



AUSTRALIAN  
PLANTS SOCIETY  
— Geelong —

# Correa Mail

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## GRAFTING EREMOPHILAS. With Russell Waite

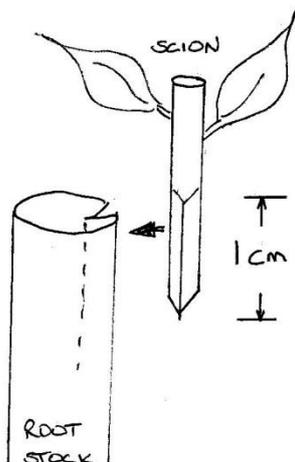
Our November meeting was a demonstration and discussion of a different grafting technique for Eremophilas as demonstrated by Russell Waite. Russell has been collecting, grafting and growing Eremophilas from cuttings for over 25 years, and this technique is one he has developed that has proven very successful.

Eremophilas, like many other genera, vary greatly in the methods needed to grow them successfully. Some grow readily from cuttings, some need to be grafted to another root-stock.

Russell grafts mostly onto *Myoporum insulare* for most Eremophilas with some *M. parvifolium* - the upright form – but this tends to sucker quite a bit.

The rootstock is prepared, cutting above a leaf node, then all leaves are trimmed off. This is done very close to the stem, using small, curved secateurs.

He cuts the material to be grafted – the scion – so that one side comes to a point, looking in cross-section like a slice of pizza. A cut is made in the side of the rootstock, and the scion slid in from the side, rather than a wedge-shaped scion inserted from the top.



It is important to ensure that the cambian layers in the scion and rootstock match as far as possible to ensure that the graft will take and remain strong.

The graft is then wrapped with 5 or 6 turns of Parafilm to keep the graft in place and to seal against pathogens.

When grafting onto a rooted plant, Russell places a small, plastic, zip-lock bag over the graft and scion as a miniature hothouse, after first spraying some water inside the bag. He leaves it in place for several weeks.

Sometimes, however, rather than grafting to a rooted plant, he takes a cutting of *Myoporum*, grafts the Eremophila to that cutting as before, and then grows it as he would any other cutting.



**A pot of cuttings ready to go**

In this case he places the entire pot with 10 or 12 cuttings in it, into a clear plastic bag, and sprays a little water into it. He then blows the bag up like a balloon and ties the top. This bag stays sealed like this until Russell sees roots emerge from the bottom of the pot.

Then, there followed a lively question and answer segment, followed by photos of some of Russell's Eremophila collection.

## ON THE TABLE

with Bruce McGinness

Bruce McGinness walked us through a very interesting specimen table.

As always there were some lovely Grevilleas. One of particular splendour was *G. eriostachya*, which has large, deep gold/yellow flowers. This specimen was grown from seed collected along the Canning Stock Route. There was also a hybrid *G. eriostachya* x *G. juncifolia* which has inherited the deep yellow flowers from one parent and the prickly foliage from the other. There was a *G. longistyla* 'Joy', a cultivar with lovely deep pink flowers, *G. treueriana* with orange red flowers and lethally spiked foliage, and old favourite Peaches'n'Cream.



**Grevillea 'Peaches'n'Cream'**

There were several very beautiful Eucalypts on the table. *E. incrassata* has small yellow flowers in profusion, while *E. nutans* has small deep red flowers tipped with gold. There were two with somewhat interesting names - *E. platypus* var. *platypus* is a smallish multi-stemmed plant from southern W.A. and *E. eremophila*, the sand mallee, is from the more arid regions. *Eucalyptus pyriformis* is a straggly mallee with salmon pink and yellow flowers.

*Halgania cyanea* is a small shrub from the drier areas of Australia. It has tiny blue flowers, and does well in full sun but needs excellent drainage.

There were several Callistemons on the table this month – *C. teretifolia*, *C. citinus* and *C. phoeniceus* are all red. *C. paludicola* (formerly *C. paludosus*) is indigenous to the Geelong region. A smallish tree with drooping habit it has masses of cream, pale yellow or pinkish flowers in late spring and summer.

*Melaleuca filifolia* is a small, spreading, very prickly shrub from the south west of W.A. Its lovely purple/mauve pom-pom flowers appear from late winter, spring and summer. *Melaleuca* 'Georgiana Molloy' is now accepted as a cultivar of *M. teretifolia*, which has long rounded leaves ending in very sharp points. Flowers are red and stem-hugging in the manner of Hakeas.

Among the other interesting plants were *Verticordia monodelpha*, *Alyogyne splendens* and *Dryandra formosa*. *Homeranthus darwinoides* is a small shrub from central western NSW, closely related to the Darwinias. It has tiny leaves and creamy flowers for long periods. It is heavily scented, with members describing the scent as 'mouse', or 'cow-shed'.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

With generous donations from our speaker Russell Waite, and our Secretary, Bruce McGinness, there were ample prizes for the door-prize and raffle. Carmel, (strangely) had several winning tickets, but the first drawn was Sue MacDonald who chose Margaret Guenzel's beautiful flannel flowers as Plant of the Month. Margaret writes ...

The iconic flannel flower (*Actinotus helianthi*) is native to NSW and Southern Queensland, where it grows among other vegetation in clay loams or sand right to the edge of the ocean. It will grow in dappled shade or full sun (with root protection) In NSW the taller forms are commercially grown for cut flowers, a stem lasting in a vase for a week or longer.



**Margaret's compact or dwarf flannel flowers**

For the gardener the more compact or dwarf forms are a better choice, as they don't get blown over so easily. Despite its appearance *Actinotus helianthi* is not a member of the "Daisy family" (Asteraceae) but belongs to the "Carrot family" (Apiaceae). Close relatives are the Rottneest Island blue pompom "daisy" (*Trachymene caerulea*) and the Xanthias, often called southern cross flowers.

*A. helianthi* is not a long lived plant, but, with a bit of luck, you may get 2 seasons out of it. It produces a lot of seeds and self-seeds readily into its own pot, especially if there is some gravel (1/4 cm quartz or blue stone) for the seeds to fall between. If you want to try growing them in southern Victoria, sow from

October to February for best results. Seed must not be older than 18 months. Ask Margaret for seeds .



**Margaret's flannel flowers**

*On the topic of Margaret's flannel flowers, I had this email from Sue McDonald ...*

I have found Flannel flowers surprisingly easy to grow in pots. My original three plants from Margaret were all seed grown in three inch pots. The plants had grown to a spindly 60 centimetres and were destined to be thrown out. I experimented with "deep planting. "

Three of these plants were placed in the bottom of a 60 centimetre tall pot. Then I filled with native potting mix and scattered fine gravel on the surface. Just the top of each plant complete with flowers was showing.

These plants have thrived for two years now and continue to self-seed into the gravel. Last year, at the plant sale, I found some more flannel flowers and "deep planted" them into another tall pot. Lovely! Try it yourself but go easy on the watering.



**Sue's self seeded flannel flowers, planted 2 years ago on the left and on the right, planted six months ago**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The **December meeting** as always, is our Christmas break-up BBQ dinner. It will be at Roger and Sheila's, 17 Aldershot Street, St Albans Park on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December from 4.00 pm onwards. The club will provide meat for the BBQ and bread, but members should bring a salad/dessert to share and BYO drinks, cutlery, plates etc. There are plenty of chairs ☺.

Members **MUST** signal their intention to attend. Email Frank at [ftscheelings@gmail.com](mailto:ftscheelings@gmail.com) ... if you don't let us know you are coming, you won't be catered for, and will have to bring your own food.

We are in recess in **January**, but the February meeting will be a BBQ at Frank and Tina's house, 7 Admiral Court, Highton. BYO everything.

## GARDEN VISIT , OCTOBER 4 by Bruce McGinness

Gladys and John Hastie invited APS-Geelong members to come and see their garden in Elaine. On a sunny spring day we were shown around their garden which is packed with plants; all the plants are labeled, which avoids chasing the hosts for plant identification.

Set on a quarter acre block Gladys and John grow a wide range of natives in pots and in gardens beds. An old Melia tree frames the front garden with an under-planting of natives. Around the back there is a productive vegetable garden set in amongst the native beds and large water tanks. A grey water system has been installed recently and the plants have responded well to the extra water .



Gladys enjoys experimenting with Australian bush tucker plants and these are dotted around the garden to use for her cooking which we were able to appreciate at lunch time and morning tea.



At lunch we were treated to a sumptuous spread prepared by Gladys and John with an emphasis on Indian dishes with the influence of John working for some time in India in his younger days. Just when we were thought we were finished desert was brought out and with Barbara's famous sponge cake to top it off we were certainly well catered for.



A big thanks to Gladys and John for a wonderful day at their garden.

## IN SEARCH OF EUCALYPTUS ALLITISSIMA

By Roger Wileman

This journey starts in 2000 when I purchased a book – 'The Eucalyptus of South Australia' by Dean Nicolle. Dean established the Currency Creek Arboretum in South Australia which is solely for the research of Eucalyptus species. Except for two to three species Eucalyptus are endemic to Australia.

My love affair with Eucalyptus began in 1964 when I grew *E. gomphocephala*, the Tuart Gum. Since then I have collected and grown a vast number of Eucalyptus species. Then I read in the book about a species that I had not heard of, *E. kingsmillii* ssp. *allitissima*, growing near the S.A. and W.A. border on the Anne Beadell Highway (Track) in a very remote part of Australia. As it is only 2,500 km from here I thought I really should go and have a look.



*E. kingsmillii* ssp *allitissima* – Anne Beadle Highway

I had not known Sheila very long and asked her if she would like to go. To my surprise she agreed! I still think she thought the Anne Beadell Highway was a road in Adelaide. I applied for, and received, the necessary permits from the Federal and State governments and the Aboriginal land owners to enter the area. As it was the site of the British - Australian Atomic tests 1956 -1963, it was then, and still is today, a very restricted area and large tracts are still radioactive (The McClelland Royal Commission is worth a read.)

So, off we went. As far as Coober Pedy was easy going, but a few km north we turned on to the Anne Beadell Highway and travelled 1,300 km west to the next sign of civilisation, fuel, food, and water. But, with repair kit and communication all accounted for I was sure I could get Sheila back home safely.



**Start of Anne Beadell Highway, near Coober Pedy**

I had an 'exact' location for this Euc in an approximately 100 km stretch of a very rough, slow track. At 30 km per hour, I said to Sheila "Keep your eyes open for a tree that looks different from all the rest." On the second day Sheila said "I have had enough, I need to stop for a break. Pull up under that small tree ahead of us for some shade." To my surprise it was the very tree we were looking for. It is very restricted and only a few trees were growing near the track, 505 km from the Coober Pedy turnoff.

The specific name honours W. Kingsmill a former member of the legislative council in Western Australia 1865 -1935. The sub-specific is from the latin *alatus* meaning winged and *issimus* meaning very much so referring to the winged fruit and buds. It is a very attractive mallee, 4 to 8 metres in height with blue/green new growth. The pendulous fruits are unique and the flowers are red. We found a rare yellow flowered form at the 705km mark from Coober Pedy turn off. We planted some on our property in the Grampians and they started to flower when very young. This year they have flowered profusely. Hopefully, I will have plants available in 2016.



**Neale Junction on the Anne Beadell Highway**

Almost 15 years have passed since we found this tree on the Anne Beadell Highway and I still get reminded that you should always pay attention to what women say. I agree ... sometimes they are almost right ?????

## **MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*Another year has come and gone, and Christmas is upon us again.*

*I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles for the 'Correa Mail', particularly Roger Wileman and Tony Cavanagh, who never fail to provide interesting and varied articles for your newsletter.*

*I'd also like to thank those who are contributing to the Facebook page. Matt and Nicole Leach have been very supportive as has Roger, Phill Poustie, Graham Parkes, Bruce McGinness and Frank Scheelings.*

*I hope all of you can see your way clear to contributing a little something in 2016.*

*I wish you all a safe and happy time, and that Christmas, however you choose to celebrate it, is a good time for you and your family. We look forward to seeing you all in 2016.*

*From Penny and me ... Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

*And since it is Christmas time, here's a short article about the Western Australian Christmas Tree ....*

*Nuytsia floribunda* is an erect tree up to 10 metres high. In summer it is covered in masses of golden flowers over a period of several months.

*Nuytsia* is a monotypic genus occurring naturally only in Western Australia. The plant is at least partly a root parasite. Its roots attach themselves to the roots of other plants and gain part of their growth requirements from the host. This makes it very difficult to grow in cultivation, although there have been some successful, though short-lived attempts.



***Nuytsia floribunda* – photo courtesy megatherium**