



Field Trip to the STEP area of the Canberra Arboretum – Chris Huxley

On Saturday the 5th November a small number of members visited the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP) at the National Arboretum. The STEP is a valuable resource for native plant conservation and education: a great place to learn basic eucalypt identification if you are new to it. Not all the plants in the park are labelled, but most are the park is a great place to see what might grow where in a native garden.

The basic plan of the park consists of bands and patches of different eucalypts representing different Southern Tablelands ecosystems. The trees are underplanted with grasses, shrubs and herbs found in those ecosystems. We started at the top meandered to the bottom of the park and then returned to the top along the western edge that is planted with a range of Acacia species.

Entering the top of the park, where conditions are dry, *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* - Red Stringybark and *Eucalyptus rossii* - Scribbly Gum have montane species planted under them. A range of grasses are planted here on the eastern side but my identification skills were not up to the job of naming them.

Open woodland species *Eucalyptus nortonii* - Large-flowered Bundy, *Eucalyptus radiata* - Narrow-leaved Peppermint and *Eucalyptus rubida* - Candlebark are planted towards the centre of the park and the shrubs and herbs under the eucalypts represent a range of grassland and woodland ecosystems. *Linum marginale* – Wild Flax, *Melicytus dentatus* - Tree Violet, *Calocephalus citreus* - Lemon Beauty Heads, *Leucochrysum albicans* - Hoary Sunray and *Geranium potentilloides* - Soft Crane's-bill were all flowering.

In the lower north east part of the park are beds devoted to bush foods. Some, like the *Tasmannia lanceolata* - Pepperberry, are not local but other plants such as *Indigofera australis* - Austral Indigo we regularly encounter in the Southern Tablelands.

Note: *Indigofera australis* is not a bush food but was used by First Nations people for other purposes

At the bottom of the park *Eucalyptus pauciflora* - Snow Gum, *Eucalyptus melliodora* - Yellow Box and *Eucalyptus stellulata* - Black Sally are planted and demonstrate plants which cope with cold air drainage from higher areas. *Solanum aviculare* - Kangaroo Apple, *Billardiera scandens* - Hairy Appleberry and *Ajuga australis* - Austral Bugle. Below this band is located a small ephemeral wetland which, unsurprisingly, was quite wet for our visit. *Coronidium gunnianum* - Swamp Everlasting, *Isotoma fluviatilis* - Swamp Isotome or Blue Star Creeper and *Grevillea lanigera* - Woolly Grevillea were flowering during our visit.

It was a pleasant visit with a lot of conversation among the group. It might be worth a visit at another time of the year to see different species in flower.



Geranium potentilloides



Leucochrysum albicans - Hoary Sunray



Linum marginale

ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2022 AGM

This year we are having the AGM and lunch, and a walk if its dry enough, at Jen's place, 10 Pomeroy Mill Ford Road, Mummel. This is an Old Church at the

corner of Range Road and Pomeroy Mill Ford Rd., just past the Yurt Farm on Range Road, coming from Goulburn.

The organisation for the day will be as follows:

9.30-10: Arrive. Coffee or tea provided, if you prefer something else you will need to bring it.

10 am: AGM begins.

11.30/12: AGM finishes

11.30-12.30: Walk around garden/paddock

12.30: Lunch

After lunch you may also go for a walk.

For Lunch we ask each person to 'Bring a plate'. To ensure we have variety and not too much of one thing please email, phone or text me with your planned food choice, also advising of any special requirements.

As some will be aware we are looking to **spread the work of running the group** wider than just the committee. I have indicated on the agenda some areas in which we need assistance but there may be other things you could take on to share the work a bit further. We can add them on the day!

Nobody will be forced into doing something they don't want to do,

SO, I hope that lots of you will make the effort to come to the meeting, meet each other and get actively involved in the group. In November 2023 we are hosting the NSW APS State Annual get together. It will require a fair amount of organisation but we have 11 months to get there. Help with some parts of this would be appreciated.

See you on the 3rd,

Jen