



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 329– July 2017

JUNE MEETING

Tim Eubergang

Our speaker was Tim Eubergang, who is the curator of the Melbourne University System Garden. The garden is celebrating its 160th birthday, and is a unique way of displaying plants grouped together in their families or subclasses. Displaying plants in this way provides an opportunity to observe the similarities and differences in form or flower structure between members of the same family.

The System Garden was established in 1856 by Professor Frederick McCoy for use by botany students although it fell into disrepair in the early part of the 20th Century. Over the years the original grounds have been reduced as valuable land was taken up for buildings and the like. The remaining area of the garden has been resurrected although the garden is now only a quarter of its original size.



The System Garden circa 1875.

It is now laid out according to 'Cronquist's Classification', which groups related plants together. This system takes characteristics like flower structure to decide which plants belonged in which family. The System Garden holds representatives from all major land plant groups, including mosses, ferns, cycads, conifers and continuing on to all the angiosperms

(flowering plants). Although there are many Australian plants on display, it is not exclusively a native garden.

The garden was most likely designed by Edward La Trobe Bateman as part of his plan to landscape the grounds in 1856. He was doubtless assisted in development by Frederick McCoy, Professor of Natural Science; and William Hyndman, from the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

The garden is used now as an educational tool for the Botany and Agriculture departments. It is an important collection with some rare and many very interesting plants. It is open to the public on weekdays from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm.



The System garden today.

ON THE TABLE

with Bruce McGinness

Bruce talked us through a very colourful specimen table, most notable for the number of *Grevilleas* in flower at this time of year. Among the true species was a deep, dusty red form of *Grevillea bipinnatifida*, which is one of the parents of the ubiquitous 'Queensland hybrids', so common in local gardens. *G. hookeriana* is a low-growing shrub from the south-west of WA. It has deeply lobed, sharply pointed leaves and typical 'toothbrush' flowers. The specimen on the table was a black-flowered form.

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There were three cultivars or forms of *G. lanigera*. The common and much loved Mt Tamboritha form is a lovely spreading plant, almost a ground-cover. 'Tucker's Dwarf' as the name suggests is a very compact shrub to about 60 cms. 'Woolly Bear' is a little larger with a more upright habit. All are wonderful plants which would complement any garden.

G. tenuiloba is a low-growing shrub from the sand plains inland from Geraldton, with bright orange flowers. It is most often seen in cultivation as a standard on *G. robusta*.

Some discussion evolved from a standardised specimen which was sold to me as *G. nana ssp nana*. When I brought this plant to a meeting some years ago I was told it was not a true *G. nana* but a hybrid with *G. tenuiloba*. I presented it as such at last months' meeting to be told it's not *G. nana* at all. Although members couldn't say what it was, they were adamant about what it wasn't! Regardless, it's a great plant and looks wonderful at the moment.



The 'mystery' grevillea ☺

Grevillea thelemaniana is a low-growing, spreading shrub which seems to be grown a little less these days, which is a shame. The foliage is attractive and the bright red flowers are wonderful bird attractors.

Grevillea maxwellii is a prostrate or low-growing shrub from the south west of WA. It has deeply divided leaves, deep crimson/red flowers and has been given the conservation status of 'rare'.

There were a number of Banksias on display with a couple of unusual ones among them.

Banksia paludosa, the Swamp Banksia, is a small shrub from NSW where it may reach a height of 4m, but usually 1-1.5m. Despite its common name it isn't usually found in swampy areas. It's a good plant in a pot, apparently.

Banksia ericafolia is a fast growing, attractive shrub which may reach 7 metres, but more usually around 4m. It occurs naturally in heath or woodland, on the central coast of New South Wales. It occurs mostly in soils of sandy loam, deep sand or sand over sandstone

in well drained areas. The flowers occur on spikes up to 30cm long and are a bright orange/red colour, greatly favoured by honeyeaters. This plant is said to be the first Australian plant collected by Joseph Banks, after whom the genus is named.



***Banksia ericafolia* at the National Botanic Gardens**

There were about 20 different *Correas* on the table, but most were named along the lines of *Correa notreallysure* or *Correa ithinkitsareflexahybrid*. They were, however, a most attractive display.

Hakeas were well represented with specimens of *H. obtuse*, *H. myrtoides*, *H. clavata*, *H. orthorrhyncha* and *H scoparia*. This last is an interesting shrub to 3m from the shrublands in the south-west of Western Australia. The leaves are long, up to 25cm, and narrow and the flowers are creamy pink.

A couple of *Eremophilas* were present, among which a favourite of mine, *Eremophila nivea*. It is a small shrub about 1.5 x 1.5 m, with soft, very hairy leaves and stems, which give the plant a soft, silvery appearance. The delicate mauve flowers against this silver grey foliage make it a most attractive plant. While it does grow on its own roots in our area, plants grafted onto *Myoporum* root-stock seem to be most successful.



Eremophila nivea

Among the others of note were *Templetonia retusa* – Cocky's Tounge, *Seigfriedia darwinoides*? (I could find no mention of this plant on-line, does it have another name?) and *Melaleuca megacephala*. This is a small, open shrub with yellow pom-poms flowers, terminally presented.

John Hastie won the raffle this month and selected *Pandorea jasminoides* as the plant of the month. Thanks again to Matt and Bruce for supplying plants for the raffles, door prizes and general use of members.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Pandorea jasminoides
By Carmel Addlem

I was at my local Tennis Club Church Fete about twelve years ago and got talking to a lovely old gent about the plants on the stall. After a pleasant chat I walked away with two creeper vines that produced pretty pink flowers. I had no idea that these were Australian native plants.



A garden arch was put in place and the vines planted. These were one of the first plants that went in my new dirt mound rural garden. They have never looked back and flower profusely. They have only had the odd prune as the harsh windy weather has maintained them to relatively smallish plants and although the arch has rusted and been staked up it still keeps growing, giving us much pleasure.

Now, for the more technical stuff. *Pandorea jasminoides* is a vigorous twining plant with pinnate leaves, having between five and seven lance-shaped leaflets up to 50mm long. The large flowers are tubular, ending in five spreading lobes. The flowers

are usually pale pink with a deep pink throat and are about 35 mm long. Flowering occurs over a long period between spring and late summer.



The flowers are followed by large elliptical fruits which split to reveal elongated, winged seeds. It is a popular plant in cultivation. It is very hardy in tropical to temperate regions, although it may be damaged by frost during very cold winters. It is adaptable to any reasonably drained soils and will grow in full sun to partial shade. It is ideally suited to growing on a fence or trellis. It prefers a reliable water supply but, once established, will tolerate extended dry periods. Propagation can be carried out easily from either seed or cuttings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July Meeting – AGM AND PHOTO EXHIBITION.

The July meeting is our Annual General Meeting. All positions on the committee will be declared vacant and an election will be held for committee members for the next twelve months.

Our committee has done a great job in the last year, but we would urge you all to consider standing for one of the vacant positions. It is not an onerous task, and 'new blood' is always a good idea.

You can put your name forward by emailing the secretary at apsgeelong@gmail.com or we will take nominations from the floor on the night.

As is customary we do not have a speaker at the Annual General Meeting, but we will have the Photo Competition/Exhibition. As in previous years there are three categories ... Australian Plants, Australian Wildlife and Australian Landscapes. Photos should be taken by members in Australia, and presented as 5 x 7 hard copies. Members may bring their photos on a data-stick for display on the big screen while we are examining and voting for the winner.

August Meeting – Members' Night. Members will be asked to speak for 5 – 15 minutes on any relevant topic they would like. Talk can be accompanied by photos, specimens or demonstration. Don't be shy!

September Meeting – Propagation, Grafting and Division

October Meeting – Cathy Powers – Moths (TBC)

November Meeting – Rare Plant Auction

EXCURSIONS

We have a number of excursions planned for the coming months. Please let us know of your interest so that a bus can be arranged if required.

System Garden – University of Melbourne, Sunday 20th August 2017 11am

The System Garden is open for the student open day as is the Herbarium. The University will be full of parents and students and parking will be hard to find so public transport may be the best option. If there are enough members interested we will meet at the System Garden gates at 11am.

Pomonal wildflower show 7th & 8th October

Always an amazing display, and a great weekend or day trip. If there is enough interest a bus could be organised for Sunday 8th October.

Bev and John Hanson's garden in Warrandyte. Trip will be on Sunday 22nd October or Sunday 29th October depending on Bev and John's availability. We will let you know in plenty of time which weekend is suitable.

Bev Hanson spoke to us in March 2016 on her landscaping ideas — her garden looks impressive. Check out the website below:

www.anpsa.org.au/design/hanson.html

FROM APS VICTORIA

22nd & 23rd July - Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Winter Plant Sale – 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. (Mel 133 K10)

INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW, 2018

APS Victoria is going to have a presence at the Melbourne International & Flower Garden Show, 2018. We will be part of the Royal Horticultural Society stand.

We are looking for ideas, suggestions, offers of help and general enthusiasm in this project. If you have

ideas or are able to assist in any way, please contact Dallas & Bernard Boulton at this email address ...

bernard.boulton@bigpond.com

or Ph: 0418 354 838

ILLEGAL SANDALWOOD DISTILLERY FOUND

Thanks to Roger for pointing me towards this story from the ABC News Online.

Authorities in Western Australia have discovered a sophisticated illegal sandalwood processing plant at a property east of Perth. The Department of Parks and Wildlife working with WA Police raided the undercover sandalwood oil distillery early in June.

Distilling equipment and more than 6 tonnes of allegedly illegally harvested sandalwood, worth about \$260,000 were seized in the raid.

Sandalwood oil is a sweet-smelling natural oil used extensively in the cosmetics industry as a base for perfumes, cosmetics, soaps and aftershave. It is also used in the manufacture of incense, and as an essential oil with many alleged benefits by the alternative medicine industry. These properties have driven international demand sky-high, and prices may be as high as \$50,000 a tonne. This makes Sandalwood, a native West Australian species, a very attractive target for clandestine criminal operations.



Sandalwood, Leonora, WA

Sandalwood, *Santalum spicatum*, has a scattered distribution across the semi-arid areas in Central and south-west Western Australia and central arid areas of South Australia. It is a small tree, usually around 3m, and is a hemi-parasite requiring macro-nutrients from roots of hosts. It is slow-growing and fire-sensitive.

The timber is fine-grained and much in demand for small furniture items and as a craftwood.

No charges have yet been laid in this case, but investigations are continuing.

RED LEAVES IN THE SUNSET

Ade Foster

On a late Saturday afternoon recently I was doing a bit of gardening - a clever euphemism for removing several tons of weeds which appear magically in my yard overnight. While leaning on the fence fighting for breath, I noticed the new growth on a eucalypt in my neighbour's yard. It was a startling shade of red, with a shiny, waxy surface. While this colour is not uncommon, unusual, or confined to Eucalypts, it made me wonder. With the perfect excuse to take a break from wrestling with Sorrels, Soursobs and Sow-thistles, I turned to the Encyclopaedia of Google to find out 'Why Is It So?'



Green leaves of most plants appear so because of the presence of a green pigment, chlorophyll, in the chloroplasts. These are the cells which enable photosynthesis, the method by which plants synthesise nutrients from carbon dioxide and water.

The new leaves on many species are red rather than green, and this is mainly due to the accumulation of anthocyanins – red pigments. But, why? There seem to be many hypotheses, but a three were common to

many of the articles I could find (and, more to the point, understand).

The anthocyanins appear give the new leaves a level of protection against UV damage, thus ensuring the tender new growth has time to mature and begin photosynthesis.

The anthocyanins also appear to have a fungicidal function offering an added level of protection to vulnerable new growth.

They may also protect the new growth from herbivorous insects in a couple of ways. Firstly anthocyanin rich leaves have less nutritional value, so the more numerous and larger mature leaves are targeted. Secondly, it is believed that any of the insects which tend to eat eucalypt leaves are blind to the red spectrum, making the new leaves 'invisible'.

Interestingly, and confusingly, there is one hypothesis which is a direct contradiction of this last, namely that the red colour attracts herbivores and so protects the mature leaves. *Psyllid* insects, *Anoeconeossa bundoorensis* and *Glycaspis brimblecombei* which are hosted by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *E. kitsiniana*, are both attracted to red-coloured foliage.

And so, as I return to battle the Black Nightshade, am I any wiser? Probably not but I enjoyed the break and the distraction.

HELP ... Again (is anybody out there?)

I will be doing the next newsletter before we head off for a much needed and keenly anticipated holiday. Nicole Leach will be looking after the following two months' newsletters while we are away.

I urge you all once again to consider writing an article for the newsletter. It really isn't difficult, or demanding, and doesn't need to be more than a couple of paragraphs.

I'm sure Nicole would love to hear from you if you feel the sudden urge ...

Shoot her an email at aidbookworm@hotmail.com



For no other reason than I needed to fill the space, Grevillea bronwenae and G. nivea from my garden .