



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 397 - January, 2024

I was away in November, trying to collate a newsletter without access to my home computer. As such, I missed a couple of submissions from members. Apologies. Ed.

EREMAEA HADRA

by Matt Leach

Eremaea hadra, now known as *Melaleuca hadra*, is a plant from the south-west of Western Australia, from near the town of Badgingarra, north to the Geraldton sand-plains.

It grows from 0.5 - 1.5m high and has erect branches with hairy young leaves. The leaves are thin, around 10mm long by 5mm wide, tapering to a point.



The flowers of *M. hadra*

The flowers are deep violet and occur in groups of 2-9 on the ends of branches. Flowering occurs from October to December.

This plant is rarely found in nurseries, which is unfortunate, as it is a frost and drought tolerant plant, ideal for small gardens.

The plant from Inverleigh is over 10 years old and is less than 600mm high and wide, and flowers profusely every year. The only downside is that the flowers seem to blend into the background from a distance, but up close, it looks spectacular. In the garden it is in a fairly open site in a granitic sand raised bed, with irrigation drippers used during drier times.



The plant in situ – Leach garden, Inverleigh

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2023 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

January 2024 High Country campout
Feb meeting Zoë Brittain – Marine Algae
Mar meeting Plant Based Trivia
June meeting Grant Baverstock – Bats
Aug Meeting AGM & Photo Competition

DECEMBER XMAS BREAK-UP

About fourteen of our regulars risked the rain and made it to Fyansford for our Xmas BBQ. The weather remained cloudy, but fine, and though it wasn't particularly warm, a very enjoyable day was had by all. Thanks to all who attended and made it such a wonderful time. We are looking forward to a big year in 2024 and hoping that you can continue to be a part of APS Geelong.



MT HOTHAM CAMPOUT ... 19 – 22 January 2024

We have made plans for a long weekend campout at Mt. Hotham. We have booked Kalyna Ski Club Lodge for the adventure. 14 members have signalled their intention to take part, but we may rooms still available. If you are interested let Bruce know bsmcginness@gmail.com and he may be able add you to the list.

The lodge is fully self-contained. Pillows and doonas are supplied, b.y.o. linen and towels. Lounge, dining, TV, and games rooms ensure space to relax. Kalyna is self-cater, with a large, fully equipped kitchen. Three cooktops and a grill, four ovens and ample bench space ensure no queues come meal time.

Hotham, being on the plateau, offers many easy walks for those of us who finds hills a chore. And January is peak flowering period for the high county flora.

QUESTION CORNER - Part 1 - LIVERWORTS

In the November edition of *'The Correa Mail'*, Chris Walker-Cook posed the question *'Is there a place for liverworts in the garden?'*

Matt Leach has offered this ... At home in Lara they have become a nuisance ever since I brought plants home from the GenU nursery with several pots covered with Liverworts. They have infiltrated our lawn, garden beds and pot plants. They have been out-competing the couch grass lawn in shady areas. They take nutrients from pots and out-compete the plants, especially in tubestock. I have tried everything to get rid of them from the lawn, from using slasher (organic, salt-based herbicide) – which sort of worked, to aeration of the lawn and digging them out. Conventional herbicides do not work e.g. Glyphosate, but I have recently read that baking soda or vinegar might work and I will try in the future.

Ade Foster wrote ... I have them in the shaded, damper parts of my garden, where, mostly, they are filling the cracks between my brick pavers. I dig them out of the garden beds, but leave them in the cracks between the pavers. I find them quite attractive as a contrast.

QUESTION CORNER Part 2 – RAMPANT PLANTINGS

Chris Walker-Cook has this very interesting question that all of us must have experienced. He writes ...

Plants which run amok in the garden: how have other readers responded to this issue?

Over the years, I have planted quite a few native plants which have self-seeded or spread more than I would have expected. Interestingly, they are all indigenous. With some species, I am quite happy for them to do their thing.

Examples which come to mind include groundcovers such as *Dichondra repens*, *Einadia nutans*, and *Lobelia pedunculata*. Other groundcovers are easy enough to keep within reasonable bounds, such as *Veronica plebeia*, or *Apium prostratum*. On the other hand, *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, I have found, requires more drastic measures and is now basically confined to the nature strip.

Then I have other species which I have regretted planting in the first place. *Hydrocotyle verticillata*, not usually regarded as indigenous to the Geelong area,

comes to mind here. Not only does it take root from nodes along creeping stems, but also reproduces miraculously across any expanse of water. Hopefully, I have managed to eradicate it completely, apart from what I have left growing in a couple of pots.



***Hydrocotyle verticillata* – Whorled Pennywort**

I am not just talking about groundcovers here. I love seeing *Bulbine bulbosa*, *Linum marginale* and *Microseris* sp. pop up everywhere, even on gravel pathways. If any appear in an unwanted spot, it is easy to pull out, and then transplant if so inclined. *Ficinia nodosa* also has a tendency to pop up anywhere, in this case, much more than I would like.

Native grasses can be a real problem. *Poa* sp., and *Rytidosperma* sp. in particular, can run rampant in a suburban garden. I have decided I can do without Wallaby grasses completely. Other grasses such as *Themida*, *Microlaena*, *Austrostipa*, are not nearly so weedy. *Dichanthium sericeum* also self-seeds very prolifically, but I find the year-long interest it provides more than makes up for this drawback.

The one species I found impossible to confine, because of its suckering habit, has been *Teucrium racemosum*. Thankfully, it has been many years since I have had to pull out any newly-emergent growth.



***Teucrium racemosum* - Photo: Melburnian- Wikipedia**

Ade: Interesting indeed, Chris. And yes, many of us must have a similar experience. For me it's been (mostly) beneficial. I have four plants in my garden which self-seed or reproduce themselves with gay abandon, but I love it.

I purchased a 3" pot of *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* from the Mitre-10 nursery about 30 years ago. From that humble beginning I have divided and introduced the plant to most of the garden beds at my place. It spreads through my propagating-sand mulch and I just rip handfuls out as they become too invasive.

Pelargonium rodneyanum, which I grew from seeds collected in the Brisbane Ranges. These self-seed now and have spread across much of the front garden.



***C. apiculatum* and *P. rodneyanum* – in the front garden**

Matt Leach donated a couple of pots of *Violacea hederacea* sourced from his dad's garden at Inverleigh. It spread rapidly and has been divided and transplanted across the front of my house where it continues to expand.

About 20 years back, Frank Scheelings gave me a small pot of a *Wahlenbergia*, perhaps *W. communis*?, which, with no help from me, is now well established across my entire back yard. It becomes very thick at times, but some none-too-gentle weeding keeps it in

check. I have not done anything to assist its expansion because it is more than capable of spreading by itself.



***Wahlenbergia sp* in the back garden**

FEBRUARY MEETING - Zoë Brittain ... Marine Algae

Our first meeting for 2024 will be on 20th February, and our speaker will be Zoë Brittain.



Zoë is a PhD Researcher at Deakin University, working within the DeakinSeaweed Research Group. She will be speaking about her research into perception of a sustainable seaweed industry in Australia,

exploring how different kinds of people think of sustainability, what this means for seaweed in the wild and whether or not we are all on the same page regarding the future of our beautiful underwater forests.

AN INTERESTING FIJIAN TREE - *Acmopyle sahniana*

While I'm driving 40 minutes each way for work, I'll often listen to ABC podcasts. On a recent one about frogs, Fijian scientist Nunia Thomas-Moko talked about

her work with NatureFiji-MareqetiViti. She mentioned the organisation's logo, a conifer called *Acmopyle sahniana*, and its somewhat mysterious distribution. According to Nunia it is found only in Fiji, New Caledonia and ... South Australia! She called it a Gwondanan relic, but Viti Levu, Fiji's largest island, is of volcanic origin. I had to investigate further.



Photo: Gymnosperm database - C.J. Earle, 2015.02.25

Acmopyle is a genus with two species of small, many branched *Podocarps*, - (roughly, *Podo* – foot, *carpos* – fruit), which bear their fruits on stems. They are conifers, mostly found in the southern hemisphere. *A. pancheri* is limited to New Caledonia and *A. sahniana* is endemic to Fiji and is currently known from less than 100 trees in three well-separated locations in Namosi and near Mt Tomanivi. However, there are fossil records of *Acmopyle sahniana* from South Australia, and recently, fossil evidence of *Acmopyle sp.* from Patagonia.

Acmophyle today are restricted to ever-wet rainforest and are perhaps the least drought-tolerant of the Podocarps. So, in the wet forests of Gondwana they make sense. But, how do they come to be in existence today on volcanic islands that only began to form some 40 million years ago and were never part of the Gondwanan land mass?

But perhaps even more curious is their reproductive strategy. They are monoecious, meaning that each plant has both male and female cones. However, with *A. sahniana*, male and female cones do not appear on the plant at the same time, rather they alternate between reproductive seasons. The pollination process has not been observed – is it wind-blown, or are the fleshy fruits eaten by birds/fruit-bats? Or both?

A very curious tree indeed, and, despite my research, I now have more questions now than when I started.