



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 289 – September 2013

AUGUST MEETING

Limeburner's Lagoon

Our speaker at the August meeting was Danny Reddan. Danny has been working for Greening Australia for over seven years as a Community Development and Training Coordinator. A significant portion of his time with GA has been the delivery of the Limeburner's Link project, which was the focus of the talk.

Greening Australia, broadly, aims at connecting remaining areas of remnant native vegetation with corridors which they have created through revegetation. This will provide access for birds and animals to other populations, and so increase the gene pool of many endangered species. The Victorian Volcanic Plains area is a big focus for GA. There is less than 1% of the original grassland remaining today. Greening Australia, like Landcare, works with farmers to revegetate, restore and protect native vegetation. But GA also works with the whole community and particularly the indigenous communities and the 'Caring for Country' initiative.

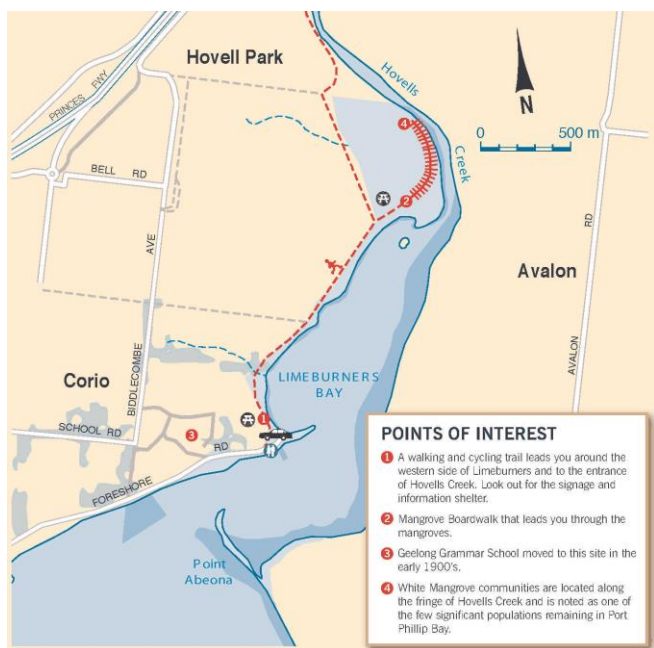
The Limeburner's Link project began in 2006. It is an initiative of Greening Australia, Shell and the City of Greater Geelong with additional support from the Federal and State Governments, and has engaged the community in conservation activities at Limeburner's Bay and Hovell's Creek, near the Corio campus of Geelong Grammar. The project aims at removing invasive weed species, then revegetating and restoring the area with mainly indigenous plants.



Limeburner's Lagoon – looking south

Members of the local community, corporate volunteers, schools and tertiary students have engaged in the planting of Indigenous plants, weed control, seed collection, bird population recording and other conservation activities. This has included a number of people completing accredited training in Conservation and Land Management. Schools have been a major focus, and over 2000 students from 21 schools across Geelong have been involved. 14,000 indigenous plants have been planted and over 8000 plants propagated using locally obtained seed and cutting materials.

The Limeburner's Bay area is of high conservation value and is a part of the Western Port Phillip Ramsar



President: Harry Webb - harry.webb@bigpond.com

Treasurer: Frank Scheelings - ftscheelings@gmail.com

Secretary: Bruce McGinness - brucesm@unimelb.edu.au

Editor: Ade Foster - adefoster@internode.on.net

Australian Plants Society – Geelong P.O. Box 2012 Geelong. 3220

site. It features saltmarsh, a shallow bay with sea-grass meadows and the Hovell's Creek estuary lined with *Avicennia marina*, the White Mangrove. It is also the largest remnant expanse of *Tecticornia arbuscula*, Shrubby Glasswort, in Port Phillip Bay. There is also a large expanse of grassland, albeit heavily degraded.

The first task is to remove the invasive weeds, notably , Blanket Weed, Chilean Needle Grass and Sour Sob. This is done primarily with spot spraying and manual removal. There were a number of remnant species among the weeds, so manual removal proved the most effective. The rains soon after clearing saw the native grasses, *Stipa sp.* returning in abundance. Then a number of indigenous plants are reinstated, including Ruby saltbush, *Enchylaena tomentose*; Berry saltbush , *Atriplex semibaccata*; Nodding saltbush, *Einadia nutans*; Sea-berry saltbush, *Chenopodium candolleianum* ; *Myoporum parvifolium*, Creeping boobialla; Running Postman, *Kennedia prostrata*; Coastal Flax-lily, *Dianella brevicaulis*; New Holland Daisy *Vittadenia cuneata* and Hollyhock, *Malva priessiana*. Continued maintenance to keep weeds at bay is essential.

Low-lying areas and drainage lines have been restored and the Marsh Saltbush, *Atriplex paludosa* has proven particularly suited to this task. Remnant Beaded Glasswort or Samphire, *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* and Austral Seablite, *Suaeda australis*, have benefitted from the weed removal and are recovering well. Rounded Noonflower, *Disphyma crassifolium*, has done particularly well and the area is a mass of mauve flowers in season. Another area, at the end of Cummins Road, was replanted by schools groups, with Redgums, various wattles, and groundcovers which have all done very well. Birds have moved in and the area is looking great.



Hovell's Creek and White Mangroves

The area is a Western Port Phillip RAMSAR site, listed for the protection of migratory birds species such as Bar-tailed Godwits and Orange-bellied Parrots. A total of 162 birds have been listed for Limeburner's Lagoon. It is certainly a site worth preserving.

Another area is known as the Market garden site. A bund was built to keep the tide and salt water out, but the project failed early last century. Now, the biggest weed is silver beet. They are huge and hard to kill. There is a large area of Austral Salt-grass , *Distichlis distichophylla* , which makes huge , bumpy mat. This is probably a single plant, or clone colony, and must ne hundreds of years old. The area has been weeded and is regenerating itself, but will be planted by trainees. 800 plants have been propagated and are ready for planting. Because of the bund, the site will be restored with indigenous woody species to make an alkaline shrub-land . Plants to be reinstated include Moonahs, *Melaleuca lanceolata*; Rough barked honey myrtle , *Melaleuca parvistaminea*, which is indigenous to the Werribee area, and probably occurred here; Shrubby Glasswort , *Tecticornia arbuscula*; Black-seeded Glasswort, *Tecticornia pergranulata*; Common Sea-heath, *Frankenia pauciflora* ; Trailing Hemicroa, *Hemichroa petandra*, and many grassland species. A patch of Nardoo, *Marsilea sp.*, is found in this area. This is most unusual as it is usually associated with fresh water. Perhaps there is a natural spring in the area.



The boardwalk over saltmarsh to the mangroves

On the other side of the creek a land-owner has joined forces to preserve an area of *Gahnia filum* , the Chaffy Saw-sedge, food plant for the Altona Skipper, and endangered butterfly. This a very different environment with the *Gahnia* and *Poa labillardieri* the dominant species. There is also a large area of high-quality, remnant saltmarsh. Work is being done right along the creek to eradicate feral animals, particularly foxes and feral cats, in an effort to increase the local bird and mammal population.

If you have not visited the area, I urge you to do so. It's an easy walk and the board-walk over the salt-marsh and through the mangroves is very interesting. I visited on a very blustery and squally day recently, and parked at the end of Cummins Road. I counted 18 bird species in an hour. Ed.

PLANT TABLE

with Tony Cavanagh

Tony kindly consented to take the plant Table discussion and there was a very good selection for him to choose from. Not all of the plants could be covered, so those which took Tony's fancy were discussed.

Grevillea laevis, a rather spindly bush from Frank's garden, has become prostrate in its old age, but still produces masses of delicate whitish flowers on fine prickly stems.

Eremophila oppositifolia (or was it *alternifolia*) is a small shrub 1m high x 2m wide with reddish/pink flowers and grey/green foliage.

Eucalyptus priessiana is a small tree to 2.5m with an almost weeping habit, deep green elliptic foliage and large, striking, bright yellow flowers. There is also a ssp. *lobata*, which is lower-growing.



***Eucalyptus priessiana* – Bell-fruited Mallee**

Acacia aspera, from Liz Wells' garden has beautiful recemes of deep golden flowers and a soft, weeping habit.

Acacia pycnantha, our national floral emblem, can become large and woody, but if pruned well when young is a very attractive garden plant.

Dryandra quercifolia, a medium shrub has beautiful yellow flowers on oak-like foliage. Both are very useful for flower arranging, and if cut at the bud stage, the flowers will last two weeks in a vase.

A surprising specimen was a pink form of *Kunzea baxterii*, from Liz's garden. Found naturally near Esperance in W.A., it is a mass of flowers at present.

Correa pulchella is well known to most of us as a garden plant in its own right, or the parent plant of many lovely hybrids. This specimen is the white-flowered form from Kangaroo Island – a very pretty plant indeed.

Frank's *Banksia quercifolia* was unusual in that the flowers are tiny. Usually 100 mm long, the golden/brown flower on this specimen was no more than 20 mm.

A dense, bushy *Hakea (clavata?)* with very strong smell initiated some discussion as to whether it was pleasant or not. *Grevillea zygodoba* 'Pink' also came into the discussion for the same reason. The consensus? .. 50% said sweet smelling, 50% said old socks.

Eremophila santalina, is now called *Pholidiopsis santalina*, the only plant in this genus. A shrub of 1m x 1.5m, it has very fine grey/green foliage and delicate white flowers.



***Pholidiopsis santalina* – image J. Wrigley**

Tony's specimen of Cocky's Tongues, *Templetonia retusa* was unusual in that it has yellow flowers. It is a vigorous plant which spreads from self-sown seeds, which, interestingly, are all yellow flowered, too.

Philotheca varicosa is a lovely plant with masses of white flowers, in this case double flowers, on a grafted plant. On its own roots it is a little temperamental ... but worth the effort.

Grevillea flexuosa is a large spreading shrub, with prickly holly leaves and masses of yellow cylindrical flowers. The plant was discovered, then lost for almost 100 years, although how such a striking plant could remain un-noticed is a mystery.

PLANT OF THE MONTH.

Calytrix leschenaultii

Benji Scheelings won the raffle, and chose *Calytrix leschenaultii*, brought in by Tony Cavanagh. Tony says ... *C. leschenaultii* is a small shrub to less than a metre, from south west Western Australia. Mine is grafted, because it was thought that it might be "touchy" over here in the east, and this gave it a

better chance of survival. Mine has excellent drainage in near full sun but is in a part sheltered position among other shrubs. Rodger Elliot in the Encyclopaedia says it can be grown from seed or cuttings but I have always grown *Calytrix* from cuttings and the eastern ones at least strike reasonably well. The flowers are pink-purple and tend to be clustered near the top of the shrub at the ends of the branches. It flowers for about two to three months around now and so far has proved reliable.



Calytrix leschenaultii

HAKEA MYRTOIDES IN CULTIVATION

by Tony Cavanagh

Way back in the dark ages of the 1970s, growers of native plants had it fairly tough. The range of plants available from nurseries was limited, there was almost no such thing as a grafted plant and if you wanted something special, most times you had to grow it yourself or swap with a fellow enthusiast. Because they were relatively readily available, everyone grew such plants as *Hakea laurina*, *Melaleuca nesophila*, *Callistemon citrinus*, *Eucalyptus lehmannii* (so called) or even, heaven forbid, *Melaleuca armillaris*. But there were also plants that many enthusiasts aspired to, sometimes with “one-upmanship” involved, other times because the plants were rare and attractive, or because they were genuinely interested in growing them. This category included plants like *Banksia coccinea*, *Boronia serrulata*, *Macropidea fuliginosa* (the black kangaroo paw, in fact all kangaroo paws were also desirable), the Sturt’s Desert Pea (growing it in upended pipes or large drums for good drainage), *Grevillea petrophiloides* and many, many more.

One in this latter group and which is still not well known today, is the small WA *Hakea*, *H. myrtoides*. This is a dwarf, ground hugging plant, usually less than 0.5 m high with similar spread, with tiny, sharp-pointed, dull blue-green leaves. What everyone

wanted was the flowers, a spectacular deep pink-red, growing along the branchlets but so densely that they were like bottlebrush heads. I dutifully obtained a plant but it is now so far back that I cannot remember whether I grew it from seed or a cutting or bought it. Anyway, much to my disgust, it never flowered and although I grew another from cuttings some years later, it too did not oblige. Now we are talking over 30 years ago so you can imagine my astonishment when my wife said to me recently, “I think that dwarf *Hakea* might be going to flower”. Sure enough, as the picture shows, that is exactly what it did over late June, early July. The one that flowered was the cutting grown specimen but I notice that the original is also in bud. So I guess the motto should be “never give up”. Over the years, I forgot I even had these plants they were so unobtrusive and never received any attention. One was even buried under a *Thomasia* for years but survived. One of the main reasons for their toughness is that they have a lignotuber or swollen underground stem which tides them over in difficult times. So if you want a tough and long-lived small plant for a rockery or large pot, then *Hakea myrtoides* might just be the plant for you – just as long as you don’t want flowers as well!



Hakea myrtoides flower with pollen receptors open

P.S. I was just checking up in Ivan Holliday’s book, *Hakeas a field and garden guide*, and he makes the interesting comment: “Unfortunately, it has proved to be unreliable in cultivation, often growing successfully for a few years, flowering well and then collapsing. – Allegedly, one of the parents of the beautiful *H. Burrendong Beauty*”. So, am I in for a nasty surprise after all these years? Only time will tell.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Our Next Meeting

Dendrobium speciosum

The speaker on 17th September will be our own Roger Wileman, who will tell us about his success with the King or Rock Orchid, *Dendrobium speciosum*. Anyone

who has seen Roger's orchid house is in no doubt as to his ability to grow orchids, so don't miss this fascinating talk.

7 September – APS Wilson Park Plant Sale, Wilson Botanic Park, Princes Highway, Berwick

7/8 September - APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo 2013 at St Savas Church Hall, 212 Diamond Creek Rd, Greensborough from 10 am to 4.00 pm both days..

14/15 September - 2013 APS Vic Quarterly Gathering hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula

21/22 September - Angair Wildflower and Art Show, Anglesea Memorial Hall, Anglesea

5/6 October - APS Grampians Pomonal Annual Flower Show, plant sale and garden displays.

5 October - APS Mitchell Spring Plant Expo

19/20 October - APS South Gippsland Native Flower Show

AUSTRALIAN OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

Two interesting local gardens are open over the weekend of 21 / 22 September, which coincides with the Angair Wildflower Show.

Solea – Horseshoe Bend Road, Torquay. Within a working protea farm is a garden featuring a diverse collection of mature native plants. Many rare species are among the generous plantings of leptospermums, isopogons, banksias, hakeas, grevilleas, verticordias and other massed shrubs. Ponds, sculptures and mud-brick outbuildings add further interest.

Waldershare – 140 Grossman's Road, Torquay. A graceful garden with generous curving beds linked by sweeping lawns showcases a huge variety of well-chosen Australian plants. Gravel garden, succulents and cactus, elegant integrated outdoor entertaining area, pleasing use of potted plants. Frog pond, large vegetable garden, indigenous boundary plantings.

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

PLANT SALE PROPAGATING DAY

September 7 will be the big day, not just for the election, but for our propagating day. Please meet at

Sheila and Roger's house - 17 Aldershot Rd, St Albans Park - at 10.00 am.

We will be propagating our own plants, as a club activity, for sale at the 2014 Autumn Plant Sale. This will give us a source of quality, saleable plants for maximum profit, while getting back to basics of our club ... growing Australian plants.

Bring along plant material or seeds from your garden that you think will be suitable, and tools, gloves etc., so you can get involved.

And, when your 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.

Oh, and don't forget to vote ☺

ANGAIR WILDFLOWERS, BBQ LUNCH AND ORCHIDS

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 for a BBQ lunch.

The garden is a newly established work in progress, and Bill and Olivia are keen for members' input and advice. Please BYO meat, drinks, cutlery, plates, etc. Soup, cake and coffee provided. No need to bring chairs. We will have a walk and orchid hunt in the nearby bush after lunch.

Please meet at the Wildflower Show in the Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea at 10.00 am, followed by lunch at Bill and Olivia's at 14 Third Avenue Anglesea at 12.30. Best access to Third Avenue is from O'Donohue's Rd.

See also the Australian Open Gardens section for two local gardens open that weekend.



Glossodia major – Wax-lip Orchid, Anglesea

XMAS BREAK-UP

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 information very soon.

2013 / 2014 MEMBERSHIP

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

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

A GARDEN VISIT TO RED GUMS

Drakes Road Drysdale

by Bruce McGinness

I remember reading a review of the Red Gums garden in the APS Geelong newsletter some time ago which stuck in my mind as a garden well worth visiting. When Red Gums came up in the open garden scheme in August I took the opportunity to visit the gardens.

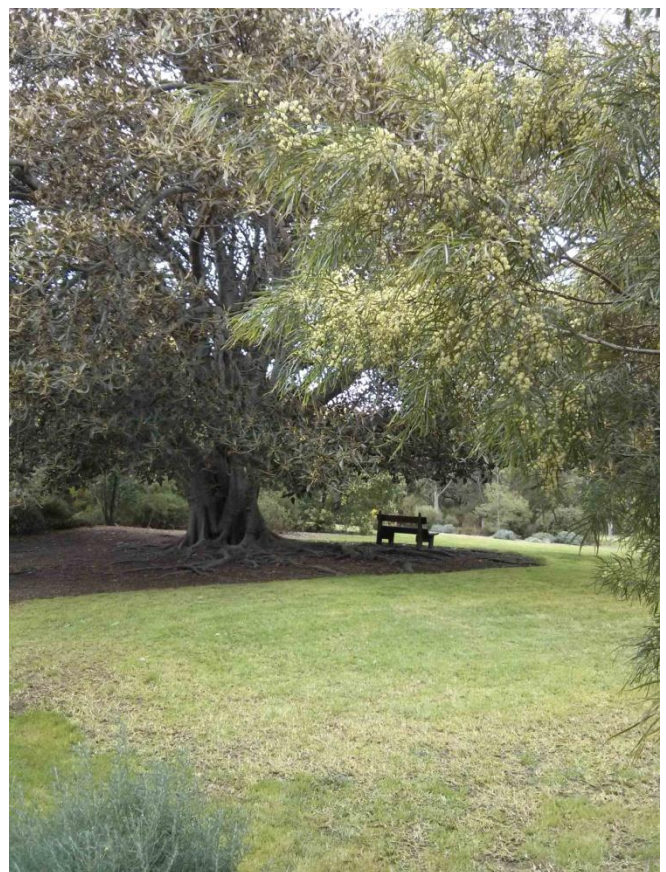
I have plagiarised an information sheet on the property as well as adding my impressions.



The old Red Gums inspired the garden

When Winsome and Ron Vernieux moved to the 2.5 hectare property in June 1998, they were seduced by the old Red Gums in the front of the property to create a native garden. After much research they found the garden philosophy they were looking for in Gordon and Gwen Fords's book "The Natural Australian Garden". Sam Cox who had been Gordon Fords protege was hired to do the landscaping, work started in November 2000 and continuing through to February 2001. The Ford inspired design is obvious with the use of large rocks and the house blending into the landscape. The decision to use native plants for the landscaping was heavily influenced by the intention of attracting birds and not providing supplementary watering after the plants were established.

Flowers were not a major consideration in the design with the harmonising of textures, colours and structures of the plants with the intention of providing an upper, middle and lower storey with tracks weaving through the vegetation to give the feeling of being in the "bush". The vistas and not being able to see the garden all at once is a feature of the garden. A small orchard and a vegetable garden is well blended into the garden and does not intrude into the native garden.



An old Moreton Bay fig dominates an area at the side of the house, the lawned space around it has been kept clear to show off its fine figure. Ron estimates

the trees age at 130 years and was most likely planted by the congregation of the Presbyterian Church who had a school house on the property. Ron found the limestone foundations when the grass died in summer outlining the location of the school. Along the grass from the fig is a brilliant underground wine cellar built by Sam Cox with an entrance framed by large rocks, the paved area at the front of the cellar is paved with Castlemaine slate and over looks the red gums at the front. It would be a fine spot to sit have a glass of wine or two.

A watercourse runs through the front of the property amongst the red gums which has been predominately under planted with indigenous plants from the Bellarine Peninsula. Older residents remember the creek flowing 2 to 3 month of the year, now with so many properties capturing the water with dams it only flows after heavy rains which just goes to show how a system can be changed drastically over a short period of time. The plantings have attracted wildlife with 60 native species of birds identified and four different frog calls have been heard in the garden.

I had a chat with Winsome after strolling through the gardens and I mentioned that I was a member of APS Geelong; she generously invited our club to visit Red Gums and would love to show us around. I think it would be well worth putting a visit on the APS Geelong calendar.

WHAT'S IN THE BUSH

Old Man's Beard

And no, it's not mine! *Clematis aristata*, or Old Man's Beard, is a native climber found down the eastern coast of Australia, from southern Queensland to Tasmania. In spring and early summer, it is a mass of creamy white flowers, scrambling through the foliage of other plants, or covering logs and fences. We found a number in full flower at Inverleigh Common during the week.

C. aristata is dioecious, meaning that it has male and female plants, but the flowers of both are very similar. They have no petals, but four sepals in a star shape from 30mm to 70mm across.

The adult leaves are pale green and trifoliate, but are purple in seedlings and younger growth. *C. aristata* is a 'leaf climber'... the leaf stems curl around the branches of shrubs, trees or fencing wires enabling the plant to climb.

The flowers on the female plant are followed by feathery seed heads, which give the plant its common name, having the appearance of fluffy white Santa Claus beard.

They are a useful garden plant in a large space, and grow well in most soil types. They respond well to pruning, and are not so vigorous as to take over the garden, or smother another plant.



***Clematis Aristata* – Old Man's Beard, Inverleigh**

VALE DEBBIE GASKILL

We were saddened to hear of Debbie's death on 18th August. Debbie was a Past President of APS Geelong, and a Committee member for many years. Debbie's funeral was held at Tucker's on Friday, and quite a few members were among the big crowd of people, many of them teachers, who attended. It was a nice remembrance with fabulous music and just one speech which covered Debbie's life. The celebrant asked us the end to stand and help Debbie celebrate the way she would have liked - and then the Hawthorne football club song was belted out!. Our thoughts and condolences to Geoff and family.



One of the bunches of native flowers from Debbie's service.