



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 327– April 2017

MARCH MEETING

Nuetrog

Helen Lovell from Nuetrog fertilisers was our speaker for the March meeting.

Nuetrog is an Australian owned company, which began the manufacture of its organic fertilisers in 1988 from a small factory at Kanmantoo in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia. Nuetrog has since grown to become the largest manufacturer of its kind in Australia. Nuetrog supplies its products to some of the most magnificent grounds and gardens around the world, along with many of the leading commercial primary producers within the horticulture, viticulture and broad-acre markets.

If you want all the information on Nuetrog's range of products, these can be gained from their website ..

www.nuetrog.com.au/

ON THE TABLE

Bruce McGinness

Bruce walked us through a small but interesting table with much discussion. It seems that quite a few plants are flowering again following a good spring showing last year. I think it must be all the hormones they put in the chicken.

Banksias were a real feature this month with many interesting and different species on show. *Banksia elderiana*, the Swordfish or Palm banksia is named for the serrated leaves. It is a large shrub from the goldfields area of W.A. and features large lemon yellow flowers. *B. burdettii*, from the sandplains of W.A. is a large shrub with striking orange flowers. A specimen of *B. baueri* – the Possum banksia – with a tiny flower created some discussion. We were assured that it was just an early stage of the flower, and it would reach its usual prodigious dimensions. *B. violacea* is always a favourite; a small shrub with almost spherical deep purple-black inflorescences. *B. menziesii* is an interesting gnarled tree to about 10m. Known as the Firewood banksia, it features purplish flowers with an orange base which are brighter in the

winter. *B. nutans* is a small, dense shrub to about 2m. The flowers are small orange/red cylinders which hang downwards, hence the epithet 'nutans' which means 'nodding'.



Banksia nutans – photo Andreas Lambrianides

As we come in to 'Correa Season' we will see many more of these lovely little plants on the table. This month we had quite a selection. *Correa schlechtendallii* (*C. glabra* var. *turnbullii*) is a small shrub with bright red flowers. Its natural range is from MT. Lofty, west into Victoria and north to the Flinders Ranges.

C. 'Matt's Magic' was another red flowering correa which self-seeded into Matt Baars' garden. *C. brownie* – the Fern-leaf Correa- has lovely soft fernlike leaves and delicate orange/yellow flowers.

Among the others were *C. decumbens* with red and yellow flowers and *C. alba* with its white star-shaped flowers.

Roger Wileman provided us with a wonderful door prize – a very rare hybrid grevillea. Roger found this plant, a cross between *Grevillea chrysophea* and *G. rosmarinifolia*, both of which occur naturally in the area. He took some cuttings and managed to strike two plants. The parent has since died.

Sheila Walter was lucky enough to be the winner of this beauty, and she chose *Hakea dupracea* as Plant Of The Month.

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PLANT OF THE MONTH

Hakea dupracea

By John Bell

This hakea once known as *H.suaveolens* is a vigorous rounded shrub to about three metres. Mine is growing close to a row of eucalypts and has proven to be very hardy in this situation.



Hakea dupracea

It flowers from March to June and the flowers are white small and rounded with pink pollen tips, which adds to the attractiveness of the floral display. Flowering time is three to four weeks.

The leaves are long and narrow and sharp pointed. It is a Western Australian species and mainly found in the coastal regions east of Albany.

It is often used in exposed coastal parks and gardens as it withstands salt spray and the winds. Apparently it has become a weed in South Africa and has naturalised in Victoria.

PLANT SALE

22nd April

Our plant sale is on again on Saturday 22nd April. It will be just a one day sale this year from 8.30 – 5.30 followed by the BBQ dinner for all helpers and growers.

We will need lots of help on the day with various tasks ranging from gate-keeper to BBQ cooker. So, if you can spend an hour, (or eight) we'd love to see you there.

We will have a working bee, mainly to clean up the greenhouse at Arthur and Linda's place on Saturday **8th April at 10.00 am**. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

A SPIKE IN THE GARDEN

by Phil Royce

Our front garden has developed a spike, a green biological spike. The plant it is part of has been a happy clump of green leaves for 5 ½ years. But in the last three months the centre of it has changed as a spike thrusts to the heavens.

The plant? Yes, just as your mind was about to say, it is a Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*).



While we saw a pretty much dormant plant, the root system has been active. It has been pulling its thickening underground stem deeper into the ground during our numerous dry spells. According to Angus Stewart's web page, the growing points can be 30cm below ground level. If this is the case for our plant, then the growing points must be tickling our clay layer, rather than the deep soil they evidently prefer.

What will it look like when it does flower? Well Di and I had looked in numerous books and seen photographs of large red flower head atop the stem. Trouble is, we stand about 1.6 metres and the flower heads will be at the end of a spike between 2 and 4 metres high. So we weren't going to get our own photographs. Then, on holiday at Merimbula, southern NSW over Christmas 2014 we spied a painting by local artist Lynda Plummer in one of the town's holiday galleries. So we bought it!



Doryanthes excelsa is endemic to coastal NSW and because of its shape and size is also called Spear Lily, and Giant Lily. They like full sun but frost can evidently be a problem for emerging flower spikes. However, this hasn't prevented the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra from having a good collection of them.

As said earlier, our Gynea Lilly has been in the ground for 5 ½ years. Our reading reveals that it can take up to 8 years for the plant to flower if grown from seed - well maybe we're nearly there.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

17th April

The speaker at our April meeting is Attila Kapitany, who will be talking about the interesting semi-succulent plants of the east coast. Attila's talks are a must. He is so entertaining, and enthusiastic that I'm sure you would enjoy hearing him read the phone book.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May Meeting – Graham Patterson will talk to us about the history and nature of Port Phillip.

June Meeting – Tim Uebergang from Melbourne University will talk about the 160 year old System Garden.

July Meeting – AGM and Photo Exhibition

PROBLEMS WITH *Prostanthera aspalathoides*

By Tony Cavanagh

This species has long been in cultivation and is a popular small plant to about 0.5-0.7 by 0.5 metres. It is found in the drier areas of all the eastern states and into South Australia. In cultivation, we have always found it reliable, easy to strike from cuttings and fairly long lived, perhaps ten to fifteen years or even longer. Consequently, we have (make that had) at least a dozen plants in the garden, in both sunny and semi-shade positions in well-drained soil. They form a lovely small shrub with bright green foliage and masses of tubular red to pinkish-red or orange flowers up and down the stems.



However, over the last twelve months, we have lost four or five mainly older plants but disturbingly, at least two less than 12 months old. In the older ones, it begins with a branch dying off (see second photo) while the rest of the plant looks quite healthy.



Dead branch among otherwise healthy ones.

Eventually, other branches turn brown and the whole plant dies. The younger ones behave similarly.\

Because our plants are of vastly different ages and in both shade and sun, I really have no idea what is causing the deaths but it is becoming very worrying when a previously reliable species dies for no apparent reason. Has anyone else had a similar experience, either with *Prostanthera aspalathoides* or anything else?

INCENSE PLANT - *Calomeria amaranthoides*

By Roger Wileman

Before December last year I had zero knowledge of this native plant. It is a member of the daisy family (*Asteraceae*) and consists of this single species. It is native to moist forests of N.S.W and Victoria.



On one of my walkabouts, I found it growing in a small, moist gully opposite the Plantation Camping Ground, on the Mt Zero Road, north of Halls Gap.

When I first noticed the plant it was a 'stop the car' reaction. The plants were 2-4 m in height and the older plants 1.0 wide. The lower leaves are very large and course in texture, the upper leaves are smaller and are retained on the stems when they die, giving the plant a rather untidy appearance. The leaves can cause severe allergic reaction to some people.



The large, pendulous plumes of small reddish-brown flowers are the real feature of this plant. The plants are biennial, flowering in the second year. They are easy grown from seed and appear in large numbers after a bush fire. The area I found them in appears to have been burnt in recent years. I have included a few photos of the plants that I found.

GARDEN VISITS

Can you help?

We've had a request via Margaret Guenzel for the 'Friends Of The Geelong Botanic Gardens' seeking people who would be prepared to open their gardens for a visit from the 'Friends'. Margaret was a volunteer and propagator for the group. At this stage they are just looking for expressions of interest – no season or dates have been finalised. They are looking for 3 or 4 gardens, with their excursions usually attracting about 20 members.

If you think you can help, please contact me and I'll forward your details to Margaret. Thanks.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES.

Help needed

I'm gratified to have had a good response to my call for articles for the newsletter. But I'd love to hear from some different folks, too. As I said, you don't need to be a literary genius, just put your thoughts down and I'll do the editing. ☺

If you see anything of interest in a newspaper or magazine, please pass it on to me for inclusion.

And, if you have some interesting plants or flowers in your garden, let me know. I'm happy to come and photograph them for inclusion on the APS Geelong Facebook page.

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