



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 306 – April 2015

MARCH MEETING

Roger Wileman

Roger is well known to all our members for his extensive knowledge of Australian plants, and his inexhaustible quest to find new and exciting specimens. His latest foray was to Western Australia, a six-week trip beginning in late August 2014.

His first day on the road is a mammoth drive from Geelong to Ceduna in South Australia; a distance of some 1540 kms, and it is here that his adventures begin. Unlike many who have driven the long road to Western Australia, Roger finds myriad interesting and exciting places to visit and things to see while crossing the Nullabor. On this trip he explores the tracks north and south of the highway, to see what he might find.

for loading wheat which is grown in the area. Huge sand-dunes tower over the village.



The jetty at Fowler's Bay



The windmills at Penong took his attention – twenty-some bringing water from deep in the ground to provide water for the township. ?????????????? School just past Penong had a well dug straight through solid limestone to supply the school with water. The well was dug at the top of a ridge and was very deep.

Some 50 kilometres further on, Roger took a detour south to Fowler's Bay, a little fishing village about 20 kilometres off the highway. A huge jetty juts into the crystal clear waters of the bay at this point, but Roger has no idea of its purpose. Perhaps it was

Roger's next detour was 110 km North, to the Township of Cook to see the railway station on the Indian Pacific line. He asked about a good camping spot and was directed to an empty house, set up for the workers on the rail-line. It was completely empty, but spotlessly clean with all mod-cons, including toilets, showers and a commercial kitchen. A sign on the automatically closing front door read ' Please Close Door Securely – Account Snake Season". The following morning he waited in the coming dawn for the freight train to pass. It was 1.5 km long and took almost 3 hours to pass by.



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Next stop was the cliff-tops south of the highway, where Roger found a very interesting plant community growing in limestone on top of the cliffs, 100 feet above the water. There was a prostrate melaleuca which trapped the sand in its foliage making tiny sand-dunes as it grew, a dense *Pultenea* forming large mats in the rocky sand, and the very beautiful *Eucalyptus yalatanensis*, named for the Aboriginal mission in this area, and which only grows to about 1.5m.



Eucalyptus yalatanensis

Arriving at the quarantine station on the S.A./W.A. border Roger handed over his remaining tomatoes. He was preparing to drive on into Western Australia when he was stopped by a quarantine officer, who told him that his very dirty car would have to be washed before it was allowed into WA! He took it to the servo opposite and get it washed for \$50 or the officer would do it for him. His car was clean and shiny, but his mood was dirty as he crossed the border.

At Madura Pass, above the road-house, there is a small hole in the rock, called the blow-hole. Flowing out of this hole is a cool breeze which emanates from the coast, about 60 kilometres away. The area is a maze of caves and grottos, such as at Cocklebidy, which were put to use as shelters by the local aborigines for thousands of years.



One of the many caves in the Madura area

Roger wandered here and there as headed west, searching for anything of interest. He was also looking for a particular tree, having been given the precise directions that it grows 'west of Norseman'. There are many plants in this very harsh environment, growing in the poorest of soils, or in tiny cracks in the rock. At McDermid Rock, a large granite outcrop, *Acacia lasiocalyx* forms a perimeter 'hedge' around the base, taking advantage of the water run-off. At Lake Johnson, there is an isolated stand of three Salmon Gums, *E. salmonophloia*., The nearest population of these trees is over 200 km away.



Roger's camp at Lake Johnson

Borya constricta is a very interesting plant which grows on the rocks in the area. This and other *Borya* species are called Resurrection Plants, because during long hot summer periods or in drought, they appear to die, with their green foliage turning orange. However, shortly after rain they fully return to life as their foliage changes back to green. In depressions where a small amount of soils has gathered, small plants and mosses have taken root forming tiny gardens on the bare rock.



***Maleleuca parviceps*, near Wyallkatchem**

Near Wyallkatchem there are a series of 'breakaways' with ironstone capping on the underlying chalk. Here, Roger found a little mallee, *E. deflexa*, which was probably several hundred years old, but only a metre

high. It has beautiful pink and cream flowers. Also in the area, often in disturbed ground, like the graded sides of the road, were *Hakea varians* ssp. *caramel*, *Grevillea insignis*, *G. pilosa*, *Adenanthos argyreus*, a beautiful pale yellow and pink *Gompholobium*, *Hibbertia sericea*, *Melaleuca parviceps*, and many colour variations of *Leschenaultia biloba* and *L. Formosa*.

Around Lake King there was an interesting phenomenon where one side of the road was barren, yet the other was 'plant heaven' Here were many different *Dryandras*, a tiny she-oak and a very beautiful (but spiny) low-growing acacia.



The mystery acacia

At Chinocup Lake there is a new species of Eucalyptus, *E. quaerenda*, which Roger hunted for several days, and a very rare orchid, *Drakea insulate*, known from just one location and, aptly, called the Lonely Hammer-orchid. At Hyden was a most unusual service station, where, with no mobile service, Roger stopped to make a call from the public phone. The proprietor, who lives on premises, assured Roger that the pumps were operational, and he filled up accordingly



The Hyden Service Station

Roger camped in a disused quarry further north, and when a sudden rain-storm rolled in he was lucky to escape, as the water rose alarmingly during the night. The area is known for its fabulous rock formations as

well as its fantastic flora, and is the home of *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess'. There is a lot of water run-off from the rocks and there are many very old wells in the area.



Rock formations with *Acacia lasiocalyx* at the base.

Roger's talk was fascinating and his photos had the audience enthralled. He will be back next month, with Part II of his trip, where he promises many more photos of the wonderful Western Australian flora. I, for one, will be sure to be there.

PLANT TABLE.

With Sheila Wileman

The table was very interesting this month, with good variety, and a number of plants which seem to be flowering 'out of season'.

The *Banksias* were very well represented with some lovely and unusual specimens. *Banksia bauera* is called the Possum banksia for its large, furry inflorescences. I would nominate Stinky banksia as a more accurate name, because the flowers have a pungent and very unpleasant odour. *Banksia nutans*, the Nodding banksia, is a small shrub from coastal WA, with small, red/orange, rounded and pendulous flowers.



***Banksia nutans* – photo G Clarke**

Banksia violacea is another small shrub from southern WA. It has rounded, hairy, dark purplish

flowers. *Banksia ornata*, is a large shrub from western Victoria and South Australia, which has large, upright yellow-green flowers, which tend to bronze with age.

Banksia burdettii is a large shrub or small tree from the sandplain country near Gingin, north of Perth. The flowers are a striking orange and white, like smaller versions of the more familiar *B. praemorsa*.

Banksia elderiana is a very interesting species, again from Western Australia. It is a tangled, bushy shrub to about 3 metres with yellowish, pendulous flowers and long very prickly leaves



***Banksia elderiana* – photo Explore Oz Wildflowers**

Banksia ashbyi is a large shrub to 4m occurring in coastal southern WA. The flowers are large, to 150mm, and bright orange. We also had three different specimens of *Banksia media*, and all were quite different in colour. Flowers were green with reddish tips, brownish or pale yellow.

Among the other more interesting and unusual specimens was *Backhousia citriodora*, the Lemon Myrtle. The oil of this plant has many uses as an antiseptic, an anti-fungal, an anti-viral, a calmate and a sedative. It is used in cosmetics, perfumes and insect repellents. The leaves can be used for herbal infusions and for food flavouring. During WWII the plant was used as a flavouring for lemonade.



Snow-berries – *Gaultheria hispida*

Gaultheria hispida, the Snow-berry, is a low plant of the rain-forests, wet forests and alpine heaths of Tasmania. It has narrow shiny leaves and produces large whitish berries which are edible.

Matt brought along an example of the Holly Fuchsia *Graptophyllum ilicifolium*. Although it is a shade-loving plant, it can be grown in full sun. However the leaves don't develop a good deep glossy green. It is a slow-growing erect shrub that can grow from three to about six metres.

Racemes of the beautiful deep red tubular flowers appear in late spring. The flowering season is short, but very showy. It is a native of the Mackay area of Queensland, and is purported to be intolerant of frosts.

Another plant of interest was *Ixodia achilleoides*. *Ixodia* is a small genus of two species. *I. achilleoides* is more widespread, and is usually a small shrub, although it can reach 2 metres in height. There are three subspecies: *ssp. achilleoides*, *ssp. alata* and *ssp. arenicola*, all occurring in South Australia with the *alata* and *arenicola* also found in coastal far western Victoria. *Ssp. alata* is also found in the Grampians. The subspecies differ in the nature of the foliage and size of the flower heads.



***Ixodia achilleoides ssp. alata* – Grampians form**

PLANT OF THE MONTH

by Matt Leach

The raffle this month was won by Tony Cavanagh, who selected Eucalyptus synandra, brought along by Matt Leach, as this month's 'Plant of the Month'. And a big thank you to Bruce McGinnis for the prizes this month. And, thanks to Matt for this article

Eucalyptus synandra, the Skirt Mallee, is a mallee, growing up to 5m tall, and 2-5m wide. It is multi-stemmed, spreading open habit with lignotuber. The bark is colourful, white with reddish-brown streaks. The adult leaves are long, narrow and dull green. Flowers are 2.5cm across and usually creamy-yellow

in colour, but can also be red. They usually appear from October to February, but flowering can also be sporadic.



***Eucalyptus synandra* – Skirt Mallee at Inverleigh**

E. synandra is found in six scattered populations from Morawa to the southern Great Victoria Desert in Western Australia. A threatened species, found growing naturally in laterite or ironstone ridges, but also found on sand. It is hardy to moderate frosts and droughts.

Its common name of Skirt Mallee refers to the stamen filaments that stay attached together when they die and fall from the old flower. They look like a skirt when they drop to the ground.



The 'skirts' that give rise to the common name

My plant was purchased from a local nursery about six years ago, showing red flowers on the tag photo. After planting *E. synandra* in a raised mound of granitic sand, about two years later it produced flower buds. I was eager to see my *E. synandra* produce its red flowers. A couple of months later the flowers opened and started out creamy-yellow. To some disappointment, the flowers never aged to red and stayed creamy-yellow until the stamen skirts dropped

to the ground. The plant is now 4m tall, and flowers profusely in mid to late summer. The flowers attract many insects and honey loving birds.



Flowers from Matt's plant at Inverleigh

*Editor's note: In January, Penny and I were at King's Park in Perth, where we noticed a beautiful little mallee with creamy yellow flowers. We asked several of the Park's staff for a name and were told it was the very rare, yellow-flowering form of *E. synandra*. I wonder if Matt's tree is the same form?*



***E.synandra* Yellow form – King's Park, Perth**

AUSTRALIAN ORCHID SPECIES – *DOCKRILLIA*

By Roger Wileman

Dockrillia is a newly created genus of Australian orchids, named after Alick Dockrill - 1915-2011- who was an amateur botanist and orchid expert in the Sydney region. He moved to Cairns in 1957, where he established himself, with other local orchid experts, and in the next ten years named many species and varieties of orchids. The name *Dockrillia* was established as far back as 1981. It is only in recent years that the name has been resurrected. The genus

has been separated from *Dendrobium* based on the absence of pseudo bulbs. Pseudo bulbs are thickened stems at the base of each growth, which serve as storage organs, primarily for water. Hence, they are more likely to be present in orchids that experience drought in their natural habit. They also differ from Australian *Dendrobium* in that the leaves and canes have been fused together to form a solid tube or 'Rat-tail'. Another distinguishing feature is that the flowers are upside down. This is a feature shared by Leek-orchids, *Prasophyllum*, where the labellum is at the top of the flower, rather than the bottom, as with other orchids.



***Dockrillia linguiformis* – Photo OzBushPics**

Dockrillia are epiphytic or lithophytic, and found mainly on the east coast of Australia. In the wild they occur from Cape York in Queensland to Bicheno in Tasmania. I have seen them growing at Bicheno in the middle of the town on the granite outcrops overlooking the ocean. The leaves are succulent-like in appearance and in Attila Kapitany's book of Australian succulent plants, he has classified it as a succulent.

There are about twenty nine species of *Dockrillia* - seventeen in Australia with the others in Timor, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa and Tahiti.



***Dockrillia cucumberina* – Photo by Eric Hunt**

Dockrillia crosses readily with *Dendrobium* to make Dockrilobium. Matt Baars and myself have a very good collection of *Dockrillia* species and hybrids. Matt's plants are entirely outdoors in a sheltered position with plenty of air flow and protection from direct sun-light. They grow and flower very freely. My plants are in the orchid house at a lower level and are mounted on aged hardwood fence palings. (Matts are mounted on cork or tree fern slabs).

Dockrillia are not hard to grow and are very rewarding, but be patient if you are growing seedlings sizes plants as they will take a few years to flower.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Australian Open Garden Scheme

4th & 5th April – Back Lake, 264 Wiggins Road, Scotsburn (there are lots of directions!) This is one Helen Kennedy selected and she writes "It's a beautiful combination of house, lake and gardens – it's certainly mixed, but there is a lot of mass planting of natives, as the owner is getting increasingly interested in them. It's worthwhile visiting if people want to drive the distance – we'll be going!"

11th & 12th April - Harry's Garden, 10 Hesleden St, Essendon, is an Australian native garden designed by Phillip Johnson. The front recreates a peaceful bush setting and includes a pond with small waterfalls. A fern walkway leads to a billabong surrounded by gums, banksias and native wildflowers. Extra – live classical music at times during the weekend.

18th & 19th April - The Mosaic Garden, 64 Rathmines Rd, Hawthorn. Enter from Victoria Grove. Brilliantly executed mosaics flow across walls, steps and boulders in a unique garden created by the late Margo Knox and recognized internationally for its innovation and artistry. This is not an Australian plant garden, but it is full of great ideas.



18th & 19th April - Giufre Garden, 150 Wattletree Rd, Hurstbridge. The effective use of many native and

indigenous plants has overcome difficult terrain and soil conditions. Eucalypts and indigenous species shelter Grevilleas, Acacias, Eremophilas, Correas, Alyogynes, Chamelauciums, Hakeas, Banksias and massed grasses, with a dam and small pond.

We believe Sam Cox's own garden in Wattle Glen will open on the same weekend as the Guifre Garden. It's not in the Guide as it was arranged as an ex-calendar event. His garden usually provokes lots of interest and last year his garden looked wonderful, filled with indigenous plants, casuarina forest, beautiful pool etc. We suggest you check the Open Gardens Scheme website to be sure.

2nd & 3rd May - Warrawong, 63 Luck St, Eltham. A steep block sensitively developed in a series of broad terraces, allowing views of the young garden from the Alistair Knox house. Yellow box trees shelter Grevilleas, Correas, Eremophilas, indigenous Acacias, Exocarpus and Goodenias.

10th May - Cruden Farm, Cranhaven Rd, Langwarrin. Charge is \$15. See the famous avenue of lemon scented gums.

OTHER PLANTS SALES

26th April - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale, Seawinds, Arthurs Seat State Park. 9.30 am to 4.00 pm.

2nd May - APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm, Uniting Church Car Park, Bacchus Marsh. This sale features genus hakea with large number of unusual species. A full list is available approx. one month prior to sale and pre-orders can be sent to the secretary, apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com.

OUR NEXT MEETING

April 21st

As a follow-up to the March meeting, **Roger Wileman** will present Part 2 of the trip he made to Western Australia last spring. Roger spent six weeks touring the wilds of WA in search of rare and interesting plants. Roger has a great knowledge of area, and the plants he's likely to encounter. But he found many that are new to him. Don't miss his wonderful photos and stories in the next installment.

APRIL PLANT SALE

April 11th and 12th

We are fast approaching our April sale, and, as always, we will need lots of help from members. Don't be shy. There will be lots for everyone to do.

Members who are working at the sale will be issued with meal-tickets for the day and will be invited to join the growers at a fabulous BBQ dinner on Saturday 11th at 5.30 pm.

We ask that everyone bring along flowers from their gardens for the display table

TALL TALE OR TRUE?

Ade Foster

A friend was cleaning out her studio recently and found an old comic book that she thought might interest me. It was a collection of 'Joliffe's Outback', printed in the late 60s. I'm sure many of you remember the cartoons from Australasian Post and other publications. While the cartoons themselves are rather dated, the humour more suited to the depression years, there was an article in there that was interesting.



It is most likely that these hundred-year-old fence posts in the Victorian Mitta Mitta Valley, would be the tallest fence posts in Australia. Originally cut from green poplar and sunk in the ground as uprights for a post and rail fence the four posts took root and grew.

The rest of the original fence is long gone and a new four-strand wire fence has taken its place. But the four sturdy old warriors will have none of this newfangled wire nonsense. Time has served only to tighten their grip on the old original rails.

This photo was taken thirty years ago. With their roots deep in the rich Mitta Mitta Valley soil the poplars are bound to be much bigger now.

When these post holes were dug, other holes were being frantically dug on all sides, in the search for gold. The gold rush has come and gone while Australia's tallest fence posts continue to break their own record.

It seems that in the latter part of the 19th century, some green poplar was cut for fence posts in the Mitta Mitta valley in northern Victoria. The fence posts struck, took root and continued to grow. While the old fence had long gone, the trees were doing well when these photos were taken in the late 1930s. They are probably Australia's tallest fence posts. I wonder if they still survive?

As an aside, I checked the internet to find out when the comic book was published and found it for sale on eBay for \$60 !!

VICTORIAN NATIVE BONSAI EXHIBITION

The Victorian Native Bonsai Club will be holding an exhibition on the 11th and 12th of April, featuring native plants as bonsai.

The exhibition is at the Royal Botanic Gardens, in Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive, from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm each day. Entry is \$5.00 with children under 16 free.



This is the weekend of our plant sale, so no fair sneaking off to the exhibition before you've done your stint for our club ☺

EUCALYPTUS WORKSHOP

At 2 pm on Saturday 18 April, 2015 there is to be an All-day Workshop at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne on the iconic Eucalypt. Eucalyptus and its close relatives are an iconic Australian plant group which has dwarf plants to the tallest flowering plant in the world. This plant workshop promises to be an excellent day. Some very knowledgeable eucalyptus presenters will be there, including the following:-

The remarkable **Dr Dean Nicolle**, creator of the famous Currency Creek Arboretum in south-eastern South Australia and one of world's leading Eucalyptus specialists will enlighten us on many aspects of Eucalypts. Dean will also guide us in Selecting Eucalypts for Home Gardens. He has a forthcoming book on this subject about to be published.

Dr Frank Udovicic Manager, Plant Sciences & Biodiversity at the National Herbarium of Victoria at RBG Melbourne has been very much involved in solving some of the botanical quandaries. He will be covering the evolution, fossil records and also the relationship of the genera *Angophora* and *Corymbia*.

The renowned landscape designer **Paul Thompson** who was part of the design team for the multi-award winning Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne will talk on Eucalypts as Design Forms.

The Workshop will be in the Australian Garden's Auditorium. Enter the RBG Cranbourne from Ballarto Road off the South Gippsland Hwy (Melway Map 133 K10, south of the Cranbourne Town Centre) and proceed to the Australian Garden Car Park and follow the Friends of RBG Cranbourne signs.

The day starts at 9:30 and concludes at about 4:30pm. BYO lunch. Cost for the day is \$75.

Bookings are essential and close 10th April, 2015.

For further information and a Booking Form please ring 8774 2483.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

By Ade Foster, Editor

Aps Geelong Facebook Page

For some time now we have had a presence on Facebook, the very popular internet social media site. Many of you probably don't use Facebook, don't know what it is, or even care what it is. That's fine, but the internet is vitally important to the survival of our club.

While our membership is steady, the average age of our members is increasing. We are not attracting young people to APS Geelong. It is self-evident that we need them for our continued existence.

Today's young people do most of their information sourcing online. They read newspapers online, they don't have them delivered. They read blogs, they don't buy magazines. They 'google' information, they don't look it up in an encyclopaedia, or a text book, as we did, back in the 'dark ages'. They use the internet.

Next year, in October, APS Geelong will celebrate its 50th birthday. I can't see us celebrating our 60th, unless we attract more and younger members. Whether we like it or not, we can only do that online.

Unless we establish our online presence, we will have no presence at all.

I started our Facebook page two years ago, on 25th April, 2013. I announced the fact in the very next newsletter, and at the next meeting. In subsequent newsletters and at subsequent meetings, I asked members for help in making the page a success. I asked you to send me photographs of interesting, attractive or just your favourite plants, so I could put them onto the page.

Your response was zero. Not one, single photograph was forthcoming.

*You all have cameras, I'm sure. I know that all but three of you have, and use, the internet. I know that every single one of you has my email address. And yet, **not one, single photograph.***

So, here is my challenge to you all. Go into your gardens, your neighbour's gardens, the local park or bushland, and take a photograph. Then email it to me for the Facebook page. Total time expended? 10 minutes maximum. Take 10 minutes to save your club from extinction.

My challenge to those who have Facebook even if you don't USE it go to the APS Geelong page and upload your photo directly. It's simple, it takes no time at all, and you might even enjoy the interaction from others in the Facebook community who see your photograph.

It's our future, and it's in your hands.

Ed.