



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

Correa Mail

Newsletter No 369 - June, 2021

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING APS GEELONG

We will be holding our AGM on 17th August. Please start thinking about whether you would like to stand for the Management Committee. Also, if you have any substantive motions for discussion at the AGM, please let me know so I can give members the required 28 days' notice. The motion will need to be signed and seconded.

CURRENCY CREEK ARBORETUM

By Roger Wileman

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the open weekend at Dean Nicolle's Eucalyptus Arboretum at Currency Creek, South Australia. The arboretum is just north of Victor Harbour, a short 650 km from Geelong.



Eucalyptus erythrocorys

Dean has created a specialist Eucalyptus research centre. He started this Arboretum with the idea to collect, grow and plant every species of Eucalyptus and record many aspects of their growth, survival, adaptability and the like.

When Dean started this mammoth task, and I do mean 'mammoth', there were about 700 species of Eucalyptus known, this has now been expanded to close to 1000 species, sub species and forms. This excludes hybrids, some of which may eventually become species. This seems to be a long process and even naming a new species is quite involved.



Eucalyptus altissima

Most of the Eucalyptus have been planted in rows with four plants of each species. This gives each species a better chance to survive and represent their species at the arboretum.

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The free guided tour of the arboretum is a good hour and rather undulating. The knowledge that Dean has is very daunting. Dean and Annette have travelled a mind-boggling number of kilometres in search of Eucalyptus species all over Australia. Dean is the author of some wonderful books on the Eucalyptus and Annette creates the format for them. All are available at the open weekends which usually occur twice a year.

As you can well imagine, species that have been collected from all over Australia, in different locations and conditions, may not cope in the Currency Creek environment. One small Eucalyptus which was planted 25 years ago is still only 200mm high. I think it is having a sleep.

At the open weekends Dean has Eucalyptus species for sale in forestry tubes, many of them very rare and attractive.

When I first became interested in Australian native plants, back in 1964, I was led to believe that gum trees grow too fast and too big for any gardens; that if you did plant one, you should start saving up for a chain saw.



Eucalyptus pyriformis

A few of the Eucalypts recommended and available at the time were *Eucalyptus nicholli*, Blue Gums, Tuart Gums and Sugar Gums – all very large trees. Well, that was right for 1964, but I have travelled many kilometres since then, always on the lookout for Eucalypts that would be suitable for home gardens.

Now, small Eucalypts that are ideal for the home garden, many of them with spectacular flowers and highly attractive foliage, are being grown and made available. But the stigma of “don’t plant a Eucalyptus, it grows too big” still persists in a lot of minds. And, to be honest, the majority of Eucalyptus *are* too big for most gardens.

We have 12 Eucalyptus on our residential block and not one of them will ever be too big for our garden.

A COUPLE OF EXCURSIONS

by Matt Baars

Hello I am putting forward some possible day trips that will take members to some areas that we usually just drive by. Anyone who has travelled from Geelong to Gisborne via Bacchus Marsh will have seen the hills and bush on the left as you leave Bacchus Marsh for Gisborne. This area is called Lerderderg State Forest. Roger and I visited this area in 2019. It was a great drive through some really good bush with many and varied plants. There was a good picnic spot on the Lerderderg River. Mid October would be a good time to visit the area to see some different plants and scenery.



Baeckia ramosissima

Another area we visited recently was the Raglan – Mt Ben Major area, just north west of Beaufort, we usually drive past this area as we go west to Ararat and further. There is some very nice bush and many plants you usually don't see, including *Grevillea florapendula* and *Grevillea ben major*. The best time to visit this area would be late August- September Both areas are not too far away, about 1.5 hours for the Raglan area and 45 min. for the start of the Lerderderg State Forest. I would recommend trips to both areas if time allows.

Here are a few of the plants we are likely to encounter in the Lederderg Gorge area.



Bossia rosmarinifolia



Eucalyptus dives



Davesia arenaria



Davesia leptophylla



Epacris grandiflora

Thanks Mat, for taking the initiative on these excursions, and for the great photos. More information and firm dates will be posted in later editions

QUEENSLAND BOTTLE TREE – *Brachychiton rupestris*
By Ade Foster

We've been travelling in outback Queensland. On the drive from Thargomindah to Cunnamulla we noticed some very strange looking trees standing in the 'paddocks' beside the road – Queensland Bottle Trees, *Brachychiton rupestris*.

Our speaker at the March meeting spoke about Werribee Zoo's use of these trees to create a pseudo-African theme, because of their superficial resemblance to the African Baobab. As I write, we are in our caravan at Roma, in central Queensland, home of 'The Biggest Bottle Tree'. So it seemed that the stars were aligned and an article was warranted.



The 'Big Bottle Tree' in Roma, Queensland

B. rupestris is found in limited areas of central Queensland and northern New South Wales where it seems to favour heavy clay soils among volcanic rocks. It will grow in a number of soil types and climates, as is witnessed by the large number growing at Werribee Zoo.

The common name 'Bottle Tree' comes from the strange, swollen shape of the trunk, which becomes bulbous as the tree matures. The name is quite apt because large amounts of water are stored under the bark, and the aborigines used them as water sources. Other common names are used including Narrow-leaved Bottle Tree and Kurrajong.

B. rupestris flowers in the late spring or early summer after dropping most of its leaves. The flowers are quite small, with five white and pink petals and prominent yellow stamens. The seeds are coated with irritant hairs, a strange adaptation.

In Roma, the Bottle trees line the streets, feature in many gardens and are quite spectacular. The 'Big Bottle

Tree' stand in a small park, fenced to protect it from initial carving yobboes. Although it is only six metres high, the canopy spreads over 20 metres and the girth of the trunk measures 9.5 metres. It was transplanted as a mature tree in 1927 so is now well over 100 years old.

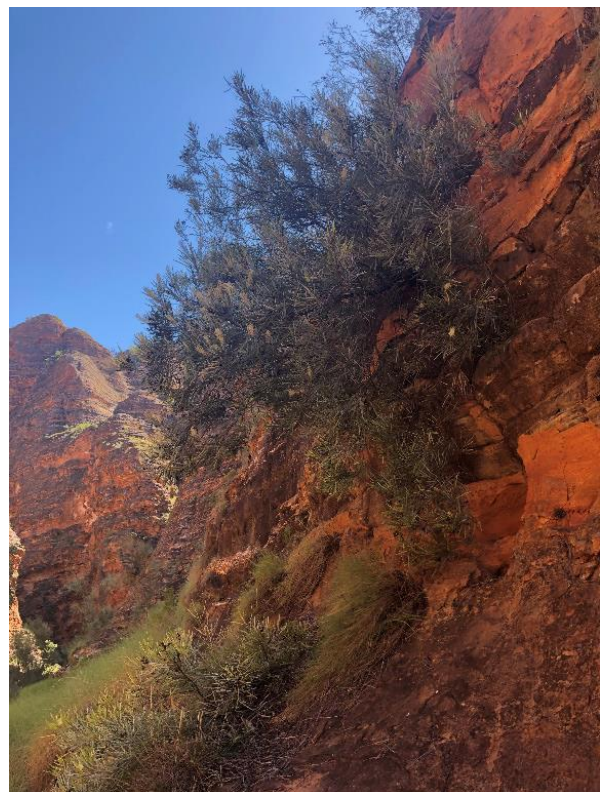


Street trees in Roma

This ability to be transplanted as mature trees has seen the Bottle Tree taken all over the world to feature in botanic gardens and the like. Trees have been known to survive over three months from up-rooting to replanting, making them an ideal subject for long-distance shipping.

GREVILLEAS IN THE KIMBERLIE

Julia Oatway has been travelling in The Kimberlie region of northern Queensland, and sent us these images of some of the grevilleas she has encountered.



Growing from a crack in a rock face

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who contributed to our newsletter this month, and thanks again to Peter Nuzum for collating all the contents while Penny and I are away.



