



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 305 – March 2015

FEBRUARY BBQ GATHERING

We met on Tuesday 17th for our start of the year BBQ at the wetland created at Wirrawilla, on the Barwon Heads road. It is a delightful spot with BBQs, benches and tables provided, and a fabulous new, but quickly developing wetland. There are walking and cycling trails, observation platforms, some fabulous plantings, and the beginnings of a very healthy bird population.

Unfortunately, there were not many members in attendance, but what we lacked in numbers we made up for with enthusiasm. Coffee and nibbles at Denise and Phil's afterwards was the perfect end to a great night.



Perhaps, given the low attendance, we might consider a regular meeting in February next year. Please consider the following three options ...

1. BBQ on regular 3rd Tuesday meeting night ...
2. BBQ on Saturday prior/post that Tuesday ...
3. Regular meeting as 'members' night' ... where members get to talk about or show others something of interest, holiday pics, what's in flower in the bush ... anything at all.

Members' opinions will be gratefully received, and given full consideration.

Brachychiton acerifolius

by Roger Wileman

The Illawarra flame tree is a large tree native to the sub-tropical region of the east coast of Australia, from central N.S.W. to far north Queensland. In its natural occurrence this spectacular tree will grow to a maximum height of 40 m, but in cultivation is usually around 20 m.

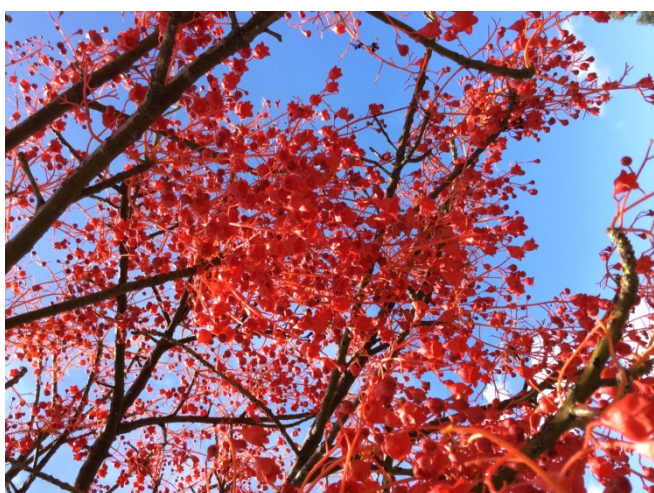


There are approximately 34 species of *Brachychiton*. All are endemic to Australia except one, and all are deciduous, except *B. populneus*. Most of the *Brachychiton* species are referred to as "Kurrajongs".

B. Acerifolius was first described in 1855 by W. Macarthur and C. Moore. It will grow in a wide range

President: Matt Baars - baars16@bigpond.com Secretary: Bruce McGinness - brucesm@unimelb.edu.au
Treasurer: Frank Scheelings - ftscheelings@gmail.com Editor: Ade Foster - adefoster@internode.on.net
Australian Plants Society – Geelong P.O. Box 2012 Geelong. 3220

of climates and conditions and is now cultivated in many parts of the world. The tree has a spectacular display of bright red, bell-shaped flowers in late spring - early summer, at a time when the tree does not have leaves. This makes it, arguably, Australia's most spectacular native tree. After flowering, the leaves appear and large, boat shaped seed pods are formed. The many corn-like seeds inside are protected by a multitude of small irritant hairs. The seeds are easily germinated, but flowering will take 5-8 years.



When the fruits of this tree are damaged by insects they produce a 'Mucilage' - a gum substance that prevents micro-organisms from entering the plant tissue. This substance will lift the paint work from vehicles should it fall on them. Grafted plants are now becoming available from selected forms, but these plants are not cheap. They will more than likely flower in a pot.

There are a good number of these trees growing in the Geelong area, usually are in flower at Christmas time. The plant in the photos is a small tree in the Eastern Cemetery.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Australian Open Garden Scheme

14 and 15 March - The Patch Primary School. A multi-award winning garden designed and implemented by the students, engaging them in nature-based education and emphasising sustainability issues. It features several small garden areas including bush food, and Australian plants and biodiversity to attract butterflies.

21 and 22 March - Dillon Garden, 9 Narraport Rd, Wycheproof. The garden is a mix of native and exotic trees shading relaxed and peaceful areas.

28 and 29 March - Wallbrink Garden, 22 Lang St, Beaumaris. Unusual foliage and plant combinations are a feature of the eye-catching native species used in the nature strip and front garden. The back garden has raised vegetable beds and chicken coop.

4 and 5 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!"

OUR NEXT MEETING

March 17th

Our first 'proper' meeting of the year will be addressed by our own **Roger Wileman**. Roger spent a couple of months touring the wilds of Western Australia in search of rare and interesting plants. His knowledge of the plant world is undisputed, his photographs are stunning and his stories are almost believable. And, this is only Part 1 of the journey. Don't miss it.

APRIL PLANT SALE

April 11th and 12th

We are fast approaching our April sale, and Roger, Matt and Frank in particular, have been busy preparing plants for the big weekend. As always we will need lots of help from members in preparation for, and execution of the sale. 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.

WIDER GEELONG FLORA LECTURE

March 10th



Hosted by the Geelong Field Naturalists Club, the lecture will be in the Geelong Botanic Gardens, in the Friends Room, on Tuesday 10th March, at 7.30

pm. Entrance is at the intersection of Holt Road and a Eastern Park Circuit in Eastern Park. (Melways 452 G4).

APS Geelong stalwart, **Tony Cavanagh**, will be the speaker and his topic will be '**Australian Plants Grown in Great Britain and Europe in the 18th and 19th Centuries**'. He will discuss the range of plants, who collected them, and the difficulties faced in growing them in much colder climes.

Arrive early and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee before the meeting commences.

NOW IS THE SEASON OF THE 'FLOWERING GUM'

Late summer is a colourful time in the streets of Geelong and districts, with a huge array of *Corymbia ficifolia*, *C. calophylla* and their many hybrids, in flower.

Colours range from a deep, blood red, through crimson and dark pink, to pale pink, whitish and iridescent orange. There are almost as many colours as there are trees.

C. ficifolia has a very restricted range in sub-coastal Western Australia, south east of Perth, near Mt Frankland and Walpole, around Albany and in the Stirling Range. It grows to around 10m. *C. calophylla* is a much taller tree and can reach 50m in its wild state, though rarely that large in cultivation. More widely distributed, it can be found from Geraldton to near Albany.

Both are difficult to graft, and this is the only way to be sure of the colour. Trees grown from seed are remarkably fickle when it comes to colour, and buying a seed-grown specimen is a real gamble.

They have been extensively grown in south-eastern Australia as street trees, because of the colourful, profuse flowering and their attractiveness to humans and nectar feeding birds like honeyeaters and lorikeets.



Little wattlebird in *C. ficifolia*, Anglesea

A drive through many parts of the district will dazzle you with the array of colours. Drysdale is particularly spectacular at the moment with many shades of red

along the highway, and some magnificent orange specimens along the Drysdale/Clifton Springs road.

Many parts of my suburb, Belmont, are planted with these trees, and a great planting with huge variety of colour can be seen at the water-storage ponds in Scenic Road, Highton. There is a magnificent pink *C. calophylla* in Roslyn Road, opposite Roslyn PS at the moment. A beautiful, very pale pink specimen, bordering on white, can be seen in Moolap Station Road just near the old Drive-in theatre. (Showing my age there ☺)

So, have a drive around, before the flowering season has finished, and treat yourself to one of the most attractive native trees you'll ever see.

IT (SOMETIMES) PAYS TO WAIT Tony Cavanagh

We have all experienced the loss of a healthy plant in the garden, lovely and green one day, dead and brown a few days later. The question may then arise, should you pull it out and replace it or wait and see if it recovers, especially if you have watered it. A recent experience I had points to leaving for a while just to see what happens - you never know your luck.



Looks dead to me – Tony's *Scaevola* in a pot

About this time last year, we put a couple of plants of a small *Scaevola* into a waterwell hanging basket. In our experience, *Scaevol*as like reasonably moist conditions and this one grew fantastically well, obviously loving the ready source of water in the waterwell. In November, we went on holidays for four weeks and the person looking after our plants unfortunately missed this one. We were greeted on return with a very dead *Scaevola*. More because I was slack than for any other reason, I just left it. Although occasionally, I gave it a bit of water. In early January, I was surprised to see a couple of green shoots, so, after more watering, by mid-January, I was able to take this picture.



I'm hoping that in a couple of months, the plant will be fully restored. I might just have been lucky, but, many plants which have lignotubers (many eucalypts, some banksias and hakeas and others) can shoot again after a stress situation such as fire or drying out. Anyway, you have nothing to lose so think about it next time you have a dead plant.

A SMALL BACKYARD NATIVE GARDEN STORY

By Phil Royce

For many years now I've been a regular attendee of the APS Vic Quarterly meetings. I have looked forward to seeing how other people construct their garden and manage the plantings in different parts of the State. But more recently I've reflected that the gardens I visit are invariably on acreage and the native plants have room to spread and impress.

And each Sunday I return home to my 780m² property with its 130m² of space dedicated to back yard flower garden, excluding the vegie garden. Oh how I envy Arthur & Linda and others in our club with more space. But I say to myself: Harden up and get on with it, be grateful for what you've got.

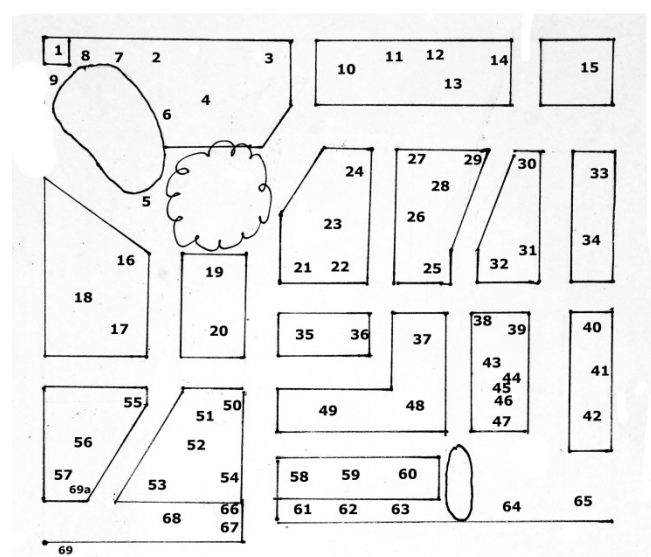


Phil and Di's Garden – Looks great!

But what have I got? I remember that the hosts at the gardens I went to rattle off name after name. But as I look at the plants in my garden that are so carefully selected, planted, pruned I wonder, which

one exactly is the *Baeckea virgata nana* or *Eremophila divaricata*? I know they're there because the names were recorded in my Plant database after they were put tenderly into the well-prepared soil – black print for living and red for dead.

I think my database is pretty helpful because it's divided into garden section: dining-room garden; fence garden; island garden; rock garden and rumpus room garden. So I should know what's what and where it is. But not always so! And then I mentioned it to Ade. Surprise. He has a database too! But with a difference - his has a 'floor plan' with numbered positions showing where each plant is.



Ade's back-garden database plan

But the challenge remains to put the most appropriate plants in the garden.

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.

VICTORIAN NATIVE BONSAI CLUB presents

**Bonsai Exhibition
of Australian
Native Plants**

Domain House
Dallas Brooks Drive
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne
10am-4pm
Saturday April 11 - Sunday April 12 2015
Entry: \$5.00
Children under 16 free



www.vicnativebonsai.com.au

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