

Australian Plants Society Ballarat District

Newsletter – September 2018

MONTHLY MEETINGS ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY
at

ROBERT CLARK HORTICULTURAL CENTRE
GILLIES STREET ENTRANCE – GATE 3 or 4

FURTHER DETAILS SEE INFORMATION BOX

Themeda triandra
Kangaroo Grass

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
SOCIETY
BALLARAT DISTRICT

COMING EVENTS

➔ WEDNESDAY 12th SEPTEMBER –
MONTHLY MEETING at 2 pm
Business Meeting Prior at 1pm.

➔ WEDNESDAY 10th OCTOBER – MONTHLY
MEETING
(Note: Evening Meeting).

**BUS TRIP TO LARA – WEDNESDAY 19th
SEPTEMBER, 2018**
**COST \$20 P.P. – INCLUDES BUS, LUNCH,
\$10 GARDEN ENTRY**

9.30am Depart car park corner of Gillies &
Gregory Streets
10.30am Depart Elaine after quick Morning Tea
12noon Arrive at Yarrabee Native Garden –
inspect garden
1.00pm Lunch
2.00pm Depart garden for Serendip Sanctuary
2.15pm Arrive at Sanctuary – inspect environs
3.30pm Afternoon Tea and home

These times are not set in stone, this is just an
outline of the day.

If possible, please bring your own cup, plate,
knife and fork (share the washing-up)

Payment, to Treasurer Liz, for this trip is due on
or before Wednesday, 12th September, 2018.

Thankyou. Queries: Gladys Hastie 53 415 567.



Australian Plants Society Ballarat District
SPRING 2018 NATIVE PLANT SHOW
Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th October
Robert Clark Horticultural Centre Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Saturday 10-00am to 5-00pm, Sunday 10-00am to 4-30pm
Members please note: Set Up from 11-00am on Friday 26th
Please volunteer where you can on any of the three days.

Unusual twin-flower of
Banksia praemorsa
shown by Mike Healy at
the August meeting. The
paired cones are 23cm
high. Photo: Fon Ryan

EXCURSION TO THE COLLIER GARDEN AND PROTEA FARM
Saturday 28th July

Report from Ruth Marton

15 members set off with our bus driver Ron to drive up the road to Helen and Neville Colliers' garden on one of the few fine sunny days in July. As usual the garden was in immaculate shape with many plants in flower, especially the grevilleas. We had an hour to look around the garden which had been further extended from when I last visited. Neville explained their soil is clay for about 40 cm deep and then a gravel layer underneath. He digs down to that when planting and adds some Seamungus, IBDU slow release nitrogen pellets and some Osmocote into the hole. Twice a year he fertilises all plants with either Seamungus or Bush Tucker. He finds the Bush Tucker is not suitable for small plants as it can burn them. He prunes severely, i.e. within 15 cm or so of the ground, with the chain saw to prevent old woody plants. A highlight for me was the many *Hakea verrucosa* plants with profuse striking dark pink flowers.



Banksia menziesii flowering at the 'Protea Farm' of Dan Thomas at Moonambel. Photo: Fon Ryan

Lunch was served, delicious homemade soup courtesy of the Hasties, then we were off to the protea farm at Moonambel. Daniel Thomas the farmer, showed us around. The farm is planted on a previously cleared area and was a dream of his mother's, to do something for the environment. He runs it with his brother but he has a day job as well. He is still actively planting and propagates a lot of his own plants. He has well established proteas of various varieties including King proteas, big pink ones, and Queen proteas which are beautiful white ones I had not seen before. He also has many *Banksia menziesii* plants, some hakeas, leucodendrons, and is keen on varieties of *Chamelaucium* which he finds are growing well, e.g. 'Purple Pride'. He sells mixed bunches to local florists and does weddings and other functions. Customers cannot order particular species, they have to take mixed arrangements as he picks whatever is looking good at the time. He explained about the frost damaging the proteas, it turns the young tips black. He has some problems as you would expect with rabbits and cockatoos. He does not water or fertilise.

We had a delicious afternoon tea, again supplied by the Hasties, bought some of Dan's honey and then made our way back to Ballarat. Thank you very much to Gladys for organising this most interesting and rewarding excursion and to John for the delicious food.

APS BALLARAT DISTRICT – Annual General Meeting – Wed 8th August

Reports were received and Election of Office Bearers took place. All Office Bearers were returned, except there are vacancies for a Vice President and Assistant Treasurer. One new office-bearer position was created.

FOUND PROPERTY: A card table from Flower Show and Secateurs from Propagating day.

For those who have not paid their annual membership this may be your last newsletter. Please get your payment in, or contact the treasurer.

SPECIMENS EXHIBITED at AUGUST MEETING from Gloria Salt

Ruth Marton – *Grevillea* 'Winpara Gem', *G.* 'Lemon Supreme', *G. olivacea*, *G. levis*, *Acacia vestita*, *A. flexifolia*, *Hakea victoria*, *Banksia* 'Mini Marg'

Mike Healy – *Banksia praemorsa* (yellow colour, twin-cone), *B.* 'Giant Candles', *B.* 'Birthday Candles', *Correa pulchella* (pink flowers, bird & bee attracting), *C. nummularifolia* (lemon flowers)

John Hastie – *Hardenbergia violacea* (pink), *H. violacea* 'Free & Easy', *Westringea longifolia*, *Templetona retusa* (Cockies Tongue 1.5M), *Correa pulchella* (orange) *Kunzea baxteri* (red, frost resistant)

Judith Lewis – *Banksia ericifolia*, *B. spinulosa* (purple-styles form), *Philotheca verrucosus* (Castlemaine form), *Grevillea aurea* (green flowers)

Bruce Cadoret – *Leucochrysum albicans* 'Hooray Sunshine' (member of the daisy family, 40cm H x 80cm-1M, self-sows & butterfly attracting)
Acacia beckleri (grows to 1.5-1m, flowers in winter)

Gloria Salt – *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* (Rosemary Grev., 0.3m x 1.5m, prickly foliage, red spider-like flowers in winter, bird attracting & protecting, frost resistant)



Banksia spinulosa, the purple-styles form, shown by Judith Lewis. Photo Fon Ryan

PROPAGATING AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS WORKSHOP Friday August 24th Report from Ainslie Whyte

A group of 10 keen participants attended this session at the Robert Clark Centre. The presenters were APS Ballarat members John Hastie, Gladys Hastie and Fon Ryan.

John explained and demonstrated the process of taking cuttings. Points covered included:

- The ideal time to take cuttings
- Suitable planting medium
- Commercially available powders and gels for promoting root growth, and how to use them
- How to prepare and plant both tip cuttings and lateral cuttings
- Aftercare of cuttings

We all took the opportunity for plenty of hands-on practice at taking, preparing, planting (and not forgetting labelling!) cuttings from our own and each-others' plant material.

John also demonstrated how methods of seed preparation and sowing will vary, depending on the seed. He used 3 types and sizes of seed, indigophera (small), hardenbergia (slightly larger) and wattle (large), to illustrate the different requirements of each one.

Our session with Gladys covered collecting and sowing the seeds of the paper daisy (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*), which can be sown all year. Tips included:

- collect the seed heads when dry and save in a paper bag until you sow
- use a free-draining mix that will remain moist
- remove fluffy parts of the seed head, sprinkle the fine seed over the mix, lightly cover
- provide reasonable light for growing seeds
- the bees will have ensured that the new flowers are often not the same colour as the parent

Fon explained all the steps and processes involved in achieving a grafted native tree of a chosen flower colour. He also gave a demonstration of how to cut the rootstock and the piece to be grafted, and make the actual graft. We all admired Fon's experience and skill, which made a precise and delicate process look easy.

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This was an excellent day. The presenters shared a wealth of detailed knowledge that can't begin to be covered in a brief report. Participants had ample opportunity to take notes, ask questions, gain one-on-one assistance, practise new skills, and take home newly-propagated cuttings & sown seeds.

OLD ANDADO STATION – From Liz Bowden's recent trip. Photographs: Liz Bowden

In July, I visited Old Andado Station, the only remaining homestead of its kind in Australia. It lies 330 km south of Alice Springs on the Old Andado Track, and is the springboard for 4x4 visitors to the Binns Track in the Northern Territory and the Madigans Line into the Simpson Desert.

The station itself was originally leased in 1880 and the original home as is seen today was built in the 1920s, and consisted of what is now the sitting room and main bedroom, the remainder of the house being transported by camel from Oodnadatta. It is built of coolibah, corrugated iron and ripple iron. The floors in the original part are cement over ash and fat with cement in the rest of the house. The outbuildings (the meat house and the saddle house) are part waddi tree and part coolibah with grass thatching roofs.



Old Andado Station



The Meathouse at Old Andado

When a new station homestead was built to the west in 1955, the old homestead fell into ruin. But in 1972, Molly and Mal Clark started restoring the old house so that tourists could see and experience the isolation of living in the outback without any modern amenities, such as mains electricity, mains water, the telephone and even in some cases glass windows! There were no closed in verandahs, no fly screens and no doors. The temperatures would have climbed over 50°C, with plagues of ants, hundreds of thousands of flies, snakes and other creepy crawlies to contend with! Until a generator was installed in the late 1970s, water had to be carried into the kitchen, bathroom and laundry, kerosene kept the lanterns and fridge going while the wood stove cooked food and boiled water.

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Kitchen at Old Andado



Rec Room at Old Andado

Communication was via camel-drawn mail cart every couple of months until the advent of the radio telephone in the 1930s followed by the installation of a satellite telephone tower in the 1980s.

For many years, the only way into Old Andado was by following a set of tyre tracks from Kulgera and Finke on the northern highway. But on her irregular shopping expeditions to Alice Springs, Molly would tow a piece of track from the Old Ghan Railway behind her truck to Santa Teresa Mission (and back) until a passable road was formed which was eventually properly cut and graded in the 1970s. What a woman!

It is a beautifully preserved homestead, which I found to be wonderfully warm and welcoming, and strangely familiar, probably because my grandparents lived in similar circumstances. Would have loved to stay in the house a few nights! But campers are welcomed as basic amenities are available – no wood for a campfire though!

And another highlight on my trip was the existence of *Acacia Peuce*!

Known as the Waddi Tree or the Birdsville Wattle, it has relatively soft, weeping foliage when mature, resembling casuarinas or pine trees – it is however extremely prickly when young – and large seed pods!! With fibrous bark concealing very dense timber, it was widely used for buildings and fenceposts as well as aboriginal tools and weapons. Waddi trees can live for hundreds of years, some even estimated to be 700 years, most unusual for acacias!



Waddi Trees with Seedpods

Mal Clark, aware of the rarity of *Acacia Peuce*, gifted a stand of these trees that was on the station to the government for conservation. There are now only three Waddi Tree conservation areas in Australia: at Old Andado in the Northern Territory and on the fringes of the Simpson Desert at Birdsville and Boulia, and it was the latter that was remarked upon by William Wills of Burke and Wills fame on their way to the north. Who knows, maybe a few trees from those days still stand!!

Great trip over a great land!!

BALLARAT DISTRICT PLANT LIST

We are looking to produce a hand-out sheet of Native Plants that will grow in all areas of the Ballarat District, that are not too finicky, are available in local nurseries, the basic stuff. Ruth Marton is putting it together. Please forward your suggestions to Ruth. It will primarily be for handing out at our shows, but in other situations as well.

The Ballarat Cacti and Succulent Society invite members of APS Ballarat to join them on a bus trip to Koroit Succulent and Natives Nursery and Crowsfoot Pottery on Saturday 22nd September. The bus leaves the Sebastopol Depot of Ballarat Coachlines at 9am. Contact Bill Morrison 53452995, email cactusbill@westnet.com.au to book and confirm the time and cost. We can promise a very good day, Judith Lewis.



A section of the Collier garden near Avoca on the day of the Australian Plants Society Ballarat District excursion on 28th July. In this view the garden landscaping merges seamlessly with the eucalypts in the paddock beyond. Photo: Fon Ryan

Thanks to all those who contributed reports or items for this issue

Deadline for October Newsletter: 29th September 2018



AFTERNOON TEA or SUPPER

Members please bring a plate of something to share

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY BALLARAT DISTRICT INC. Incorporation No. A0013127M

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

The **SECOND WEDNESDAY** in October, November, December, February, March, at 7-30pm
 The **SECOND WEDNESDAY** in April, May, June, July, August, September at 2-00pm

MEETING VENUE

ROBERT CLARK HORTICULTURAL CENTRE, Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Access: GILLIES STREET ENTRANCE – GATE 3 (or from Wendouree Parade, **Afternoon Meetings only**)

CORRESPONDENCE

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

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