



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 357 – Mpril, 2020

GREETINGS! I hope this newsletter letter finds you all healthy and as sane as our current situation can allow. At least the weather has been reasonably kind, (or cruel, depending on your outlook), so there should be no excuses for weeds in your gardens.

As you are all aware our meetings are cancelled until further notice. Our speaker at the April meeting was to have been APS Geelong Life Member, Tony Cavanagh. Tony is a lover of history, and especially the history of our native plants.

Some years ago Tony was a very regular contributor to our magazine, and wrote many articles on the history of our plants and the origins of their names. I will reproduce one such article here. It first appeared in the Correa Mail back in 2013. Thanks again, Tony.

WHAT'S IN A NAME – Plants Named After People By Tony Cavanagh

Kennedia. While only a small genus of around 15 species, *Kennedias* are important horticulturally, as nearly all species are attractive to spectacular in the garden. They are creepers/trailers or climbers and are found in all Australian states with some nine endemic to WA.



Kennedia prostrata – Running Postman

The best known is *K. prostrata* – The Running Postman - which I am sure all of us have seen in the bush, a prostrate plant with bright red/pink pea flowers and dark green foliage. Most *Kennedias* have pink to purple

to red flowers except perhaps the spectacular rampant WA climber *K. nigricans* with its flamboyant black/purple and greenish yellow flowers.

Kennedias are generally very hardy in the garden although I always think of them as preferring at least some shade. They seem to handle most soils and are sometimes used on banks and slopes to help stabilisation. They are usually grown from hot water-treated seed



The spectacular *Kennedia nigricans*

Kennedia was named after Lewis Kennedy (born c1721, died 1782), founder of The Vineyard Nursery, in about 1745 with partner James Lee. The nursery was in Hammersmith west of London and the firm (simply called Lee and Kennedy) soon developed a reputation of being able to supply the largest range of rare and unusual plants. They were large stockists of Australian plants and received some of the earliest seeds and plants for private gardens from Botany Bay. One of their best known customers was the Empress Josephine, the wife of Napoleon, who developed a spectacular garden at Malmaison. It is likely that Kennedy supplied her with a then unknown plant which the French botanist Etienne Pierre Ventenat named *Kennedia* in his honour. No picture is known of him.

Kunzea. When we think of *Kunzea*, we usually think of the spectacular WA species such as *K. priessiana*, *K. affinis*, *K. baxteri* or *K. sericea* with their massed displays of pink, pink-purple or red flowers in heads or

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clusters. A couple, *K. ericifolia* and the alpine *K. muelleri*, are yellow. There are up to 40 species, mostly medium shrubs with a couple such as the white-flowered *K. ambigua* and *K. pomifera* being sprawling or prostrate. Most are quite hardy and long-lived, doing best in near full sun and well-drained soil although *K. ambigua* and *K. pomifera* grow well in sandy soils and are widely used for soil stabilisation in both coastal and inland situations. They can be grown from seed or cuttings, the latter being best for propagating good forms.



Kunzea priessiana

Kunzea was named after the German Professor of Zoology at Leipzig University, Gustav Kunze, born 4 October, 1793, died 30 April 1851. Kunze was a versatile scientist with strong interests in entomology



and botany (mainly ferns and orchids) as well, and was appointed Director of the Botanical Gardens in Leipzig in 1837. It was named in his honour by the botanist and ornithologist Ludwig Reichenbach in 1828, later the founder of the Dresden Botanical Gardens, so there is a botanical gardens connection but I have been unable to discover

how these two Germans became involved with our plants.

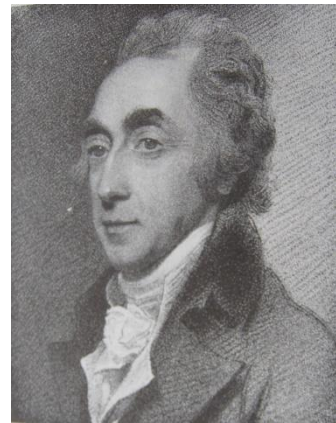
Lambertia. This genus is part of the *Proteaceae* (Banksia) family but most species are not widely grown. There are only eleven ... ten in WA and one in NSW. Surprisingly, it is the NSW plant, *L. Formosa*, the Mountain devil or Native honeysuckle, which is best known in the garden. It was also grown in England in 1789. They are generally medium to tall shrubs, and the

tubular flowers, often red to orange or yellow, are profuse and form in clusters. Established plants are generally hardy but being *Proteaceae*, they do require good drainage and perform best in full sun or light dappled shade. I have not tried them from seed but have been successful from cuttings.



Lambertia inermis

The name honours an English botanist and early member of the Linnean Society, Alymer Bourke Lambert (born 2 Feb. 1761, died 10 Jan. 1842), whose main plant interest was in the genus *Pinus*, about which he was the main authority having published A description of the genus *Pinus* in parts between 1803 and 1837 where many new species were described. He also bought other herbaria and amassed a large collection of specimens and drawings from Australia in the years after settlement but I cannot determine if he grew Australian plants. *Lambertia* was named in his honour by the well-known English botanist J.E. Smith in 1798.



Lechenaultia. This group have some of the most brightly coloured and spectacular small plants in the Australian flora. By far the best known are the sky blue *L. biloba* and the orange-red *L. Formosa*, although with some 26 species, there are many other interesting ones. One I remember being fascinated with in WA was the "wreath lechenaultia", *L. macrantha*, which forms flat wreath-like mats on the ground with the green foliage in the centre surrounded by the profuse flowers. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to cultivate, a common story with most species which are often described as "touchy" and "short-lived"; they are best treated as a biennials (replace every couple of years). If you can get a plant, it is easy enough to grow more

from cuttings. They require a sunny, well drained spot and benefit from light pruning with watering only in very dry weather. There are also many hybrids which may be hardier although I am unsure how many are available in nurseries.



Leschenaultia biloba

The name honours the French botanist and ornithologist Jean-Baptiste Leschenault de La Tour - what a mouthful! He was born 13 November, 1773 and died 14 March, 1826. He was the official botanist on the French expedition to Australia and the South Pacific led by Nicholas Baudin between 1800 and 1803.

It appears from the expedition journal that he did not work particularly hard at his job - the junior gardener Guichenot collected more specimens and labelled them more usefully!

While he later published few new plant descriptions, his specimens from Australia and other countries were described by many French botanists in later years. Between 1803 and 1807 he made the first thorough botanical examination of the Javanese flora and later collected in India from which he obtained two species of sugar cane and six species of cotton, and also South America. I think that the naming of *Leschenaultia* by Robert Brown in 1810 is an honour justly deserved.



PLANT OF THE MONTH

The door prize was won by Di Royce, who chose the Garland Lilly brought along by Matt Leach as the 'Plant Of The Month'. Last month's newsletter went out early so I missed Matt's 'Plant Of The Month' article. I offer

my apologies to Matt for jumping the gun. Here is Matt's article, for your enjoyment.

CALOSTEMMA - GARLAND LILY by Matt Leach

Calostemma are in the same family as exotic daffodil and nerines, Amaryllidaceae. It is the only endemic species of this family to be found in Australia.

Calostemma is named from the Greek *kalos* (beautiful) and *stemma* (crown). *Purpureum* is from the Latin *pupureus*, meaning purple and *luteum* is from the Latin *luteus* meaning yellow.

Calostemma purpureum and *C. luteum* are now considered two distinct species, with *luteum* having fewer flowers per umbel and larger individual flowers than *purpureum*.

Calostemma purpureum is the most common member of this genus and occurs in north western Victoria, western New South Wales and eastern South Australia. It is a bulb that grows well around the Riverina district on both floodplains and rocky ridges. Nicole and I found a some large colonies in the Murray-Kulkyne Regional Park and the adjacent Hattah-Kulkyne National Park in full bloom in late March.



***Calostemma* in Hattah-Kulkyne**

Calostemma often flower in a leafless state. The narrow, shiny green, strap-like leaves usually precede flowering. Flower stems can reach a length of 25-30 centimetres. The flowers are borne in an umbel of 5-20 flowers on a leafless stem. Flower colour can be light purple to purplish red and/or yellow to yellow with some purple streaking. All have yellow anthers. Trumpet like individual flowers are held on a thin pedicel that is about 2 centimetres long.

Calostemma bulbs can be grown as you would grow exotic bulbs, like daffodils. They are happy in pot culture or in the ground. Fertilizing will help to promote flowering and you can use either native or exotic fertilizers safely.

Propagation is fairly easy if you can get your hands on bulbs or some seeds. The seeds germinate very

readily if you do one important thing. Do not let the media on which the seeds are placed dry out when the little bulblets are growing.

Calostemma, like any other bulb will die down around October and usually appear again in late February to March, given decent rains at these times. There are no real pests of the bulbs themselves, but I know from experience, that Swamp Wallabies love to eat the flowering stems.



Matt's *Calostemma* from the last meeting

We have some of these bulbs growing in pots and the garden, in full sun to semi shade, in many different soils. I think the secret is to keep them on the drier side of wet.

WHAT'S FLOWERING NOW?

With the extra rain we've had at the beginning of the year – 260mm in my gauge - many plants have begun flowering earlier than usual at my place in Belmont. There are a few out in flower that I don't expect to see until spring, and many were flowering in March when I would expect them at the end of April.

I'm not complaining, mind. Flowers are welcome at my place any time. Many of you will know that I have a lot of Grevilleas, both true species and hybrids. Many of the 'Queensland' hybrids, *banksii x bipinnatifida*, flower all year to some extent, so there is always some colour. But this year is particularly nice and I'm almost grateful for the extra 'enforced' time to enjoy it.

Given that we are all confined somewhat to our gardens, perhaps some of you could email me photos of a favourite plant for future newsletters? We will be looking for content with no meetings, no plant table and no speakers to report. Why not write a short article to fill in your time, and fill up our pages?

Here are a few from my garden, just to fill up the page.



***Grevillea zygoloba* – pink. Usually flowers in October**



***Banksia spinulosa* – 'Birthday Candles'.**



***Grevillea bronwenae* – stunning colour**



***Grevillea lanigera* – '-Winter Wonder'.**