



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

Correa Mail

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FEBRUARY BBQ MEETING

About 30 members congregated at Roger and Sheila's place for the first get-together of the year, a BYO BBQ. (How's that for a brace of TLAs?)



"It's a man thing"

The BBQ meal was exceptionally well cooked by mine host Roger, with lots of lovely salads and desserts provided by members to share.



"Eating Well"

There was lively discussion and much merriment as members talked about all the news since our last meeting in 2015.

We thank Roger and Sheila for offering their house at short notice, after Frank And Tina's place was affected by the big storm in late January. It is a great room and we are truly grateful for their generosity.



OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 15th March at 7.30. Our speaker will be Bev Hanson. Bev is a landscape designer, who, after completing a 3 year Diploma of Horticulture course in 1960, was fortunate to be employed with Ellis Stones as his assistant for 5 years. Ellis Stones, a landscape architect, was the father of the 'Australian Landscape Style'. Bev has since run her own landscape designing business with over 1000 clients. Her talk will be about designing a natural style garden using Australian plants.

OPEN GARDEN DRYSDALE / BELLARINE PENINSULAR Sunday 20th March, 2016

The Cottage by the Sea in Queenscliff has been giving holidays to children in need for over 125 years and receives no government funding. It is

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dependent on money raised by its branches, and donations from individual supporters. The Bellarine Branch is organizing an Open Gardens Day on Sunday 20a March, which features 5 gardens around Corio Bay. They are all in close proximity to each other in the Drysdale area, and most have wonderful views over Corio Bay towards Melbourne.

REDGUMS at 30 Drakes Road, Drysdale is a totally native garden. With the help of landscape designer Sam Cox, the owners began work in 2000. An informal garden was created with the aim of having an upper storey of trees, a middle storey of smaller trees and shrubs and then underplanting with ground covers and smaller shrubs. Unnecessary trees and shrubs were removed, and then extensive rock landscaping and paving in Castlemaine slate was done. Planting of approximately 6000 trees, shrubs and grasses in 3 separate periods between Jan 2001 and Nov 2003, together with mulching, makes this garden low maintenance. The character of the garden changes from year to year, and is always a work in progress.

NORTHLEACH at 35 Oakden Road, Drysdale is a beautiful Japanese inspired garden. The large copse of pine trees which surround the entrance will immediately capture your interest. The garden has taken 10 years to create and nurture, and is still an open canvas. It is tranquil and features 2 courtyard gardens, a pond garden and an enclosed dry landscape garden. Bluestone steps connect the main courtyard to the pond garden, and from there, a winding path leads to the dry landscape garden. The development of an undulating landscape on the western side of the property boasts 3 very tall eucalyptus trees and several black pines.

BRAMBLEDALE FARM at 2 115 Portarlington Road, Drysdale is a well-known, large garden and working farm, which features a haha wall and superb views. It is well established with many beautiful trees and perennials. It is also full of changes, with the owners' latest folly being a "Smartie Garden".

BOURKE FARM at 2235 Portarlington Road, Bellarine accommodates a significant collection of almost 40 contemporary sculptures. The garden has wonderful views and is planted mainly with indigenous species. The landscaping was intended to nurture & maintain the areas natural beauty & biodiversity, with plants & materials in keeping with the natural environment. A variety of spaces around the house & garden provide places to sit & walk; places to reflect quietly. The sculptures are an integral part of these spaces. It is a steep walk from the car park to the garden.

KILMURRAY at 405 Scotchmans Road, Bellarine is a relatively new garden with a large succulent bed near the entrance to the property, an orchard and a more formal garden immediately around the house.

At the front the owners have built a 'ha ha' wall to keep cattle away from the actual garden and to enable an unencumbered view back towards Melbourne. The garden comprises a number of different areas with good use of vistas and hedging. To the west of the house is an arboretum containing a wide variety of trees. Devonshire Tea will be available at Kilmurray. A variety of stalls and exhibitors will also be a part of the day.

GREVILLEA ROBUSTA (SILKY OAK)

By Roger Wileman

Members could not have missed the fabulous flowering display of Grevillea Robusta in and around Geelong last spring/summer. I think it was a better show than normal due to the cold dry winter.

The natural habitat is New South Wales and southern Queensland. I have seen them growing along the Mary River, Queensland, where they grow to a serious sized tree - 30 m (100 ft) - with a straight trunk up to 1m in diameter. In the Geelong region they grow with a more open crown.



They flower in Queensland in mid spring, in Geelong early summer. The timber is resistant to wood rot and was used for many years in window frames, furniture, cabinets, guitars and wood turning.

It was first cultivated in Sydney in 1828, and seed distributed from the Sydney Royal Botanical Gardens. It is now grown worldwide for different uses - timber, shade, plantations, wind breaks etc. Although a beautiful tree, it is not grown as much as previously most likely due to the enormous size that they attain, making them too big for most gardens. It has been used as a root stock for grafting hard to grow grevilleas and in more recent years for grevilleas as a standard. The two standards along our drive way are *Grevillea bipinnatifida* and have continuously flowered for five years.

The plant in the photo is in Olsen Ave, East Geelong and was planted in 1965 the owner told me they planted it because it had large golden flowers and ferny leaves, they probably did not read the label to see how big it did grow.

Editor's note: *G. robusta* is grown as a street tree in Belmont, near to where I live. They are beautiful when in flower but exceedingly messy as the flowers begin to die and fall from the tree. Great in a park, not in the garden 😊

F.J. ROGERS SEMINAR 2016 **Terrestrial and Epiphytic Orchids**

The F.J. Rogers Seminar is on again this year, and while it's not until October, we thought it a good idea to whet your appetites early, so you have plenty of time to consider attending.

The seminar for 2016 will be jointly hosted by the Hamilton and Warrnambool groups, and will be presented in Hamilton.

The topic is Terrestrial and Epiphytic Orchids, and promises to be a very interesting and enjoyable weekend.

Monthly newsletters will be sent to our group, which I will include as an attachment to our own newsletter.

BANKSIAS EVOLVED FASTER WITH FIRE SELECTION **by Joshua Rampling**

I found this article in the Science Network WA website, and thought it was interesting ... Ed.

NEW research furthers understanding of the role of fire in Australian plant evolution and may help in future conservation efforts. Research conducted by a Curtin University plant biology team shows that fire is a larger factor in the evolution of Banksias than was previously thought. Large-scale bush fires are believed to have been present in Australia for the past 15–20 million years and plants much older than this have not

developed adaptations to counteract it. Emeritus Professor and team leader Byron Lamont says the research shows Banksias—known to be older than 20 million years—have adaptations which stem from evolving in the presence of fire.

“We examined features of Banksias that have long been considered examples of adaptations to fire...their ability to re-sprout after fire, the retention of seeds in woody cones that are released after fire, and the fact that many species hang onto their dead flowers,” he says. “Putting these findings together, we concluded that Banksias must have evolved in the presence of fire right from the time it departed from its rainforest ancestors.”



***Banksia burdettii* – Photo Matt Leach**

Prof Lamont's research also showed that some species of Banksias retain their dead leaves which help to provide the necessary fuel—during a bushfire—to melt the sealing resin allowing seeds to be released. Australian plants have evolved many adaptations that enable them to survive and regrow after a bushfire.

Adaptations like fire-mediated serotiny—the fire induced release of seeds into a nutrient rich, post-fire environment—increase the chance of a plant's survival and successful reproduction.

Prior to this research it was thought that plants over 50 million years old had only developed adaptations for drought and poor soil conditions. Prof Lamont says the study will change the understanding of the factors at play in Australia's evolutionary history.

“These discoveries mean that biologists must now take seriously the possibility that fire has had a profound effect on the direction of evolution in Australia for more than 60 million years,” he says. “It is just as important as drought and strong seasonality, high air temperatures and poor soils as limiting factors in the evolution of plants and animals.”

Prof Lamont hopes that this research will help with conservation efforts for endangered plant species. He says awareness and understanding of the optimal fire requirements of individual species is critical to be successful in future conservation efforts.