



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 404 - August, 2024

JULY MEETING - Seaford Banksia Arboretum

Our speaker at the July meeting was Ross Shepherd and he spoke to us about his project, The Seaford Banksia Arboretum. Ross had been growing Banksias for many years, without much success, until he moved to Seaford. The sandy soil in his area, an ancient sand-dune was ideal for Banksias, most of which come from the sandy soils of Western Australia. The foreshore reserve along the Port Phillip at Seaford has Australia's largest population of *Banksia integrifolia*, the Coastal Banksia.



As a member of the Banksia Study Group, Ross is putting together a photographic database of 'baby' banksias to help identify seedlings. He planted Banksias in his Seaford garden and they grew quickly and flowered after just a year in the ground. His neighbour was encouraged by Ross's success and has planted his garden with many species of Banksias, too.

A garden in the Primary School in Bunbury, WA, featured a wall of *B. prionotes*, a spectacular sight. This inspired Ross to try and do the same in the magic Seaford soil. But where? He lives in a townhouse with a small garden and no room for bulk plantings of large Banksias.

Near his house are two strips of vacant land adjoining the Frankston Freeway and being used primarily as a dumping place for the locals. He enquired

of the Frankston City Council who informed him that the land was owned by VicRoads.



The Bunbury garden of *B. prionotes*

A planting schedule was submitted and a year later, VicRoads granted Ross planting rights to the land and he began the arboretum project. It was lucky that the land was owned by Vicroads, as the council would insist on only using plants indigenous to the local area.



The shaded area shows the two tracts of land used for the arboretum. They front onto Seaford Rd, bisected by Wells Rd., with the Frankston Freeway on the right.



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With the help of volunteers and with some very generous donations the arboretum is beginning to take shape. Ross has managed to purchase equipment to help maintain the grounds. He has done talks on the project for Bunnings, in return for large numbers of plants. He assured us that the speaker's fee from our meeting will go to purchase more Banksias for this wonderful project. Congratulations Ross on a great initiative, and thanks for a most interesting talk.



PLANT TABLE - Various members

Matt Leach, who, like Ross, is a Banksiaphile, brought along a great selection of Banksias for the table.

Banksia candolleana is a branched shrub to about 1.5 metres. The long, green leaves have triangular serrations on each edge. The flowers are a deep golden yellow, but there are reports of a pink and green form and a red form from cultivated plants.



Banksia spinulosa is a very variable shrub, with many cultivars in nurseries and gardens; - Birthday Candles, for example. In nature, it may be a shrub to 1.5 metres or a straggling tree to 6 metres. The flowers are generally gold, but the styles vary greatly in colour, giving the inflorescences many different appearances. Found naturally along the east coast from Gippsland to north Queensland.

Banksia baueri is commonly known as the Possum Banksia or Teddy Bear Banksia because of the very large soft inflorescences that resemble animal fur. A shrub to about 2m x 3m they are common in cultivation. The flowers give off a pungent, unpleasant odour.



Banksia baueri

Banksia telmatiaea, commonly known as swamp fox banksia is a shrub from s.w. Western Australia. It has long, narrow leaves and small golden yellow flowers, often pinkish when first opened.

is a small shrub to about 1.5 metres found on the plains and mallee bushland of southern Western Australia. Flowers are generally yellow and the fruit resembles an unopened pine cone.



***Banksia pulchella* – Teasel Banksia**

Banksia sphaerocarpa is a shrub from the south west corner of Western Australia. It grows in bushland and shrubland to a height of about 2m. The inflorescences are roughly round and vary from pinkish yellow or orange.

Banksia violacea, from the s.w.of Western Australia is a small shrub with fine, narrow leaves. The flowers appear in spherical inflorescences and are yellowish in bud, but a dark purple when opened.



Banksia oreophila, commonly known as the western mountain banksia is endemic to the south-west of Western Australia. It is a very tough plant, notable for its cylindrical grey/mauve flower spikes. It grows on slopes and hilltops in the Stirling and Barren Ranges in southern WA.

Banksia grossa is a many stemmed shrub growing naturally in sandy soils around Eneabba in WA. It has orange and red/brown flower spikes that produce copious quantities of nectar and are very attractive to birds and insects.



Banksia grossa

Banksia menziesii, the Forewood Banksia, is a straggly tree to about 10m or a spreading shrub to about 1.5m in the northern part of its range – coastal Western Australia, from Perth to Kalbarri. Matt's plant is the dwarf form, a compact shrub to about 1m with large red and orange inflorescences.



Banksia menziesii dwarf – Image: Benara Nurseries

Ross also brought along a number of Banksias including *B. praemorsa*, *B. media*, *B. menziesii*, *B. prionotes*, *B. occidentalis*, *B. canei* and *B. laricina*



Tracey Hind: Tracey had a *Hardenbergia violacea* just starting to flower, which will be spectacular in a few weeks. She also had *Acacia baileyana*, the Cootamundra Wattle which is flowering profusely all over the Geelong region at the moment. (See Ade's article later in this edition)

Joy Sutton: Among Joy's offerings this month was a lovely prostrate *Correa reflexa* var. *nummularia*. *Hakea clavata* is a shrub with leaves like a succulent, bearing a very sharp spike on the tip and lovely deep pink flowers. She also had a couple of *Eremophilas* – *E. oppositifolia* with fine leaves and lovely purple flowers; *E. subfloccosa* with grey green leaves and yellow green flowers that are very attractive to birds and *Eremophila mulleriana*, a striking plant with grey/green foliage and deep purple, almost black flowers.



Eremophila subfloccosa – Photo: Wildtech Plants

Carmel Addlem: brought along a number of unidentified *Eremophila* and *Correa*, *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty' and lovely example of *Kunzea baxterii* pink flowering form.



Kunzea baxterii - Pink form

Ade Foster: As usual Ade had a few Grevilleas including *Grevillea nivea* 'Scarlet King' a plant of 4m x 4m which is pruned pretty hard after each flowering season. The plant is around 20 years old, and this year has been its most prolific flowering.



Grevillea nivea 'Scarlet King'

PLANT of the MONTH – *Astus subroseus*

Carmel picked the plant of the month and chose Astus subroseus, brought in by Matt Leach. Matt writes

...

There isn't a lot of information around about this plant. It's a slender, spreading or dense, compact shrub to 1.5m high and the same wide. The flowers are pink to purple, from June to September. They are from the south-west of Western Australia across a fairly large distribution area - Avon wheatbelt, Coolgardie, Esperance Plains and Western Mallee areas.



Astus is a small genus of four, all of which are endemic to south-west Australia. *Astus* is one of a number of genera belonging to the tribe *Chamelaucieae* that have kidney shaped seeds. The type species *Astus tetragonus*

is based on *Baeckea tetragona*, with sufficient differences to separate it from *Baeckea*. *Astus duomilius*, *A. subroseus* and *A. wittweri* are all new species.

My plant was purchased from Goldfields Revegetation Nursery in Bendigo, 10 or so years ago. The plant is almost a metre high and a little less in width. It's growing in a raised granitic sand bed with drip irrigation. This plant, when in flower, is a show-stopper as the bush is absolutely covered in flowers.

2024 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

Aug Meeting	AGM & Photo Competition
Sept Meeting	Stephen Murphy – Bringing wildlife to Suburbia
Oct Meeting	RSPCA Koala Hospital
Nov Meeting	TBA
Dec 7th	Christmas Break-up BBQ

Lots more in the pipeline. Stay tuned!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – August 20th, 2024

The August 20th meeting will be the Annual General Meeting of Australian Plants Society – Geelong. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm at The Ballroom, Hamlyn Park.

Elections will be held for all committee positions ... President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and General Members.

We would encourage you to consider a term (or two) on the committee. It is not an onerous task and new ideas are always welcomed.

A Nomination Form and Proxy Voting Form were posted in last month's newsletter

PHOTO COMPETITION

Once again we'll have our legendary Photo Competition instead of a speaker at the AGM. There are three categories: Australian Plants, Australian Animals and Australian Landscapes.

Photos must be taken by you, in Australia, and have nothing which identifies the photographer. You can use your DSLR camera, your phone or your grandad's box brownie. The photos can be recent, or as old as you like. You can submit two photos in each category – a total of six entries. Once the photos are received, they'll be

uploaded to the internet and a link will be sent out so you can view them, and vote for your favourite in each category. Photos will be identified by a number only, no names.

All the photos will be shown on the big screen after the AGM and the winners announced. Prizes will be presented at the Christmas break-up in December.

Entries close 28th July and voting is from 31 July to 13 August. Please send your photos through to Bruce at bsmcginness@gmail.com If you have any problems emailing your photos let Bruce know by email or at M: 0428439761, H: 52788827. Nicole Leach will send an email outlining the voting procedures.



A previous winning entry by Carmel Addlem

APS GEELONG MEMBERSHIPS - Don't Forget

We have introduced a new system for our membership renewals, to keep in line with APS Victoria procedures and to enable us to better keep track of our membership.

All memberships terminated on 30th June, regardless of when the previous payment was made.*
Membership fees are due on July 1st every year.

* Exception: We had hoped to recruit new members at the plant sale in April, and any who signed on at the sale, or from April 1 to June 30, will have membership through to 30 June 2025.

Don't forget, if you join APS Victoria and pay your membership of APS Geelong at the same time, please email our secretary to let him know. That way, we keep you in the loop and keep our records up to date, as we are required by law to do.

Email the secretary at: apsgeelong@gmail.com

OUR GARDEN JOURNEY (so far) – By Tracey Hind

In 2020 my husband and I were looking for a place to retire to on the Bellarine Peninsula. We found a brick home built in 1985, nestled on 3.5 acres of a former potato farm on the edge of Clifton Springs. The grounds had obviously once been thoughtfully designed and planted with a mix of natives and exotics, but the decades had wreaked havoc and the block was massively overgrown with weeds and leggy, unsightly messes of legacy plantings. We saw through the mess to the potential and were smitten.

We spent a month clearing the mess and debris from the immediate environs of the house itself, while leaving 3 small horse paddocks mown and tidy, but otherwise still overgrown. Not quite ready to retire and relocate we rented the property for 3 years to 3 different lots of tenants.

On 4th July 2023 we moved in ourselves. The house had been well looked after, but the gardens and block were a mess. The garden beds I had created around the house 3 years earlier had been reclaimed by paddock grass and the weeds had grown up again over all the fences on the block, including the pool fence. The job was on!

Our vision is to return the block to a viable habitat for native species of insects, reptiles, birds, mammals etc – a more curated version of how it would have been prior to European settlement. European potato farming methods cleared the land completely in the nineteenth century.



Aerial shots of the land from the 1950's show it to be completely barren; not a tree in sight. So too do photos shown to us by our elderly neighbours who moved to the area in 1986 – a year after our house was built. Ours was the first on the subdivision, theirs was the second.

There are around 60 mature trees now on the block of various types, mainly pines, eucalypts and cheesewoods, but also olives and willows. And just as many fledgling trees, again of various types. All would

have been planted within the last 40 years as the photos show.



In the first year of executing on our vision we have painstakingly removed numerous large trees that were either pittosporums or enormous pines, one willow and sadly some callistemons strangled by invasive weed growth, as well as taking out unproductive orchard/fruit stock. Hundreds of boxthorns have been removed along with dozens of roses, unending ground and climbing ivy and many hundreds of agapanthus. Our shovels, mattocks, hedgers, chain saws, clippers, pruners and wheelbarrow have all been overworked and many pairs of gloves have been worn through. Most of the detritus (minus the boxthorn, weeds and agapanthus) has been mulched and so enjoys a more productive second life. As for the rest we have had 6 huge bonfires comprising piles 3m x 3m; it's incredibly satisfying watching them burn!

We have reclaimed the dam on the property. It had been choked with weeds, rubbish and willow. It has been a massive job to clean it out, invest in and dig in aeration, remove residual phosphorous from the potato farm soil and address water quality. Native bullrushes now line the edges and we have released silver perch into it and can hear the frogs frolicking there in the night-time. It's potential as a fresh water source for local fauna is now excellent.

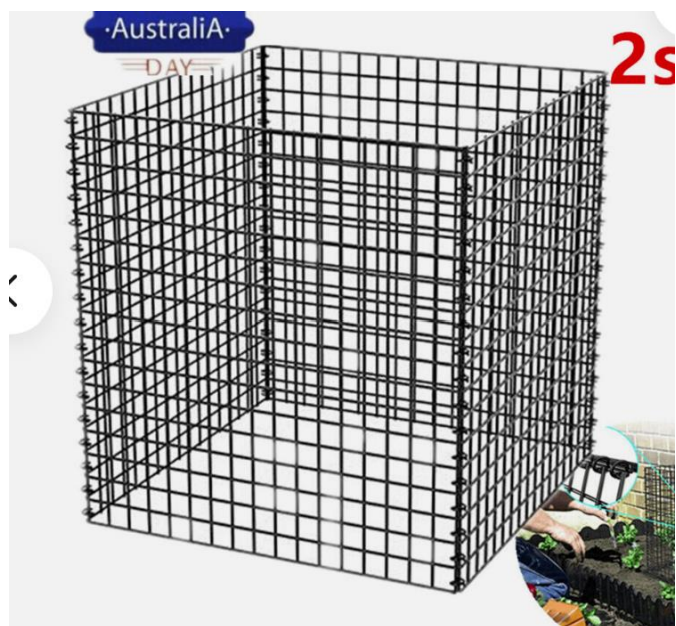
As we've progressed we've made many discoveries on the block that we didn't know were there when we bought it because it was so overgrown. They include seven additional taps set around the block, an animal (we hope) graveyard replete with solid crosses and a fibreglass pond set up with a mini waterfall flow. We've spotted a lot of wildlife already including Tawny Frogmouths, possums, several pairs of wooduck, yellow tailed black cockatoos, lots of rosellas and parrots, a

territorial magpie family, flying foxes, belly gliders, herons, ibis, treefrogs, wrens and wattlebirds.

As we close in on the end of our first year of garden renovation we can look around and see great bones, some lovely established trees and a huge opportunity now to maintain those basics and grow the ecosystem. The target for year two will be to complement the tree cover with a 3-6 metre next-level cover and then a 1-3 metre cover and down to the ground level. There are spaces now to put in plants that will become food sources and homes for all sorts of birds and animals, where once there were weeds. Some areas have water sources like the dam and newly uncovered pond, others have mid sized rocks to sunbake on and use as hiding spaces. Native grass replanting is high on the agenda

The biggest obstacle to achieving our goal seems to be rabbits. Every day we can weed, plant and curate, but every night there are dozens of new holes dug by rabbits across the block. Every plant is at risk of being eaten before it has a chance to establish. To combat this we have been investing in metal guards for each plant. At around \$11 per guard it's expensive when we need many hundreds of plants on a block our size. But not as expensive as losing the plant.

The other downside is that until we consider the plant safe, we can't remove the guard and the native animals can't get to it either (except birds and insects, of course). And our friends ask us why we are growing a garden full of metal boxes! Until they can be removed the garden doesn't look great either! We have had a calicivirus treatment on the block and plan to have the warrens smoked and collapsed shortly. I'm also spraying a very whiffy mixture of egg/garlic on some of the areas as strong smells are supposed to deter rabbits. However if anyone in the club has ideas on how to eliminate this pest (without poisoning other species), we would be delighted to hear it!



The most common species currently in our garden

While the rabbit challenge is disheartening, it won't deter us. We're inspired by the concept of wildlife corridors and the growing movement of land in private hands having a role to play in conservation through sensitive stewardship. We plan predominantly native species on the block but have included a couple of exotic specimens where conditions favour this.

Being a member of the club has already contributed to our goals. I am learning more about Australian plants and seeking to acquire different species for the block that members have bought to plant night or that I have seen on one of the presentations. I always leave the meetings with more motivation to keep on going and keep doing what we're doing. So thanks to the club for that.

A SUCCESSION STORY – *Acacia baileyana*

Way back in August, 2013, I wrote an article about my favourite Acacia – the Cootamundra wattle, *Acacia baileyana*, growing in a garden on the corner of my street. I've reproduced the story here (with a few edits for brevity) and added another chapter. Call it a succession story, perhaps also a success story.

We had a huge Cootamundra wattle in our garden when I was a kid, and I loved to lie under it when it was in full flower, gazing through the blossoms that were so intensely yellow in the bright winter sun, that they hurt my eyes. I'd come out covered in pollen and bits of flower, and Mum would shake her head in exasperation again.



The bright yellow blossoms of Cootamundra wattle.

On the corner of the street where I now live, in Belmont, there was an ancient Cootamundra wattle. 25 years ago it was huge and magnificent, filling the front

yard, and adding a certain pleasure to the cold days of winter. Over the years, the borers attacked, it became rotten and branches fell away. But it wouldn't die. Eventually, two winters back, all that remained was a gnarled trunk with two straggly branches. Though each still bore a spray of magnificent yellow blooms, the tree was doomed. The owners removed it, and with it went a piece of me. I loved that tree!

But the removal of the tree meant sunlight on the ground and years of fallen seed began to germinate. Seedlings sprang up in profusion – over fifty at one stage. Most did not survive, but this week there are seven or so, all about 2 metres high, and all promising to return that little piece sunshine to my winter's days.



The seedlings in July, 2013

And now, we fast forward to July 2024. The seedlings have been allowed to flourish, and are now an impenetrable forest of yellow. While there are only seven of the original fifty, it's almost impossible to see the house, and it must be as dark in there as the inside of a cow. They completely swamp the other trees in the front garden.

But 37 years on, that wonderful wattle still adds some sunshine to my winter, a much needed reminder that this bloody cold won't last forever!



The same 'seedlings' – July 2024

NEXT MONTH'S EDITION

Penny and I will be on our way to Queensland by the time you read this, desperately searching for some warmth. We'll be back in mid-September, so there won't be a September edition of the Correa Mail.

Have fun at the AGM and good luck in the Photo Competition. I'll report on all the proceedings in the October edition.

If you find yourself inside, escaping the Victorian winter, you might like to put together an article for the next *Correa Mail*. It doesn't need to be an in depth scientific treatise ... just a paragraph or two will do.

Or just send through some photos for the Facebook page. I'll be monitoring emails while we're away, and I'm happy to receive any contributions.

YOU KNOW YOU DO

