



Bendigo Native Plant Group Inc.

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Reg. No. A0014487F

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BNPG is a district group of Australian Plants Society - Victoria and Bendigo membership requires membership of APS - Vic.

March 2018 Newsletter

Greetings, what a wonderful start to our year! The bring and share meal prior to the meeting was well attended and the food scrumptious and plentiful. A relaxed meeting followed with a good supper to end!

Bendigo was represented at the National APS conference in Hobart during January - see report page 3 - and members Janet and Peter reported that on their recent trip to India they were amazed to see *Grevillea robusta* pruned into tall umbrellas between rows of tea bushes. If you've been and seen something interesting then let us know for the newsletter! A couple of things coming up worth noting - the official opening of the "Garden For The Future" at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens is on 22 April at 10am followed by tours. It showcases plants for our climate including Australian Natives; and the Native Bonsai show in Melbourne (see ad p.3) which will feature some of Mary Wilkinson's creations. And don't forget our first day-time meeting of the year when we'll be looking at local butterflies! Thanks to Peter Harris who helped take photos at last meeting and I finally worked out how to use Wikicommons for more photos! See you on Tuesday - *Sandy*

February 2018 Presentation *Foliage Discussion* Led by Ian Evans

Led by President Ian, we toured through plants that make up for the lack of flowers over our hot, dry, months.

The first question related to foliage for flower arrangements:



Stan Shebs Wikicommons CC BY-SA 3.0

'Giant Spear Lily' *Doryanthes palmieri* has very fleshy roots like a cactus so don't need heaps of water. The 1m long spear like leaves are ribbed which add strength. It is related to the Gynea lily but the flower spike droops to the ground rather than standing tall like the Gynea.



"Fir0002/Flagstaffotos" Wikicommons GFDL 1.2

Macrozamia communis is a cycad and is grown mainly for its foliage. Ian sowed his plant in 1977 and it has cone about 30cm long on it at the moment. Being a bit spikey it keeps people away from front door! The cone is toxic to animals although with the right treatment human animals can eat it.

7.30 pm Tuesday 20 March 2018

Small Eucalypts with Ian Evans

Supper - Janet Justin and Stu Symonds

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

7.30 pm 28 March 2018, 112 Casey Street Bendigo

Daytime Meeting - Friday 23 March 10.30am

Butterflies of Bendigo

112 Casey Street, Bendigo



Eucalyptus tetragona - now called *E. pleurocarpa* is grown for their big silver nuts which are much favoured by florists as are the leaves of *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* 'Baby Blue'.

Both 'Moon Lagoon' *Enc. latens* (below left) and *Enc. albida* 'White-leaved Mallee' or 'Rustle Gum' to the florists (below right) have silver grey juvenile foliage that changes to glossy green as the plant ages. *E. albica* changing to adult leaves is pictured right. By pruning hard the juvenile foliage can be kept growing for some years. Again, florists love them.



Photo - Goldfields

Meetings are held at the Golden Square Community Hall, Old High St, Golden Square, on the third Tuesday of each month from February to November. The room is open from 7.10 pm, for viewing of display specimens. Program begins at 7.30 pm.

Euc. formanii 'Die-Hard Mallee' or 'Feather Gum' referring to the feathery leaves is another that can be cut back hard to 1 foot from ground to maintain juvenile leaf growth. Once cut they shoot right back up

The purple foliated Cootamundra wattle is not quite as weedy as the common form. The purple tips to the grey foliage are good for floral art and of course the flowers are stunning but short lived. We should however be wary of planting any Cootamundra given their propensity to become a weed!

There are of course many other natives suitable for floristry but now on to some of the other plants discussed - how about for smells! Many Aussie plants have wonderful aromas such as the many eucalypts - peppermint, lemon, eucalyptus etc. Also small plants like *Darwinia*



like *Darwinia citriodora* (lemon); croweas (spice); myrtles - lemon, cinnamon and anniseed. Crush the leaves for indoor aroma, walk on the fallen leaves after rain, or pop some in your cooking! But check first to make sure they are edible!!

CT Johansson Wikicommons CC BY 3.0 Darwinia



Now for some that just look good! Grown for the red buds *Euc. desmondensis* branches right down to the ground. The buds grow on the stems for two years before flowering and new buds are forming all the time. Once the plant gets to 4m it starts drooping. Pictured left.

Geijera parviflora 'Wilga' is quite a big tree and looks like peppercorn but nicer. It has small white flowers. There is one outside Bendigo hospital and some in Short Street, Kangaroo Flat near the Fire Station.

Looking a bit like a twisted lump of wire, *Acacia aphylla* is one that seeds prolifically. The flowers are yellow and fairly insignificant but the shape of the small bush is very attractive. (right)



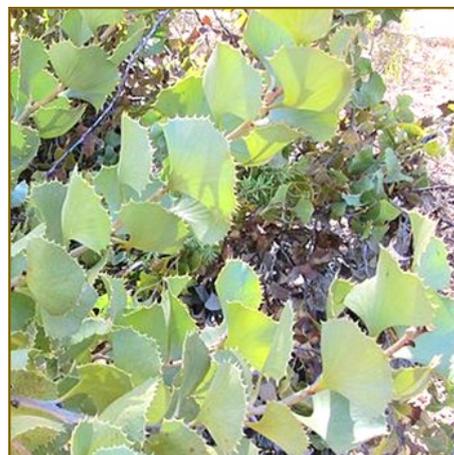
A. redolens 'Soap Wattle' forms a dense low mat. Both the foliage and the seed pods lather when rubbed in water. The foliage also smells of spices.

Brachychiton ormeau (left) has small insignificant flowers but wonderful foliage. From the Gold Coast area it is one of Australia's rarest tree. Rarer than Wollemi Pine! *B. compactus* (left) has the fastest developing trunk. The juvenile leaf changes from tri to a single adult blade. Don't forget that Brachychitons are closer to a cacti than a tree.



Hakea baxteri (below) only has small brown flowers deep in the leaf axis but the leaves are really interesting being grey green fans with a serrated edge across the top of the fan. It's hard to grow but Bev C's is going gang busters!

But where, I hear you cry, are the other wonderful foliage plants we discussed? Patience! Part Two will follow in our next newsletter. It may have to be a six pager!



Akos Koka Wikicommons

Nurseries Who Support Our Group

A bit of unashamed advertising for our members

The owners of these nurseries are BNPG members and generously support our group so don't forget to support them! More member businesses who support us to come.



230 Tannery Lane, Mandurang
Ph: 5439 5384
www.goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au



Revegetation and Forestry Plants

8 McClelland Dr. Eaglehawk
Ph: 5446 9260
www.neangarnursery.com.au



HABITAT NATIVE
PLANT CO
Plants for your Habitat

86 Maiden Gully Rd,
Maiden Gully Ph:
417544159
www.habitatnativeplantcompany.com.au

Victorian Native Bonsai Club Inc 2018 Exhibition

April 14 & 15, 9am to 4pm



Leptospermum laevigatum

Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive,
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Adults \$5, children under 15 free.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club

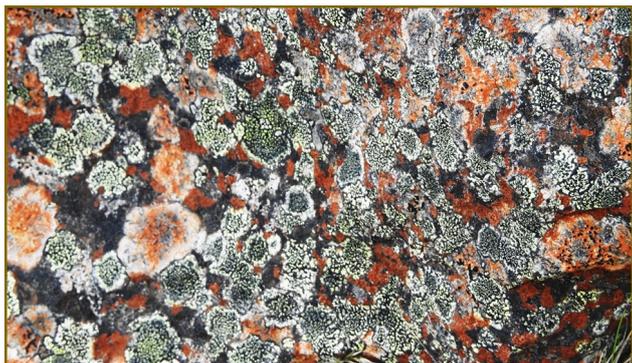
7.30 pm second Wednesday of the month
Golden Square Hall, Old High Street, Golden Square

A Memo About the Hobart Conference January 2018 ZOe Thomas

The Conference was given the best Welcome to Country I have ever experienced, and then opened by The Hon Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania who hosted us all to a slap-up soiree that evening. I took a zillion pics. -of people and bits of spectacular furnishings.

The take-home message from the science papers and my extra excursion to the Warra Super Site near the Tahune airwalk is : global warming is very real and actually generating damaging weather affect. The increase of 1 degree temperature means migration to cooler regions is a temporary survival strategy for species able to creep their germination to colonise higher altitudes. This is not possible for the sub-Alpine plants of Tasmania which are at their ceiling, and optimum temperatures have now been exceeded.

On Macquarie Island the weather pattern has changed drastically. From a constant soggy misty "Pommie" rain atmospheric there is now a pattern of winds drying off the moisture creating a daytime drought followed by heavy rain episodes which erode the soil structure, damage fragile emerging growth and runs off as quickly as it comes. This wet/dry pattern of blustering winds and deluge is the result of warming. The drought length of hours -not weeks- is significant for plants on depleted soil structure. They take up their moisture through their epidermal pores.



Plants on Mount Wellington bedded in dolomite rock (above) are similarly evolved to absorb their moisture from the cloud mist hanging around the peak. Some species like mosses can go dry for years, eg. in a packet in a laboratory drawer, and revive when water is added -but they are a bit freaky in that regard. Whilst in dry-out-mode they are not actively participating in the cycle of life within their ecosystem.

The Supersite data is collected by sensors of wind speed, direction, moisture, air constituency light and heat radiated down and up, located at several heights in the Forest on a dizzyingly high flux tower (right).

The 24/7 collection is fed into a computer running on solar panels on the roof of it's shipping container office. Results show the benefit of old forest in generating oxygen absorbing radiant thermals and affecting rainfall among other vital planetary balances. Of all the SuperSite species studies the Eucalyptus forest ecology is most effective in all regards. We land-clear at our peril.



The garden visits were special for being so, so Tasmanian, due to quarantine restrictions. I especially loved the cushion plants. Marvellous. The tidal salt marsh, riddled with tiny crab dens, was of particular interest because I spend time each year at Port Fairy tramping about in gumboots. Now I will really see what is there with deep understanding of the regenerative capacity of such maligned margins. They are the southern equivalent to northern Mangroves as a water filter and breeding ground - for birds who eat the fish who eat the crabs etc etc. Some of the plants are delicious too!!

The conference concluded raising some important business but did not generate resolutions. We need serious consideration by all membership, about perhaps waiving membership fees, future role of the organisation, and sticking to a nationally recognized name. The latter is most simple and needs discussion and implementation.

At my accommodations I met a number of visitors who were fascinated about the conference and general doings of the membership, but the confusion was about how to contact a local group in any part of the country when each State seems to constitute a multitude of idiosyncratic names. Perhaps web site consolidation will cross reference our diversity and be more cost effective. Another thought is Promotion to the public for inclusion on an ad hoc basis if not full time commitment. Cash income from an active educational program.

The new National President is Riitta Boevink. The Organisation now has a voluntary campaigns person, Eddy Wajon from W.A. He is available to help us -not to do it - to pursue local issues such as irrelevant tree removal, roadside and habitat destruction, whatever can be addressed by our Society speaking up for the environment. Being a vocal consultative authority on local matters seems a valuable direction for our future community engagement, and with combined effort we can develop National campaigns. Research indicates younger generations are interested in active activities that enable participation and can produce results.

The next National conference is being hosted by W.A. at Albany from 29 September to October 4, 2019.(school holidays!!! (Book travel, accommodation early) They are planning several tour routes from Perth to Albany and reverse as extra 4-5 night packages. See their website and register interest to receive updates. www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au

Ps - The wondrous Geologist Sib Corbett told me that rocks can be identified by the specific growths on them!

(Photo below of the Victorian attendees - our member Zoe is kneeling on the far right. Another of our members, Alex Don, also attended the conference (3rd from left, kneeling) and put some photos and comments on our Facebook page - Bendigo Native Plant Group APS.)



The February Specimen Table

Being Summer the specimen table was sparse. In fact there was only one specimen from Bev C's garden until Ian arrived with seven more contributions!

Bev C's *Eremophila* 'Summertime Blue' is the prettiest pale lilac blue. A natural hybrid of *E. divaricata* and *E. polyclada* it comes from northwest Victoria near the Murray. It likes the sun and grows to 2m, is drought hardy and copes with frosts. Birds love it.



Ian E's *Goodenia gracilis* has tiny yellow flowers. He carefully prunes it each September by ripping the plants straight out of ground. It's a good thing that lots of seeds come up just like a lawn! It needs moisture so he grows it where water falls from the roof.

Grevillea microstegia 'Mount Cassell Grevillea' is rare. The foliage is quite prickly, the flowers are deep dark pink. It is found growing on the sides of Mt. Cassell in the Grampians. Ian's is grafted.



Brachychiton acerifolius has leaves that are not as divided as expect so may not be true. It grows to about 8m in Bendigo and has been in flower over December and January

and Ian is grafting from it. He soaks it for 3 - 4 days straight four times a year thereby mimicking cyclones.

Eremophila flabellata is a West Australian and has only a few mauve flowers on end of each stem. It is a small shrub and he grows it because it is rare even though it may not be hot and dry enough in Bendigo.



Eremophila flaccida is from north of the Canning Stock route - north W.A. Bit frost tender, the top leaves go black with frost but the lower branches on the ground are O.K. At the moment it is all calyces with only one flower out. The profusion of large mauve flowers hang down from branches, brushing the ground. The showy sepals of the calyces are reddish-purple. Ian's plant is grafted onto Myoporum and is about 80cm tall.



It's a grevillea! No, a hakea! No - it is *Buckinghamia celsissima* or 'Ivory Curl'! Coming from north Qld. it suffers from our frost and dry heat. It may grow to 2m in central Victoria.

John and Lorene reported that there are hundreds of these as street trees in Qld where they grow very tall. The cream lowers are up to 20cm long.

Grevillea bipinnatifida (orange form) is one of about four forms that Ian grows and is grafted onto *G. robusta*. Its grey foliage really stands out at dusk. The calyces grade from reddish orange through to gold and the long spider leg styles are deep red. Ian has found it the easiest grevillea to graft. Common name 'Grape Grevillea' and the flowers do look like plump bunches of grapes hanging on the plant!



BNPG DIARY

Friday 23 March - Day Time Meeting
Tuesday 18 April - Native Conifers
Sunday 29 April - Excursion to Melton Botanic Gardens
Tuesday 15 May - Dryandras
Tuesday 19 June - Grevilleas

Other Diary Dates

17 & 18 March Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Spring Plant Sale - 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. (Mel 133 K10)
21 April APS Geelong Plant Sale at 'Wirrawilla', 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks. (Mel 431 D6). 8.30 am to 5.00 pm
28 April APS Yarra Yarra Plant & Book Sale. Eltham Senior Citizens Centre, 903 Main Road, Eltham from 10 am to 4 pm.
21 & 21 October - 12th FJC Rogers Seminar at Horsham. To express interest email fjcrogersseminar2018@gmail.com