



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 316– April 2016

## March Meeting

Bev Hanson

Our speaker at the March meeting was Bev Hanson. Bev is a landscape designer, who, after completing a 3 year Diploma of Horticulture course in 1960, was fortunate to be employed with Ellis Stones as his assistant for 5 years. Ellis Stones, a landscape architect, was the father of the 'Australian Landscape Style', and studied under Edna Walling. Bev has since run her own landscape designing business with over 1000 clients.

Bev and her husband, John, live on 10 acres of mostly natural bushland at Warrandyte. Their property is bordered on two sides by National Park and features an acre of mostly native garden designed by Bev.



*Bev's garden at Warrandyte.*

Bev is a designer. She does not do the build of the garden, which is left to a landscaper. She provides a detailed sketch and the client and landscaper choose the plants.

Bev uses a few key phrases to describe her design philosophy, which is to create a harmonious landscape with a 'natural' look.

Meandering paths lead you through the garden space from area to area, and are always the low point, with mounded beds for the plants.

Sweeps of groundcovers create a connection between features of the garden and are preferable to isolated plantings of different species.

Large rocks should be used to create points of interest, and should be placed with care, as they won't be moved. Bev's rule: If you can move a rock, it's too small. So choose your rocks, and their positions, carefully.



*Rocks and stone steps to change levels.*

Changing the levels of a garden creates interest. This can be done making use of existing slope of the land, or by mounding garden beds and rocks.

Embankments should be landscaped to use the natural slopes, rather than retained with walls and straight lines. Add rocks, and stone steps, and allow plants to consolidate the exposed face.

Water always adds interest to a garden. A pond adds so much and the wildlife it attracts adds even more.

Hide your boundaries by shielding fences with taller plants. This gives the illusion that the boundary doesn't exist, and may give the appearance that a

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neighbour's trees or the adjoining parkland is part of your garden.



**Use of water and rocks to create the natural look.**

Bev showed us before and after shots of a few of the gardens she has designed to illustrate her points. It was a most interesting talk, and many of the members went away with some new ideas and inspiration.

*My thanks go to Bev for the use of her photos with this article. Ed.*

#### ON THE TABLE

with Roger Wileman

Roger led us through a small but colourful display on the table this month. Many members noted that the warm weather following the heavy rain in late January has seen many plants 'confused' about their flowering time and quite a few that usually flower in spring are flowering now.

Grevilleas were a feature as they are in most months with *Grevillea georgeana*, *G. lanigera* (Mt. Tamboritha), *G. tenuiloba*, *G. preissii*, *G. fililoba* (Ellendale Lace), and hybrids 'Peaches'n'Cream', 'Molly', 'Ivory Whip' and 'Midas Touch' all flowering in Ade's garden.



**Grevillea preissii – 'Seaspray'**

John Bell brought along two interesting Eremophilas, which we will call *Eremophila sp* 1 and 2. E1 had large grey/green leaves and deep mauve flowers on a shrub which has grown the 2m x 2m. E2 had longish stems with tiny leaves and even tinier mauve flowers. There was also an *E. bignoniiflora* hybrid with graceful weeping habit and vibrant purple flowers. This can grow quite large, and needs to be cut back quite severely.

There were only two banksias this month. *B. baueri* – the Possum Banksia - is a large shrub with very large, woolly flower spikes, which emit a powerful and unpleasant odour. *B. speciosa* – the Showy Banksia, whose common name speaks for itself, is a large shrub or small tree with very attractive pale yellow flower spikes.



**Banksia speciosa – the Showy Banksia**

*Hakea clavata* is an interesting specimen with thick, succulent leaves, tipped with a wicked little spike, and masses of pink and white, fragrant flowers.

*Eapacris longiflora* is a spectacular plant with very showy deep pink/red and white flowers. It requires a lot of moisture, and Matt keeps his specimen in a pot with the base standing permanently in water.

**RAFFLE and DOOR PRIZE.** Our raffle and door prizes have become an institution, and we thank Bruce McGinness and Roger Wileman for their kind donations of plants for the prizes. Of note this month was the absence of Carmel selling tickets and the corresponding dearth of committee members among the prizewinners. Coincidence?? ☺

The first raffle prize was won by Geoff Wilson and as such he was responsible for choosing the 'Plant Of The

Month'. He chose a lovely specimen of Sturt's Desert Pea, which brought along by Matt Leach.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

## STURTS DESERT PEA

by Matt Leach

Sturts Desert Pea - *Swainsona formosa* syn. *Clianthus formosus* is a prostrate annual or short-lived perennial herb, found in the drier areas of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Its branches are densely covered with soft hairs. The leaves are pinnate with 9-21 leaflets up to 3cm long. These are oval, grey-green, and usually only slightly hairy above, though densely hairy below. The flowers, seen from May to March are pea-shaped to about 7.5cm long. They are borne on axillary racemes of about 5-6 striking red and black, all red, or rarely red and white flowers. The seed pods to about 6cm long, and leathery with soft hairs.

This is one of Australia's most admired wildflowers. After rains, the inland areas can become a magnificent and colourful sight. *S. formosa* resents cold and wet conditions (ie southern winters) and the very humid east coast. They prefer a neutral to alkaline soil. The plant is sensitive to grey mould and root rotting fungi if exposed to humid or wet conditions.



Sturts Desert Pea – Photo Andrew Willington

Germination from seed is usually very rapid, 7-10 days. Propagation by grafting was practised in England and Germany during the 19th century with good success. At present, *S. formosa* is successfully grafted onto *Coluta arborescens* as a cotyledon graft. Australia has some success with cotyledon grafts using New Zealand species *Clianthus puniceus* as the root stock.

My plant was raised by seed (scarified) in December 2015, a little late in the summer. My father was struggling to get his *S. formosa* to germinate in Inverleigh, so I thought I would have a try germinating

them at our home in Lara. I had great success with germination. Once they had their first true leaf they were potted up into different potting mixes as an experiment.

Knowing that they need a little fertilizer to grow well, one was put into straight native potting mix, another in native potting mix with Bounce-back (similar to Dynamic Lifter) in the bottom of the pot (eg in a 30cm pot, use approx 2 tablespoons of Bounce-Back), another in straight Terracotta & Tub potting mix and the last in Terracotta & Tub potting mix, with Bounce-Back in the bottom of the pot.



The native mix with no Bounce-Back only just survived and is no bigger than 2cm high at present. The plant in native mix with Bounce-Back has grown, but not greatly, and is around 10cm high x 10cm wide. The plant in the Terracotta & Tub mix has done well and has been planted out. It is 15cm high x 15cm wide. The final plant in Terracotta & Tub with Bounce-Back has grown the best and was the piece of plant that was at the meeting (and in the photo above).

The plant was blown out by the strong winds the night before, unfortunately, but is lasting well as a cut flower.

## MELALEUCA LINARIFOLIA - Snow in Summer

By Roger Wileman

*Melaleuca linarifolia* is a beautiful Melaleuca, which occurs naturally from Maryborough, Queensland to the Ulladulla district of New South

Wales. It reaches 10m in height with a crown of 6 meters in mature trees. It has a beautiful, white, paper-bark trunk and a great show of pure white flowers in early summer, hence the common name of 'Snow in Summer'. The flowers fade to a dirty brown with age.

Locally, they flower profusely from late November, until around Christmas time, and have been planted in many suburbs in Geelong and Melbourne as street trees. It was thought that they were a good tree to plant under power lines.



***M. linarifolia* - Fairview Ave, Newtown.**

The paper bark trunk is a real feature of this tree and always seems to be in the process of shedding large sheets of bark. I use this bark as lining for my hanging baskets, where it works really well and looks a lot better than most basket liners.

There are several different forms of *Melaleuca linarifolia* available from nurseries - Snow storm, Snow fire, Sea foam and Snow flake. Most are smaller, more compact forms. I don't know if they flower any longer or better than the original plants. *M. linarifolia* is a tree worth planting if you have enough room.

## **F.J. ROGERS SEMINAR 2016**

### **Terrestrial and Epiphytic Orchids**

The F.J. Rogers Seminar is on again this year, and while it's not until October, we thought it a good idea to whet your appetites early, so you have plenty of time to consider attending.

The seminar for 2016 will be jointly hosted by the Hamilton and Warrnambool groups, and will be presented in Hamilton.

The topic is '*Terrestrial and Epiphytic Orchids*', and promises to be a very interesting and enjoyable weekend.

Monthly newsletters will be sent to our group, which I will include as an attachment to our own newsletter.

## **OUR NEXT MEETING.**

**19<sup>th</sup> April**

**Ade Foster**

Given that the FJ Rogers Seminar is about ground orchids, we thought we'd whet your appetite with a talk about the local orchid flora. Ade will show us photos of the orchids found in and around Anglesea, one of the richest orchid areas in the country. According to Foster & McDonald - '*Orchids of the Anglesea District*', there are 108 orchids recorded for that area. Ade and Frank Scheelings have managed to find and photograph well over 80 of them.

## **ILLAWARRA FLAME TREE**

Last year we published an article by Roger Wileman about *Brachychiton acerifolius*, the Illawarra Flame Tree. Debbie Biro brought a lovely specimen to my attention last month, and I thought it was worth another look.



**A nice specimen in Highton**

The Illawarra flame tree is a large tree native to the sub-tropical region of the east coast of Australia. It occurs naturally from central N.S.W. to far north Queensland. In 'the wild' this spectacular tree will grow to a maximum height of 40 m, but in cultivation is usually around 20 m. This one is in Thornhill Drive, in Highton, and was photographed in Mid-march.



**Flowers and leaves**

## EUCALYPTUS CAESIA

by Ade Foster

*Eucalyptus caesia* - 'Silver princess' is a tree which has become very common in gardens around Geelong in recent years. It is a beautiful open tree, to 15 metres or so, with a lovely weeping habit. The bark is dark brown, but peels in narrow, curly strips to show the paler buff coloured surface beneath. The deep green leaves, stems, buds and fruits are covered with a white or silver bloom which gives this tree its cultivation name.

The flowers are another feature of this tree and are pink to deep red, with white forms not unknown. The flowers are large, up to 50 mm in diameter, very conspicuous and occur in winter and spring. Flowers are followed by large, urn-shaped "gumnuts" about 30 mm in diameter.



*'Silver Princess' flowers*

*E. caesia* is endemic to the central wheat-belt area of Western Australia, where it is restricted to a small number of granite outcrops. According to my research, there are two subspecies recognised. *E. Caesia subsp. caesia* is a smallish tree of about 6 metres. *E. caesia subsp. magna* is a taller tree to about 15 metres with pendulous branches. This is the form known in cultivation as "Silver Princess".

*Eucalyptus caesia* was named in 1867 by George Bentham from specimens collected by James Drummond late in the 1847 season. Because he was too late to collect buds or flowers, later identification was difficult. During the 'Elder Scientific Exploring Expedition' of 1891–2, Richard Helms collected samples of a Eucalyptus species that the Nungar aborigines of the area called "Gungurru". This is now believed to have been *E. woodwardii*, but, in 1896, it was incorrectly named *E.caesia* by Mueller and Tate. This has led to the incorrect use of the common name "Gungurru" for *E. caesia*, and to confusion about the species' proper distribution.

Later collections of *E. caesia* were made by Morrison in 1885, but in 1923 Charles Gardner

collected specimens from a form with much larger leaves, buds, flowers and fruits. This was later recognised as *subspecies magna* by Brooker and Hopper (1982), with the original form being designated *subspecies caesia*.

*E. caesia* is native to relatively dry areas, and is best suited to cultivation in climates with a dry summer. It has been grown unreliably in humid areas. The species develops a lignotuber and should respond to hard pruning to near ground level if rejuvenation is required. The weight of the old fruits may cause the branches to bend excessively and removal of some may be warranted if breakage seems likely.



*A lovely specimen of E. caesia*

Because of the open weeping nature of the tree, there is a tendency to plant two or three in close proximity giving a denser appearance and each provided some support for the others. The one in the photo is a single tree, in Hill Street, Belmont, planted in 2006. When in flower it is one of the best specimens I have seen.

### UPCOMING EVENT

The Victorian Native Bonsai Club exhibition will be held at Domain House, in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Victorian Native Bonsai  
Club Exhibition**  
**April 9 & 10, 2016**  
Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive, Melbourne  
Botanical Gardens.  
April 9&10, 9 am to 4 pm both days  
Adults \$5, children under 16 free.  
To contact the Club,  
Email: [secnativeclub@gmail.com](mailto:secnativeclub@gmail.com)  
Vic Native Bonsai Club  
[www.vicnativebonsai.com.au](http://www.vicnativebonsai.com.au)



*Acacia  
cardiophylla*