



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

Correa Mail

Newsletter No 351 – October, 2019

A Short Holiday in the West

by Ade Foster

I was asked, or I volunteered, to be the speaker at the September meeting. Penny and I has just returned from a short holiday and spent two weeks on the coast north of Perth. While it was a little early for the full splendour that is W.A. in spring, I still photographed almost 200 plants in flower, and brought along a selection of photographs to show the group.

We flew into Perth from Johannesburg, arriving around midday. We picked up the hire car and drove 400k north to our first stop, Geraldton. I must say it was a disappointment. For many kilometres around Geraldton the roadsides were scraped clean right up to the farm fences, without a hint of native flora to be seen. But we did day-trips out into the country side, and found quite a bit of interest.



Our modus operandi was to head towards a town or flora reserve that had been recommended. We would stop each time we saw something of interest, which was often, and have a little wander in the area. These would sometimes be stops of five minutes, sometimes and hour or more. Often, we didn't get to our target destination and would return the next day to complete the planned journey. Railway reserves were particularly rewarding 'wanders'.

Despite our early arrival, there were so many plants in flower that it was hard to know where to start with the presentation to the club. So I decided to focus on smaller plants which I thought would look great in a

suburban garden, and there were plenty to choose from.



Grevillea intricata

Identification was tricky, as I am no expert on matters floral, but I found a few resources online that were particularly helpful. Flora Base, Atlas of Living Australia and the WA Wildflower Society Facebook page were all useful, as were my books at home.

If we went to the local tourist information centre to ask about 'wildflowers' the information was almost entirely geared towards the masses of small flowers that abound in the area, or where to find orchids. This was not exactly what we were looking for, but we went anyway and experienced some spectacular floral carpets. Coalseam National Park, north of Mingenew, was one such place. In places the ground was covered in yellow, just a hundred metres on it was all pink, and then white. Really spectacular.



Shoenia cassiniana

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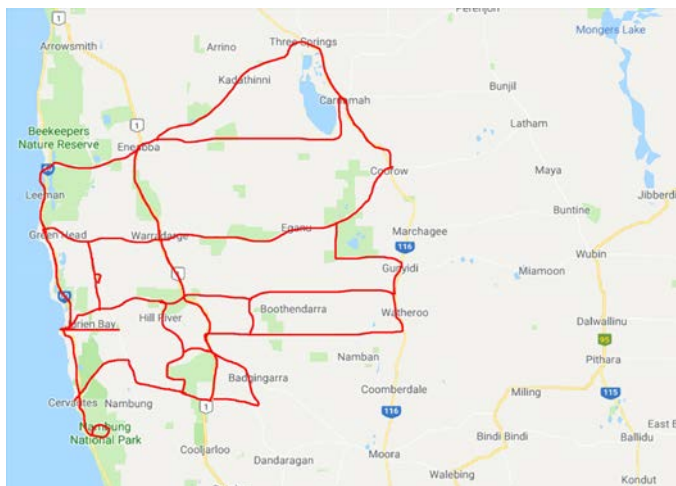
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A longer trip to Kalbarri National Park convinced us that Kalbarri will be our base on our next W.A. holiday. It really is the prettiest little town we've ever been in, and the flora of the area is wonderfully diverse and interesting.



Anthrocerius littorea

After a week on the Geraldton area we drove 140k south to Jurien Bay, where our pattern of day trips was repeated. This area was much more productive than Geraldton, with Leseur National Park, The Pinnacles and the bush around Eneabba particularly good. We spent the entire morning just travelling about 15k of the Coorow-Greenhead Road, which should be declared a national treasure in its own right.



Eneabba is a magical place for plants. The roadsides, the town plantings, and the little reserves dotted around are a delight, and there is always something new, or interesting or just downright beautiful, to see. On a little bush-block behind the town I was thrilled to see *Grevillea mackinsonii* flowering. This is a rare plant, known from only a few sites, and I'm lucky enough to have one in my garden. And it was here that we saw our first 'wild' *Verticordia grandis*, the vivid, deep red flowers standing out from the grey/green scrub and pale, sandy soil in a most spectacular fashion. There were also two *Astroloma* – *epacridis*, a startling red and *xerophyllum*, snow white, and many, many others.



Verticordia grandis

And of course, there were orchids. It was orchids that started my interest in plants and photography, and there were plenty to be seen. Penny is about the best little orchid-finder there is, and we developed an intense (but healthy) competition to find the next one. *Caladenia flava*, the Cowslip Orchid, was particularly prolific. They were seen at almost every place we stopped, hundreds and hundreds of them, in all sorts of colour variations.



Caladenia flava

The amazing diversity and almost incomprehensible number of flowering plants in just the small part of Western Australia that we visited made this trip one to remember. We drove almost 3500 km in 13 days. We saw plants that we've never seen before, many of which remain unidentified, and I took almost 1200 photographs. In all that, we gained an appreciation for just what a treasure the southern part of W.A. is. I urge you all to go there and see for yourself, while it's still there to be seen.

NEXT MEETING:

October 15th

Our speaker will be Tim Trottier who will be talking about Landcare projects in the Leigh Catchment area.

PLANT TABLE

with Matt Baars

The plant table was quite a mix this month and Matt did his usual great job of talking us through some of the more interesting and attractive specimens.

Eremophilas are a diverse group which featured strongly this month. A number of very interesting species, cultivars and hybrids were on display. *Eremophila nivea* is a very attractive plant with soft, silvery foliage and pale mauve flowers. It can become quite large, but, like most Eremophilas, it responds well to pruning. *E. macrantha* is a small shrub with fine, dark green foliage and small violet flowers. *E. maculata* is a variable plant, well known to most of us. Our specimen showed deep maroon flowers with the typical spots in the throat. *E. cuneifolia* is a low shrub with rounded, stem-hugging, green leaves and spectacular pink and purple flowers. Ade reported that the flowers were much smaller this year than in previous seasons. A couple *E. 'I Can't Remember's* were discussed in some detail. The first had narrow, green foliage resembling the introduced Broom. The small, pinkish flowers were an attractive contrast. The other had fine, almost lacy foliage and lovely mauve flowers.



Eremophila cuneifolia

Grevilleas always make an attractive display on our table and this month was no exception. *G. flexuosa* is a very showy plant with divided, holly-like leaves and soft, lemon yellow flower heads. *G. bronwenae* has narrow leaves and the most startling red-orange flowers with dark blue tips to the styles. *G. insignis* has sharply pointed holly-like foliage and flowers vary in colour from pink to the rich, deep red of our specimen. An old

favourite, *G. 'Clearview David'* made an appearance. Once a very popular plant it seems to be less common in nurseries lately. It is a hybrid *G. rosmarinifolia* which originally came from the Clearview nursery in Maffra.

Hypoclimna angustifolia is a shrub with delicate foliage. It features deep pink and white, stem hugging flowers which give a rich, honey aroma to the garden.



Hypoclimna angustifolia

Matt Baars showed us a *Micromyrtus ciliatus* which has lived in his garden for forty years. When in flower the red and white blooms completely obliterate the foliage. He also brought along a lovely specimen of *Dodonea boroniifolia*, the Fern-leafed Hop-bush. It is the seed capsules that give colour to these plants, rather than the flowers, and it was very attractive. There were many others of interest from Matt's garden. *Epacris longiflora* has long, narrow, bright red and white tubular flowers. Matt grows this plant in a pot, as he does with many plants in his garden at Corio. Matt also had a lovely double-flowered, white *Philotheca*, a most unusual form.

Among the other interesting plants on the table was *Nematolepis phebaloides*, a Western Australian endemic with red and yellow bell flowers that look remarkably like a *Correa*. *Chorizema varium*, also known as the Flame Pea, Paxton's Pea, Bush Flame Pea, Paxton's Bush-Pea or Limestone Pea (don't you love common names?) is a low, open shrub which features almost fluorescent orange and pink flowers.

PLANT OF THE MONTH – *Dampiera 'Mallee Mauve'* by Annette Packett

The plant chosen for Plant Of The Month was brought along by Annette Packett. She writes ...

Dampiera is an endemic Australian genus of 76 species, more than 40 of them confined to the south west of Western Australia. Most species are worthy of cultivation and some are outstanding. They are generally herbaceous plants or sub shrubs nearly all

with blue to purple flowers. Not all species have been tried in cultivation, but some have proved to be outstanding in the urban garden.



The *Dampiera* in Annette's garden

From checking my reference books, I believe that the plant in my garden is *Dampiera hederacea*. This is a small plant 20cm by 50cm across with a tendency to sucker. Grey green, slightly hairy leaves are lanceolate to broadly ovate, lobed or toothed and up to 4cm long. Flowers are light blue and borne on moderately hairy stalks. The plant flowers from early spring through to summer. This is a showy, spectacular rockery plant and its long flowering period makes it worthy of a place in any garden. It accepts full sun to part shade.

The plant in my garden was purchased with the label *Dampiera* 'Mallee Mauve'. It has been in my garden for many years and has thrived with minimal attention. I trim it back after flowering, and during long dry spells it is occasionally watered.

AROUND THE GROUNDS:

5th & 6th October: APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall. 9.30am-5.00pm on Saturday, 10.00 – 4.00 on Sunday.

12th October: APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. A huge flower display, plant sales, floral art, native bonsai, basket weaving and other displays and demonstrations.

12th & 13th October: APS South Gippsland Native Plant Sale and Flower Show. 10am-4pm Saturday & Sunday. South Gippsland Historical Automobile Club Pavilion, Leongatha Recreation Reserve.

12th & 13th October: Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants at Horsham Spring Garden Festival, Horsham Botanical Gardens, Firebrace Street, Horsham, from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm.

WIDER GEELONG FLORA LECTURE

Tuesday 8th October 2019
7:30pm...FREE

Recreating Grassland Habitat

Guest Speaker:
Mr Peter Sullivan

From the Australian Plant Society & previous Head Horticulturalist at
The Werribee Open Range Zoo

Location: Geelong Botanic Gardens; Meeting Room.
Tea/coffee available at 7pm.
Entrance is at the intersection of Holt Road & Eastern Park Circuit.

12th & 13th October: APS South Australia 2019 Spring Expo Native Flower Display and Plant Sale. 10am-4pm. Adelaide Showgrounds, Wayville. Entry \$3. Check www.australianplantssa.asn.au for more details.

12th & 13th October: Biodiversity Symposium – “Restored Ecosystems or Green Deserts and Ecological Traps”. This event is hosted by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc., at the RSL, South Parade, Blackburn from 8.30 am to 4.30 on Saturday, Sunday 9.00 am till noon. This will be followed by a guided excursion to Westgate Park all afternoon.

The Biodiversity Symposium will be around the theme of revegetation, recovery, rehabilitation, reinstatement, replacement, regeneration and “restoration” of ecosystems after they have been damaged, if not destroyed, by human activity. The realities of the complexity of biodiversity, and what needs to happen to monitor and measure real success to achieve better outcomes in a range of environments, will be subjects for open and frank discussion. The actual value of “offsets” in the real world will also be discussed.

19th October: APS Mitchell Plant Expo and Sale. Kilmore Memorial Hall, 14 Sydney Street, Kilmore. From 9 am to 3 pm.

26th & 27th October: Cranbourne Friends Spring Plant Sale – 10.00am-4.00pm. (Mel 133 K10)

26 & 27 October APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show at Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanical Gardens. 10am–4pm.

24th September to 20th October 2019

Maranoa Gardens Florilegium – Town Hall Gallery
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn. Free entry.

Twelve local artists from the Balwyn Community Botanical Art Group have painted an exquisite series of plant specimens picked by the curators of Maranoa Gardens in Balwyn.

These intricate botanical paintings have been created to document the fascinating floras of the Maranoa Gardens, one of the oldest surviving gardens to exclusively feature Australian native plants. Filled with watercolour paintings and drawings in pencil, pen and ink, this exhibition celebrates the collective artistic achievement of these dedicated botanical artists.

PROPOSED CLUB EXCURSIONS/WEEKENDS AWAY

The Pomonal Wildflower Show, October 5 and 6 is a must attend for plant lovers and The Grampians flora is always interesting. We plan to camp or use cabin accommodation at Halls Gap Gardens Caravan Park. Hall's Gap is a three hour drive from Geelong, so the weekend is doable or you might like to come up a day or two earlier. We can car-pool for bush exploration.

Maranoa Gardens Day Trip – 19th October. The Maranoa Gardens in Balwyn were designed as a botanical display to exhibit plants in a range of habitat styles and show the flora of Melbourne but also other regions. Members should meet at the main entrance on Yarrbat Avenyue, Balwyn at 11.00 am. After lunch (picnic or a local eatery) we will also visit the Maranoa Gardens Florilegium at the Town Hall Gallery, 360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn. Members should meet here at 2.30 pm. See the write-up in 'Around The Grounds' (above) for a little more information.

THE BOAB

by Joy Sutton

Winning the prize for best flower picture at our recent AGM with a Boab flower has rekindled for me my fascination for this remarkable plant.

Now, I am no botanist and have no technical knowledge about the Boab but ever since I first clapped

eyes on one in 2006 when I moved to Kununurra for work I've just been in complete awe of it.



Joy's prize-winning photoo

Kununurra is the main service town in the east Kimberley and is situated about 100 km inland on the banks of the man-made Lake Kununurra and about 50 km from the earth and rock fill dam that holds back the huge water body of Lake Argyle.

This part of Australia is considered arid tropics where it is hot to very hot most of the time. The average rainfall is close to 1m but that all comes in about 3 months from late December through to March. For the rest of the year, the plants and animals of the region have to make do in whatever way they can to survive.



A magnificent Boab in full leaf during the Wet

The Boab is a specialist at this. It stores water in the tissue of its enlarged trunk and it loses its leaves (normally) after the wet season and remains leafless

until just before the rains start again. Come November, the first signs of life start to appear with tender lime green shoots sprouting followed soon after by the glorious flowers.

For humans this is the worst time of the year when the daily maximum temperatures hover around the low 40s and humidity builds. So the appearance of this life and beauty on the Boabs is a rare highlight. The rest of the countryside usually looks starkly parched and wild fires will have been raging for weeks.

Its leafless form during the dry season together with its flaky fibrous bark and water storage capability enables the Boab to withstand wild fire better than other trees. These adaptations mean there are Boabs that are many hundreds of years old – and some particularly large gnarled specimens are estimated to have already lived for more than a thousand years. No other tree can survive the harsh conditions of the Kimberley for these periods of time.



An ancient Boab from near Derby

The Boab, *Adansonia gregorii*, is the only member of its tribe in Australia and its natural occurrence is only in the Kimberley extending east just into the NT and south to just north of Broome (Boabs in Broome have been translocated). The other species of *Adansonia* are the Baobabs of Madagascar and one other Baobab found in Africa. There is much speculation on how the Boab came to Australia although ocean transport of the large seed pods or nuts seems to be a favoured theory.

The flower of the Boab is an absolute beauty. Its ivory colouring, the folding of sepals and petals and the burst of stamens make for a stunning display. It is also a large flower – about the size of a small orange. Unfortunately for human viewers, the flowers are at their best at night. Indeed the flower spike ready to burst open can sit quite stationery for hours during the

day waiting for sunset before leaping into action.

One stinking hot (normal) November day/night a couple of years ago, I set out to observe a flower come into being. I watched several flower spikes clearly ready to burst all through the afternoon up to dusk with no movement. Then just after the sun had set and the short dusk had expired, these spikes leapt into action.

I was stunned to note that it took something like just 10-11 minutes for those spikes to peel open, fold back and turn into the beautiful flowers. The flowers exude a subtle perfume when they first open and it was remarkable to see how quickly the insects homed in.

Early in the mornings the beauty of the flower remains although the perfume seems exhausted. However, as the heat of the day builds the flowers rapidly wilt and disintegrate. If pollination has occurred the Boab seed pod rapidly starts to grow and can reach the size of a medium eggplant. They hang on the (normally) leafless tree for many months during the dry season.



An interestingly shaped Boab

Boabs come in all shapes and sizes – sometimes tall and stately at others squat and round. They seem to be able to recover significant damage and can grow into bizarre shapes. Some develop a beautiful coppery

shewn to their bark. When in full leaf they provide beautiful shade in which to take respite if out in the elements.



The Boab's coppery bark

Whilst apparently resilient in many ways, they clearly require certain growing conditions. I recall a 4WD trip to the northwest of Kununurra heading toward the coast where this was very visible. We travelled for large distances without seeing a single Boab and then suddenly there would be a cluster of them. On this trip it seemed that basaltic extrusions were the attraction with Boabs even sprouting out of the top of these mounds of black rock.

However, in other areas where cluster distribution is evident, basalt is not. Apparently the trees can be killed by waterlogging and given the amount of water that can accumulate in the environment during the short but very wet 'wet' season, this could also explain patchy distributions of the trees.

You may know also of the massive Boab – 36 tonnes worth of living tree – that was translocated 3200 km to the Perth Botanical Gardens due to it being in the path of road works but of particular significance to the local Gija people. I saw it growing there a few years back and I believe it is still doing OK. Aged at some 750 years, it has some younger companions there in Kings Park, so clearly the tree can grow in areas outside the

Kimberley.



Boabs like basalt

You will notice I have been referring to the leafless state of the trees during the dry as "normally". That's because every now and then, you will find a very leafy specimen in the middle of July when all other self-respecting Boabs have long since shed their leaves and are adorned only by the large nuts.

Altogether, it is a magnificent plant worthy of any plantsperson's attention.

BOAB FLOWER OPENING SEQUENCE



I noticed at about 4.30 pm that there was a flower bud ready to open that night - that is with the top of the bud exposing the tips of the closed petals.

I checked again at 5.30 - no movement.

I stationed myself (well covered in insect repellent) beside the flowers at about 6 pm when the sun had set and waited. By about 6.30 it was almost fully dark, but still no movement.

At about 6.40 I checked the bud again and hey presto, there was movement. I stood and watched and was able to observe the sepals and petals moving. It was amazing and took 11 minutes to happen.



FUTURE OF THE YOU YANGS

Parks Victoria is developing a Master Plan and Business Case for future government investment in the You Yangs Regional Park and Serendip Sanctuary (You Yangs Precinct).

The local community, park users and stakeholders are invited to have their say on potential options for the area.

Public consultation is open until midnight, Wednesday 16 October 2019. If you have anything to offer, you might like to make a submission.

For more information :

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/future-investment-you-yangs-and-serendip-sanctuary>

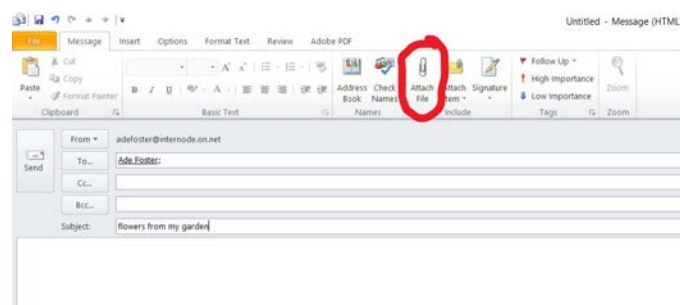
NEWSLETTERS FROM OTHER APS GROUPS

In the past our secretary has forwarded newsletters from other clubs to interested members. We've decided to discontinue this practice, as the newsletters are available online at the APS Victoria webpage. If you are interested in what's happening around the state, go to <https://apsvic.org.au/> click on the 'District Groups' link, choose your group and click on the 'Newsletters' tab.

FACEBOOK PAGE

As spring comes in we will all have beautiful floral displays in our garden. I'm keen to get photos for the

club's Facebook page. Please email them to me **as attachments** to the email **NOT** embedded as inserts in the body of the email. This makes it very difficult and time consuming for me. Just use the little paperclip symbol at the top of your email client to attach the photos.



If you know the names of the plants and can name the photos or name them in the email, that would be a great help. Looking forward to your contributions.

ESPERANCE WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL

Roger Wileman is touring the south-west of W.A. at the moment and has sent a few photos from the Esperance Wildflower Festival

The Esperance Wildflower Festival ran from 24th - 28th September with the theme "Bugs & the Bush" - highlighting the important relationships between local plant and insect species.



Swift moths – *Hepialidae* – in the bush

The Festival featured a display of over 500 individual specimens; art exhibitions from over 400 school students; cultural presentations by Nyungar Elders and Rangers; Keynote presentations from internationally renowned Australian botanists; displays from a range of local organisations, an interactive community sculpture project, and more.