

March Meeting

Speaker : Miriam Ford

Topic : "Mint Bushes and Allied Genera"

Our guest speaker for the March meeting was Miriam Ford. Miriam is the leader of the APS Yarra Yarra group who are organising the 2020 FJC Rogers Seminar. Tonight's talk was a foretaste of the seminar; "Mint Bushes and Allied Genera".

The evening's talk began with images of the seventeen genera in the subfamily Prostantheroideae appearing on the screen, one by one, as music gently played in the background. Prostantheroideae is a subfamily of the genus Lamiaceae and contains the genera; *Brachysola*, *Chloanthes*, *Cyanostegia*, *Dasyamalla*, *Dicrastylis*, *Hemiandra*, *Hemigenia*, *Hemiphora*, *Lachnostachys*, *Microcorys*, *Newcastelia*, *Physopsis*, *Pityrodia*, *Quoya* and *Westringia*.

The genus *Prostanthera* was named by the French botanist Jacques Labillardière in 1806 from a specimen of *P. lasianthos* he collected in Tasmania. The genus name comes from the Greek, prosthéce ; an addition or appendage and *anthera* ; anther, in reference to the small appendages found on the anthers.

There are c.100 species of *Prostanthera*, all endemic to Australia, occurring in all states. Some of the most commonly cultivated species are;

- *Prostanthera ovalifolia* (Qld, NSW Vic.) A small to medium sized shrub with mauve, purple or rarely white flowers that are often prolific and very noticeable.
- *Prostanthera rotundifolia* (Qld, NSW Vic. Tas.) A small to medium sized shrub with mauve or purple flowers wthat are often prolific and very noticeable.
- *Prostanthera incisa* (includes *P. sieberi*) (NSW, Vic.) A small to medium sized shrub with pink or mauve flowers that are often prolific and very noticeable.
- *P. lasianthos* (Qld, NSW Vic. Tas.) A medium sized shrub to small tree with white or pink flowers that are often prolific and very noticeable.

The genus *Prostanthera* has two sections; *Prostanthera* and *Klanderia*. In the section *Prostanthera* the flowers are more bell shaped and are more likely to be pollinated by insects whilst in the section *Klanderia* the flowers are more tubular and are more likely to be pollinated by birds.

There are 35 species of *Prostanthera* in Victoria with one of the rarest being *P. galbraithae* from East Gippsland. It is this species that has been chosen as the emblem for the 2020 FJC Rogers Seminar.

Prostantheras can be distinguished from *Westringia* in the following ways;

- In *Prostanthera* the calyx is two lipped whilst *Westringia* have a five lobed calyx.
- *Prostantheras* in the most part have aromatic foliage.
- *Westringias* have their leaves arranged in whorls.

There are c.25 species of *Westringia* all endemic to Australia, occurring in all states except NT. They are found in a diverse range of climates with most species enjoying the same growing conditions as *Prostanthera*. They are regarded as being hardier than *prostantheras* and are used as a rootstock when grafting the more difficult to grow *prostantheras* such as *P. magnifica*.

Propagation is usually from cuttings with most species striking with relative ease. Seed is not as easy and in garden situations many species can hybridise so cuttings are recommended.

Cultivation - plants are best grown in well drained soils with leaf litter as a mulch making them ideal for planting under eucalypts or wattles. A morning sun or dappled light aspect is best as is protection from the hot westerly summer sun.

MARCH SPECIMEN TABLE

Marj opened with a colourful collection which included *Rhododendron locheae*, *Xerochrysum bracteata* "Lemon Monarch", *Acacia cardiophylla*, two *Plectranthus* – one large, one variegated and prostrate, *Veronica perfoliata*, the magenta coloured *Swainsona greyana*, *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* and two *Correas* "Dinner Bells" and "Pink Tips". She commented that the rhododendron has 'gone bananas' since the recent rains, and that her *Xerochrysums* just won't stop flowering.



Robert brought in a flower of *Banksia media*, (right) a WA species which is tough. It is currently quite a wide plant and showing a lot of buds. Not so good as a cut flower he says as it smells though few of us could pick that up.



Betty has an *Eremophila mackinlayi* which is growing particularly well and she brought in several branches for members to take cutting material from. Similarly, Marg had a bucketful of prunings from a very healthy *Correa reflexa* which has lime coloured flowers.

Mandy again provided us with an array of interesting plants. A favourite is *Grevillea bipinnatifida* (right) with its orange to yellow gradation in colour and cut leaves. *Correa glabra* "Inglewood Gold" has unusual olive coloured flowers. Mandy had two *Croweas*, both with very fine leaves. One of the brightest coloured plants on the table



was her *Calytrix fraseri* (left), a vibrant magenta and lots of flowers on the stem. This is a summer flowering plant; Mandy's is in a pot which has rooted through into



the ground. In a nod to the topic of the evening, Mandy had a piece of *Prostanthera phyllicifolia* (photo right by Austplants). This grows in dappled shade. It has fine foliage and purple flowers.



John confined himself to members of the Lamiaceae. His first, *Prostanthera densa* was of great interest to Miriam Ford who subsequently confirmed that it is a rare endemic of the Sydney area. John has it in a large pot and it is currently 1m high and 0.4 – 0.5m wide. He said that it did not do well in the ground and is best grafted. It does strike readily. *P. cryptandroides* is a small aromatic and long flowering plant.



P. ekersleyana (left, photo APS Yarra Yarra) has its flowers in pairs. John's is grafted and in a large pot. It is at least 10 years old. It responds well to rain (and we had a good lot of that the day after the meeting!) but can suffer from dieback which should be cut off quickly.

John's last specimen was of the grey upright form of *Hemiandra pungens*, sometimes known as snakebush. John's is on its own roots, flowers sporadically over the whole year and is currently about ¾ m high.

(Photo right from Wikipedia)



Pick of the Bunch March 2020*Prostanthera densa* A.A. Ham.

Specimen grown by John Thompson

Prostanthera densa is an erect, compact shrub to 2 metres tall by 1 metre wide. It grows in sclerophyll forest and shrubland, on coastal headlands and near-coastal ranges, on sandstone, from Nelson Bay to Beecroft Peninsula. It is endangered by urban development and is listed as a threatened species.



The leaves are ovate and appear triangular and are covered with fine hairs. The mauve flowers which have orange markings in the throat are produced in the leaf axils often opposite each other giving the appearance of the flowers being in pairs. The flowers occur throughout the year.

P. densa will grow in most well drained soils in a partially sunny aspect. Propagation is from cuttings that strike readily.

Prostanthera is a member of the Lamiaceae family, a large family consisting of c.3500 species in 200 genera. About 250 species in 38 genera including many naturalised weeds occur in Australia. The Australian genera include *Ajuga*, *Hemiandra*, *Hemigenia*, *Hemiphora*, *Lachnostachys*, *Microcorys*, *Plectranthus* and *Westringia*.

The genus *Prostanthera* consists of about 100 species all endemic to Australia.

The genus *Prostanthera* was named by the French botanist Jacques Labillardière in 1806 from a specimen of *P. lasianthos* he collected in Tasmania. The genus name comes from the Greek, prosthécé ; an addition or appendage and anther ; anther, in reference to the small appendages found on the anthers. The specific name, *densa* is from the Latin *densus* ; thick, dense or crowded, in reference to the branches, leaves and calyces which are densely covered with long, spreading hairs.

DIARY FOR 2020

April 7	Trevor Blake: "Malvaceae" Cancelled
May 5	John Thompson: "Historical Collectors other than Banks and Solander"
June 2	Chris Long: "Boronia Oil"
July	TBA
August	AGM and members' slides
September	Dr Sandy Webb and Dr Marilyn Olliff: "The Jawbone Sanctuary"
October	Marg and Ivan: "South Western Australia"
November	Kuranda nursery and café.
December	Christmas wind-up, "Clear the Decks" plant sale and members' slides.

Plant Sales and Shows 2020

February 17 – April 17	"Australian Plants Revealed" Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery, Cancelled 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood (See below and Sept 'Growing Australian' pp 26, 27)
March 25 – 29	Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, Carlton Gardens Cancelled
March 28	APS Vic COMM and quarterly, hosted by APS Maroondah Cancelled
March 28	Keynote address by Bruce Pascoe and Prof. Tim Entwistle as part of "Australian Plants Revealed" exhibition. Cancelled
April 4	APS Geelong native plant sale, "Wirrawilla", 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks. Cancelled
April 18	APS Yarra Yarra Native Plants and Book Sale. Eltham Community and Reception Centre. 801 Main Road, Eltham. 10am – 4pm Cancelled
May 2	APS Mornington Plant Sale, Seawinds, Arthurs Seat State Park, Purves Road, Arthurs Seat. 10am – 3:30pm
July 25, 26	Cranbourne Gardens Friends Winter Plant Sale, 10am – 4pm

APS-Vic Exhibitions and Lectures 2020
Marking the Collection of Australian Plants by Banks and Solander

April 2020 will mark the 250th Anniversary of Lieutenant James Cook and crew reaching the east coast of Australia in HMS Endeavour. During the voyage up the east coast, naturalist Joseph Banks and botanist Daniel Solander made collections of Australian plants which were taken to London for classification and scientific study.

Although the main exhibition at Maroondah has been cancelled, you could still try a visit to Karwarra: [Karwarra Exhibition 18th February to 18th April 2020](#) Free admission, Tues – Fri 10 – 4, Sat, Sun 1 – 4. Note the gardens are closed on days of Total Fire Ban and extreme weather. 1190 – 1192 Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Kalorama.

The display at Karwarra, highlights Banksias and our unique Australian flora. Karwarra is set on two hectares at picturesque Kalorama in the Dandenong Ranges and is devoted to displaying a diverse range of Australian plants in a landscaped setting. There is a well-stocked nursery and helpful staff to assist you in choosing plants suitable to your needs (not sure if this still applies – Marj).

MAY MEETING (if applicable)

Write-up: Marj Seaton

Supper: Amanda Loudon (Please bring milk)

PHOTO GALLERY

Ray found these bats under his verandah. His research seems to indicate that they are *Nyctophilus geoffroyi* or lesser long-eared bats.

