



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 399 - March, 2024

FEBRUARY MEETING - Zoë Brittain ... Marine Algae

Our speaker was Zoe Brittain who gave a very engaging and interesting talk about marine algae ... seaweeds. Around the world, seaweeds have been used for millennia. Here, in southern Australia, we have the greatest abundance of species anywhere. Yet, we don't seem to utilise it. Why not?



Photo credit: Dr Jacqui Pocklington

One of the problems might be the name ... seaweed. It has certain negative connotations among we plant people. There are many projects happening here which use marine algae, but they are not sexy in a news sense. Headlines appear but are seldom followed up, so we just don't know what is happening.

And, they seem quite exciting ... using kelp to replace plastics; turning seaweed racks into fertilizer, cattle and poultry feed and food colouring; reducing land use for agriculture; or helping climate change by reducing methane emissions from cattle

Surveys conducted by Deakin University showed that all 198 participants had some 'connection' to seaweeds, and many showed concerns about a seaweed industry and its sustainability. Concerns about over harvesting,

introduction of foreign species, indigenous cultural connections and the question of 'who owns the oceans' are all valid. Harvesting marine algae 'racks' – the piles of weed washed up on beaches – may seem to be a victimless process, a 'let's clean up the smelly seaweed from our beaches' idea. But those racks support life – crabs, and sand-fleas and worms that feed our seabirds, so it must be carefully planned and monitored.



Racks at Narrawong – a sustainable resource?

And seaweeds have their place in the environment and play a vital role in cleaning up the mess we have made of it. For example, seaweeds are great at absorbing nutrients from storm water drains and sewerage outlets to help maintain balanced levels in the ocean.

The questions and answer time after Zoe's presentation was, perhaps, the most lively in my years with the club, demonstrating perfectly Zoe's point that we all have a connection to seaweed.

What species does Zoe harvest from racks to eat? About 8 species like bull kelp, dried to make a jerky, then ground and used as seasoning. Most species are safe to eat, but are high in iodine, so care should be taken.

How many uses do aboriginal people have for seaweeds? Zoe's research has found that, at various times of year and in different locations, between 50 and 100 indigenous uses for marine algae have been documented.

Could we harvest the introduced Undaria and help rid our waters of this pest species? All things are possible.

President: Position Vacant

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These and many, many other questions ended a most interesting talk.



Black Sea-hare among the algae. Photo: Penny Foster

PLANT TABLE

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Various Members

Again I'm pleased that members are sending me information about the plants that they have brought along for the table. It was a small table, as expected, given the time of year, but interesting nevertheless.

Frank Scheelings:

So often we seem to say "this year is different from normal" with plants flowering at the wrong time. This year so far is no exception. Several of the plants in my garden had a second flowering in February, which is usually the worst month for our flower table. Here are a few examples ...

Banksia burdetti. This is the dwarf form, a shrub to 1.5m from coastal area north of Perth. It has orange acorn - type flowers similar to *B. prionotes*. My plant had about 40 flowers in late winter spring, and is now starting again.

Banksia occidentalis – flowered in spring, now starting in earnest. From near Augusta WA, grows to 6 meters evidently. I hope not!



Beaufortia schauerii – from south WA , Albany area. It grows to 1.5 meters with mauve, terminal, pom-pom flowers covering the bush, usually in early spring.

Grevillea magnifica - flowered in late winter/spring, following which I pruned the long, 4m to 5m canes on which the flowers appear. The new canes are at 2-3 meters now with smaller flowers.

Myoporum floribundum "Snow in Summer" – A short lived (5 to 7 years) bush to 3m, but easily grown and replaced from cuttings. It is covered in white flowers in summer.



Eremaea beaufortioides – 1m bush, again from WA, which has bright orange flowers in spring. I feel they would be the perfect Christmas flower, except usually finished by then.

Backhousia citriodora - Lemon Myrtle from SE Queensland grows to 6 meters. This is its first flowering. The leaves are used in cooking due to strong citrus smell and flavour.



Grevillea "Billy Bonkers" is a dense shrub with layered appearance. Red / pink flowers for 14 months of the year, loved by bees. It came up as a seedling in a nursery in Queensland and the grower named it after his dog. Grows to 1 ½ meters, if you can get one, grab it.

Matt Leach:

My flower was a *Banksia dolichostyla* which has been given an upgrade to a species status. It used to be *Banksia sphaerocarpa* var. *dolichostyla*. Its common name is Ironcap named for the land around where it is found, near Ravensthorpe in SW Western Australia. This species has been deemed rare or in danger of extinction by the Western Australian government.



I first saw the full size of this plant a couple of years ago when we visited Pangarinda Botanic Gardens, near Tailem Bend, in South Australia. There you can see many mature plants growing up to 3 metres high and wide. I have read that they can get to 4 metres high and as wide. My plant is 10 years old, in a raised bed of its own, with some summer watering delivered through drip irrigation. It has been flowering for a few years now.

**Peter Nuzum:**

The Button Wrinklewort, *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*, is a very rare perennial flower of the grassy plains in NSW, ACT and Victoria. It is listed as “Endangered” in

the 3 jurisdictions. Its rarity is due to grazing, land clearing, invasive weeds and changes in fire regimes. According to SWIFFT, it occurs in a total of 27 populations – 8 in Victoria and 19 in NSW/ACT.

The plant is a single or sparsely stemmed herb to about 30 cm in height and flowers in summer. The yellow flower heads consist of numerous tiny flowers clustered together and surrounded at the base by overlapping, wrinkled, dull greenish bracts to form a button flower which can be 8-20mm across (SWIFFT).



The Victorian plants have a genetic mutation in that they are tetraploids, which means they have double the number of chromosomes of other Button Wrinklewort plants found in other parts of Australia, which are diploids.

The Victorian plants are located to the west of the State, mainly in the volcanic plains bioregion.. Most plants are growing along roadsides, railway lines and cemeteries. However, one lonely plant has been discovered in a secret location.

A major effort is being made to collect seed and grow seedlings for transplanting adjacent to existing populations to increase numbers and genetic diversity. Glenelg Hopkins CMA has been to the forefront of protecting these plants. And last year, a major workshop was held in Little River to review efforts at saving this delightful little herb.

PLANT SALE

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13th April, 2024

Our plant sale will be happening again on Saturday, 13th April. We are changing the format a little this year in

that we won't be running a canteen and BBQ. That side of the event will be undertaken by a Lion's Club, to relieve we aging volunteers from the chore, and to free us to chat to folks about APS Geelong and native plants.

We would still like as many of you as possible to help out on the day. We'll need help with parking, gate takings, general duties around the place. There will be a working bee to get the site ready and we'll give you the date once it's finalised.

We look forward to seeing you all there.

CABBAGE WHITE BUTTERFLIES

I'm sure we've all noticed the sudden influx of Cabbage White butterflies in the area recently. On the first day I noticed them, I was driving to Werribee on the M1 and it was like a snow-storm of butterflies. Quite a spectacle. We are lucky that the butterflies don't really use our native plants as a food source for their larvae, but if you have a veggie garden, beware!

I found this article on 'The Conversation' and thought you might like a read.

<https://theconversation.com/a-great-year-to-be-a-cabbage-white-butterfly-why-are-there-so-many-and-how-can-you-protect-your-crops-217794>

2023 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

March meeting	Plant Based Trivia
April 13	Plant Sale
June meeting	Grant Baverstock – Bats
August Meeting	AGM & Photo Competition
October Meeting	RSPCA Koala Ward rescue work

Lots more in the pipeline. Stay tuned!

APS VIC MEMBERSHIPS

HELP! If you joined APS Victoria and paid your membership of APS Geelong at the same time, will you please email our secretary to let him know?

APS Vic forwards the membership fee to us, but are a little slow in so doing. We are required by law to keep an accurate and detailed list of all our members, and this makes it hard for us to fulfil our legal responsibility. So, if it's you, please let us know.

Unlike many APS Groups, we do not make membership of APS Victoria a condition of membership of our club. There are many benefits to membership of the state body, and we certainly encourage you to join, but don't insist on it.

Email the secretary at: apsgeelong@gmail.com

CORREA REFLEXA

Ade Foster

As Frank noted in his plant table contribution, this year is different from normal. I have had *Correas* flowering in my garden for a for or five weeks now, months earlier than usual.

I have two *Correa reflexa*, which are the Brisbane Ranges forms of this very variable plant. One is the 'usual' red and green flowering form, the other the less common yellow-flowering form, a gift from Matt Leach.



The yellow-flowering Brisbane Ranges form

Correa reflexa is found between the Great Divide and the coast from southern Queensland to South Australia and into the eastern part of coastal WA. It is also found on Kangaroo Island and Tasmania. Its variety of habitats suggests that it is a very adaptable plant that can cope with many and varied situations in your garden.

It is also a bit promiscuous, and, according to ANGB has hybridised naturally with *C. alba*, *C. decurmbens*, *C. aemula* and *C. pulchella*. As such, it is one of the parent plants of many of the hybrids found in nurseries around the country. We found it sold as 'Aussie Fuschia' in a nursery in Finland last year.

It can be a scrambling prostrate plant, a compact shrub or an open shrub to about 1.2 metres. Leaves may be glossy green and smooth, or rough and warty. Flowers are bell shaped and range from pale yellow to crimson red with yellow or green tips. Stamens are long and generally protruding with large yellow anthers.

In the garden it will tolerate most conditions, but a loose, well drained soil and afternoon shade are best. Tip pruning after flowering maintains a compact shape and encourages more flowers. Cuttings strike well if taken in late summer and autumn.