



Running Postman



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY – MELTON & BACCHUS MARSH INC

FEBRUARY MEETING

Overview by Cathy Powers

The subject of our February meeting, as presented by Bob Chinnock, was very prickly and a little bit scary. It seems that our colonial background is to blame for the introduction of cactus (in particular the Prickly Pear) into Australia. The Red Coats needed, well red coats, so the first plants were brought here in 1788 to establish the cochineal (red) dye industry. A small female plant-sucking bug, known as the cochineal scale insect, is smushed to extract the red carminic acid. This, however, did not work out so well and eventually the prickly pear was used as fodder during the dry times.



Hudson Pear

Photo: M Linnamagl

Opuntoid cacti are now declared weeds in all states except Tasmania.

Bob showed us images of other invasive species and in Victorian Mallee regions, there are populations of Hudson Pear reported near Mittyack, Underbool, Ouyen, Tol Tol, Beggs Bend and Natya. This particular cactus is easily moved around

because every little bit that breaks off, when transported to a new location, becomes a new plant. The spine has a reverse barb and makes removal very difficult. He even showed us images of impaled animals and birds (which cannot escape). Thanks, Bob, to alerting us to the potential devastation feral cacti can cause.

Points to remember: Opuntia ficus-indica has been cultivated for its edible fruit and is exempt from being on the declared pest plant list. BEWARE! It can still be weedy – (or feral)

CALENDAR EVENTS

2015

25 March

PRESENTATION:

Mike & Cathy Beamish

Kangaroo Island Flora +



Credit: SATC/Milton Wordley

Echidna research is one of the varied programs that occur on this isolated island.

22 April

Eremophilas -

Come along to hear from **Russell Wait** (our current President) all about a genus that has come of age in the dryer environments we now face.



ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Our annual plant sale **is definitely on** and at the usual venue thanks to the generosity of the St Andrew's Uniting Church (Bacchus Marsh). We will be using the carpark area. Saturday - 2nd May, 2015 from 9 – 1pm



Please make plans to volunteer on the day. Closer to the plant sale date, there will be a roster set up but if you have preferences, please contact our secretary (Cathy).

Open Garden Scheme – a garden close to us:

11 and 12 April 2015

Harry's Garden, 10 Hesleden St, Essendon.

An Australian native garden designed by Phillip Johnson. The front recreates a peaceful bush setting and includes a pond with small waterfalls. A fern walkway leads to a billabong surrounded by gums, banksias and native wildflowers. Extra – live classical music at times during the weekend.

Enigma Moth



Photo by George Gibbs

Recently discovered on Kangaroo Island, the *Aenigmatinea glatzella* has caused the 'Entos' to sit up and take notice.

This moth lives on Southern Cypress-pine trees (*Callistris gracilis*) near the mouth of the Wilson River and is a member of an entirely new family of primitive moths. It is the first time since the 1970s that a new family of primitive moths has been identified anywhere in the world according to the CSIRO website.

The adult moth is short-lived. In just one day it emerges from the cocoon, mates, the females lay their eggs and then die.



Map of Australia with Kangaroo Island circled in blue



OUR WEBSITE:
www.runningpostman.org.au

BOOK SALE:

Congratulations to all our members who now own some new publications adding to their personal library. Our book sale was a great success enabling our treasurer to bank \$700.00 but more importantly getting our library material out of the closet and into the hands of Australian plant enthusiasts.



Your committee has determined to donate the following books to the Friends of Melton Botanic Gardens for their library:

- A New Image for West Australian Plants* (book sale value = \$10)
- Eucalypts of Western Australia* (book sale value = \$30)
- Flora of Australia – Volume 19* (book sale value = \$50)
- West Australian Plants* (book sale value = \$5)
- Wildflowers of South Eastern Australia* (book sale value = \$10)

The remainder of the books will be for sale during our May Plant Sale.

QUOTE OF THE NEWSLETTER

Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.

--- Edward M. Forster

Surprises in the Garden

Barking

By Cathy Powers

During the month of February and sometimes into March, I enjoy the changing colours of the trees. This includes the trunk and branches as the old bark dries creating colours and textures that only nature can provide. Eventually all that dried bark falls to the ground becoming some of the litter that sustains insects, creates habitat for lizards and eventually will break down to become part of the soil.



I also had an interesting find which intrigued me – a small cocoon which, upon close inspection, allows a view of the moth's structure including eyes, wings and

even antennae. I have no idea which species it is but when I moved it, the insect inside responded by moving around as well.



Australian Plants Society – Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc.

Incorporated in Victoria: A0026204P

ABN: 68 053 689 781

APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee 2014/15

President	Russell Wait	0428 388 211	
Vice President	Graeme Woods		
Secretary	Cathy Powers	5369 4302	email: apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com
Treasurer	Norris McCarthy	5428 9320	
Committee:	Julianne Diwell, David Pye, Lucille McCarthy, John Bentley		
	Cathy Powers – Newsletter editor		

URL for relevant internet websites:

Website: www.runningpostman.org.au

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.

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 946

Bacchus Marsh, Victoria 3340

MEETINGS: 4th Wednesday of the month except July and December (doors open at 7.30pm)

VENUE: Dunvegan Cottage, Willows Historic Park

Cnr Reserve Rd & Nixon St, **Melton Melways: 337 C9**