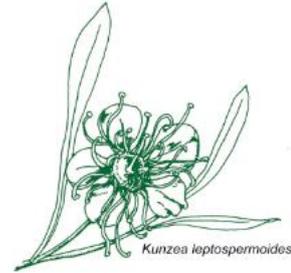




KUNZEA

Australian Plants Society Maroondah
Preservation by Cultivation



September 2020

From the President

First of all, I hope you are all well. It has certainly been strange times, especially now that we are in Stage 4 restrictions, but they won't last for ever!

I have been trying to make the most of things, with the hope of opening our garden through *Open Gardens Victoria* later this year. It was a great motivator to do all those jobs which I had put off, but I have been forced to accept that the event is cancelled. The upside is that the garden is looking the best it has in ages.

Your Committee has mastered holding Committee Meetings online with Zoom, so we are continuing to meet on a monthly basis. We are constantly monitoring what is happening in Melbourne, and we are itching to get back to meeting face to face as soon as possible. I have to admit that it is handy not having to travel, but the real bonus is having a "Mute All" button – absolute power!

Of course, we were due to have our Annual General Meeting soon, but that will have to be delayed until we can work out the best way to

hold it under the circumstances. We will keep you posted.

If there is anything the Committee can do for you, either individually or as a group, please give me a call. I would love to talk with you and hear any suggestions!

Graeme and Sue having been working hard keeping this newsletter going out each month, but they are always looking for more articles. So I have come up with a few myself this month, but PLEASE give some thought to providing a short piece, with or without photos, telling us what you have been up to, or how your garden is going. Otherwise you will be stuck with my constant barrage of questions – being the expert gardener that I am (not).

Contributions should be emailed to Sue at aitchguy@gmail.com, with photos separated from any text and sent in highest resolution that you have.

Stay safe, stay in touch, and here's to getting back together soon.

– Debbie Jerkovic (From the Oval Office)

International Fame

It is interesting to hear how far afield *Kunzea* is appreciated. Last month we heard from John Knight in New South Wales. This month we hear from Judy Clark in England.

Judy is a member of APS Victoria and is also the newsletter editor for the Australasian Plant Society in the UK. She was so impressed with Bruce Schroder's wonderful article on the Yellow Waratah that she is going to reproduce it in their newsletter *Pentachondra*.

Well done Bruce.

Vale Win Bennet

We are sad to report that Win Bennet has died, at the age of 96.

Win was a long term SGAP/APS identity. She was a member of APS Maroondah back in the 1980s, although more involved with APS Yarra Yarra in recent years.

Our Maroondah group had a visit to her Greensborough garden in 2002, and she often attended APS Victoria quarterly meetings. She was a regular and eager purchaser at the APS Geelong Plant Sales.

Condolences to her friends and family.

Membership Reminder

Subscription payments for APS Maroondah and APS Victoria were due on 1st July. Thanks to those of you who have already paid.

If you haven't paid yet, please do so as soon as possible. Any questions please contact APS Maroondah's Membership Secretary Jan Nicholls on 9893 4422.



It's the season for wattles – *Acacia acinacea*.

Eucalyptus caesia

Alison Rogers

Eucalyptus caesia is a species of mallee that is endemic to the south west of Western Australia. It is a beautiful flowering tree in the wild, but makes a perfect part of any suburban garden.

What isn't there to like? The buds with their whitish bloom, the perfect pink flowers with their yellow stamens, the young stems covered also in whitish bloom and the tan trunk with its beautiful flaking bark. To top this off, after flowering it has bunches of urn-shaped gumnuts that are a beautiful silver in colour. (The nuts can get a little heavy and can be pruned to prevent small branches breaking off).

The form we grow is known as "Silver Princess" and would be described as a graceful weeping tree that has a regular and weeping form. Both plants we have in the garden are this form. For 20 or so years we had a large plant overhanging the letter box area. People would know where to visit, as it stood out as a landmark.

As we had really planted it too close to the path, we found that we would be cutting 3 foot lengths off regularly. Eventually we had members of the public breaking pieces off, so we decided we would cut it down low and let it shoot again. This species develops a lignotuber and responds to hard pruning to near ground level. But when we did this, we found that the main trunk actually had a hollow through it, and so never reshooted.

This plant likes to be in well-drained soil in full sun. It doesn't require much water and is frost tolerant. It is not suitable for high rainfall areas or humid climates. It has quite open growth, so planting underneath is still an option.

The birds in our garden (mainly honeyeaters and lorikeets) love the flowers, along with many insects.

I would have to say it is one of my favourite eucalypts for small gardens.



Minni ritchi bark of the trunk of *Eucalyptus caesia*.



Silver-coloured gum nuts.

Nature Strip Planting

Trevor Blake

We downsized a little over 10 years ago from 10,000m² in Ringwood to 580m² in Northcote.

The nature-strip was covered in Kikuyu Grass and it was the only lawn area that needed mowing. My mower was elsewhere and so the grass was begging to be removed – this I did with great delight. The best way for instant results was by digging it out and into a wheely bin, the neighbour's of course, as I have the philosophy that everything cut from our property is the energy of our place and must be recycled, except the noxious stuff.

Two decent-sized crossovers were needed for pedestrian access, so bricks were the order of the day. I asked some locals – one said they had just demolished a chimney prior to renos, so problem solved. The soil removed from the brick-laying raised the beds to provide drainage prior to planting. The soil had been aerated and so was ready to go.



Growing in the nature strip were two beautiful *Callistemon viminalis* with long, weeping branches. There was a space, and in went a *Eucalyptus orbifolia* which has gained many neighbourly comments. We planted the seedlings from the daisy seed that APS Victoria sent out with their *Growing Australian*, and these have been a hit with people photographing the display. So this season I collected seed of the everlastings and planted them in 2 large seed trays, and up they came so much so that it was suggested I get out the whipper snipper to control them.

With this warm weather and the regular moisture we have had over the last couple of months, things are growing. What to do with about 1,000 seedlings – certainly not tossing them, and so potting them up was the way to go, but what to do with them? The neighbourhood needs to get to know the beauty of these

ideal cottage garden Aussies. We've circulated a lot of houses where the owners are obviously interested in their gardens, and the orders have come in thick and fast, as we can give people as many as they can cope with. There is quite a bit of gardening taking place in these crazy times, and it may help; certainly the butterflies will be appreciative.

In autumn we saw an amazing amount of self-seeding along the whole of our nature-strip of *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, so maybe we will have to resort to the whipper-snipper after all.

Well, spring is almost here and we decided to let the daisies go, no thinning, and they are looking splendid. But every now and then a neighbour reverse turns in our drive, and the daisies have suffered on both sides of the crossing. So with the best intent I decided to help to improving driving skills with an immovable rock. One side has been protected, but there were attempts, according to the paint left as evidence. However, the problem still exists on the other side where *Rhodanthe rosea* has been flattened several times. I've selected another pebble, which should do the trick.

It's interesting to see that several neighbours have taken their gardening tools to the verges. From the last packet of seeds of *Brachyscome iberidifolia*, about 30 germinated, so I want to add them to the daisy forest.



Brachyscome iberidifolia

Angus Stewart. Used by permission.

Growing the Brown Boronia

Bruce Schroder

As I write this just shy of the first day of spring, this delightful and much desired gem of the Western Australian bush is currently at its flowering peak and if I was in a position to visit my usual haunts (Kurunga and Bunnings!) there would be masses of them for sale on the benches, covered in their highly scented and unusually coloured flowers. COVID has a lot to answer for!

I guess I am one of the fortunate ones who doesn't need to treat *Boronia megastigma* as one of the "drop dead" species but I know many people struggle to keep it going. I have found that they detest their relatively fibrous, and close to the surface, root system drying out. At the same time, they hate to be water-logged. I have them growing in a couple of positions in my garden, but in each location they are protected from too much sun exposure and are growing in well-composted fibre-rich soil, which tends to remain moist all year round.

In limited light situations, they do have a tendency to become leggy, and as such a good hard prune towards the end of the flowering period, before new season's growth commences, is very important. Cutting off flowering bunches to bring inside as a cut flower is the best thing you can do for them – don't wait till it's too late. So too is continuous tip pruning throughout the growing season, never allowing any growth to get more than 75mm long before pinching out the tip. I keep doing this throughout the season until I start to see flower buds developing in the leaf nodes.

Boronias have always done well in the rich mountain soil of the Dandenongs, and were at one time farmed as a cut flower at the base of the hills in the area we now know as The Basin, and I would like to provide a little background to this.

Alfred Elliott Chandler (1873-1935), nurseryman, property entrepreneur and politician, was born on 1st July 1873 at Gardiner (Malvern) in Victoria, son of William Chandler and his wife Kate. William had left his father's market-garden complex at Gardiner in November 1872 to clear 40 acres (16 ha) at The Basin, Bayswater, at the foot of the Dandenongs. He prospered with vegetables, flowers and fruit on small acreages. Alfred, his seven brothers and three sisters, were all brought up in the market-garden tradition. The children worked arduous hours on the farm without pay but in the expectation of acquiring property and economic support when they left home.

From 1895 A.E. Chandler, with financial backing from

his father, developed 47 acres (19 ha) which became known as the Everson Nursery. Originally Chandler specialized in daffodils and boronia, but rust which began in 1928 forced him to abandon the delicate Western Australian boronia in favour of the hardier daffodil, which he grew on a huge scale.

Like his father, A.E. Chandler became a Ferntree Gully shire councillor, and served in 1901-35. He urged the government to improve roads and to extend the suburban railway to the area he had recently named

Boronia. Chandler named the suburb Boronia in 1915 after the boronia plants which grew on his property at The Basin. Prior to that, Boronia was considered part of Bayswater. He was elected shire president four times, and from 1922 held various positions in the Municipal Association of Victoria. His nursery was opened to the public to raise funds for local charities which he and his wife sponsored.

The Chandlers continued to farm and run a nursery at The Basin until at least the mid to late 1980's (I was still buying plants from Bert Chandler's Como Nurseries when I was a landscape contractor at that time). The land is now private property but the extensive nursery gardens remain.

Interestingly, in my garden, one of the selected cultivars of the Brown Boronia, *Boronia megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red', seems to be one of the hardiest. The first to come into flower is the cultivar, *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin', followed by *B. megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red' and then the common brown form. *B. megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red' is a seedling variant of *B. megastigma* that was selected as far back as 1928 by the late Mr Jack Maguire of Forest Road, Boronia. The flowers are described as "a deep orange red on the outside of the perianth", although I'm not sure about the orange component! All other features of the shrub are as for *B. megastigma*.

I couldn't find any information on the origins of *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin' but I suspect it might be a sport from *B. megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red' as the flowers are predominantly yellow with red stripes or blotches of pretty much the same hue as Jack, rather than the brown hue of the common Brown Boronia. *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin' is interesting in that the plant will rarely flower entirely with the yellow/red flowers, and often many flowering branches will be yellow only. The photo of my *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin' shows the dominant pure yellow flowering branches in the background. Perhaps taking cuttings from only red/yellow flowering branches is the key? It is a different



Boronia megastigma



Boronia megastigma – 4 together.

yellow to the cultivar known as *B. megastigma* 'Lutea' which to me is almost like an albino form of the species, in that the entire plant seems to have a chlorotic look about it, the foliage not the same deep green of other forms.

The following somewhat long-winded background info has been drawn from the Australian Cultivar Registration Authority (ACRA) web site:

Boronia 'Jack Maguire's Red' has been in cultivation for many years,, and in that time has been known under a variety of names. It is one of the prime examples of confusion in our cultivar history due to the non-standardisation of cultivar names when a selection is first made. Selected in 1928 by the late Jack Maguire, this plant was one of a number of selections by the Chandler family of *Boronia* in Victoria who used to grow this species for the cut flower trade. It was referred to by the Chandler family as 'Uncle Jack's Red'. This name was a family reference to isolate this form from others that they were growing, and were not published in the Chandler family nursery catalogues. Some material, however, must have been released under this name as it did become established in the trade. The Chandler family always used the group name *B. megastigma* 'Bergundy' (sic) to cover the red forms that they were growing. Synonymous with the name 'Bergundy' were 'Chandleri' and 'Chandler's Red'. Boddy's Catalogue of 1966 lists *B. megastigma* 'Chandleri', 'Pops's Red' and 'Uncle Jack' as "Bergundy shades of the brown boronia". This catalogue entry appears to relate 'Bergundy' to a group name. Another 'Bergundy' form isolated by the Chandlers appears to have been listed as 'Pop's Red', presumably as Arch Chandler's children called it by this name. As the form now subject to registration, *B. megastigma* 'Jack Maguires Red', has been in cultivation for many years, it would be desirable to leave it as *Boronia* 'Uncle Jack's Red'. However, the applicant indicates that the name should be 'Jack Maguire's Red', and Articles 41 and 55 of the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants 1980 have to be considered. Article 41 states "Publication of a cultivar name is not valid if against the expressed wish of its originator or his assignee", and Article 55 "On or



Boronia megastigma 'Jack Maguire's Red'

after 1 January 1959, a name must not be listed in a non-statutory register against the expressed wish of the Originator or his assignee". Therefore, *Boronia* 'Bergundy' (syn. *B. megastigma* 'Chandleri' and 'Chandler's Red') should be considered a group name covering two burgundy colour forms of the species selected by the Chandler family, *B. megastigma* 'Uncle Arch's Red' (syn. *B. megastigma* 'Pop's Red') and *B. 'Jack Maguire's Red'* (syn *B. megastigma* 'Uncle Jack's Red'). These plants must be grown by vegetative means to preserve the cultivar form. Cultivation requirements are as for *B. megastigma*.

At the best of times, many members of the boronia genus can prove a little tricky in cultivation, and in recent years a number of hybrids have been developed, which, if I may go out on a limb, have proven a little easier ►



Boronia megastigma 'Harlequin'

to grow in suburban gardens. One of these, *Boronia* 'Purple Jared', a hybrid between *B. megastigma* and *B. heterophylla*, is certainly worth a try, but like both its parents doesn't like to dry out. I'm not sure that I would describe the flower colour as purple though, perhaps a purplish/plum colour. It has been around for a few years now and I have found that it also strikes readily from cuttings taken in mid to late summer.

A couple of years ago, I came across a plant in a garden of *Boronia* 'Purple Jared' which has a couple of branches that had sported white instead of purple flowers. A bit like *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin', not all the flowers on this section of the bush were white, some a mixture of white and "purple". I have subsequently struck some cuttings from this section of the plant earlier this year and to my surprise one tiny cutting has produced a single white flower with "purple" tips. It will be interesting to see what transpires with the rest of the young plants.

Unfortunately, although the brown form and yellow (lutea) form of the species are readily available from most nurseries, particularly when in flower, *B. megastigma* 'Harlequin' and *B. megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red' need to be searched for, and can usually be found in season, in small quantities, at Kuranga Nursery. I put in a few cuttings each year just as a safeguard.



Boronia 'Purple Jared'



Boronia 'Purple Jared' Purple Tips



Boronia 'Purple Jared' White Sport

Earth Stars

Diane Hedin

I thought our members might be interested in this photo of earthstars (*Geastrum*) in Peter Smith's garden.

All I can say about these fungi is that the name is romantic, they're very cute and there are 10 species in Australia. My reading tells me that they can appear anytime of the year but mostly in autumn and early winter and often following rain.

They are found in a wide variety of habitats and it is fun to look for them in the garden.



Grasstree

Bev Hanson

In front of the Spotted Gum is a grasstree, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, which has flowered for the first time. Our son Peter grew it from a seed more than ten years ago. I think we will be waiting a long time for it to grow a trunk.

The climber on the pergola to the right of the trunk of the tree is *Pandorea pandorana* which is a mass of flowers in the spring, but note that all the leaves on the lower areas have been removed. This is because the feral deer from the nearby State Park enjoy feeding on it.



The Kangaroos are usually in a group of eight, and tread lightly, compared to the deer which are quite destructive at times. We like having the kangaroos around, even though they do a bit of pruning of my garden. We also have swamp wallaby, possums, phascogales, sugar gliders, etc, so we have learned to share over the years.



Templetonia and Thryptomene

Jannie Lay

The garden is starting to look like spring has arrived already with many plants budding and flowering.

The *Templetonia retusa* started to flower last week and looks like there will be many more blooms ready to burst open. It certainly stands out in the garden like many flames bursting out all over.

Another prolific flowering bush is the *Thryptomene calycina*. The bush looks like it is well covered in snow and almost glows.

We are enjoying the garden very much, and can't wait to see what is next to burst forward and treat us with the wonders of Mother Nature.



Templetonia retusa



Thryptomene calycina

Wattles

Text and pictures by Sue Guymer

You might guess that we have quite a lot of different wattle species in our garden, particularly with Bill being the ANPSA Acacia Study Group leader. We both love this genus and find great variety in form, foliage and bark, and sometimes even in the flowers.

Truly it is said that you can have a wattle flowering at any time of year. However, late winter and spring are the time when most of the species flower. I made a list of the species which we have in flower in late August (see below). A number of others will be flowering in September. Hence, Wattle Day is celebrated on 1st September.

Indigenous species flowering in August: *acinacea*, *dealbata*, *pyncnantha*, *verticillata*

Non-indigenous species flowering in August: *adunca*, *amoena*, *beckleri*, *brachybotrya*, *bracteolata*, *calamifolia*, *denticulosa*, *drummondii*, *glandulocarpa*, *guinetii*, *imbricata*, *lasiocalyx*, *phasmoides*, *pulchella* (Kambellup dwarf form), *restiacea*, *trigonophylla*, *triptera*, *wilhelmiana*

Cultivar flowering in August: *howittia* x *leprosa* "Twilight Glow"

There is a species suitable for every garden! Hope you have at least one.



Acacia bracteolata



Acacia guinetii



Acacia brachybotrya



Acacia calamifolia



Acacia 'Twilight Glow'



Acacia imbricata



Acacia drummondii



Acacia trigonophylla



Acacia glandulocarpa



Acacia wilhelmiana

Involvement of Members Linked with Churches

Nicky Zanen

I loved the August edition of *Kunzea* with so many items written up by Bill and Sue.

Bill's item on Tom Banfield and his involvement in the St David's Church in East Doncaster intrigued me. The techniques used to soften the views on what could have been considered an impossibly difficult situation impressed, but mention of the "entrance narthex" made me reach for the dictionary. What is a narthex? My trusty Oxford Dictionary describes a narthex as an antechamber, porch or distinct area at the western entrance of some Christian churches.

This led me thinking about the number of APS members I have met based all over Victoria who have been involved with church gardens – members from Colac, Natimuk, the Grampians, Wangaratta, Berwick, Inverloch and several around Melbourne.

APS Maroondah have many such members too, and this led me to looking for photos of a visit made to the



Peace Garden at Warrandyte Uniting Church.

Warrandyte Uniting Church garden in 2012 that Bev Hanson had a hand in designing.

An Unusual Plant

Peter Rogers

Lawrenzia is a genus in the Malvaceae family, which is endemic to Australia. There are about twelve species primarily found in arid and saline habitats. Six species are endemic to Western Australia, one in Queensland and the remainder more widely distributed in Australia.

One Western Australia species, which is quite common in the Mt Magnet to Leinster and north to the Little Sandy Desert area, is *Lawrenzia helmsii*. It is not a plant you would not normally grow in your garden. However, it was exciting to stumble across this unusual plant in the wild whilst travelling around Leinster a few years ago.

I was actually looking for a rather rare mistletoe that grows on melaleucas around salt pans. We had stopped to check this salt pan and have a cup of coffee. Whilst checking out the vegetation I came across these unusual cactus-like plants. I remember having seen a picture in a plant book.

This unusual plant turned out to be *Lawrenzia helmsii* which grows between 0.3-1.5m tall. The yellow or green flowers are present from July to December. Despite initial appearances it is an intricate plant when looked at close-up. The tiny flowers crowd along the stem between the tight clusters of small leaves. It is not a succulent but has tough woody stems. It grows in sandy soils, clay, gypsum and limestone ridges and around salt lakes.

Oh, and I did also find my mistletoe in the melaleuca stand on the far side of this salt pan about 1km away. In all, a very rewarding stop for a cup of coffee.



Lawrenzia helmsii



Intruder

Sue Guymer

We recently had an intruder in our garden. We realised this because part of a chicken wire fence had been pushed over for a length of about 2 metres.

My first thought was that it had been one of our bunny friends, albeit a rather stealthy (strong and healthy) one! But Bill wasn't buying that explanation.

Further investigation revealed a sizeable scat (see picture) in the vicinity. It was roughly cubic and about 6cm across. I got excited by the thought of a wombat in our garden! However, reference to Barbara Triggs "Tracks, Scats and Other Traces" book suggested the more likely kangaroo. Exciting enough!



Plants from Chris Fletcher

Debbie Jerkovic

I love the saying “Necessity is the mother of all invention”. The following story is testament to just that.

I happen to live near some other members of APS Maroondah. One of them, Judy Mallinson, rang me and asked if I knew how to get plants at the moment. Judy and her husband had been busy preparing a new bed in their garden, and had just finished when Stage 4 restrictions were put in place. I mentioned Chris Fletcher, Phil Vaughan and Kuranga, but all of these options were well outside the 5km zone from our homes.

Judy was not phased. She spoke with Chris Fletcher and it was agreed that we could place a bulk order but would have to work out a way of getting the plants delivered to us in Glen Iris. Judy then rang around and

managed to find a taxi service who agreed for a set fee to deliver the plants to us. The \$90 fee was to be split four ways, making it very affordable, especially if we ordered lots of plants.

Well, that wasn't a problem. The challenge was going to be getting all the plants into the taxi. The driver picked up the order from Chris at 8am, and had it to us in Glen Iris by 9:30am. He was very grateful for the work as the restrictions have severely impacted their service for months. So it was a win-win for everyone involved.

I personally recommend this if anybody else is looking for a way of getting plants at the moment. Judy even gave the lovely driver hints on planting in winter!

Taxi Service: Ring Damian on 0412 453 743

Plants: Ring Chris Fletcher on 0419 331 325

Yarra Glen Garden

Chris Fletcher

Here are some photos of my garden as it is looking so beautiful and is bringing me joy. Also, the local park where I walk my dog which was planted out in 2012 and has some interesting plants

Hope the members enjoy them too.



My garden



Dodonea microzyga



Bossiaea linophylla



Hardenbergia violacea form in Park

Sturt's Pea Challenge 2018 and 2019 – Final Update

Bruce Schroder

A little while ago I put out a request to those that took part in this activity over the last 2 years for an update on their experiences in growing the grafted peas. The eastern suburbs of Melbourne are well outside the natural climatic range of this species but, given its amazing floral display, is it any wonder we'd want to try growing it ourselves. I know there have been reports over the years of APS members having success growing and flowering South Australia's floral emblem from seed but I think all of us who have tried and failed can all agree that they are the exception to the rule! I guess that's why we had such an enthusiastic response when the opportunity arose to try growing some of Peter and Doug McKenzie's grafted specimens.

Doug has been grafting and growing this species for maybe 40 or so years now at his property in Ocean Grove, so I think it's fair to say he is very familiar with the idiosyncrasies of growing the species in southern Victoria. His airy but enclosed north facing patio is a sun trap and they thrive there – I do wonder whether it was built specifically to support his passion! But even Doug will admit it's not just a hardier root system that is needed to get this desert species to perform, as confirmed by many of our responses.

In summary, it doesn't look like the 2019 plants fared as well as those from 2018. The following responses have been received from some of our various "Challenge" participants:

From Melva Griffiths – Mine is planted in a basket facing north east, and has had many buds for 3-4 months. Lately the buds have started growing stalks, and occasionally we have given it Dynamic Lifter. I give it a little water each day, which usually drains immediately. I hope this is of interest.

From Bill & Sue – 2018 plant (Bill's) had been a great success for about 18 months, but then died. We both

got plants from the 2019 batch, but they have both expired about a month ago.

From Elspeth Jacobs – My 2018 plant began to die off as soon as the weather became wintry (large pot). My 2019 plant (hanging basket) grew very well but only had about 5 bunches of flowers. It also died off branch by branch when the weather became colder. I won't try another one...part of my problem, I think, is that the basket was too heavy for me to move, eg. out of rain, so it had to cope with the weather.

From Michael Cook – I positioned them both in morning sun out of the hot winds, as advised. Both looked great for about 4 months, but then succumbed. I don't expect the latest one to return as, I was told, it also was grafted onto a foreign (NZ pea) root stock. The hanging basket looks bare now.

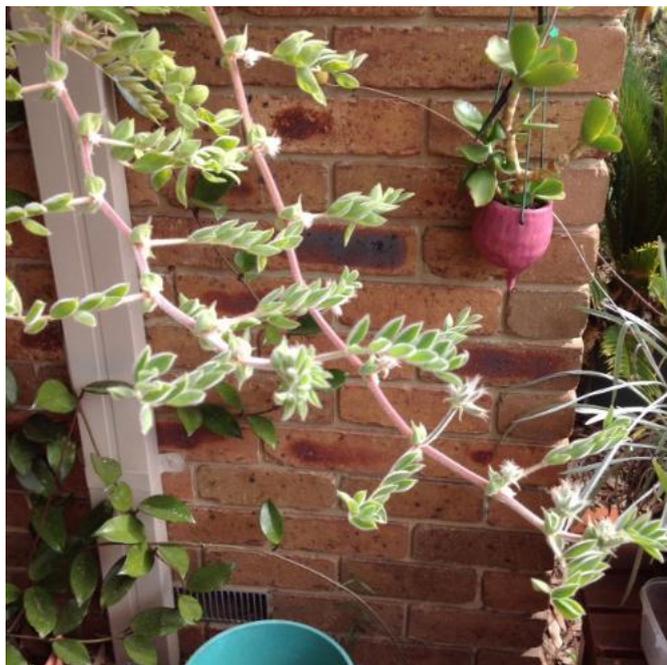
From David Lightfoot – Unfortunately mine died. They were however totally neglected, being left in my shade house, as I was moving home, and I suspect got too much water and not enough sun. Next time....

From Dallas Boulton – We were very happy with our 2018 one and decided to try a pink one in 2019. However, it has not been as stunning as the red variety so we have not given this one as much TLC.

From Doug Wightman – We did not have much success with the second Desert Pea in 2019. It had few flowers, did not grow well and has not survived for a second year. The previous one from 2018 was excellent in both the first and second year, but has now succumbed.

From Eleanor Hodges – My 2018 Desert Pea did well, but didn't make the second year, and my 2019 plant died almost immediately, though it was in the same pot and situation as the first one.

From Marion King – Although I had better luck with my 2018 plant, which flowered quite well and then died off, my 2019 plant, although planted in the same conditions



Melva Griffiths has had good success with her plant.

and treated the same, only lasted 2 weeks. Pretty disappointed with this one.

From Barry Ellis – This is the only desert pea I have now, bought in 2019. It has plenty of flower buds, but how to get lots of them flowering? It gets Seasol twice a week and once a month a sprinkling of potash. (Barry’s plant was photographed on 26 July, the dead of winter.)

From Bev Fox – I ended up placing my hanging basket on top of a pot that another plant had died in. If I had hung it up, the Cockatoos would have destroyed it. It went well over summer. I had plenty of flowers though it did not set seed. Then late Autumn I decided I would move it to a sunnier spot, but when I picked it up, the roots had gone through the basket into the pot it was sitting on and right to the bottom of the pot. I was surprised at the length of the roots. By me cutting them the plant did not survive. I should have left it where it was, but I was concerned it was in too much shade.

From Joe Wilson – Our Desert Pea was surviving until late February 2020. We initially had it hanging in a wire hanging basket, which did quite well sheltered from too much rain. In the Autumn of 2019 we moved it to receive more sunshine as it was flowering and growing well, but would dry out too quickly and required constant attention. In October 2019 we transplanted it into a much larger terracotta pot for full sun in our front garden, but it just became food for every slug in the garden, plus it seemed to be attacked by powdery mildew. In January 2020 we moved the terracotta pot into a sheltered but sunny position in our front garden. Things improved slightly but the fungal infection plus a heavy infestation of black aphids just capped it all off.

From Graeme and Jan Nicholls – We did better this year than last year with our pea plant. It grew well in a hanging basket and flowered a bit, although only a few flowers. But from April onwards it gradually began to die back, until by May it was all gone. We won’t try any more. Rather disappointing.

From Peter and Alison Rogers – Our plant decided to grow upwards and was given support. The pot was placed by the front door facing east and got plenty of sunshine, with a little supplementary watering during drier spells. It produced numerous flowers over the period with lots of comments from visitors. There was one last burst of flowers about 6 weeks ago, resulting in a single seed pod. About 4 weeks ago the plant started



Barry Ellis had lots of buds but few flowers.

shooting from the bottom of the main stem. At this stage the shoots are looking healthy.

* * * * *

OK, so 2019 was not such a good year for Sturt’s Peas in Melbourne! Maybe we’ve bitten off more than we can chew. Take heart, click on the link below or type it into your web browser, and have a look at this video of a couple of plants in flower in their own environment, shot recently at Roxby Downs, by Brian Reichelt from Port Augusta:

www.facebook.com/brian.reichelt.3/videos/1654337498069486



Peter and Alison Rogers have impressed visitors with their plant.

Ray and Eva's Garden

Just a few sand-loving specials from Cranbourne South.
Ray thinks it will be a good year for darwinias.



Conospermum and Darwinia



Eriostemon australasicus pink form



Darwinia 'Coolamon Pink'



Drachophyllum secundum



Darwinia macrostegia



Geleznowia verrucosa



Conospermum caeruleum



Drachyphyllum secundum flowers.



Darwinia 'Coolamon Pink' flowers.



Hovea pungens



Diplolaena grandiflora

Why is This So?

Debbie Jerkovic

Two years ago our family expanded with the arrival of a very cute Australian Shepherd puppy called Jess. As some of you may know, half of all "Aussies" are born without a tail. Jess right from the start looked like a wombat – brown colour, wide backside, no tail. And like a wombat, it turns out Jess likes to eat roots.

Jess, unlike our previous dog Mini, immediately took to pulling up the smaller Kangaroo Paws, eating their roots, and then depositing the leaves on our back door step. She didn't do this to any other plant in the back garden, only the small hybrid Kangaroo Paws such as "Bush Fury" or "Bush Pearl".

My question is "Why?". What is it about the roots of these plants that attract our dog without any hesitation? When I put her on lead to go for a walk, we have to pass several in the front garden and she lunges at them. Jess won't look twice at the larger forms, or any other plant for that matter.

If someone can come up with a feasible explanation there will be a prize in the post coming their way. So far I have lost over 20 plants, and now Jess is fenced off from the garden to prevent any more damage. Help Jess regain her freedom, and me my garden.

Laugh

with Alison Rogers

How do trees get online?
They just log in.

Why do trees have so many friends?
They branch out.

What kind of tree can fit into your hand?
A palm tree.

What has no fingers, but many rings?
A tree.

Someone has been adding soil to my garden.
The plot thickens.

Propagating *Acacia glaucoptera* from cuttings

Graeme Nicholls

This species is common in the Esperance region, WA. Some forms can reach 1.5 m in height, but ours is only about 50 cm. The unusual broad wing-like foliage is most ornamental, especially the new growth which is a deep maroon colour. Mature foliage is blue/grey. Small ball flowers appear along the length of the stems in spring. It seems to grow happily in our clay soil, but it needs good drainage and likes full sun.

Acacias are usually propagated from seed, suitably scarified, but many species can also be reproduced from cuttings, especially those with small inter-nodal spaces.

When it comes to *Acacia glaucoptera*, with its unusual structure of flattened phyllodes hugging the stem, it is not possible to take cuttings in the normal way. I have had success by carefully cutting away the phyllodes on the bottom half of the cuttings with some sharp scissors, leaving a virtual stem. I take about 8 cm of tip growth, trim it as shown in the picture, dip it in rooting hormone, and pot it into a mixture of mainly perlite with a small amount of peat moss, or sometimes seed raising mix.

Our plant was originally grown from a cutting from a plant in the Melton Botanic Garden. My most recent cuttings were taken in mid-July this year and placed on a heated bed. By the end of August they had good roots and were potted on.



Australian Plants Society Maroondah Inc.

Postal address: P.O. Box 33, Ringwood 3134

Email: maroondah@psvic.org.au

Newsletter contributions:

Contributions for the October 2020 Newsletter should be sent to Sue Guymer at aitchguy@gmail.com.au no later than **Friday 25th September 2020**

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