

DYEING FABRIC WITH PLANT DYES

Kerry Maloney, a food technology teacher, was our speaker at the June meeting. After an entertaining introduction from Frank Scheelings, Kerry amazed us all with the variety obtained with her art.

Kerry has always had an interest in anything to do with textiles be it knitting, embroidery or dyeing, and when she was asked to incorporate 'sustainable practice' into her Year 10 Textiles syllabus, her ingenuity came to the fore. Synthetic dyes were too expensive, both for the environment and then budget, so eco- or natural dyeing was adopted. Synthetic fibres don't take natural dyes, so protein based fibres, mostly recycled, fitted the bill. Cotton, wool, and silk gleaned from op-shops, or re-dyed again and again make the method cheap, sustainable and environmentally sound. Kerry's tunic was an example of her art .. an eco-dyed former damask tablecloth.



Kerry's eco-dyed tunic

Kerry uses a wide variety of plant materials as dyes, and trial and error tell her which plants produce what

colour ... Eucalyptus makes a neutral green; onion skins a bright brick-red. Bark from various trees not only give colour, but form, and 'found items' -wire, bottle caps, nails and screws – to add shape and colour to her work. Dying pots of different materials also give a range of colours to the finished article.



A sample of Kerry's work – colour and form

The method also applies to dying paper for use in cards, book covers etc. It is a great activity to keep kids occupied on a wet day – safe, cheap and lots of fun.

There are basically three methods, which I will call the 'Roll', the 'Bundle' and the 'Fold'. The fabric are laid flat, one on top of the other, and the dye materials are distributed on and between the layers, in any way you like. There are no rules, and no right or wrong way. The fabric is then rolled or bundled tightly, and bound firmly with string.

This bundle or roll is placed in a pot of cold water and brought to a boil. It is simmered gently for an hour or two... or six (no rules, remember?) then allowed to cool in the pot overnight.

For the folding method make a concertina fold in the fabric, and distribute dye materials between the folds. Turn the fabric over and do the same for the old side\ folds. Roll, bind and simmer as before. This technique is used a lot in Japanese traditional textiles.



Dyes made by steeping different plant materials in water which is in pots of different can be added to the water to further change the final result. Kerry uses aluminium, steel and cast iron pots, and all manner of plant material. Kerry has a quince tree, and preserves quinces. The leftover pulp and skin is boiled up and strained to make a beautiful pinkish dye.

The found items add colour and interest – iron gives black – and Kerry collects her treasures wherever she travels. Bristles from a street sweeper in New Zealand were lovingly collected and ceremoniously transported to Australia to add the black lines in the scarf above.

Once the pot has cooled the bundle, roll or folds are untied and dried in the garage. They are left there for a couple of weeks, then ironed to 'cure' the dye, then washed in Martha Gardner's Wool-Mix or similar. If you don't like the finished result, simply do it again; the layers of dye creating an interesting layered affect.

The rolls and bundles can be left tied and dried in that way. This will make the colours more intense, but risks the fabric growing mould, and spoiling the item.

The leaves and used water can be safely put onto the garden, and the metal found objects and the string dried, ready for use on the next article.

Small paper cards were made with individual leaf patterns on each, by layering the paper, the leaf and a piece of Gladbake baking paper and repeating. The stack is held in place with a ceramic tile, and put into a steamer.

The variety of colour and form is endless, and almost anything can be used to dye fabric. Experiments tell you what will work, and what won't. Tumeric makes a bright yellow dye, and Kerry uses a bit in Indian cooking. She saves the outside bits in a zip-lock bag in the freezer, until she has a reasonable amount.

Kerry's enthusiasm was infectious, and I'm sure many of the members present will be cooking up a pot of eco-dyed fabric in future.



The amazing array of samples Kerry brought along.

PLANT TABLE

with Matt and Roger

The table was very full and colourful, given the time of year. Grevilleas and Correas dominated, but there was a good sprinkling of other genera too.

Grevillea 'Birdsong' is a *G. banksii* x *G. petridifolia* hybrid with vibrant orange flowers. The plant in question is in its first year and just 900mm high, but has over 50 blooms and buds at present. Other grevillea include *G. lanigera* 'Mt. Tamboritha', *G. alpina* 'Sweet Cherries', *G. Georgiana*, *G. buxifolia*, *G. tenuiloba* and a *G. tenuiloba* x *G. nana* hybrid (both standards), *G. 'Molly'* and *G. 'Soopa Doopa'*, *G. dielsiana*, *G. 'Superb'* and *G. 'Peaches'n' Cream'* (both

in the Robyn Gordon complex) *G. Lassiter's Gold* and *G. Fireworks*, another delightful *G. alpina* cultivar.



Grevillea 'Birdsong'

There were three quite different specimens of *Hakea clavata*. The first, from Roger, is quite bushy with abundant terminal flowers. The second a spindly shrub with flowers spread along the branches. This plant has never produced seed, and neither has a perfume. The third, from Matt, resembles the first but with lighter coloured blooms a very strong perfume. *H. clavata* is apparently the only *Hakea* classified as a succulent.

The first of the correas is a Tasmanian plant (species unknown) which grows on the sand-dunes near Strachan. It's a low growing shrub with deep green shiny leaves and yellow to yellow/pink flowers.

C. decumbens is usually a spreading shrub but Matt's specimen is a couple of metres tall and covered in a profusion of pink and cream flowers. There were two specimens of *C. pulchella* – a delicate pale salmon pink, and the more vibrant 'Autumn Blaze'. There were two white flowering Correas ... *C. alba*, the local one, and *C. glabra*, described as 'a promiscuous thing' which hybridises readily. *C. 'Winter Bells'* a deep pink, and *C. 'Federation Bells'* in red and white rounded out a great range of Correas.

Eremophilas also featured strongly. The most impressive was *E. flaccida*, a very showy plant from the Mt. Augustus area in Western Australia. Shrubs are domed, 1.5 metres across with large purple red and brown flowers which look more like orchids than eremophilas.

E. oppositifolia is a dense shrub to small tree also called Twin-leaf Eremophila. Our specimen had pink/purple flowers, but it also comes in white yellow and orange. There were two yellow eremophilas ... *E. maculata* yellow form and a prostrate form of *E. glabra*. There was also another form of *E. glabra*, this time with red/orange flowers, *E. brevifolia* with deep,

dark red flowers, and a *maculata x brevifolia* cross, also red flowered.

Winter is the time of the wattles and there were two very interesting acacias. *Acacia merinthophora* is an open shrub which may reach 2.5 metres, with an attractive weeping habit. The long grey / green phyllodes sprout from stems, which change direction at each junction, making a zig-zag appearance, although I think the name 'Zig-Zag Wattle' has already been claimed by *A. macradenia*. The other was *A. iteaphylla*, called the Willow-leaved wattle, with long thin phyllodes and lovely pale yellow flowers

Completing the full and very colourful table were, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Billardiera bicolor*, *Templetonia retusa* and *Alyogyne huegelii* in both purple and white.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

The raffle was drawn early, with 10 prizes. Harry won four of them! As punishment, he contributes the Plant of the Month article for June – *Alyogyne huegelii*.

Reflecting on the huge variety of plants on display at our last meeting, I chose the "humble" ***Alyogyne huegelii*** as my favourite. I have two of these in my garden, one on the nature strip and the other alongside my garage. The plant beside my garage is about three metres high, and I think that it looks pretty good, in my "clay soil", since it grows naturally in sandy to sandy-gravel areas of South Australia and Western Australia. I am told that *Alyogyne huegelii* is not tolerant of bad drainage.

Some people call the lovely purple flowering plant the *Native Hibiscus*, but it has also been called the *Lilac Hibiscus*.



I am not sure how I managed to get this plant; possibly I grew it from a cutting, as I now have a number of them in pots, grown from cuttings. But I admire the plant because of the brightness of colour,

that can attract the eye on a cold winter's day, and it seems to stand out in a vase of flowers that has contrastive colours. The shrub has flowers in bloom for quite a few months of the year, but needs a good cut back in late spring to keep it in good shape. I have not noticed any pests on the plant, gobbling up the leaves.

The *Aloyogyne huegelii* belongs to the Malvacea family, and its flowers open up in the morning and last only one day...but then there are always lots of flowers on it.

I also have a white *Aloyogyne huegelii* which has grown fast on one of my back fences. This cutting I received from Eileen and Michael's garden a couple of years ago. Again, the white and purple together look absolutely great when displayed.



In conclusion the name *Aloyogyne* comes from the Greek **alytos**, united, undivided, and **gyne**, woman, ovary, alluding to the undivided style;

huegelii – after Baron Karl von Huegel (1795-1870), a German naturalist who collected extensively in Australia.

WHAT'S IN A NAME – Plants Named After People by Tony Cavanagh

Olearia. The olearias are members of the daisy family (*Asteraceae*) and are widely found in southern Australia especially eg, according to Rodger Elliot's encyclopaedia, there are 23 in Tasmania alone. There are some 50 species outside Australia and around 130 from all Australian states. The flowers are typically "daisy-like" but the shrubs often have woody stems and branches and one, *O. argophylla*, reaches tree size. Many of the eastern Australian species favour shaded and moist positions and are frequently found in gullies and in scrub while the western and inland Vic. and SA plants favour drier and more open

situations so there is probably an *Olearia* for most garden situations. The best known are the many heavy-flowered and very colourful variants of *O. phlogopappa* with flowers ranging from white to pink to mauve to purple-blue or blue, while others worth growing include *O. ciliata* and *O. floribunda*.



Typical *Olearia phlogopappa*

Finding the true origin of the name caused me an immense amount of heartache because even famous botanists such as Joseph Dalton Hooker (later Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) "got it wrong". Hooker gave its origin, in a book published between 1852 and 1855 as "from *Olea*, an olive tree, which some species resemble". This was repeated for many years, especially in New Zealand which also has olearias. Then a dictionary of plant names in 1972 chipped in with "named in honour of Adam Oelschlaeger (1603-1671) whose named was latinised to Olearius". One of the volumes of the *Flora of South Australia* in 1986 states "probably named after Adam Olerius (1603- 1671), a German botanist" which Rodger Elliot in the *Encyclopaedia* probably followed except for the spelling as 'Olearins'. There was an Adam Olearius with the dates 1599 to 1671 but he was a German mathematician, geographer and author, not a botanist, so they once again "got it wrong".

Many problems would have been solved if they had looked at the original description by the German botanist Konrad Moench in 1802 where he says in part "in memorium Joannis Gothofriedi Olearii ---" who turns out to be another German botanist Joannis Gothofriedi Oelschlaeger, born 1835, died 1711. Apparently he was also known as 'Olearius' (? a nickname), because his surname in translation means "oil presser", so I guess Hooker's original reference to the olive tree may have some relevance.



***Olearia phlogopappa* Purple**

***Patersonia*.** This is a small group of about 20 species (2 being found in Borneo and New Guinea) which are mainly confined to the southern half of Australia, especially in WA, although a couple are found in Qld. and NT. They form small tussock-like plants with thin strap-like leaves, often grey and usually hairy. The flowers, mostly blue to purple, sometimes white, are short lived and fragile and only last a few hours but are large and showy, appearing on long stems.



Pattersonia occidentalis

In a mass planting, they can be a spectacular sight on a sunny day. These small plants can be fitted into nooks and crannies in the garden, also as pot plants or even hanging baskets but must have excellent drainage and preferably a sunny position. Can be grown from seed (I have never tried it) or by division. The widespread *P. occidentalis* is a well-known garden plant, as is *P. sericea* (eastern).

There are no problems with the origin of this name, it being to commemorate Colonel William Paterson (born 1755, died 1810), Scottish military man, artist, explorer and horticulturalist, friend of Sir Joseph Banks and later Lieutenant Governor, also

Acting Governor, of the Colony of New South Wales. Despite his military work, Paterson collected plant specimens and seeds which he sent to England, especially to the nursery firm of Lee and Kennedy, and wrote an unpublished account of the flora of Norfolk Island. *Patersonia sericea* was named in his honour by Robert Brown in 1807, from a plant grown from seed from Botany Bay which was flowered by Lee and Kennedy.



Colonel William Patterson

***Persoonia*.** Although this group is not well known to many growers, it is a large and important group within the *Banksia* family (*Proteaceae*), having some 90 or more species found mainly in WA and Eastern temperate Australia. Like banksias and dryandras, plants range from small or prostrate shrubs to trees with the majority being between 1 and 3 metres. Flowers are small and often tubular, generally yellow and many species are not striking when in flower.



Persoonia pinifolia

They often have interesting foliage and can be long lived in the right conditions of part to full sun and well drained soil. Probably the best known is the eastern *P. pinifolia* which can be quite spectacular with masses of yellow flowers, although I have grown a few others including *P. levis*. You will probably need to buy plants from a nursery as they are in general very difficult to grow from either seed or cuttings.



***Persoonia pinifolia* fruits**

The name commemorates Christian Hendrik Persoon (born 1761, died 1836), an outstanding botanist of fungi who worked in both Germany and Paris. The name was applied by the English botanist J.E. Smith in 1798 and was one of 20 new genera of plants Smith described in his paper. Persoon had no connection with Australia but was honoured for his pioneering work on fungi.

SCORE ONE FOR US BULLIES

You may remember a couple of months back when Margaret Guenzel resisted my 'bullying' and gave us a demonstration of propagating Flannel Flowers rather than writing an article for the Correa Mail. Well, it seems the folks at 'Growing Australian' have charms that I don't possess ☺. Margaret's article about Dracophyllum secundum appeared in the last issue, and she has kindly consented to us reproducing it here. Thanks Margaret!

MY DRACOPHYLLUM SAGA by Margaret Guenzel

When the Maroondah Group ran an annual flower show in Ringwood at the Karralyka Centre, I first came across *Dracophyllum secundum*. It was always one of their exhibits, and came from the Karwarra Australian Plant Garden.

Once I stayed long enough to be given a cutting when they were packing up, and this cutting actually grew roots – one of only two I ever managed to strike. However, due to my ignorance about growing conditions, this plant did not survive long. A few years later, Monica Herman – bless her - gave me a plant

from their sale. This plant lived in a pot and flowered every year for about fifteen years.

When I moved from Boronia to Ocean Grove, I took with me the second cutting I had struck, which is now twelve years old, and doing well in a pot. It also flowers every year, but not until 2009 did I ever get a seed. That year, one of the flower spikes set seed. I don't know anything about how or by what this plant is pollinated in its natural habitat. Maybe an insect got lost or confused, or maybe I now have a suitable pollinator in my garden?

I could not find any information on how and when to sow the seed, so I did it there and then – October/November from memory. They did not take long to germinate, and by the end of February, I had two punnets full of 2mm seedlings. There was no further development for many months. In the winter months I kept one punnet in my greenhouse and one in a protected spot in the garden. The seedlings kept outside did not survive our winter, and again there was no further development in the surviving seedlings until I started feeding them with a very weak solution of PowerFeed from an eyedropper. Either that, or the fact that the weather was getting warmer, or perhaps both did the trick.



Dracophyllum secundum

When the seedlings reached 3cm I potted them on. I lost a few, but not many, and some have been given to good homes. The following year I got no seeds. But surprise, surprise, this year, out of thirty flower spikes about half set seeds. I have sent some to the seed-bank.

I have learned that it doesn't matter whether the seeds are sown in autumn or spring because the spring ones catch up very quickly once the growing season gets underway. It is important to know that *Dracophyllum secundum* needs to be grown like ferns – with good composted soil, moisture and sun protection.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Our Next Meeting

16th July.

The July meeting is the AGM and the 4th Annual Photo Competition. The AGM is important as we will elect a new committee and vote to accept the rules for our group. We urge you all to attend, and give consideration to nominating for a committee position.

The photo competition categories are the same as usual, Australian Landscapes, Australian Animals, and Australian Birds. (*Warning: Some unscrupulous members may try to enter photos of birds taken in New Zealand!*) Judging will be different this year. Frank will employ a 'Brownlow' system where each person enters a 3, 2, 1 vote in each category. Frank will do the counting. (*Remember: photos of Verticordias will only be accepted from members whose initials are not Tony Cavanagh*)

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.



Thelymitra antennifera – Anglesea

Rocklands Reservoir in the southern Grampians is a beautiful place in spring, and **October 5th and 6th** is the Pomonal Wildflower Show. Several members are

spending the weekend at the Southern Grampians Wilderness Resort.

<http://www.grampiansresort.com.au/index.php>

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.

WINTER WORKSHOPS - RODGER AND GWEN ELLIOT

A new series of monthly hands-on gardening workshops at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne Australian Garden aims to help home gardeners prepare their gardens for a plentiful spring. The three workshops will cover a range of topics including coastal gardening, plant selection, plants in pots, container cultivation, and bush tucker.

The workshops will be hosted by Rodger Elliot AM and Gwen Elliot AM, renowned horticulturists, authors, garden journal contributors, native plant enthusiasts and propagation experts with over 40 years' experience.

Each workshop includes an informative talk by Rodger and Gwen, a visit to the new Northern Display Gardens for a hands-on session, a plant to take home, refreshments and one daily pass for the Garden Explorer people mover. Enjoy all three Winter Workshops with a Winter Series Pass – great value at \$50 per adult or \$45 concession.

Workshop 1: Coastal gardening with Australian plants

Date: Sunday 16 June

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Cost: \$20 adult, \$18 concession

Many Australians live by the coast and gardening in these conditions can be rewarding yet challenging. This workshop will focus on sensitive plant selection, how to protect plants from strong winds and salt spray, soil conditioning and erosion control.

Workshop 2: Going potty

Date: Saturday 6 July

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Cost: \$20 adult, \$18 concession

Plants in pots can add seasonal colour, texture and aroma to the smallest spaces in your home. This workshop will cover all aspects of container cultivation from container and plant selection to the best potting mixes, maximising climatic benefits, and pot maintenance.

Workshop 3: Growing and enjoying bush tucker

Date: Saturday 3 August

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Cost: \$20 adult, \$18 concession

Add the flavor of Australia to your veggie patch. This workshop will focus on plant selection and cultivation so you can confidently plant and enjoy the taste of the Australian bush in your own backyard.

Rodger Elliot AM and Gwen Elliot AM

Rodger and Gwen have recently moved to Berwick after having spent 20 odd years in Heathmont, a leafy suburb some 30km to the east of Melbourne, Victoria.

They have had a passion for Australian plants for a long time. Both are professional horticulturists and writers. Rodger and Gwen have delivered lectures on Australian plants in many parts of Australia as well as in USA, UK, Europe and Japan.

Rodger has written for Australian and overseas garden journals and magazines since the 1970s and has had over 25 books on Australian plants published. He is co-author with David Jones of the highly renowned 9-volume *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants Suitable for Cultivation* (illustrated by Trevor

Blake). Gwen has written 10 books on Australian plants and was a regular contributor to Australian Horticulture for many years.

Rodger with his wife Gwen have owned and operated retail and wholesale nurseries specialising in Australian plants since the early 1960s. They have also been involved in selecting and breeding Australian plants for worldwide markets.

Rodger was a member (for 16 years till April 2012) of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria. He is a member of Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Board and the Maud Gibson Trust Advisory Committee. He is Chair of Karwarra Australian Plant Garden Advisory Committee in the Dandenong Ranges. Both are regulars on the 3CR Gardening Show. Gwen has been President and Secretary of Horticultural Media Association Victoria Inc. and both are Honorary Life Members of this organisation.

Rodger is a recipient of the Australian Natural History Medallion, Australian Institute of Horticulture's Award for Excellence and in 1999 he received the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society, London.

In June 2001, Rodger and Gwen were appointed Members of the Order of Australia (AM) for their contribution to the horticulture of Australian plants. Other awards for both include Honorary Life Membership of Australian Plants Society (Vic), Australian Plants Award (Commercial) 1995 (Rodger) and 2012 (Gwen).



RGB Cranbourne.

WHAT'S IN THE BUSH? Onion Grass and Cockies

Many years ago, as a school-boy, I became interested in birds. With my mate, Phil, I spent many happy days, and hitch-hiked many hundreds of kilometres, in search of new or uncommon species to add to our list. In those days (the late 1960s) we made several trips to outback New South Wales, camping in rocky outcrops and dry creek beds at Mootwingee in the

north west of the state. These water courses are lined with ancient River Red Gums, with hundreds of hollows inhabited by thousands of corellas, galahs and cockatoos. The raucous call of the Little Corella became, for me, the sound of the outback.

In those far away days, we seldom saw 'white cockies' around Geelong ... they tended to be birds from north of the divide, or the far west of Victoria. But the prolonged drought that started in the late 90s saw many birds change their distribution as they moved south looking for food and water. Birds like the Crested Pigeon and the Little Corella are now often seen around town.

I'm currently working near Freshwater Creek, and the paddocks on either side of the house have been recently ploughed. There are hundreds of white cockatoos which spend all day digging in the newly turned soil, joyously wheeling overhead or roosting noisily in the sugar gums along the driveway. Having heard my favourite Little Corellas flying overhead, I assumed they were the culprits, but photos show the majority of the flock to be Long-billed Corellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.



Long-billed corellas roosting at Freshwater Creek

I also assumed the farmer would be less than happy with the birds stripping his crop, but I was wrong again. He told me the birds were digging up the corms of onion grass, and he was more than happy to allow them to do a job that would otherwise require the use of expensive herbicide. I've seen Sulphur-crested cockies displaying similar behaviour along the roadside at Balyang Sanctuary, too.

According to the Department of Primary Industry, Onion grass can significantly reduce the productivity of crops, pastures and animal systems, making it a costly agricultural weed. Onion grass has no nutritional benefit to animals, remaining undigested in the gut. If large quantities are consumed, fibre balls

may form and obstruct the bowel, causing death. In crops and pastures, onion grass often grows ahead of desirable species, utilising valuable moisture and nutrients and restricting production.



Sulphur-crested cockatoos 'weeding' at Balyang

Onion grass is a perennial herb with distinctive growth behavior. It looks like a grass, grows like an annual, and can spread rapidly on farm land. The plant not only produces abundant seed, but also corms underground to survive the hot and dry summers in mediterranean environments of temperate Australia. Most onion grass seeds require a temperature of < 16.5°C to germinate and animals can disperse large numbers of seeds through grazing (>500 viable seeds/sheep/day). Seed can also be dispersed by mowing, slashing and by some insects such as ants. Seed and corm germinate or sprout in autumn to winter and grow over winter and flower from August to November. The flowers initially open close to the ground then the stalks elongate to lift them into the air and then bend downward to take the maturing capsule back to ground level. Top growth dies in summer leaving a perennial corm in the soil.



Onion Grass – *Romulea rosea*

So, my Little Corellas, and their mates are doing good work, helping the farmer rid his land of a nasty weed. But will he be so happy to see them later in the season when he's sowed his wheat or barley? Somehow, I don't think so.

MESSAGE FROM BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA

We received this message from Birdlife Australia regarding proposed changes to the use of National Parks. Follow the link and sign the petition, if you are so inclined.

'As you are most likely aware, state governments around the country are opening up our National Parks and Nature Refuges to grazing, shooting, logging, resort developments and even mining.

Stronger national environmental laws are needed to protect Australia's National Parks and Nature Reserves from an onslaught of state government development.

In December last year, we put national environmental law on the political agenda by asking our members to write to their local MPs, sign our petition and share the message on social media – and we succeeded! The Prime Minister took notice and halted plans to devolve decision-making powers to the States.

Now we need your help to convince federal Minister for the Environment, Tony Burke, to protect all National Parks and the National Reserve System under national law.

When the Victorian Government tried to re-introduce grazing into the Alpine National Park system, Minister Burke could act because this area is listed under the EPBC Act as a National Heritage Area. Amending the EPBC Act would extend this kind of protection to all national parks and high value reserves across Australia.

It is essential that we urge parliamentarians to take this opportunity to ensure that decisions involving National Reserve System, and habitat for federally listed species are retained at a federal level. We are therefore asking that the National Parks amendment also remove the approval bilateral powers from the EPBC Act and safeguard the future of the places and wildlife we all love.

We may have only a matter of days to influence the Governments decision on this matter. Please encourage your members to sign our petition by going to

<http://www.savethebirds.org.au/protect-our-national-parks-and-nature-reserves/>

and to share it through their networks and on Facebook and twitter so that we can grow our support base for this critical campaign.



Gratuitous pic of wedge-tailed eagle. ☺

WELL DONE, YOUNG HARRY

Our President, Harry Webb, has been flying the flag for APS Geelong, delivering a talk to students at Kardinia College about the benefits of growing Australian plants. Apparently, it was such a success that Harry had to call an end to the session, or the questions would have continued well past the allotted time.

2013 / 2014 MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for 2013/2014 are due as of July 1st. A new membership form is attached to this 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.