



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 359 – July, 2020

**GREETINGS everyone, and welcome to Winter.** As the Covid-19 situation unfolds, we are really not sure what the future holds for APS Geelong, but a planned outing may be the beginning of the end of our isolation.

I am grateful once again to have received articles from members for this month's edition of the Correa Mail. Thank you Peter Nuzum, Joy Sutton and Tony Cavanagh ☺

## JULY GARDEN VISIT.

18<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

We have been invited by Sheila and Ric Walter to visit their farm, "Waterland" at 1285 Barrabool Rd, Gnarwarre on Saturday 18th July, between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm. "Waterland" is a working farm of 160 acres raising sheep for wool and meat and cropping for hay and food for the sheep.

Sheila says ... Ric and I married in 1999 and purchased Waterland that year. When we arrived it needed a lot of fencing repairs, there were just a few old pine trees and the paddocks had a lot of thistles. And, we had a very old cottage in bad repair, and a 55 year old house that needed attention. At this stage we both had jobs off the farm so our farming venture was in our spare time. Eventually Ric left his job and became a full time farmer and I continued to work in Geelong.



So we wonder where the 20 years has gone, but we have done a huge amount of work - fencing plantations, planting trees (with the help of Landcare) mending gates, restoring the old cottage, renovating our own

home, and we've fitted in lots of overseas trips. We have 6 children and 7 grandchildren between us.

About 8 years ago we built a small theatre in our woolshed and use it for showing movies to friends and small groups as a fund raiser.

We have observed over 100 species of birds here and fencing off our dam to stock has helped. Gazebo at bottom of house garden is a good place to observe – bring your binoculars.

We have had to learn and adapt to water usage, rely on tanks and the dam for water for house, stock and garden. Our two windmills also play a big part in filling tanks and stock water troughs. Our soil is good – light to heavy loam.

Since I joined the Native Plant group about 4 years ago more native plants have been added to our garden. The house garden has a mixture of plants, a lot of which were here when we came.

Enough about us. I have always wanted to have the plant group out here, but time has never allowed. Enter 2020 and the year of lockdown when we have had time to appreciate our surroundings, sort out sheds and tidy up the garden, like everyone else, no doubt.

We are mindful that we are attempting this gathering in the middle of winter but will be nice to get the group together for some fellowship. Bring appropriate warm clothing and shoes for walking in paddocks. If weather is bad the date can be changed.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

*Grevillea lanigera*

*Grevillea lanigera* is a hardy plant and well known to gardeners. There are a number of forms which are commercially readily available. I have four plants of two different forms, in my garden.

*G. lanigera* occurs naturally from around Wilson's promontory in Eastern Victoria to the south/central coast of New South Wales and inland onto the nearby ranges. It is found mostly in open Eucalypt woodland, but occasionally in coastal heath and scrublands. It varies greatly in form and may be prostrate or an erect shrub to 1.5 meters and just about everything in between the two extremes.

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***Grevillea lanigera* 'Mt. Tamboritha' flowers**

The name '*lanigera*' derives from the Latin '*lana*' meaning wool, and '*ger*' to carry or to bear. This refers to the hairy branchlets and leaves. The flowers are usually pink/red and white/cream, but may be pale green or yellow. They begin as a tightly bunched cluster that reminds me of a raspberry. As the flowers mature, they gradually open more and fade as they do so. While there are some flowers all year, the peak season is winter and spring. This year has been a particularly good one in my Belmont garden.



**'Mt. Tamboritha'**

The 'Mt. Tamboritha' form is perhaps the best known form in cultivation, although it apparently is not found at Mt. Tamboritha. It is a dense, prostrate plant about 200mm high and a spread of about 1.5m. My plant is now about 23 or 24 years old and is thriving. It is a great favourite of my little New Holland Honeyeaters. I do not prune it after flowering as I do with most of my Grevilleas, and apart from a bit of a feed it is left to its own devices.

My other *G. lanigera* is an upright, sculptural shrub called 'Winter Wonder'. The leaves are a much darker green and more succulent than 'Mt. Tamboritha' and the flowers are a brighter red and more compact. It has a very interesting appearance with some long, straight branches, and some with radial clumps of branchlets. The flowers tend to come in dense clumps along the straight branches, or in the middle of the clumped

ones. I do prune this one after flowering to maintain a more compact size and promote next year's flowers.



***Grevillea lanigera* 'Winter Wonder'**

*Grevillea lanigera* is a suckering plant but can be propagated readily from seed, or cuttings from this year's growth. It is recommended that seeds be nicked with a sharp blade prior to planting. It occurs naturally in a number of habitats and so tolerates a range of soil types and conditions in the garden. It will tolerate full sun to part shade and prefers a well-drained soil, but has proved hardy in most conditions. It does not need a lot of water and really, is quite self-sufficient.



***Grevillea lanigera* 'Winter Wonder' flowers**



## WHAT'S FLOWERING?

By Joy Sutton

With us all still being unable to meet as a group at the Ballroom, now is the time to load up the virtual plant table for us all to enjoy via Correa Mail. So here are a few items that are flowering at my place now.

*Banksia elderiana* is one of the few – 6 I think – that bears its flowers and fruits in a pendulous fashion. As I see it this is a terrific example of botanical mysteries – why has a small number of banksias developed this different way of presenting flowers and fruits. The other 5 pendant banksias are all West Australians – *B. aculeata*, *B. caleyi*, *B. lemanniana*, *B. nutans* and *B. rosserae* (only discovered in 2000).

The plant this flower is on is 35 to 40 years old, has a slim upright shape and is about 2 m high. So it has done quite well given it is way out of its native territory of a small section of inland WA. It is growing in a raised gravelly bed which no doubt helps with imitating its natural environment.



***Banksia elderiana***

*Hakea scoparia* ... I am guessing with identification with this one but I am pretty certain of my guess. This specimen started opening its flowers in May, but I am including it here to show how the colours change over time with a subtle pinkish tinge appearing as the flowers age – the second pic having been taken in June. This is another 'escapee' from the Western Australian wheat belt. It has an upright habit with needle like long leaves and comes out in quite a mass of flower.



***Hakea scoparia***

*Hakea bucculenta*, is included because it is just beginning to flower now. It is rather fascinating watching how the buds elongate and then burst open. You can see this process happening in the picture.



***Hakea bucculenta***

This plant is about 3 m tall but with quite spindly growth. When the yellow tail black cockatoos find the fruits I fear for the outcome although I love the fact that a plant I have in my garden helps to provide food for these magnificent cockies.

Another Western Australian which hails from the mid-west-goldfield area which I have recently discovered through propagation attempts how much it



really needs good drainage. It will be interesting to see how the seedlings I have recently planted out will fare.

## ALYOGYNES

by Peter Nuzum

*Alyogyne* are flowering plants in the *Malvaceae* family, which are endemic to the drier areas of Australia – Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory. Originally, they were classified as hibiscus but were transferred to *Alyogyne* in the 1960s. With *Hibiscus*, the style is branched below the stigmas but in *Alyogyne* it is undivided. Wikipedia lists 12 species though only about 4 species are in general cultivation - *Alyogyne hakeifolia*, *Alyogyne huegelii*, *alyogyne cuneiformis* and *Alyogyne pinoniana*. Flowers generally only last for 1-2 days but the plants produce copious flower buds so there are always lots of flowers during a flowering season giving a marvellous floral display.

*Alyogyne huegelii* is a medium shrub to about 2 metres. Flowers can be deep purple, white, yellow or pink. Main flowering time is listed as spring to summer though someone forgot to tell my plants as they are merrily in flower at the moment (depths of winter) making a very colourful display. This bush can be pruned quite hard after flowering and can be made into a compact shrub which I will do “one day”. Propagation is by half-hardened tip cuttings 7-8 cm long, although soft tip cuttings also do well or by seed.



***Alyogyne huegelii* – Photo: peter Nuzum**

*Alyogyne pinoniana* or sand hibiscus grows to 3 metres high and wide. It is long flowering from autumn to spring, with blue to mauve-purple flowers. A hardy and drought tolerant plant that responds well to light pruning, which is best done after flowering. Propagation is from seed, softwood cuttings or semi-hardwood cuttings. It grows in eastern Western Australia and in South Australia.



***Alyogyne pinoniana* – Photo: South Australian Seed Conservation Centre**

*Alyogyne cuneiformis* or Coastal Native Hibiscus grows along the Western Australia coast between Geraldton and Exmouth. It has profuse cream/yellow flowers with a dark red centre. They grow to about 2 metres and like a damp, well-drained soil.



***Alyogyne cuneiformis* – Photo: Bill and Mark Bell**



***Alyogyne hakeifolia* – Photo: Wikicommons**

*Alyogyne hakeifolia* or Desert Rose is a medium shrub to about 3 metres with mauve, pink or yellow flowers over most of the year. Flowers last for one day but the bush produces large numbers of flowers so looks spectacular when in flower. It is a desert plant so well suited to Lara. It likes good drainage though mine are

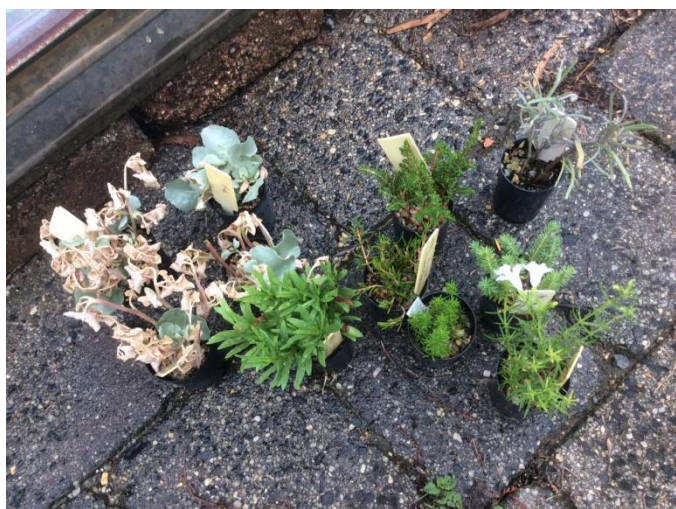


growing in heavy clay. It can be pruned after flowering as it can become rather scraggly. After pruning, it will grow long, fast-growing shoots from old wood. Propagation is from cuttings which strike readily or from seed - no special pre-treatment is needed.

### IS THERE A "BEST" TIME FOR TAKING CUTTINGS?

By Tony Cavanagh

When I began propagating native plants in the early 1970s, we all wondered if there was a "best" time to take cuttings. The smart Alocs would tell you that the best time was when the cuttings were ready, but most of us settled on later winter/early spring on the basis that the cuttings had around six months to establish and grow before winter.



This summer, we decided to grow some plants for our daughter's property in Mildura and right through summer, from late December to mid-February, we took cuttings from our plants.



A major problem with growing cuttings in summer is keeping the water up and protecting them from heat waves, especially as many people take holidays then as well. Much to our delight, we had what I believe were

the best results we have ever achieved, both as regards percentage success, often over 80%, and speed of rooting, often less than four weeks.

The rooted cuttings had also remained healthy in their pots and produced strong and vigorous roots. We were able to take more than 40 plants to our daughter in early June, much to her and her husband's delight, and we still have over 100 to go in early spring. The attached pictures tell the story, the last one showing what proved to be @ highly successful growing season.



So why not give summer a go next time you are taking cuttings? I was fascinated with the vigour of the roots and the high success percentage for most but not all species tried. We will have another go this summer.



### ARTICLES FOR THE CORREA MAIL



As always, I'll be happy to receive any articles from any members who'd like to share something about their garden, gardening experiences or the bush.

This month's offerings from members are a perfect example of the sort of thing we need. Give it a go.