Next Meeting

Saturday 6th May 2017

Garden Visits

This month members are invited to view 3 quite different gardens in the Batemans Bay area

We begin our journey of discovery at 10.30am, at the garden of Ruth and Bob Pulford, 12 Silverdell Place, Surf Beach.

After lunch travel to Vista Ave. Catalina to the gardens of Sue and John Knight at 115, and Annie Hood and Geoff Gosling at 125.

See map on page 12

This will be the first visit by the Group to these gardens, and presents an opportunity to see quite different, but complimentary approaches to using Australian plants.

We have settled into some really nice autumnal weather, but as always on excursions, come prepared. Wear sensible clothing and shoes for wandering around the gardens.

BYO morning tea and lunch, and a chair if possible.

Members are welcome to collect cuttings from each of the gardens

The following notes have been provided by the hosts as an introduction.
Ruth and Bob Pulford. (0428 397 701)

We had no intention of buying a large block when we moved to the coast in 2001. We had wanted to buy an established house mainly because we had gone through the trauma of building 3 houses and were well aware of the work involved in establishing a garden. We looked for some time, but while we could find a house we liked the gardens were always too small. Finally the poor salesman said what we wanted was acreage. Having lead a sheltered suburban life we had never heard of such a thing and weren’t sure whether that was what we wanted. We eventually bought 2 acres in Surf Beach.

By the time the house was completed 12 months later, we had a home on a quarry site. Our builder had told us there was no fill available in the area so we had a huge hole dug at the back of the block, which together with tonnes of soil from the front of the block, creating a steep driveway in the process, provided enough fill for the house to stand on.

Not much work was done in the garden for the next year or so as Bob laid paving and built pergolas.

During that time we paid a visit to the ERBG several times each year, and each time were waylaid by a persuasive volunteer, and eventually gave in and became volunteers ourselves.

Having lived in Adelaide and Canberra we knew very little about Australian plants and certainly not the ones on the south coast we decided to use only Australian plants.

With no experience, we bought plants haphazardly and then had to work out where to put them, which invariably involved walking around the block trying to work out where they should go.

As you can gather, there was no plan for the garden, but we are incredibly lucky having dark, fertile soil in which just about anything will grow. The first bed was established where vegetation, removed when we built, had been burned, and lots of seedlings had come up. So we added some more, built a path, put in more plants, mowed the grass, pruned, weeded, planted some more,……

We haven’t specialised in any particular type of plant, except for pink ones, and it is probably best described as an eclectic Bunnings garden.

I should mention here that Mark and Carolyn Noake have been very helpful, especially in patiently encouraging us to try propagation, and supplying us with umpteen plants. We look forward to seeing members at our garden in May.

The photo shows how the hole down the back regenerated with native grasses and eucalypt seedlings, and became what we call the gully.
Sue and John Knight (0434 674 347)

115 Vista Ave Catalina

Ours is a steep east facing block of 1300 sq m., which when we moved in 5 years ago, supported a flourishing infestation of every weed imaginable. In fact when browsing the Shire’s publication, “Plant this instead”, we could find plants of each species described as an invasive weed.

One wonders why on retiring, and with a crook back and wonky knees, you would choose such a project. Well the views help. On a nice sunny day, to sit back and enjoy a sea breeze as it stirs the foliage of spotted gums.

Reality of course is somewhat different. First removing all the weedy plants from the front half of the block, constructing retaining walls to provide at least some trafficable areas around the house, barrowing 40 tonnes of fill, digging out a bamboo forest from the neighbours, which had spread right across the block and to the neighbour on the other side, and about 4m deep, well what else is there to fill in those quiet retirement days.

Anyway, we have just about got on top of this half, and will someday tackle the wild lower section.

Annie Hood and Geoff Gosling (0438 286 382)

125 Vista Ave Catalina

A GARDEN IN TRANSITION

When we took over the garden at 125 Vista Avenue in December 2015, it was overrun with pittosporum, wild tobacco, spotted gums and other eucalypts, yuccas, buffalo and kikuyu grasses, and many woody weeds. A large area had been covered by artificial turf rescued from the refurbishment of the Batemans Bay tennis court. The previous owners had described it as a ‘low maintenance’ garden; truth was ‘no maintenance’.

The last 15 months or so have been used to thin out the unwanted material and replace it with flowering border plants and many Australian plants. Before doing any planting, effort had to be put into the soil by the addition of compost plus many ute loads of top soil and mulch. In the course of this work, we discovered the block had been covered with weed mat, and then the weed mat had been covered with carpet. There were no obvious signs of any attempt to improve the soil before banging in plants.

In addition, we have put in place a lot of infrastructure (edging, paths, walls, lighting).

The results are just now starting to be seen with good growth in the plants salvaged from wallaby browsing and in the plants that have appreciated being cut back and freed from their neighbours ie given more room, light and air circulation.

Given that the property is more than 5000 square metres, there is a lot more to be done but at least it no longer feels overwhelming. We are pleased to be welcoming APS visitors for the May outing to view the transitional works completed so far.
Long serving Past President Bob Ross has been rewarded for his many years campaigning for the conservation of Australian plants.

Bob was recently announced as the recipient of the Australian Plants Society NSW Region Conservation Award in recognition of his commitment in championing, Australian plants, and in particular the value of conserving the environment.

Bob will receive his award at the APS Regional quarterly meeting at Coffs Harbour in September. Members are encouraged to join with Bob to celebrate his achievements at Coffs Harbour.

Jan Robilliard was responsible for putting together the nomination (see below) for Bob on behalf of our Group, and I am pleased to say that her efforts were not unrewarded.

Thanks Jan, on behalf of the Committee and members of the APS South East Region Group.

“It is my pleasure, on behalf of Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Region, to nominate Bob Ross for the APS NSW Conservation Award.

Since arriving in Australia from Colorado, USA, Bob has been interested in Australian plants and the environment in which they exist. One of his first jobs was with the Snowy Mountains Authority as an engineer. In this role he realised how important bogs were to the gradual release of water and how summer grazing in the high country contributed to erosion and damage to alpine plants. Not long after arriving in Cooma an SGAP (Society for Growing Australian Plants, now APS, Australian Plants Society) group was formed, and both he and his wife Wendy immediately joined.

In 1968 they moved to South Australia and set up a 13-acre hobby farm, converting paddocks to forests and planting lots of Australian plants. They also joined SGAP South Australia, regularly attending meetings and field trips. In 1970 Bob was elected Secretary/Treasurer, in 1971 Vice-President and in 1972-3, President of the South Australian Region.

In 1973, moving to Mount Gambier, they joined a Field Naturalist group and soon formed a local group of SGAP. Bob was President of that group until he and Wendy moved back to Adelaide in 1979. One of his major contributions to the environment was as Delegate to the S.A. Conservation Council, which met with the S.A. Minister for the Environment.

When they moved back to Cooma again, there was no longer an SGAP group, so they joined the ACT Region on some of their field trips. Bob also became a National Parks Australia delegate to the NPWS Snowy Mountains Advisory Committee, and re-nominated for the position in the Far South Coast, being a member of these committees for about 24 years.

Bob has been a particularly active member of APS South East NSW Group, opening his garden for monthly meetings, acting as a lobbyist in furthering the appreciation of Australian plants, and attending many field trips. During 2012-14, as Conservation officer for APS NSW Region, he contributed articles particularly on endangered plant species in NSW. To further demonstrate his commitment to the environment, Bob joined a local Landcare group in 2012, and assisted in removing weeds and replanting indigenous plants in the local environment.

In summary, Bob Ross has been a tireless advocate and worker for the environment in various locations in which he has lived. Since moving to Australia he has accumulated and disseminated a large body of knowledge about Australian plants and the environment in which they live.”

Jan Robilliard, on behalf of Australian Plants Society South East NSW Region.
Last Meeting... report by John Knight

Bywong Nursery

Australian Plant Development
By
Peter Ollerenshaw

Breeding Correa

All photos in this report are selected from Peter’s presentation.
They are copyright to Bywong Nursery

Peter began his talk by introducing to the gathering, which filled the ERBG meeting room, the range of Correa species, and where they occur naturally.

Correa is in the Rutaceae Family, within the Tribe Boronieae, and is separated from other closely related genera within the Tribe in having simple, opposite leaves, flowers with 4 petals which are at least initially joined to form a tube, and 8 separate stamens which in some species exceed the length of the petals, and in others do not.

Of course there are always some exceptions within species, as some plants have been noted to have 5 or 6 petals on rare occasions.

Boronia and Zieria also have opposite leaves, but differ in that the petals are distinct rather than joined, and are usually spreading. Boronia has 8 stamens which are erect or inwards curving, and Zieria has just 4 stamens.
Correa is a genus of just 11 species endemic to Australia, with representation from southern Queensland to just inside the eastern border of Western Australia, where C. backhouseana var. coriacea is found.

3 forms of Correa reflexa. Note the pair of reflexed leaf-like bracts which protect the developing flowers

The most widespread species is *C. reflexa*, which occurs in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, and has 7 varieties or distinct forms.

*C. alba*, with 3 forms, is widespread in NSW, Victoria Tasmania and S.A. but only occurs in coastal communities. Likewise *C. backhouseana*, also with 3 forms, is also a coastal plant with its main occurrence in Tasmania, but found also in S.A. and W.A.

*C. glabra* is a species which prefers inland areas, and is very comfortable in drier gardens which do not suffer too much humidity. The 3 varieties are often found in rocky situations on the ranges from southern Q'land, through NSW and Victoria, into S.A.
One of the most popular and desirable species is \textit{C. pulchella}, which occurs on limestone derived soils in lower S.A. and across the border into western Victoria. It also occurs on Kangaroo Is.

The largest of all Correas is \textit{C. lawrenceana}. Some shrubs in Eastern Victoria can grow to 10m tall, though most of the 8 varieties are usually less than 3m, but can spread quite a deal. For this reason I think not many people are attracted to this species, although they can prove quite hardy shrubs.

Of the other species, only \textit{C. baauerlenii}, the Chefs Cap Correa is widely grown. It is found in a couple of isolated populations between Bega and Batemans Bay, growing on hillsides adjacent to waterways, often in association with rainforest species. It has however proved a very hardy and long lived, reliable garden plant. The foliage exudes a delightful spicy fragrance on warm days or after rain.

South Australian \textit{C. decumbens} was once widely grown but has lost favour over time. It is a very useful garden plant, being low growing, but spreading to around 2 metres. The reddish tubular flowers are unusual in that they sit upright rather than hanging bell-like. This is no doubt influenced by the pollinator, although anyone who grows this plant knows that the same birds visit other Correas in their gardens just as often, and successfully. When there is time to sit and watch the birds working Correas, one might notice that the Spinebills in particular sit on a branch and lift the flowers upright to sip the nectar. Maybe \textit{C. decumbens} might have evolved to favour a particular bird.

\textit{Correa calycina} and \textit{C. eburnea}, both from South Australia, and \textit{C. aemula} from western Victoria and S.A. are rarely seen in gardens, being grown mostly by keen collectors of Correas, but they each make good garden plants. \textit{C. aemula} with its bluish green flowers is particularly attractive in a shady garden among ferns.

Correas are naturally promiscuous, and no doubt many members who grow more than one species in their gardens have had seedling pop up over time. This of course led growers over the past 50 years to propagate those which appeared different, resulting in many different forms with varying redeeming or desirable features. A couple of early releases, including \textit{Correa “Mannii”}, \textit{Correa “Dusky Bells”}, and \textit{Correa “Marians Marvel”} have proved very successful for many years and can still be found in nurseries.

There has also been released many naturally occurring forms of \textit{C. reflexa, C. alba} and \textit{C. pulchella}, such as \textit{C. reflexa “Clearview Giant”}.

\textit{Correa reflexa “Clearview Giant”} is a naturally occurring large flowered form of \textit{Correa reflexa} from East Gippsland in Victoria
Peter went on to explain that few species are suited to use in developing new cultivars. Over the years he has produced many lovely plants, but they have not been successful commercially. Plants which are protected by **Plant Breeders Rights** are very expensive to register, and the registration must be maintained to enable the breeder to profit from the many years of work taken to trial new varieties.

The criteria now is to produce plants with flowers in which the petal tips are recurved, or the petals are widely open, as in *C. alba*. The plants must also be strongly floriferous, and the brighter the better.

The species used to produce the wonderful plants on display today are *C. alba*, *C. pulchella* and *C. reflexa*. From *C. alba* comes the broadly spreading petals, from *C. pulchella* the lovely flared tips and attractive foliage, and *C. reflexa* provides colour and hybrid vigour.

Choosing which forms of which species are best to be used, Peter sometimes makes a number of hybrid crosses from similar plants, and then selects the progeny which best exhibit the features he was seeking.

As you can imagine, very few of the hundreds of plants grown will be commercially viable, so a careful culling is needed to produce the final product. He is also experimenting with crossing hybrid plants back to the original crosses, and has come up with some interesting forms.

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**Correa flowers exhibiting receptive stigmas**

**Flowers which have been pollinated.**

Note the careful labelling, and just think how much work has gone into the process of removing anthers from flowers to ensure further pollination by insects cannot occur.

Partial success, some of the pollinated flowers have produced some fruit. Next comes the tricky bit, capturing the seed before the capsule expels it explosively.
To date 12 varieties of Correa cultivars have been released by Peter through his Bywong Nursery, and who knows just how many more might prove successful in the future.

Following lunch we managed to convince Peter to talk about his Grevillea breeding program, and how he goes about producing his smoke to germinate seeds. On completion of the meeting members accompanied Peter to his vehicle to view some of his Correa cultivars. Those lucky members who were quick, managed to purchase some of the delightful plants illustrated in last month’s newsletter.

I am working with fellow member Norm Hulands on a simple design for a smoke cloche members could build to germinate seed. Details will be available at a future meeting.

Germinating seed.

Once seed is collected it is sown and treated with smoke for 30 minutes to encourage germination.

Success, a couple of seeds are already on their way.

Now comes the long wait.

Grow the plants to flowering size, which takes 2 - 3 years, and hope that some of the seedlings produce flowers which might exhibit desirable commercial qualities.

A range of hybrids produced.

This photo illustrates some of the many potential successes, but how many might prove winners commercially?

Careful selection could mean profits, but most would be rejected as not meeting Peter’s stringent quality tests.

To date 12 varieties of Correa cultivars have been released by Peter through his Bywong Nursery, and who knows just how many more might prove successful in the future.

Correa alba pink form crossed with Correa C.15c produces a lovely pink flower with the desirable flared tips
In My Garden ..... Leigh Murray

Dearly Departed

It’s been a tough summer in our gardens, and we’ve recently lost some very important plants at Tuross: a gorgeous big *Adenanthos sericeus* Albany Woolly Bush, a large *Acacia implexa*, a showy *Isopogon formosus*, a semi-coppiced *Eucalyptus bridgesiana* as well as recently-planted tubestock-size *Eucalyptus conferruminata* and *Einadia nutans*. The biggest shocks were the *Adenanthos* and the *Acacia* - both were long-established plants that looked happy.

I think most of these deaths were related to one of two factors: root rot and bad pruning.

Examples of sudden death following a bout of heavy rain include the *Adenanthos sericeus*, the small *Eucalyptus conferruminata* and the *Einadia nutans*. This is a regular pattern for our Tuross garden: plants seem to be chugging along just fine until we have a big downpour (maybe 100mm in a day or two). A week or two later, a previously thriving plant suddenly looks half dead. And it will be fully dead a week or two after that, probably from *Phytophthora cinnamomi* or another form of root rot. Our land is sloping and well-drained, but these downpours seem to be overwhelming.

Examples of death from bad pruning include the *Acacia implexa* and the *Eucalyptus bridgesiana*.

Because it hadn't been kept low in its early days, the *Acacia implexa* had developed a hefty, bare trunk with all its foliage on the top. But because it had grown too tall for its spot, that splendid top had to be cut back moderately hard from time to time. This was done every few months or so for years, until, with no warning, it seems that it was cut back one time too many or at the wrong time. The tree shot new growth at the top, as usual. But that growth got wind-burnt and began to die back. And continued dying back, until it was dead… The *Eucalyptus bridgesiana* was cut back in summer; its new growth was burnt, and it too died. Similarly, an *Isopogon formosus* that had begun to hang out over the driveway wasn't pruned soon enough. When it began to scrape the car, it had to be cut back into thicker wood. It too, shot new growth, but that died back, and then the rest of bush died too. It would probably still be with us, in all its bright pink glory, if it had been cut back more gently earlier - its two mates, planted a little further back in the bed, still look beautiful.

Ages ago, I made a half-hearted effort to treat a few plants that I thought had been affected by root rot with Anti-Rot. But it seemed a hopeless task, so I soon gave that up, and have learnt to live with post-downpour losses. I've never had a problem related to pruning with any plant I've diligently tip pruned frequently. It seems to be a safe, easy and desirable method, and I think it's especially suited to a wind-blasted site, to reduce stress on plants. So, I'll keep trying to find the time to tip prune as many of our plants as possible.

Sad to hear about your losses, Leigh, but talking about these is just as important as talking about successes. We can all learn from each other about which plants can be treated to a heavy prune without concern, and when best to avoid such drastic action.

Other members must have a story to tell, be it success or otherwise. So take up the challenge and send a few words about your experiences in growing Australian plants.

At our November meeting, this topic will be explored in detail, and hopefully we will be treated to some words, and actions, by a renowned grower of Australian plants. More on this once details are confirmed.
Myrtle Rust, a Threat to Plants of the Myrtaceae Family
Margaret Lynch has noticed that Myrtle Rust is present on her Backhousia citriodora, and an article she produced a couple of years ago has been reproduced below to remind members to remain vigilant.

Myrtle rust, first identified on the central coast of NSW, has since spread as far south as Tasmania and north into Queensland. This exotic rust is a variant of the Guava rust complex native to South America and infects only plants of the Myrtaceae family. While there are native rusts in Australia they are very rare on myrtaceous plants.

The most recognisable stage of myrtle rust is the yellow pustule and yellow spore stage. The underside of new leaf growth is usually first to be infected, spreading to the upper surface and causing distortion of growth. New shoots, buds, flowers and fruit of soft-fruited species such as lilly pilly (Syzygium sp.) may also become infected. As there are no other rusts on Myrtaceae in southern Australia if you see egg yolk yellow pustules and spore masses it most certainly will be myrtle rust.

Spores can be spread by wind, movement of infected plants, on people and equipment and most probably by animals. Optimal conditions for infection include warm temperatures, high relative humidity and low light. The naturally occurring genera of myrtaceous plants in this area are Acmena, Backhousia, Callistemon, Eucalyptus, Leptospermum, Melaleuca, Rhodamnia, Syncarpia, Syzygium. Remember any myrtaceous plant can be infected whether exotic or natives from anywhere in Australia.

Further information and updates on species known to be affected can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust.

THE ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK AUTUMN OPEN DAYS
Illawarra Grevillea Park Society, a non-profit voluntary society, is proud to announce Autumn OPEN DAYS on Saturday & Sunday May 6th and 7th and Saturday & Sunday May 13th and 14th.

Even at this time of the year you will see a diverse range of plants from across Australia in flower. Many only in bloom at this time of the year so it’s a great chance to see some unique plants.

The Grevillea Park is nestled into the foot of the Illawarra Escarpment. Find us at the rear of Bulli Showground on the Princes Highway.

The park is in a relaxing bushland setting with fantastic rainforest walks. There are picnic and BBQ facilities adjacent to the 100 year old Grevillea Park Chapel.

A good range of plants will be available to purchase, including grafted Grevilleas and some difficult to obtain in nurseries. Grevillea Bulli Beauty and Grevillea Bulli Princess are among the best you can put in your garden.

www.grevilleapark.org

Ray Brown
Grevillea Park Manager

Committee news
Membership
This month we welcome a new member from Cobargo, Verna Aslin, who is transferring from APS Armidale. Welcome Verna, and we look forward to meeting you at our gatherings.

Jenny John, Membership Officer

Future activities
The new committee has developed a provisional program of interesting meetings for the coming year, activities which will hopefully add to our knowledge of Australian plants.

The preliminary program is as follows, subject of course to variation:

| June 3 | My role at ERBG | Dianne Clark (ERBG) |
| July 1 | Identifying Eucalypts | John Knight at ERBG |
| August 5 | Landscape feature | with designer Shane Doherty |
| September 2 | Isopogons and Petrophiles | Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate |
| October 7 | Narooma, property of Joan Lynch |
| November 4 | AGM at Horse Island, Pruning |

If you have issues or ideas, any of the committee would appreciate your input.
Sue and John Knight, Annie Hood and Geoff Gosling
From the Pulfords, return to George Bass Dr, turn left and head back towards Glenella Road. Just past the 60k sign turn left onto Calga Cres, then left at the T intersection, right on Berrima St, then left at the next T intersection and left again at Vista Ave. 115 is over the crest, and 125 just a little further on

Don’t get lost

Glenella Road Bear right at the traffic lights

Ruth and Bob Pulford are at the far end of Silverdell Pl. Turn off Beach Rd at the High School traffic lights (Glenella Rd) and continue on George Bass Dr until Silverdell Pl is reached. The turnoff is well signposted.

COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

President, John Knight  Ph 0434 674 347  e. johnvista49@outlook.com
Vice-President Geoff Gosling  Ph 0438 286 382  e. geoff.gosling@bigpond.com
Secretary, Michele Pymble  Ph 02 4473 8587  e. mishpymble@gmail.com
Minute Sec., Amanda Marsh  Ph 0421 426 366  e. mohippoly@gmail.com
Treasurer, Mary Harrison  Ph 0421 423 200  e. maharr03@gmail.com
Membership Jenny John  Ph 02 4476 3576  e. peteandjenny.john@gmail.com
Publicity Jillian Peck  Ph 0421 432 953  e. jcpeck88@gmail.com
Website. sundeast.austplants.com.au