



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

Correa Mail

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2014 PLANT SALE

April 5TH and 6TH

After much planning and hard work behind the scenes from the committee and regular helpers, the April Plant Sale was a great success. Saturday dawned grey and misty, but it didn't keep the crowds away, and Arthur and Linda's place was buzzing.

A more concentrated and targeted advertising campaign seems to have paid off, and many people reported hearing Linda chatting with gardening guru, Jane Edmanson, on radio station 1278. We also advertised in newspapers, gardening journals and on road-side signs on the major routes into Geelong. But, it would seem, our biggest asset is still 'word-of-mouth'.

The regular growers were there, but we certainly need more. If anyone has any inside running or knows of growers / nurseries who may be interested in future sales, please let us know.



Our thanks to stall-holders *Mahoney's Creative Botanicals* and *Geelong Propagation* from Waurn Ponds, *Tree Action* from Leongatha, *Otway Greening* from Deans Marsh, *Special Effects* from Colac, *Vaughan's Native Plants*, our own Harry Webb, and the members of APS Geelong.

The Saturday night BBQ was a great night, as it always is, though Arthur was a little more subdued

than usual. The guitars did not make an appearance, and those present were spared yet another rendition of 'Ebony Eyes'.

Sunday morning was a little more pleasant, weather-wise, and a steady trickle of buyers kept all the stall-holders reasonably busy.

The decision to close the sale at 1.00pm on Sunday this year was, I think, the right one, and by 3.30 the place looked reasonably neat, and Arthur and Linda could get back to some semblance of normalcy.



Once again, we say a huge thank you to Arthur and Linda for their ongoing, very generous support of APS Geelong, and to all those who contributed to yet another very successful weekend. Great job!

APRIL MEETING

Exotic Birds

This meeting saw a bit of a departure from our usual speakers in that the topic had nothing to do with gardening or plants, and everything to do with Frank and Ade showing off their photos. Frank, Tina, Penny and Ade have been lucky enough to do some overseas travel in recent years, and as Frank and Ade are both keen photographers, and lot of exotic bird photos reside on their computers.

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They have shared trips to South Africa, Finland and Thailand. Penny and Ade have regularly visited Finland, Lithuania and USA while Frank and Tina have also been to Botswana, Borneo and New Zealand.

Most of the birds seen on these trips are not found in Australia, although some have been introduced either as cage birds, or by 'acclimatization societies' in the earlier days. Many of the African finches, like the Blue Waxbill, are popular cage birds, and many of the doves can be found in wild populations, mostly in Perth and Adelaide.



Blue Waxbill – South Africa

Some, like the albatrosses, waders and black kite are cosmopolitan and are found across the world. Several groups of birds were very well represented in the photos on the night.

Hornbills are a diverse group occurring in tropical and sub-tropical Africa, Asia and Melanesia. Most have feathers which are black, brown or grey, often offset with bright colours on their large, down-curved bills. They are omnivorous, feeding on fruits, berries, insects and small animals. They nest mostly in tree hollows or tunnels in earth banks. In many species, the male 'bricks up' the opening, trapping the female inside and leaving a gap just large enough for her bill to protrude as he brings her food.



Red-billed Hornbill – South Africa

The sunbirds and spider-hunters are a group of small, very colourful birds, usually with long sharp, down-curving bills. They are found throughout Africa, the Indian sub-continent, south-east Asia and northern Australia. They are strongly sexually dimorphic. The females are usually a dull brown, while the males sport bright, iridescent plumage all year. They are mostly nectar feeders, but also take insects and spiders. There are two very similar groups with remarkably similar habits – the hummingbirds of the Americas, and the honeyeaters of Australia. They are one of the few groups of birds who have benefitted from human habitation, with gardens and parkland becoming important habitat across their range.



Lesser Double-collared Sunbird male – South Africa

The other group well represented on the night was the owls. Owls are found right across the world in almost every habitat except Antarctica and some remote islands. They are, for the most part, nocturnal so are not often seen. They eat a variety of foods from small mammals, birds, insects and fish. There were photos of six species, from the tiny African Barred Owlet just 15 cm tall to the Giant-eagle-owl which stands 70cm tall with a wingspan of 150 cm.



Buffy Fish-Owl - Borneo

ON THE TABLE

with Matt Baars

The table was very sparse again, with many members commenting on the lack of flowers in their gardens. However, there were still enough for Matt to present an interesting forty minutes of discussion.

Not surprisingly, the predominantly autumn/winter flowering *Correas* featured strongly. There was delightful, low-growing *C. reflexa* hybrid which was a startling deep pink. There were two cultivars of *C. alba* - one with open white/cream flowers, the other with pale pink flowers. *C. 'Wynn's Wonder'* is a small shrub with green and yellow variegated foliage and a small red flower. *C. 'Federation Bells'* is a favourite with its large salmon pink and yellow blooms. There were two very large flowering cultivars - *C. Longfellow'* and the well-named *C. 'Clearview Giant'* both with massive deep pink and yellow flowers. There were also two unknown varieties - one was very pale pink, and the other with tiny deep pink and green flowers.

Eremophila maculata, a robust plant with deep purple spotted flowers, was also represented with *E. maculate aurea*, a deep yellow flowered form. Another *Eremophila*, of unknown origin, possibly *E. glabra*, featured lovely grey-green flowers and orange/yellow flowers.

One very interesting specimen was *Gossypium sturtianum* – The Sturt's Desert Rose. It is a woody, open shrub to two metres with large deep mauve/pink flowers with deep maroon centres. Apparently it is closely related to the cultivated cotton plant. It is the floral emblem of the Northern Territory and appears in stylised form on the N.T. flag.



***Gossypium sturtianum* – Sturt's Desert Rose.**

Theo Melaleucas on the table demonstrated well the diversity in this genus. *M. fulgens* is a small tree with very showy red flowers. It can also be orange or purplish. *Melaleuca lateritia* is known as Robin Red-breast for obvious reasons. It is a small shrub with

large bright red flowers. Carmel brought along a white-flowered specimen, which she said was indigenous to the area. It was probably *M. ericifolia*, the swamp paperbark, which is found along watercourses. The only other indigenous melaleuca that I could find listed for the area is *M. lanceolata*, the Moonah.

Other specimens of interest included *Pandorea jasminoides* – a vigorous climber, *Prostanthera nivea*, a white-flowered mint-bush, *Banksia occidentalis*, with large red/gold flowers and *Acacia iteaphylla*, the Flinders Ranges wattle, an open shrub with lovely pale lemon flowers.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Westringia fruticosa

Dorothy won the raffle and selected *Westringia fruticosa* as the plant of the month. This information comes from the ANBG website.

As a large permanent feature in a garden or public grounds where space is available, the Coastal or Native Rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) is an excellent choice. It is an easily grown shrub of simple and neat appearance which grows wild near the coast of New South Wales. Stretches of it are seen hugging the cliffs and down to beach level, either prostrate or several feet high depending on situation.



White flowers dot the shapely plants. Growth is naturally stiff and bushy but responds to garden treatment by growing much taller. It reaches at least 2 m high and 5 m across, often forming a regular dome with its lower branches covering the ground. It is useful as a large type of ground-cover plant. Sometimes it throws out one or two main branches to develop an irregular habit, but generally the plant is shapely. After reaching a mature size it does not deteriorate quickly with age as some species do, but maintains a good condition for years. During the coldest weather it keeps a fresh appearance and is also drought hardy, though adequate water should be given to avoid tendency to yellowing leaves and bare wood.

Foliage is a dark, even green, and a covering of short hairs on the young tip growth and leaf undersides gives a silvery tint which adds to its attractiveness. Leaves are up to 2 centimetres long, narrow and pointed and set closely in whorls around the stem. *Westringias* are in the mint family (Lamiaceae). The name 'Rosemary' refers to the appearance of the plant only, as the leaves have not the familiar aroma, though a light scent has been noticed in the flowers in one location.

The flowers are 2 centimetres across set round the stems in the axils of the leaves. In shape they resemble other flowers of the mint family. They are from white to palest mauve with reddish and yellow brown spots near the throat. Though the shrub is never smothered in flowers, they are conspicuous against the dark foliage and are seen most months of the year except in extreme heat or cold. In November they are abundant.



***Westringia fruticosa* – typical habit**

Young plants raised from cuttings may be bought from nurseries and may be planted in any soil. Owing to its original habitat it is a good choice for a seaside garden, as it withstands salt spray. As a cut flower the stiff straight sprays are surprisingly handsome, especially where a large arrangement is wanted, as quite long sprays live well in water and continue to open their buds for weeks. Yet another use is as an indoor plant when it remains equally fresh in a reasonably cool atmosphere, and continues flowering. Pests and diseases never seem to trouble this species.

WALK TO SAVE RARE PLANTS

I was listening to Radio National and heard an interview with Dr. Trevor Wilson, a Scientific Officer with the Sydney Royal botanic Gardens. He talked about an innovative plan to save four endangered plants from the Sydney area, by raising money to fund a three day, 120km walk, collecting seeds as he went.

A team of eight Botanic Gardens staff will hike 123 km in just three days from Mangrove Mountain to the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah. They will cross four National Parks following major watercourses taking them through rainforest valleys, wooded ridges and windswept escarpments. The path includes historical sites, such as they second oldest bridge on mainland Australia, as well as

the plant species that the team is raising money to save.

The plants in question are an interesting quartet. The needle-leaved geebung (*Persoonia acerosa*) is medium-sized erect shrub that has short needle-like leaves. It is found in forest restricted to the central Blue Mountains and is listed as a threatened species. Its small yellow flowers are often grouped in golden clusters at the tips of branches.



Glandular pink-bells - *Tetratheca glandulosa*

The glandular pink-bell (*Tetratheca glandulosa*) is a very small shrub that produces attractive deep lilac-pink flowers. It grows in dry forest between Mangrove Mountain and the Blue Mountains and is listed as threatened. Only recently it was discovered that this distinctly Australian group of plants is related to large trees from rainforests.

Olearia cordata is a medium-sized shrub bearing small daisy-like flowers. This rare and threatened species is a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). Although this is a popular group in horticulture there is a significant gap in our knowledge about its Australian representatives.

Zieria involucreta is a medium sized shrub with soft furry leaves and small white flowers. It is part of a large Australian group in the Citrus family, making it a relative of cultivated plants such as lemons and oranges. The primary characteristic of this group is their large, readily visible oil glands located over the surface of the plant. Conserving this species is important as inside the oil glands are fragrant to strong-smelling oils with untold pharmaceutical potential.



Zaeria involuocrata.

In the two days between hearing the interview, and writing this article, the money had been raised and the trip has been undertaken. You can make a donation to help continue this valuable work, and read all about the walk to save rare plants, at the Friends and Foundation of the RBG website at <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/saveaspecies2014>

DRYANDRAS, HEAT AND WATERING

By Tony Cavanagh

As you know, Victoria had near record high temperatures this summer, with seven days of over 40 °C, three of them at 44 °C or above, here at Ocean Grove in January and only 15 mm of rain, well below our average rainfall of 34 mm. Such weather can play havoc with gardens, especially when a 45 °C day follows one of 24 °C! Even though in principle I try to avoid much garden watering (working on the philosophy that established plants should be able to look after themselves), this year has been so excessively bad that I have found myself watering gardens that have not been touched, water wise, for probably 15 years.



Typical burn patterns on *Dryandra praemorsa*

The problems for the plants are twofold – they are already under stress due to excessive dryness and secondly, these really hot days can cause extensive

scorching of already dry foliage and this may just be the straw that takes the plant beyond redemption. Scorching and burning affects individual leaves and while plants are disfigured, many can survive provided there is enough green foliage left (see pictures of typical results). This article is about my dryandras which, so far, have all survived although one is mostly burnt leaves with little green foliage.

My wife and I identified “danger” beds and plants and I tried to water the beds/plants one or two days prior to forthcoming hot days, either with buckets of water or a 30-45 minute soak with a sprinkler. The aim was to give the plants a lift and put some moisture into the leaves, stems and roots so they were better prepared for the hot days. Most were established plants in established gardens so this watering was only a temporary fix for a particularly bad situation. However, with young and yet to be established plants, the watering can be critical for their survival as they do not yet have an extensive root system. You need to check them regularly and apply water as needed, sometimes a real pain but half a bucket of water at the right time can often save a plant.

You also need to remember that a plants ability to survive in very dry conditions is not necessarily an indicator of its ability to handle very hot days. Sometimes, even plants that come from wet areas can show remarkable resistance to burning and scorching. One that always amazes me is *Isopogon formosus*. In my garden, it has a very well drained but full sun position and yet has never had even a leaf burned in the bad summer of 2009 or this year.



Burnt dryandras –*D. foliosissima*

There appear to be no hard and fast rules about which species do best but plants from forested and protected areas probably will do poorly if planted in the open eg. some of my eastern banksias suffer badly on very hot days.

Also of course, a plant in a sheltered/part shade position in the garden may be less affected than another specimen in a hot, open position. And each

garden is different so it is best to keep your own notes and act accordingly.

So after all this, how do dryandras perform on very hot days? The following lists do not include all my species but are an indicator of how these species performed in my garden under the same severe weather conditions. I would be very interested in other Geelong member's observations on plants in their gardens, as that way we can build up information and perhaps see some patterns (and Ade would love your article!) (*Very true! Ed.*).

Moderately to severely burnt

D. foliosissima, by far the worst, upper foliage all over bush badly burned (photo previous page). Surprisingly, I think that it will recover as there are good areas of green still surviving. I have also included a picture of this plant (the dead looking bit on the right) beside a plant of *D. nivea* which was completely untouched. Shows how different species even from the same genus can behave in near identical conditions.

D. quercifolia, two plants affected, one worse than the other, perhaps up to 50% of leaves burned.

D. praemorsa (young plants), older plants have little damage but two young ones show nearly every leaf affected. I think that I missed watering them before one bad day (see photo, previous page).



Dryandra nivea and *D. foliosissima*

Light damage

D. baxteri (dwarf form), top 10-15 cm. of many branches moderately burned, rest of plant okay.

D. calophylla, one plant in open, hot position more damaged, scorching often showing as rusty patches on the leaf lobes.

D. nivea sub. *uliginosa*, unlike two plants of sub. *nivea*, top five cm. or so of nearly all leaves burned, otherwise okay

Little or no damage (the majority)

D. blechnifolia, *brownii*, *carlinoides*, *cirsioides*, *cuneata*, *drummondii*, *formosa*, *fraseri* (several var.),

ideogenes, *ionthocarpa*, *longifolia*, *nervosa*, *nivea* sub. *nivea*, *nobilis*, *plumosa*, *sessilis* (several var.), *shanklandiorum*.

Can anyone add to these?, not just dryandras but any species and genera.

OUR NEXT MEETING

20th May

Matt Baars will speak to us about weed-busting. Everything you ever wanted to know about keeping weeds at bay. Meetings are at 7.30 pm, at the Ballroom.

PLANT SALE – ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

The Growing Friends of the RBG are holding their Super Autumn Plant Sale on May 3 and 4 at the Gardens, inside Gate E. Lots of interesting, unusual and rare plants, both native and exotic, sourced from within the gardens. Most are not readily available, such as *Acacia acinacea*, the Gold-dust wattle.

The Growing Friends' Super Autumn Plant Sale 2014

SATURDAY 3 MAY 10 AM TO 4 PM
SUNDAY 4 MAY 10 AM TO 3 PM

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PRE-MEETING DINNER

Some members get together before our monthly meetings for dinner at the Dragon's Bistro, which is just 100 metres from the Ballroom, across the football field. Meals are very good and at just \$10 or \$12 are great value for money. Drinks are also at very reasonable prices. If you wish to join us for dinner, we'd love to see you. But, you need to book. Please contact Harry on 52753748 and there will be a seat waiting for you before the next meeting.

PLANTS FOR SALE

We have a number of the plants we purchased from Mahoney's nursery left over from the plant sale. *Correas*, *grevilleas*, *westringias*, *chorizimas*, *isopogons*, *erimophilas*, *adenotus* and others. \$5.00 each for members. Contact Ade – Ph: 52439478