



Australian Plants Society

South East NSW Group

Newsletter 169

March 2021

Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

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Next Meeting

Saturday 10th April 2021, 10.00a.m.

**Propagation / Grafting and Garden Visit at Phil and Catriona's
at 663 Lyrebird Lane Little Forest (see map on P. 10)**

President's message

Dear Members,
Welcome to the changing season.
Suddenly it is autumn and the days are a bit shorter.
We are still making the most of them as you will see from this newsletter.

A while ago I was approached by **Annie Lane** to see if I would be interested in helping with the plant surveys taking place at the Guerilla Bay Bioblitz that she was organising. **Annie is the contact person for the Guerilla Bay Landcare Group and also the chair of the Budawang's Coast Group.**

The Bioblitz was to be held at Burrewarra Point at Guerilla Bay on the first weekend in March. As this coincided with the APS monthly meetings I thought it may be interesting to meld the two activities. I then recruited John Knight to be one of the leaders for the two day event and it all took off from there.

The Bioblitz was very successful and I have written more about that later on.
I would just like to acknowledge that it may have been difficult for people to attend, and that they might have preferred a different type of meeting. I am sorry if that was the case, although over the 2 days 15 members did participate. The melding of the two seemed like an ideal solution and we hope that the message got through eventually that people could come along even though the website advised that walks were booked out. We did add in extra walks on the day to cover this.

We will always try to plan ahead and have information available for you if possible.
At present we have several activities pencilled in for the year.
This newsletter will detail the next meeting in April.

In May we will be visiting my garden in Rosedale and be able to participate in an inspired discussion with Shane Doherty regarding garden design, it's joys and dilemmas.

The following meeting in June will be held at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens and we will provide more details of that in each newsletter to come.

Thank you for your membership and participation.

Proteaceae Project at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden

You will see under the Committee Notes section in this newsletter a message from your committee regarding this group offering assistance to ERBG.

I would urge you all to read this message and think about if you would like to contribute to this exciting idea. This is a developing idea and we would be very interested in your views.

There will be opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issues at the next monthly meeting, but if you are, like me unable to attend, please feel free to contact me either by email or phone.

This is a project that offers something for everyone and allows for an ongoing commitment and contribution, or a few hours gardening assistance.

It is an opportunity to help the ERBG recover from the 2019 bushfires and to share your skills or learn new ones.

I think it will be an exciting project that will help nurture the link between the ERBG and APS South East NSW Group and inspire us to grow plants and work together towards a common goal.

Regards,

Di Clark

Next Meeting

The committee has been asked to arrange a refresher course on propagation by grafting, and we are pleased that once again Phil Trickett has volunteered his services and expertise to accommodate this exercise. We understand that it is a bit of a hike to travel to Little Forest, but Catriona and Phil's garden is always a pleasure to visit, with the range of difficult to cultivate plants grafted to hardy rootstocks testament to this method of growing unusual Australian plants, so the extra effort is certainly worthwhile. We have been blessed with a cool summer, and somewhat regular rain, but as the days cool, the window of opportunity for propagation is quickly closing.

Phil will again demonstrate his method of grafting, and depending on the material available, will show us how to graft Banksia, Grevillea, Isopogon and Eremophila.

Members who wish to participate in actually doing some grafts will be encouraged to do so.

However, although Phil will provide plant material for participants, he is not supplying the equipment necessary for the physical grafting.

Should you wish to do some grafts to take home, you will need to:

bring your own small tubes of your preferred propagation mix, into each of which one cutting graft will be placed,

or struck cuttings / seedlings you have already grown you would like to graft onto,

clean and sharp implements (secateurs, razor blade, scalpel, hobby knife etc) which you are comfortable and confident using, (and band-aids if you are not confident),

small plastic bags to cover completed grafts to prevent them drying out (these need to be unused)

and some way of transporting the grafts home without the tubes and mix messing up your vehicle.

Phil will talk about how to ensure the plant material is disease free, and will supply bleach solution. We will also supply methylated spirits used to keep equipment clean, hormone treatment for cuttings, including discussion on the benefits, if any, of applying hormone treatment to cuttings, and grafting tape to hold the stock and scion together.

The pre-lunch session will begin with open discussion about grafting, and then practical demonstrations. Members will then be encouraged to “have a go”, with Phil providing personal assistance for those requesting it.

After lunch, the grafters will get back to work, and those members not wishing to continue developing grafting skills can join Catriona in a wander around their large garden.

Whilst there is no need to remind you that CoVid restrictions are still in place, there is no limit placed on attendance at this event. However Government health authorities still warn that the situation can change at any time, and your committee will advise if there are any changes to arrangements.

You should also bring morning tea and lunch, as there are no facilities close by.

We remind you also that cars must not be parked on Lyrebird Lane, as the road and verge is too narrow for vehicles to pass. There is plenty of space on the property, and those attending will be directed to suitable parking space.



Eremophila mackinlayi ssp *spathulata* makes a great candidate for grafting.

It is a reliable shrub which flowers for much of the year

Last Meeting report by Di Clark, photos Marj Apthorpe

The Guerilla Bay Bioblitz

March 2021

A Bioblitz is a wonderful opportunity for the community to get involved in their local environment and contribute as citizen scientists.

For the Guerilla Bay Bioblitz, events were organised for each day and these started off early on Friday with a bird survey walk. John and I were involved in the plant surveys and worked with a Guerilla Bay identity, **Lyndall Hatch**.

Lyndall has observed the Burrewarra Point vegetation and environment over many years and was a wealth of information. Anyone who went on any of these walks was treated to a treasure hunt of plants.

This was all supported by participants recording the species seen and others uploading the pictures taken onto the **iNaturalist app**. (See below for more information).



John explains how to recognise features to assist with plant identification, without needing in-depth botanical knowledge

The Guerilla Bay Bioblitz was set up as a project so that all recording could be viewed and tallied. This is something our group could do for a specific area if there was an interest.

The Bioblitz activities also included sessions by the Eurobodalla Shire Council Environment Team. The participants came along to learn about setting up motion sensor cameras and hair funnels. This was followed by hands on experience of seeing how to set up the equipment in the bush and what you can learn from it.

Some of our APS members came along on the Friday as well and found these sessions very informative. The Environment Team continued in the afternoon with a discussion of how to build nest boxes and what the shire have learnt from the experts. This is extremely important after so much of the fauna friendly vegetation has been lost, particularly hollows.

We were also given a passionate demonstration of how cat bibs help prevent out native wildlife being decimated by suburban cats.

Follow this link to the Shire Webpage <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/residents/pets/cat-ownership> for more information

The Bioblitz continued well into Friday night with insect surveys and spotlighting activities being undertaken. All these surveys were carried out by local people with local knowledge.

The local Natural History Societies were involved and I believe that there was some excitement when a Hawk moth was found on the insect attracting sheet.

On Saturday the blitz continued with early morning bird surveys, another session on the cameras and hair funnels and then the plant surveys. Guerilla Bay contains such a diverse range of vegetation and environments that there was no shortage of places to survey and more plants were spotted, recorded and introduced to a new audience.

Tricoryne elatior is a tiny lily hiding away in the heathy understory, but gives itself away by displaying bright yellow flowers during warmer weather. Photo Di Clark



Not only were we provided with their identity we were also given wonderful extra information teaching us how to learn to identify plants and how to gain a better understanding of plant relationships. Also how to observe nature, slow down and have a look.

In the afternoon the APS conducted a separate plant survey for our members while other participants were able to listen and engage with Inga Simpson discussing ‘Nature writing in the Australian Context.’

As usual John has compiled the plant lists from our day’s activities, **and this list is included in the mailout as a separate excel file for those interested in the results.**

There were many sighting and lots of learnings.

It was a wonderful event and a good opportunity to meet with other groups with similar passions and interests. John and I have both

been inspired to get out into the bush and see what is growing, so stay tuned for more opportunities to do this. We hope you will join us.

Some information about iNaturalist.

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au>

In 2020 the Budawang Coast Nature Map (BCNM) project needed to change their nature observation platform from NatureMapr to iNaturalist(iNat). There is a feeling that iNaturalist will be easier to use.

I would just like to give you a few points to get you started.

iNaturalist may be viewed on your PC through the webpage or as a mobile app on other devices. You don't have to log in or sign up to view the data, but you do need to do so if you wish to contribute sightings.

You can view the Guerilla Bay Bioblitz results by looking up community and selecting projects. Search for Guerilla Bay and you will find it.

If you wish to search the Budawang Coast Area in general, you can search for Budawang Coast as a project and then move around the map to find your areas of interest.

I encourage you to download the app (application) to your smart phone and have a go. It's really a lot of fun and I've found it has boosted my motivation to record and learn what plants and creatures live in my neighbourhood.

Blitzing your backyard

If you catch the bug, so to speak, and are keen to continue logging sightings, then why not explore your own backyard. Every sighting adds to the growing body of records for the South Coast. You might be surprised at how many different plants and animals live in or visit your patch over the seasons.

This could be the start of a new hobby.

Committee news

Broached at the recent AGM, and subsequently discussed at the latest Committee meeting, was the idea of assistance to ERBG by members of this APS group.

Geoff Gosling prepared a proposal, approved by President Di, which was then circulated to the committee members for comment. Geoff and Di met on-site with ERBG Manager Michael Anlezark to formulate a plan for our future involvement. As Di mentioned in her opening remarks, there is an opportunity for our APS group to have some direct input into displaying a range of plants in the PROTEACEAE family.



Mirth all round as local identity Mark Callanan, our volunteer recorder of all things plant, comes to grips with 'what was that?'



Scaevola ramosissima is another plant happy to hide away in the understory, but with such impressive flowers, can't stay shy forever

The following is an approach to you, our members, to consider the benefits of the proposal, not just to ERBG but also to us as growers with an appreciation and knowledge of Australian plants.

A GARDEN WITHIN A GARDEN

At the 2021 Annual General Meeting, there was discussion of the objectives of our group and of a proposal for APS South East Group to assist ERBG by asking for the allocation of a particular area of the garden which we would care for on a long term basis.

Putting the two discussions together, the Committee has approached the ERBG General Manager to canvass the possibility of APS taking responsibility for a particular part of the gardens. It could be viewed as ‘a garden within a garden’ or an ‘Adopt a Garden’ proposal.

The proposal would build on the long and cooperative relationship between the ERBG and APSSE dating back many years to the extent that many APS members are also members of the Friends of the ERBG, or volunteers at ERBG, and APSSE donates funds to the Friends. APSSE would like that relationship to continue for many more years.

APSSE has used the ERBG meeting room for its monthly meetings on up to 4 occasions each year and is grateful that there was no charge for that use.

However, the most recent list of charges introduced by Council requires users of the meeting room to pay a fee of \$124.00 per half day.



Gardens Manager Michael Anlezark discusses possible joint opportunities with our Committee members, at the site of a proposed Proteaceae garden. Photo Marj Apthorpe

We understand ERBG’s need to contribute to Council’s revenue and to earn money to pay for the excellent facilities at the Gardens but unfortunately, APSSE is an entirely volunteer organisation with no revenue stream other than member’s membership fees, which would be insufficient to pay the hiring fee for 4 meetings per year.

We suggested to the General Manager that, as a *quid pro quo*, our members could use their wide range of practical garden design and building skills along with botanical knowledge to benefit ERBG on a regular and voluntary basis. The committee thinks that you, our members, would be more excited and interested to perform this voluntary work if a particular area of ERBG was allocated to us on a more or less permanent basis. Of course, our input would always be subject to the approval and direction of the General Manager.

Our input would also be subject to the enthusiasm and dedication of you, our members!

There are areas within ERBG that could readily be brought up to standard for planting at minimal cost to ERBG. We could help with that process and then prepare a design with planting plan for your approval. We would then undertake the planting and maintenance of the area. In return, we would ask that ERBG waive the hire fee for up to four Saturday meetings of APS during 2021 and into the future. For ERBG’s accounting purposes, the voluntary labour will be of greater value than the hiring fees foregone.

Will you be prepared to volunteer on a regular basis to bring this into existence?

What skills can you bring to the project?

What would convince you to participate?

There are many ways of playing a part – design work, propagating, growing, planting, maintenance pruning and weeding after the area is established, liaison with management and volunteers at ERBG, becoming active on the APS Committee, etc.

Of course, there are a lot of unknowns and unanswered questions of detail but the broad outline of the proposal is simple and has been well received by the General Manager who has been given a written proposal to consider. **But the Committee would like you to consider this proposal and come to the next meeting ready to discuss it.**

Geoff, Di, and other committee members would welcome your comments and input so that your commitment to the proposal can be judged, and be used to guide our future actions.

Friends of ERBG

Easter Book and Bake Sale

The Friends of ERBG committee has asked whether our members could donate books, etc and even bake a cake or two to help them raise funds to assist with the development and recovery projects at ERBG.

You can help – Box your donations of books, CDs or DVDs (no magazines please) in saleable condition and deliver them to the Garden Monday 29 or Tuesday 30 March. The service entry gate will be open to permit drop-offs to the rear of the Visitor Centre between 9 am and 3 pm only. Vehicles will not be permitted to drop donations to the Visitor Centre outside these hours..

Wednesday 31 March and Thursday 1 April, parking is in the normal car park only, but a trolley is available at the plant shop to assist in deliveries.

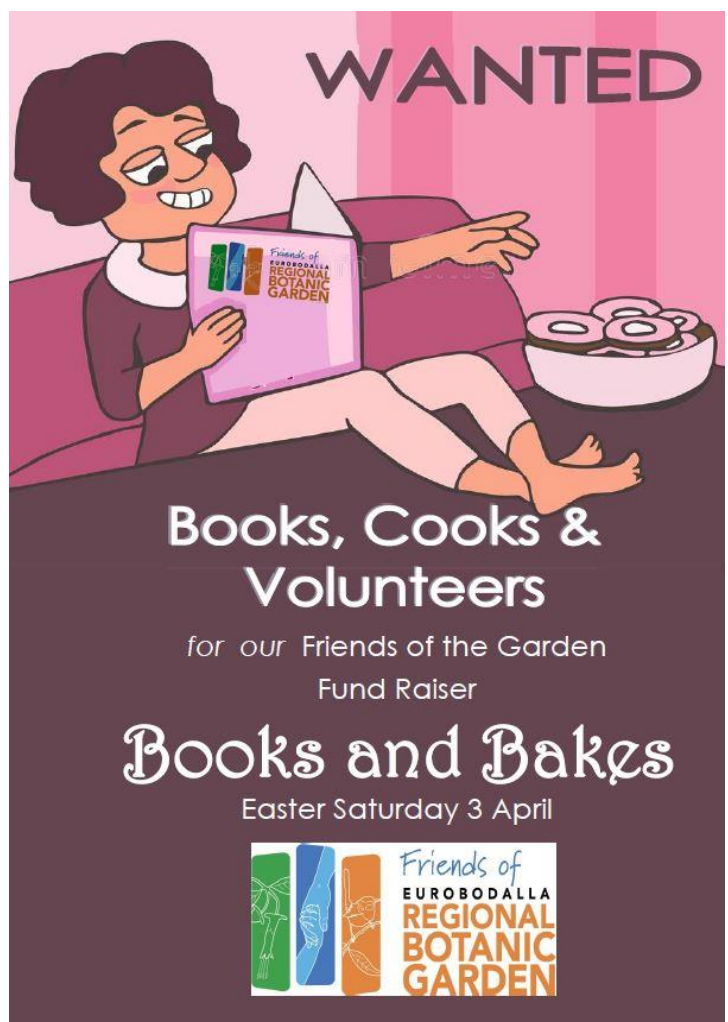
Note that ERBG is closed on Good Friday.

Any sorting of titles that could be done at home would be appreciated, e.g. fiction from non-fiction, gardening from cooking, fictional titles alphabetically by author.

If possible we'd prefer to receive books in cardboard boxes or cloth shopping bags, not plastic.

If anyone would like to cook something, all donations will be welcome!

Donated **baked goods** welcome on Saturday 3 April. Please use alternatives to cling wrap.



**Books and Bakes on sale
Saturday 3 April, 9:00am to 3:30pm,
in the Visitor Centre Function Room.**

In My Garden

Jenny's specimen of *Rhododendron* with large bright red flowers, presented at the February meeting, was I believed *R. lochiaie*. However, with some further research, I do think maybe not. Since the provenance of the plant is unknown, it is worth noting botanical work undertaken at of all places Edinburgh, and reported in their Journal (Craven, L.A. (2002) *Edinburgh Journal of Botany* 59(3): 448-450), and previously detailed in Craven, L., & Withers, R. (1996) A second species of *Rhododendron* (Ericaceae) from Australia. *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*, 53(1), 27-37 . Lyn Craven (1945-2014) was at that time principal research scientist, CSIRO taxonomy unit. Dr. Bob Withers OAM, was a medical practitioner, with a passionate interest in horticulture, particularly Camellias and *Rhododendrons*.



Until recent years it was held that there was only one Australian species, this being known as *Rhododendron lochiaie*. Investigation of the taxonomy resulted in the recognition that there were, in fact, two separate species one of which is the plant long familiar to Australian vireya growers and the other a little-known plant from a restricted area in north Queensland, i.e. *R. lochiaie* and *R. notiale* (Craven & Withers 1996).

As the specimen to which the name *R. lochiaie* was attached represented the relatively unknown plant, Craven attempted to have the name *R. lochiaie* conserved with a new type specimen so that stability would be maintained in nomenclature. This was not accepted by the relevant **Committee of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)** with the result being that a new species, *R. viriosum*, was described for the species which we used to call *R. lochiaie* (Craven 2002). The correct name for species first described in 1887 as *R. lochiaie* (and recently as *R. notiale*, Craven (meaning southern)) is now *R. lochiaie*. *R. notiale* is now a synonym of this name.

Vireya *Rhododendron* plants have been found on nine peaks and tablelands in the Wet Tropics region of north Queensland, and now two unique species have been recognised as being native to Australia. Their natural habitat is confined to a relatively small region of tropical rainforest in North Queensland.



The most obvious difference between the two Australian *Rhododendron* species is the shape of the corolla tube of the flower - curved in *R. lochiaie* and straight in *R. viriosum*.

The curved form, *R. lochiaie* is from south of Cairns, while the straight tubed form, *R. viriosum* is from north and north west of Cairns, and is more closely aligned to the many species from Papua New Guinea.

Rhododendron lochiaie growing on Mt. Bartle Frere, south of Cairns. Note the curved corolla

Another point of difference is the placement of the anthers within the tube. *R. lochiaie* generally has the anthers placed to the top of the tube, suggesting bird pollination, whilst *R. viriosum* presents the anthers in a circle around the tube, probably favouring butterfly or other insect pollination.

The floral emblem of the Australian *Rhododendron* Society represents the new species, i.e. *R. viriosum*. The epithet '*viriosum*' means robust, strong and refers to the qualities of the plant when used as a parent in hybridising.

Both species are easily cultivated from cuttings and seed.

***Rhododendron viriosum* Craven**

Craven, L.A. (2002) *Edinburgh Journal of Botany* 59(3): 448-450.

Type: cultivated in the Australian National Botanic Gardens at Canberra, 22 ii 1994, Craven 9354 (holo. CANB; iso. A, B, BRI, E, L, MEL, QRS).

(Provenance: Queensland: Mount Windsor Tableland, 27 v 1989, Jones & Clements 4420 (CANB).

Common name Native Rhododendron

Stem Usually grows as a terrestrial, lithophytic or epiphytic shrub.

Leaves Leaves in pseudowhorls of 2-6.

Leaf blades rather thick and leathery, about 2.5-11 x 1-7 cm, cracking when folded. Apex acuminate to obtuse. Lateral veins 4-9 on each side of midrib, form loops inside the blade margin. Underside of the leaf blade marked by numerous dark peltate scales. Petiole channelled on the upper surface.

Flowers Umbel 2-7-flowered. Corolla funnel-shaped, straight, red to reddish-pink, 3.5-5 cm long in all, sparsely hairy outside and marked by scales.

Stamens ten, anthers presented around the throat (more or less in a circle, absent or rarely present in the upper part of the throat), anthers red; filaments red, hairy.

Base of the ovary surrounded by a lobed disk with the staminal filaments inserted in the indentations.

Pollen is white.

Ovary with scales, with dense white hairs. Basal half of the style clothed in scales and white hairs.

Stigma 4-lobed.

Fruit Capsule rather long and narrow before dehiscent, about 1.5-3 cm long. Seed narrow, about 3-4 mm long with a slender somewhat twisted wing or tail on each end.

Embryo cylindrical, cotyledons about as wide as the radicle.

Seeds may germinate inside the capsule.

Seedlings Seed germination time 23 to 331 days.

Cotyledons obovate, ovate to elliptic, about 1.5-3 x 0.5-1 mm.

First pair of true leaves obovate, about 2-3 x 1 mm, apex obtuse,

base cuneate, glabrous, petiole about 1 mm long, lateral veins not visible.

At the tenth leaf stage: all seedling parts clothed in pale brown scale-like glands which are visible to the naked eye.

Leaf blade elliptic-obovate, about 8 x 5 mm, apex obtuse, midrib depressed on the upper surface. Lateral veins difficult to distinguish.

Terminal bud scaly.

- **Distribution and Ecology**

Endemic to NEQ, occurs on Mt Lewis, Mt Spurgeon, Pinnacle Rock, the Windsor Tableland, Mt Finnigan, Mt Pieter Botte and Thornton Peak. Altitudinal range from 940-1330 m.

Grows as an epiphyte in well developed rain forest but also found as a lithophytic shrub on boulders in stunted windswept rain forest on mountain tops.

- **Reports about The Vireya Hunting Expedition to North Queensland 2012** appeared in the October 2012 issue of the Australian Rhododendron Society Vic. Br. Newsletter, edited by Simon Begg. This provides quite some detail about the flora of the areas in which the Rhododendrons occur, and makes interesting reading.

Directions to Catriona and Phil's

Take the Princes Highway north, travel through Milton, look for the turnoff to Little Forest Road (signposted) on the left, about 2km after leaving Milton. Travel on Little Forest Road for about 7km.

Nearing the turn into Lyrebird Lane, Little Forest Road veers left.

On the right is a gravel track.

Do not take this !

On the corner of Lyrebird Lane is a group of letterboxes. Here, turn left. The garden is at the end of the bitumen, on the right hand side about 100m along Lyrebird Lane.

You will know you are at the right house site, because the garden features lots of Australian native plants, and has a nice new timber entrance fence, which has been rebuilt following the recent fires.



Please do not park on the road as it is too narrow to allow other vehicles to pass safely.

Enter the property and you will be directed to a suitable parking space.

Committee news

The committee continues to monitor and enforce any NSW Health guidelines regarding COVID - 19 and gatherings.

COVID 19 restrictions still apply at all our gatherings, both indoors and outside.

Members will be required to sign our attendance record, and supply contact details for tracing purposes should that need arise. Also, you need to supply your own refreshments, as a “no sharing” policy is adopted by the committee until advised by APS NSW Region that this requirement has been relaxed.

We will keep you informed of any changes to plans. We hope to see you all many times during the year.

Please note the new email address for John Knight, Newsletter Editor. I am phasing out the use of the @outlook address as the site has become unstable and prone to spam attacks.

All future contact should be addressed to johnonvista49@gmail.com

Could members please make the change as of now. Thank you.

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