



Running Postman



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY – MELTON & BACCHUS MARSH INC

GARDEN VISIT

Saturday 22nd September

Report by Barb Pye

On a beautiful Saturday morning, seven members visited Alan Nener's garden in Bacchus Marsh. Alan is a keen gardener, who has packed many interesting native species into his garden as well as some exotics. His garden is only 5 years old but the growth has been exceptional. Catherine told us that

this area used to be a dairy farm – the soil is very well drained and probably quite rich.

There were eremophilas, banksias and correas as well as some beautiful South African leucospermums.

We were all drawn to a *Callistemon subulatus*

which was a handsome specimen about 3 metres high and just about to bloom. Alan prunes his plants to keep them bushy and prevent them from growing too tall. Two outstanding specimens of *Eucalyptus caesia ssp magma* (the Silver Princess) were blooming profusely and attracting honey-eaters. Two plants which



Photos by Barb Pye

had finished flowering, but were exceptional specimens, were Hakea Burrendong Beauty and *Templetonia retusa*. It was a treat to be shown over this much loved and beautifully kept garden. Thanks Alan

CALENDAR EVENTS

2012

October 24th

Meeting: Julianne Diwell will offer some insight into the growing and care of orchids such as *Dendrobiums*. If you have a native orchid that needs a helping hand, whether in a pot or on a mount, please bring it on the night.



November 10th & 11th

FJC Rogers Seminar hosted by APS Victoria.

November 28th

Meeting: See page 5 for details.

PLANT PROFILE

The plant selected for review from our September meeting was ***Hakea francisiana*** (cream-flowering form). This was formerly known as *H. coriacea*. I first saw this species when visiting John Clarke at his nursery at Lovers Leap. It became a 'must have plant' because when it flowers, it is magnificent. That is how it is described in the Ivan Holliday's book - *HAKEAS* and the information also notes that the birds love it and so they do. The species is originally from Western Australia's wheat belt and grows mainly in gravelly sand of lateritic origin and prospers in areas where rainfall rarely exceeds 400mm annually.



Flowering time is from July to October but my plant usually flowers in September with the flowers lasting about a month, depending on the weather. I have yet to see a fruit (seed capsule) but obviously grafting is an option for those with interest in propagating such a beautiful Hakea.

SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT

Geoff Lay was our guest speaker in September and his topic was Wilson's Promontory – Flora & Fungi Before & After Fire. The background information was very interesting and if you ever have been to the Prom during the winter, you will probably agree that the mean maximum temperature is about 13° in winter and in summer about 24°. The average rainfall is 1090mm and frosts are rare. The lighthouse was built in 1859 from local granite and the area was declared a National Park just over 100 years ago. The area is a peninsula that forms the southernmost tip of Australian mainland and contains the largest coastal wilderness area in Victoria.

Major events that have impacted on the Prom, recently, were:

- In 2005 about 13% of the park was burned after a 'controlled' burn became uncontrolled.
- In 2009, a larger fire started from a lightning strike and burned more than 25,000 hectares over a three week period.
- In March 2011, significant rainfall led to major flooding and the park was closed to the public for about 6 months.

The geography is fascinating with mountains virtually leading into the sea. There are gorgeous headlands and sandy beaches.



The prom beaches are very shallow and the tannin in the water makes it look brown in colour offsetting the beautiful orange lichen on the granite boulders.

After the two major fires, plants have come back relatively quickly (due to the high rainfall) and in some places, except for the dead tree trunks standing high above the new growth, it is difficult to tell how much was actually burned.

The fire also made way for a resurgence of some interesting orchids such as the *Pterostylis cucullata*



and the Spider Orchids flowered prolifically for the first year (then the numbers slowly dwindled as the years post fire increased). In the autumn of 2010, I found the smallest, most red fungi I had ever seen.



Thank you Geoff – great presentation!

OUR AGM

The 2012 AGM provided us with an opportunity to elect a new committee but not before Barb Pye, the outgoing President, presented her **annual report** (see below).

2012 has been a mixed year for our APS Group. Some activities have been very successful, but overall our attendance at meetings and excursions has been disappointing. Your committee has had difficulty in arranging a suitably diverse and interesting program for the year. Speakers are quite difficult to find for various topics and good ones are in high demand. Nevertheless we put together a program which included speakers on Eucalypts, small plants for the garden, grafting, Wilson's Promontory, Brisbane Ranges and small creatures in the garden. In addition we had an excursion to the Brisbane Ranges and a recent garden visit – both of these were poorly attended by our membership. We need feedback and ideas for speakers and excursions you would like.

Our plant sale in May however was very successful and the hakeas we potted up sold very well, leaving the group in a very strong financial position.

I would like to thank the outgoing committee for their support especially David who has produced the newsletter for the past 14 years, going from black and white from 1997 to 2007 and in colour for the past 5 years. He has indicated that he would like someone else to take over this task in the future.

We need an injection of new ideas for this group to continue to flourish. I urge members to volunteer for the committee. Thank you all.

SPRING PLANT SHOW & TELL

Following the meeting, all members had the opportunity to participate in 'show & tell' by presenting their plant samples for discussion.

Graeme started the discussion by showing us *Hakea cucullata* and *corymbosa* telling us that the *H. cucullata* had a unique leaf in a cup shape (hence it's common name Cup Hakea). The term *cucullata* comes from the Latin *cucullatus* 'hooded', referring to the leaves which hide the flowers.



He then showed us three interesting grevilleas (*G. magnifica* subsp. *magnifica*, *G. magnifica* subsp. *remota* and *G. brownwenae*.) The two *magnifica* subspecies are very similar and the difference is mainly in the glaucous branchlets of subspecies *magnifica*. Both are extremely attractive to honey-eating birds.



The *G. brownwenae* is known for its scarlet flowers which have blue styles and is certainly a stand-out plant for the garden. Lucille was in her element showing some of the fantastic *Banksia* species she brought along not to mention the bright *Waratah* species for us all to admire.



Jenny brought along some exquisite flowers from some of the more 'cottage garden' type plants. Not everyone has large spaces to put some of our medium to large growing shrubs and these examples show how smaller, herbaceous type plants can put on a great show of dainty flowers.



Thanks to everyone who brought along plants to talk about.

MEMBER NEWS

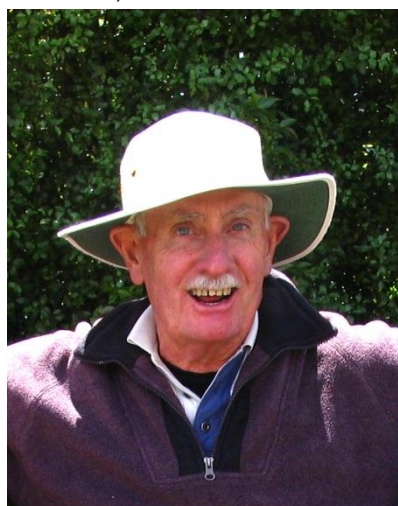
We would like to welcome our newest members, Russell and Beryl Wait. They have moved from the northern Victoria area to Riddells Creek and we are very excited to have them as members.



Unfortunately Beryl was not present or I would have a photo of her as well.

CONGRATULATIONS

Graeme Woods has been awarded a Certificate of Commendation by APS Victoria and this will be presented on Saturday the 1st of December, 2012.



Good on'ya Graeme!

APS Victoria AGM and End of Year Celebration

DATE: Saturday, 1st December, 2012

As President of APS Victoria, I cordially invite all members to the Annual General Meeting. This will be followed immediately by our End of Year Celebration.

The details regarding the AGM are as follows:

- Venue:
 - Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne - Auditorium
- Time:
 - 12.30pm

The details regarding the End of 2012 Celebration:

- Venue:
 - Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne - Auditorium
- Time:
 - Approximately 1pm (immediately following the AGM)

During the celebrations, we will be presenting one Honorary Life Membership award and a Certificate of Commendation to six APS members. These were detailed in the September issue of *Growing Australian*.



Happy Birthday

It is our 55th birthday and the gemstone is alexandrite (or emerald as an alternative). We could all wear something of that colour on the day. Coffee, tea, cold drinks and finger food will be provided. Please think about coming along and helping to celebrate with our deserving award recipients.

Remember to register – the form was in your latest issue of *Growing Australian*.

See you there. Cathy Powers

- The Official grand opening of the Australian Garden stage 2 is on the 20th & 21st of October at Royal Botanic Garden Cranbourne.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ❖ We will once again be entering a hanging basket in the RHSV annual Hanging Basket competition for MIFGS. Julianne has volunteered to produce our basket.
- ❖ The APS Victoria myrtle rust policy is to remain in place until January 2013. At that time it will be reviewed. Spring can be a critical time for spore spread because of the increase in temperatures and humidity (all the things the spores like). Remember to be vigilant and report any suspected outbreaks to DPI.
- ❖ Our group has decided to donate \$2,000.00 to the Friends of Melton Botanic Garden for the purchase of seats to be placed in the Botanic Garden area.
- ❖ New Books available through APS Booksales (apsvicbooks@gmail.com) are:

- Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains produced by APS Keilor Plains
- Plants of the Victorian High Country

We note with sadness that **Marlene McFarlane** passed away recently. Marlene was one of the sellers at our recent plant sales. We extend our sympathies to her family.

MEETINGS

Visitors & New Members

At our recent Executive meeting, a decision was made to restructure our general meetings to facilitate a more friendly atmosphere. To this end we will have one member assigned to greet & meet from 7.30pm onwards. For the October and November meetings this will be Graeme Woods. Coffee and tea will be available in the main meeting room. We will not be using the kitchen for anything other than washing up after the meeting.

The meeting presentation will begin at 8pm followed by a short break and the plant table discussion will begin at 9.15pm. At 9.45pm we will conduct our raffle and then an 'all hands on deck' clean-up for a 10pm departure.



Bus Trip in Autumn

In April 2013, we are planning an excursion to Maranoa Gardens. There has been a suggestion that a bus trip would be enjoyable but we need to have an indication of interest before we organize a bus. We realize this is a few months away but please contact Julianne Diwell if you would be interested in going on this excursion by bus. There is a possibility of a pick-up from both Bacchus Marsh and Melton.

Julianne can be contacted by email on diwellj@bigpond.com or at our meeting.

November Meeting

Our November meeting is traditionally our end of year X-mas break-up. This year we will be meeting at the Willows Historic Park at the usual time of 7.30pm for an 8pm start. I will advise you soon, by email or snail mail, who our guest speaker will be and the topic.

Barb Pye will present a 5 – 10 minute overview of a 'special plant'. Anne Goetz is organizing a special treat for our coffee & tea break.

Research

Australia's mysterious native *Xanthorrhoea* genus will receive increased attention from Botanist Todd McLay, a postgraduate student at the University of Melb., who won the 2012 prestigious Australian Conservation Taxonomy Award.

This award will be used to 'interpret the evolutionary history of the grass tree with a view to underpinning conservation in the global biodiversity hotspot of Western Australia'.

The last major look at the *Xanthorrhoea* family was in 1986 and it showed a level of uncertainty about some aspects of the grass tree. We urgently need to learn more about its biological make-up in order to better protect it.



HINTS

MITREPLANS from Mitre 10

- Like all gardens, soil preparation is most important. Before planting, dig the ground over well. Where there is clay, add a little gypsum.
- Avoid staking native plants too tightly. Give them room to move to develop a strong root system and not become dependent on the stake.
- Many of the more difficult-to-grow natives can be planted successfully in small tubs where it is easier to control conditions.
- Protect soil in garden beds from the hot sun using the many low ground cover plants available as a natural mulch and by planting close together.
- Caring for native plants isn't that much different to other garden plants. The term "Low Maintenance", often used to describe native gardens, does not mean total neglect. Like many other plants, natives also need an occasional prune to help them flower better and to keep them in shape. This is usually done after flowering.
- If you wish to trim older plants into hedges, particularly Grevilleas, prune back a little at a time over several seasons to the required size. Pruning too hard may kill them.

Surprises in the Garden

This is the area where a member can submit a short article about a 'surprise' in their garden. It may be plant related but it does not have to be. I will get it started by telling you about my *Hakea denticulata*. Its common name is 'Stinking Roger'. The plant is now about 1 metre high and about the same in width. This is the best flowering it has had since the first flower appeared about 3 years

ago. The interesting feature about this plant is the trailing, downwards hanging branches. The flowers are fairly insignificant. The Latin term *denticulata* comes from *denticulus* which means small tooth, referring to the prickly leaf structure. Up to this year, the written about smell of the flowers has not been an issue. Either because there are more flowers or the plant has finally matured to

produce this odour, the strong perfume is very evident. It is very difficult to describe this smell but there is no mistaking it. The cultivation description includes: Although the plant has attractive foliage and flowers, the latter's smell rather limits its use in cultivation. It was certainly a surprise for me when I got the first whiff!

Australian Plants Society – Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc.

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APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee 2012/13

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Treasurer	Norris McCarthy	5428 9320	
Committee:	Ann Goetz, Graeme Woods, Jenny Morris, Julianne Diwell Cathy Powers – Newsletter editor		

URL for relevant internet websites:

Website: *Until further notice please use our old website address* www.bulokebulletin.com

APS Victoria website : <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>

ANPSA website: <http://anpsa.org.au>

All contributions to the newsletter are gratefully received. Please send a word document and photos to the group's Gmail address. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by email, snail mail or phone.

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