa, cryostat, invaginata, aculeate and lasiocarph.



H. verrucosa – Photo: M. Fagg

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Frank Scheelings

At the November meeting the plant of the month was *Chamelaucium uncinatum* "Purple Pride", more commonly known as Geraldton Wax flower

The *Chamelauciums* are woody shrubs which belong to the *Myrtaceae* family, and are endemic to the coastal region of southwest WA. Their flowers are 5 petalled, and are similar in appearance to tea tree flowers. The leaves are generally needle like.



Frank's *Chamelaucium uncinatum* – 'Purple Pride'.

Purple Pride is one of the best of the Geraldton waxes due to the intense deep purple coloration which makes it an outstanding addition to any garden. As is general with this genus, they are easy to grow, are best in an open, sunny position and respond excellently to hard pruning, which is necessary to prevent a too open spindly, woody growth habit. The *chamelauciums* will easily grow to 3 or 4 meters, and in Kings Park in WA I have seen them the size of a

house! That is unlikely here, but it is best to keep them under 2 meters.

The blooms are excellent as cut flowers with a long vase life of 2 weeks or more. In my garden they flower for almost 6 months, from early winter through to Christmas; one specimen flowered as early as April. Other colour variations occur, from pink to pure white, but the deep purple is outstanding.

SUMMARY OF APS VICTORIA COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEETING, 9/11/2013 by Phil Royce

As well as discussion of correspondence, the accounts, and future quarterly meeting hosts, topics covered included ...

- * APS Vic participated in the Royal Melbourne Show by conducting three 1-hour workshops for children.
- * Several documents were circulated for District Group comment: Plant Sale advice; and District Group Annual Report template.
- * Establishment of the Public Trust Fund (created by APS VIC to facilitate activities concerning the environment) has resulted in the need for some rule changes to APS Vic Constitution. A Special General Meeting will be held before the March 2014 COM.
- * Use of Royal Botanical Gardens Cranbourne (RBGC) Plant Labels (partially funded by an APS Vic donation) by District Groups is still being discussed with RBGC management.
- * APS Vic has been invited to participate in the State Rose and Garden Show at Werribee Mansion on 1 Dec 2013. Local District Groups were asked to support it. (APS Geelong will be represented)
- * The suitability of activities for an ageing APS Vic membership at the Quarterly meetings was queried. Representatives were asked to seek comment from their District Group members.

THE NATIONAL BONSAI & PENJING COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIA, & THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM, CANBERRA

By Tony Cavanagh

Benji Scheeling's fabulous bonsais, featured in the last Newsletter, reminded me of our recent trip to Canberra, where we saw the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection.

And before you ask, "Penjing" is the Chinese equivalent of the Japanese "Bonsai". According to Wikipedia "Generally speaking, tree penjing specimens differ from bonsai by allowing a wider range of tree shapes (more "wild-looking") and by planting them in bright-coloured and creatively shaped pots. In contrast, bonsai are more simplified in shape (more "refined" in appearance) with larger-in-proportion

trunks, and are planted in unobtrusive, low-sided containers with simple lines and muted colours.”

As with almost everything in Canberra, this is “bigger and better” than anything else you are likely elsewhere. The displays are mostly on loan or are commissioned and are the work of some of Australia’s best practitioners. The usual maples and oaks figures prominently but there are many Australian plants, some spectacular banksias and native figs but also uncommon one like the sticky wattle *Acacia howittii*.



***Acacia howittii* bonsai**

Because the collection is housed at the National Arboretum (I’ll bet you’ve never heard of that), then tend to try to include many of the trees represented in the 104 forest plots which make up the Arboretum, both native and exotic. The Arboretum has a strong Friend’s group and the Collection is largely supervised by volunteers, for many a labour of love – if you love Bonsai, what better way to spend your spare time than caring for the best collection of Bonsais in Australia. They have many individual specimens, some quite massive, more than a metre high (I think of Bonsai as usually being rather small, even if they are trees), and in keeping with the surroundings, there are a few “forest” bonsais as well.



A bonsai forest

Some are very old, having been “trained” since the late 1960s though most are younger and the display is mind boggling – we spent a couple of hours there and I am not a “bonsai person”. It is a definite “must” for your next Canberra visit as is the Arboretum which I’ll now talk about.



The arboretum main building

The Arboretum of International Trees was envisaged by the Griffins in their original concepts for the design of Canberra and the current Arboretum lies on the hills and valley area to the west of Lake Burley Griffin and close to the National Zoo and Aquarium. It has changed in concept to try to reflect a 21st Century concept of a public arboretum, through a vision of “100 Forests” of rare and endangered species from all around the world, planted as forests rather than as single specimens. (The Arboretum actually has 104 forest plots – they can count in Canberra, there are several plots set aside for trial plantings). As you can imagine, selection of just which species to grow was a major headache. These were the criteria – the species had to have:

- Recognised status as threatened in their home country
- Have national significance in their home country
- Have a low risk of becoming a weed
- Have strong “ethnobotanical” or cultural links to their native habitat.

Overlying these requirements were the following “challenges”:

- Limited number of trees available as seed sources
- (Australian) Quarantine regulations
- Canberra’s climate (not to be sneezed at)
- The need on occasions to obtain seeds from extremely remote locations or war zones
- (My thought, propagating and growing-on the plants, many of which had rarely been cultivated before. I think that they aim for something like 100 trees per forest).



***Banksia serrata* bonsai**

Anyway, over the years they have made a start on most of the forest plots, only 10 of the 104 are yet to be planted. There are 18 Australian tree forests, one of the rarest being something I have never heard of, Buchan Blue Wattle, *Acacia caerulescens*, of which apparently there are only 1700 plants in the wild near the Buchan Caves in Victoria. The Woolami Pine, *Woolemia nobilis*, was originally represented by only 80 plants in the wild but has been extensively propagated and the plantation we saw at the Arboretum was very healthy and about 1.5 m high ("the largest collection of Woollemi Pine in the one place anywhere in the world"). I was somewhat surprised to see they were planted on an open hillside (considering they grow naturally in shaded gullies) but I guess they know what they are doing.



The view from the Arboretum

Other surprises were that 10 of our 18 were Eucalypts and that the Silky Oak, *Grevillea robusta* must be considered as a rare and threatened species as it fills forest 51. Apparently their most endangered species is the Saharan cypress, *Cupressus dupreziana* var. *dupreziana*, of which only 230 plants exist, clinging to life in the desert of Algeria. A falling water table has

produced desert conditions in which few seedlings survive so soon the plants in Canberra may be some of the only ones left.

The Arboretum was surprisingly interesting. The main building had a fabulous timber beam roof and lots of displays explaining the purpose of the area as well as great food places. There are walking trails to see first hand many of the forests and you can drive through as well. There are several interesting sculptures on the walks and lookouts giving fabulous vistas over the Arboretum and Canberra. It is very popular with the locals, there were hundreds of cars there on the day we visited. Well worth spending a few hours there and if you have children with you, the new Gumnut Playground will give them lots of fun.



The beautiful roof structures

2014 SPEAKERS.

Your committee has been hard at work arranging the 2014 calendar. We now have the year locked away, but we would like to hear from you if you would like to speak, or know of anyone interesting who would make a good speaker for the future.

January	In recess
February	BBQ at Arthur and Linda's
March	Wilma Trew – 'The Tree Project'
April	Frank & Ade – 'Exotic Birds'
May	Matt Baars – 'Weed-busting'
June	Cathy Powers – Natives in Pots
July	A.G.M and Photo Competition.
August	Brett Deihm – Re-establishing Native Orchids on the Barwon Coast.
September	To be confirmed
October	Carlie Bronk – Marine Plant Life
November	Frank Scheelings – Borneo

AUSTRALIAN OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

There is a special twilight event happening at Anglesea on January 25 & 26, 2014, opening from 3.00pm - 8.00 pm; food & refreshments are available.

Lewis Garden, 2 Bronwyn Court, Anglesea. This is a modern coastal garden of stylish design with excellent combinations of indigenous, native and introduced species.

Sunnymeade, 48 Harvey St, Anglesea. This garden features a field of native grasses and emu bush clipped into ball shapes and beds of tough natives.

The Shack, 1 Purnell St, Anglesea. This is a young Australian native garden with clever plant selection to achieve a low maintenance environment around a coastal holiday house.

XMAS BREAK-UP

Saturday December 7th is our end of year BBQ get together at Liz Wells' place at Lot 1549 Meredith-Shelford Rd, Meredith. There'll be a lamb on the spit, sausages and vegie burgers provided by the club – 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. Directions to Liz's House are as follows :-

1. Take Midland Hwy through Lethbridge. About 2 Kms past the 100km sign turn left into Lower Plains Road. Go to the end (about 10kms) turn right and about 2kms go past Green Tent Road on your right. 400 m past Green Tent road on the LEFT is Liz's rammed earth entrance.

OR

2. Continue past Lower Plains Road about 6 Kms, will see Happy Hens Chook farm on the right. 400 m past turn left into Green Tent Road. Go to end (3.4km) turn right and first entrance on left (400m) is my entrance.

Green Tent Road is an all weather dirt road, Lower Plains Road is sealed but several kms longer to Liz's place.

A FAVOURITE TREE

Acacia pendula

In the owners' car-park at the Geelong Racecourse there is a beautiful specimen of *Acacia pendula* – the Weeping Myall. It is a magnificent gnarled old tree, and quite the largest I have ever seen.

Found in alluvial soils in inland NSW, southern Queensland and north west Victoria, it has an elegant, weeping habit with grey/green foliage. Small hairs on the phyllodes' surface give them a yellowy or silvery appearance in some light. The flowers are small, sparse, and not as brightly coloured as some acacias, so are not a feature of this tree.

It grows to 12 metres, and has a wide canopy. The one at the race-course is about 10m high with a spread of almost 18 metres ... not for your average suburban garden!



***Acacia pendula* – Geelong Racecourse**

The timber is dense and hard, with a deep, reddish colour. Also known as Boree, it was used by the aborigines for boomerangs and throwing sticks, and is a lovely timber for wood-turning.

It is best grown from seed, which can be collected from late October to January. Seed should be soaked in very hot water until it swells, or scoured with sand-paper to break through the tough outer coating.

OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

As you should be aware, we have an APS Geelong Facebook page, which is starting to get some attention from the general public. I know that many of you are not part of the Facebook crowd, but you can still be of assistance to the club, (and me).

Please email me with photos of interesting plants from your garden, or the bush, so that I can include them on the Facebook page. Even if *you* don't look at it, others will. To date, all photos are from Ade's garden, and he's running out of ideas!!



***Pimelea ferruginea* as a hedge at Harry's place**

This is just another way we can fulfil our club charter by promoting Australian Plants.

adefoster@internode.on.net