



AUSTRALIAN  
PLANTS SOCIETY  
— Geelong —

# Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 259 – November 2010

## OUR LAST MEETING – Judith McGinnis – “Weeds”

(Thanks to Frank Scheelings for this report)

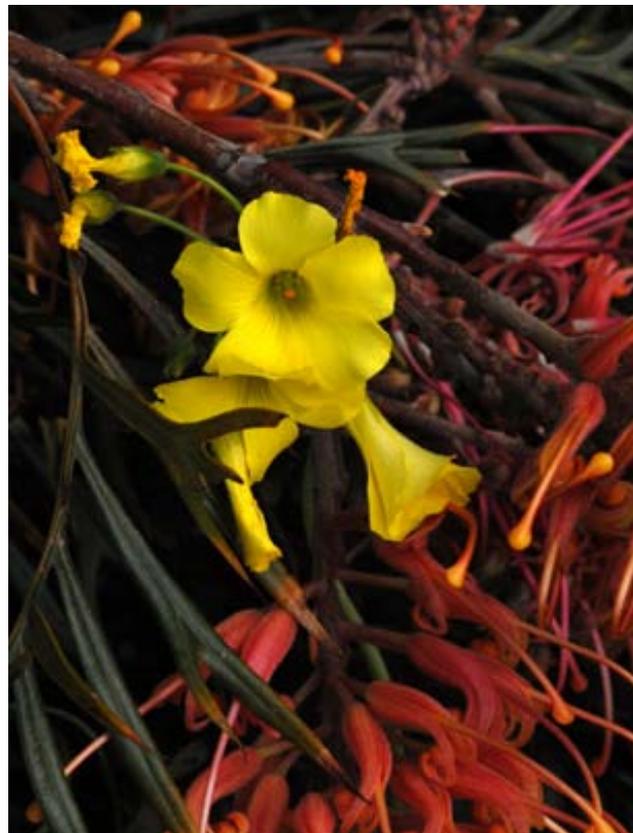
At the October meeting we had the privilege to listen to Judith McGinnis as she shared with us her passion for weeds. Her talk was not about those evil, hard to kill or get rid of blights in our garden but a true love of all things weedy.

Judith described how her interest started as a school project on flowers as a young girl, and as she lived in the Melbourne suburbs her collection consisted predominantly of weeds and this grew into an obsession. Her interest was plain in the loving way her weeds had been photographed to show them in all their glory, and not as infestations creeping under bushes or exuding from a crack in the concrete.

Judith’s enthusiasm was infectious, dotted with anecdotes of finding a great patch of superior weeds on a vacant piece of land only to be thwarted by enthusiastic council workers armed with whippersnippers, who obviously had no idea the destruction they were causing. Travelling with Judy must be an experience as she gushes over new species poking their heads up on international runways and through the wire of graves long-forgotten. No cemetery or overgrown paddock is passed by without at least a cursory look.

Judith showed us over 50 slides of weeds covering a variety of genera, from daisies to thistles to boxthorns. Common names as well as scientific names catered for all listeners. It was interesting to note that what are vast infestations here, such as oxalis, are considered rare plants in their homeland. It was not surprising that she not once mentioned how to get rid of weeds, as this would be contrary to her passion. Following her slide presentation Judith made herself available for discussion at a show and tell table where examples of various weeds were on display.

All in all a very entertaining night and none of us will pick up the roundup sprayer or sharpen the shovel again without thinking of Judy and perhaps a pang of remorse. It made me think that there might be a connection between her love of weeds and her choice in partners, eh Bruce??



Soursobs - *Oxalis pes-caprae*, battling my Grevillea

## UP-COMING EVENTS

### Our Next Meeting

The speaker at our next meeting is Ade Foster, and the topic – ‘Making your garden frog and wildlife friendly’.

### Christmas / End of Year Gathering

Our Christmas break-up will be hosted by Gaeton and Pauline Limsowtin at their Lara home, 40 Gebbies Road, Friday November 26<sup>th</sup> at 6.30 pm. Gebbies Rd runs off Kees Rd, just up from the 5-Ways. No. 40 is at the end of a long driveway. Gaeton has a wood-fired pizza oven in his yard, which will add a different flavour to this year’s break-up, in more ways than one. There will also be a BBQ. Please bring a salad or desert item to share, as well as your own chair, plate, cutlery and glass. We hope to see you all there.



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## Other items of Interest

**23 October to 7 November** - Wildlife Art Exhibition, Karwarra Gardens, Mt Dandenong Tourist Road, Kalorama.

**13-14 November** - SGAP Hamilton host Quarterly Gathering. 'All Points West'. Speaker Saturday evening is Bryan Haywood on butterflies and their food plants.

**13 November** - APS Victoria Annual General Meeting, Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning, 333 North Boundary Road, Hamilton.

**13 November** - APS Mitchell Native Plant Sale, Kilmore Memorial Hall, 14 Sydney St, Kilmore. Info call Julie 03 5784 1990.

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

### 6-7 November

*Janalli* 285 Wagners Rd, Neerim South. Aust. plants in one section only of a v. large landscaped garden. Also Japanese garden, rose arbour, parkland, lakes etc. ((3.5 ac.)

### 13-14 November

*Campbell Garden* 64-66 Claremont St, Mount Eliza. Diverse profusion of colourful natives and exotics plus borrowed landscape. Sculpture. (0.32 ac.) (NEW)

*Kinvarra* 13 Rodger Rd, Wandin North. Phil Johnson's blended garden, one area with waterfall, pools, big rocks and Australian plants, the other cottage style and formal. (2 ac.)

### 20-21 November

*Hidden Lake* 15 One Chain Rd, Merricks North. Well-designed, young garden, steep drive lined with natives. Roses too, grape-covered loggia, potager, alpacas. (4 ac.) NEW

*Georgina Martyn in the Gosling Garden* 32 Auburn Grove, Hawthorn East. Large trees shelter natives and exotics, foliage and texture the focus. Landscape features pebble spiral. Asian-Australian fusion. 3 daily

talks by Martyn, the landscape designer. (13x15) (NEW)

### 27-28 November

*Clark Garden* 305 Rodier Street, Ballarat East. Knowledgeable ex-native nurseryman's new garden, planted for all-year colour. Big variety, some unusual plants. (41x17) (NEW)

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

The chosen plant was *Lasiopetalum behrii*, Pink velvet bush, which was brought in by Frank Scheelings. Frank writes –

"*Lasiopetalum* belongs to the Sterculiaceae family which includes the *Thomasia*, *Guichenotia* and *Rulingia* familie – all wonderful garden plants which can grow in a variety of conditions, and are quite drought tolerant. Locally we have around Anglesea *Thomasia purpurea*, *Lasiopetalum bauera* and *Lasiopetalum behrii*.



**Lasiopetalum behrii - Pink Velvet Bush**



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The name means hairy leaf or petal (actually referring to the calyx) There are about 35 species of *Lasiopetalum*, and are mostly ground covers or small shrubs. They have sprays of cup-like flowers which tend to hang down, so the beauty of the flowers is not immediately evident, and need to be viewed from below. The showy part of the flower is the calyx with the petals being reduced to scales or absent. Propagation is easy from cuttings.

*Lasiopetalum behrii* in my garden is a small shrub 20 cm high and a meter wide. Covered now in beautiful dark pink cups about 1 cm in size, hanging down from the branches in small “racemes”, lotus-shaped which then open to reveal a darker centre. These calyx “petals” have a hairy exterior and are smooth on the inside. The leaves are about 8 cm long, lanceolate olive/grey green on the upper surface and whitish green and slightly hairy on the underside. New growth is often a very attractive brown / bronze colour. Flowers are long lasting and worth cutting for flower arrangements. In summary a beautiful small plant, easy to grow, tolerates shade and sun, relatively drought tolerant and worth a place in any garden, as all this group of plants do.”

## FIRE AT CRANBOURNE

A planned burn at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens jumped containment lines on October 21, and burnt about 20ha of the 363ha property. CFA and garden staff fought the fire and had it under control by evening. Gardens management released a statement blaming unpredictable wind conditions for the blaze getting out of control.

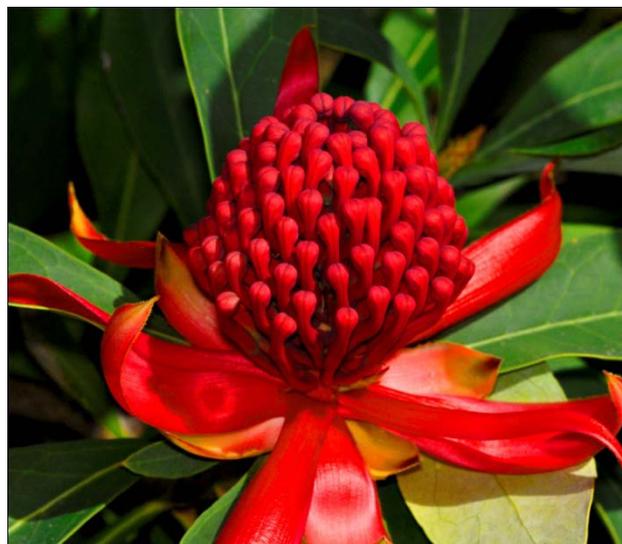
“The burn has spread to an area within the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne that was already scheduled for a prescribed burn in the near future,” the statement says. “As a standard safety precaution, the bushland has been closed to visitors all day. “

The park is open again, and really worth a visit. Our late spring is the perfect time, so, do yourself a favour, and make the trip to Cranbourne.

## POMONAL NATIVE FLOWER SHOW WEEKEND

About 25 members made the trip to the Gariwerd National Park, better known as ‘The Grampians’ for the annual Pomonal Native Flower Show.

As arranged, we gathered at the Pomonal Hall at 10.00 am, and spent an enthralling half hour wandering among a most dazzling array of native flora. I readily admit to being so immersed in the display, that I failed to take notes of any kind. While I clearly remember the riot of colour and form, I have little or no recollection of the names of the plants themselves. A few which have stayed with me are a red form of the Hedge Wattle, *Acacia paradoxa*, (which will soon become commercial available as ‘Scarlet Hedge’) and a beautiful double flowered Pink Heath, *Epacris impressa*. All the plants come from the gardens of the local APS chapter members, garden which were open to the public on the last weekend of October. What a wonderful, magical place to have a garden.



Waratah - *Telopea speciosissima*

We then moved on to “Illawarra” the property of Brian Mullens, a neighbour of Roger and Sheila. The large, rambling garden was a mixture of native and exotic species with winding, overgrown paths, open grassy areas, water features and fountains, and colour



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everywhere. While there seemed to have been little planning in the design of the garden, there was a surprise around every corner and delighted “ooh”s and “aaah”s could be heard from all corners of the block.



Some of the crew at the BBQ banquet

After a delightful hour we crossed the road to Roger and Sheilas block, ‘Ryans Springs’, where we had a leisurely walk along a creek-side planting then retired for lunch. A barbeque banquet would be a more fitting description, and we must thank Roger and Shiela’s neighbours Jenny and Warwick Chapman, and Sheila’s sister, Judy, for their hard work and hospitality. We were visited, quite surprisingly, by a herd of deer. All in all, it was a very enjoyable way to spend the afternoon.

We took another walk around the dam after lunch, to look at more of Roger’s wonderful and varied plantings. The Eucalypts, in particular, attracted a lot of attention.



A Eucalypt from Roger’s garden

A few hardy folk (some would say fool-hardy) met up for an evening of wine, song and general hilarity that night, and despite a very slight over-indulgence, all were bright eyed and bushy tailed the next morning when we met at the Pomonal Store. A small caravan of enthusiasts followed Roger, who promised us a veritable feast of orchids at a couple of local sites. We promptly got lost, but in his inimitable fashion, Roger found (fluked) a grassy roadside with six species of orchids in flower. Another stop a little further on added four more species, then we finally arrived at Deep Lead Flora and Fauna Reserve where the promised feast was delivered.

The orchid species list included *Arachnorchis fulva*, *A. reticulata*, *A. tentaculata*, *A. parva*, *A. phaeoclavia*, *A. versicolour*, *Caladenia carnea*, *C. fuscata*, *Diuris orientis*, *D. pardina*, *Glossodia major*, *Thelymitra antennifera*, *T. luteocilium* and *T. megcalyptra*.



An unusual *Thelymitra antennifera* – Rabbit ears

We visited an amazing garden in Pomonal on Sunday afternoon. From the street it looked like a small garden, but that was deceptive. Once we went around the back of the house we discovered many different areas and lots of wonderful native plants. The garden was full of surprises. There was a series of dry creekbeds which would flow with some rain and also a pond with huge tadpoles. The wide range of Australian



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plants attracts lots of birdlife. There was also an aviary with colourful finches and even some kangaroos which went hopping through as we wandered around. It's a garden well worth visiting!

Once again, we offer our sincere thanks to Roger and Sheila for their hospitality on what was a most enjoyable weekend in one of Australia's premier parks Gariwerd – The Grampians.

## WHAT'S IN THE BUSH      Sturt's Desert Pea

Well, not around here, of course! Listening to ABC Local Radio 774 an item by Kendall Jackson on 'The World Today' caught my attention. With the wonderful winter rains experienced across the outback, the wildflowers this spring are spectacular ... none moreso, apparently, than the Sturt's Desert Pea, *Swainsonia formosa*.

The South Australian floral emblem is well recognised as a startling red flower with a shiny black central boss, and this year around Roxby Downs, it is putting on a real show. There is an area of two square kilometres which is a sea of pea-flowers ... but not the usual colours. The peas are appearing in a multitude of variants from white to crimson.

Michael Anlezark, the curator at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, says it's an amazing sight.

*" They are just naturally occurring. You know they can be called mutations. Some of the flowers on individual shrubs are different to the ones on the rest of the shrub. And some plants are producing a whole series of different colours. So it's pretty amazing. There's white, pink, yellow, burgundy. Honestly I have seen a red, white and blue one, you know. So we have even got the Australian flag. I can't imagine anything more patriotic than that. So yeah the colours are quite amazing. There's stripes. It's incredible.*

*I think we are so used to seeing, the flower itself is basically red and the black centre part which is called the boss is usually always black. But to see one that is actually pure white or green it's right at the opposite end of what we are used to. So individually the flowers*

*may be one completely different colour or we are seeing a mix of colours for one flower. You know the boss on some of them is red and the flower is white. So it's sort of throwing up all sorts of strange things."*



**A red Sturt's Desert Pea – *Swainsonia formosa***

## HELP!!!

Once again I'm asking members to contribute articles, musings, observations or anecdotes for inclusion in the Correa Mail. It's your newsletter, and I'd like you all to feel some ownership of it. Perhaps you have some interesting photos to share, an unusual sighting, or a funny story.

You don't need to be a literary genius to share your love of native plants with the rest of us. So, please, try your hand at an article. You never know ... you might like it!