



# Australian Plants Society

## South East NSW Group

Newsletter 195

May 2023

*Corymbia maculata* Spotted Gum and  
*Macrozamia communis* Burrawang

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Dear Members,

Welcome to Autumn. The time of year when gardening is a wonderful way to keep warm, and the milder sun ensures everything glistens and glows. I am enjoying photographing the environment and am very impressed by how many people are also obsessed with native plants.

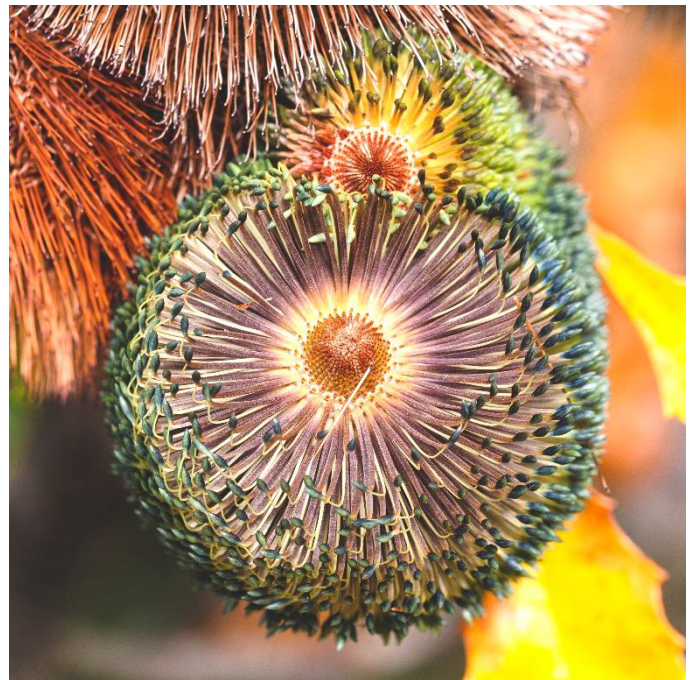
We are not the only organization with our love of native plants as a priority. It was very interesting to read the summer issue of the Australian Plants Journal and note the call for members to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. We live in challenging times and may need to think a little differently.

The Australian Plants Society NSW has also been working hard behind the scenes to develop OH and S policy and guidelines articles for us to use. You will notice that we will be using a new sign on form that asks for an emergency contact number. The committee is also looking into obtaining a first aid kit and ensuring there are people trained and willing to take on that role.

We have always tried to highlight any hazards and risks that might be present at our activities and we will continue to do this at our meetings. The Australian Plants Society NSW website includes information about all our responsibilities and we appreciate your support with taking note of any issues and letting people know. We all have a responsibility to look after ourselves and others.

Thank you, and hope to see you at one of our meetings in the next part of the year.

Di



All the colours of the rainbow. The exquisite display of *Banksia robur*. Photo Daniel Bateman

# Next Meeting

## Saturday 3rd June 2023,

### Meeting at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens

### 10.00 a.m.

Arrive at the Gardens around 10am for morning tea, and our program will commence at 10:30am.

**The morning session will feature Insect & Plant Ecologist, Dr Roger Farrow, discussing ‘post fire recovery of the vegetation in Morton and Tallaganda National Parks’**

The mega fires of 2019-2020 in south east NSW completely incinerated the shrub and forb layers over large areas in Morton and Tallaganda National Parks, as well as those of many other National Parks and Nature Reserves.

The immediate public response was that many plant species could have been lost in the conflagration. However, Roger’s observations over the last 3 years in these burnt areas show that all the species present before the fires have regenerated in different ways and at different rates and that more species are now present post fire than before the fire, due to recruitment from the seed bank. These observations confirm that the Australian flora outside the rainforest is highly fire-adapted and even fire-dependant and suggest that hot wild fires are more important than cool burns in maintaining floral diversity.

**Our SHOW and TELL session will follow Roger’s presentation, so please bring along some samples to discuss before we break for lunch.**

**The afternoon session commences at 1:30pm, running to 3pm.**

**The Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens have arranged for Helen Moody – author of South Coast Islands, New South Wales to discuss her recently launched publication.**

For three years Helen Moody and Mike Jefferis led walks and kayak trips to the 61 islands of the NSW South Coast. Now they have written the first ever book on the islands. You have likely never heard many of their names before; perhaps not even been aware of their existence.

The book isn’t just a travel guide for walkers and kayakers. It’s a book for South Coast residents, visitors to this area, and anyone who loves nature and discovering wild places.

It tells of Aboriginal connections to the islands, the history of South Coast exploration, and the arrival of settlers and convicts.

It covers the geology, flora, lighthouses, shipwrecks, bird life and environmental values of the islands. There are over 200 photographs from over 20 photographers, and maps and description of how to visit every island, whether on foot or by boat.

**Whilst this is a Friends event, all APS members are welcome to come along, and as noted in the previously issued newsletter 195a, if you wish to attend this you will need to book in via the link below. Hopefully, you will have all done this by now.**

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/south-coast-islands-nsw-tickets-635769442517>

Di Clark

## Last Meeting , report by Jenny John,

Photos Amanda Marsh, Daniel Bateman, Di Clark, Sharon Pearson and John Knight

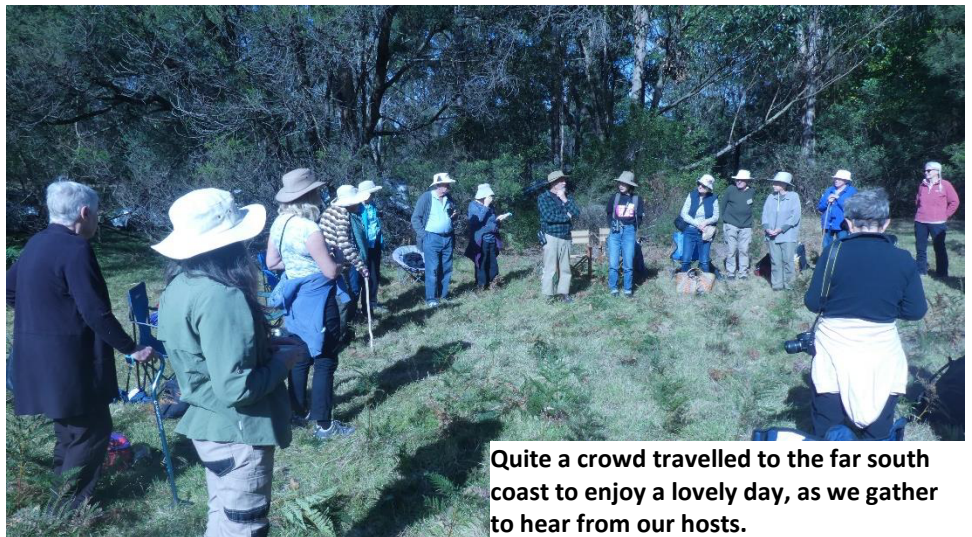


A fine and sunny day greeted us, as Cliff welcomes the group

**Visit to 'Watery Fowls', a 40HA / 100 acre property that runs along the southern side of Wallagoot Lake adjacent to Bournda NP. and is the property of Cliff Wallis and Sayaka Mihara 6 May 2023.**

When we were gathered in a paddock near the gate for morning tea Cliff told us about the history and development of the 100 acre property – Watery Fowls. I thought that the name might have some deep indigenous significance but Cliff removed such lofty thoughts by telling me that Watery Fowls was one of the anagram names of Fawltly Towers!, although the property does boast plenty of water birds and often plenty of water.

For the past 25years Cliff and Sayaka have worked to regenerate native vegetation on what was an expanse of grass paddocks separated by fence lines. There is a conservation agreement in place for about 55 acres of the property and vegetation surveys by Jackie Miles over a period of 5 years identified up to ten native plant species that are regarded as being of regional conservation



Quite a crowd travelled to the far south coast to enjoy a lovely day, as we gather to hear from our hosts.

significance. The reports Jackie produced enabled a Plan of Management to be prepared for NPWS to support the process of establishing the Conservation Agreement.



In 1999, it was noted that 114 bird species had been recorded. Cliff told us that number is now 182.

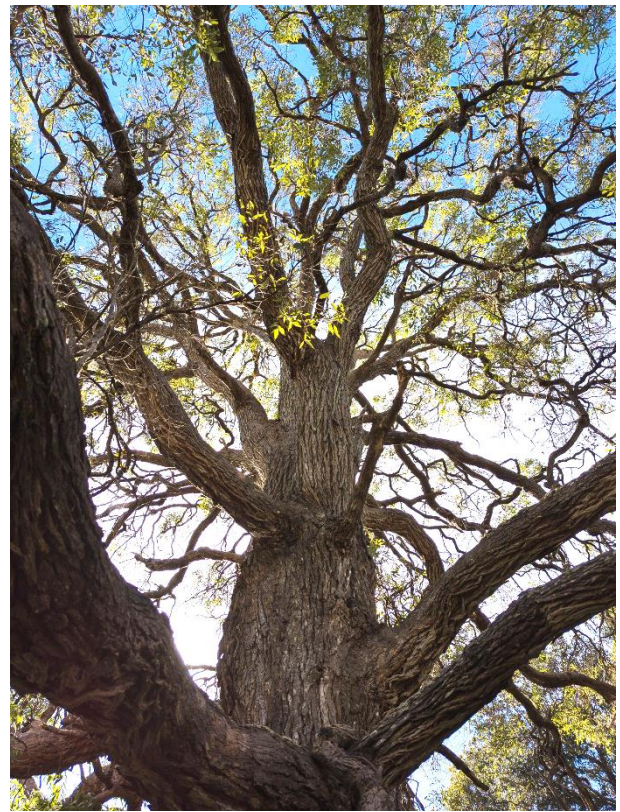
The day was warm enough to invite one of the locals to join us, although not all were keen on his or her presence.

So, tea and cake consumed Cliff led us to an area along the western boundary fence which had not been cleared and still carried the trees and plants of the endangered ecological community (EEC) habitat type reclassified in 2007 as **Lowland Grassy Woodland in the South East Corner Bioregion**. (previously it was nominated **Bega Dry Grass Forest EEC**, Keith, D. & Bedward, M. (1999))



The trees, such as *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, Forest Red Gum, and *Angophora floribunda*, Rough-barked Apple were well-spaced, with numerous birds flitting through the branches and an understory of predominantly sword grass, *Gahnia* sp. and ground ferns including Prickly Rasp Fern, *Blechnum neohollandicum* (syn *Doodia aspera*) with scattered *Exocarpus cupressiformis* and the Milk vine *Marsdenia rostrata* climbing through many of the young saplings.

Slow and steady across the planks, as members negotiate the ferny creek bed of *Melaleuca ericifolia* swamp, but it proves no barrier to Sayaka, as this forms part of her regular wanders around the property.



The majesty of old trees on the property, with *Eucalyptus tereticornis* recognised by its branching habit, where main branches are often offset at only 30° from the trunk, and *Angophora floribunda* which has gnarled branching and leaves in opposite pairs.

We progressed from the woodland to an area of creek bed where Cliff has been trying to develop a rainforest area with species such as *Ficus rubiginosa* and *Ficus obliqua* (the first species planted) beneath the protection of huge *Acacia elata* and various Banksias. The planted shrubs were protected by robust chicken wire cages that needed star post supports to withstand kangaroos, wallabies and strong weather conditions. Cliff described the area as getting very wet but also drying out quickly when the weather changed. Some other species growing here include *Alphitonia excelsa*, Red Ash, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, Bangalow Palm, *Baloghia inophylla*, Scrub Bloodwood, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, Blueberry Ash, *Glochidion ferdinandi*, Cheese Tree, *Grevillea baileyana*, Brown Silky Oak, *Graptophyllum ilicifolium*, Holly-leaf Fuchsia, *Hymenosporum flavum*, Native Frangipani, *Synoum glandulosum*, Scentless Rosewood, and *Toona ciliata*, Red Cedar.

On the opposite side of the property Cliff told us the majestic Eucalypts interspersed with Acacias and Kunzeas were the first plantings that he and Sayaka had made 25 years ago. The boundary strip already showed small seedling plants advancing into the paddock and there were also trees just 18 years old scattered through the paddock. Cliff emphasised that he always aims for mixed plantings that mimic the natural vegetation, and was guided in his choices by his plant ecologist brother.



From a bare paddock, we could appreciate the hours spent preparing planting holes for the nearly 7000 plants now transforming parts of the block. Some of the Eucalypts have reached 25m in height, and already provide an impressive habitat for many birds and animals.

We returned to our cars and moved them along the track closer to the house where we spread ourselves for lunch. After sale and distribution of plants by Tom Jordan, which were remains of the APS Canberra plant sale, and a presentation by Di, on behalf of the group, to Cliff and Sayaka of a selection of rainforest plants from the ERBG Nursery, we followed Cliff to see some of the plots most recently planted in the middle of another paddock.

He explained that the establishment of these groups of trees and shrubs requires patience, but patience is usually well rewarded. He covers an area with a product called Mulch



*Eucalyptus elata*, about 18 years old

Mat, secured round the edges with rocks and tops it with 100mm of hardwood mulch. After 4 months the treated area shows a higher moisture content than the surrounding paddock and very little weed growth and can be planted with the trees and shrubs that will revegetate the area.

Cliff recommended that we use **mulch mat** in preference to weed mat, as it is micro-porous which enables greater water permeability than woven weed control mats and yet it still suppresses weed growth.

**He uses Rally Mulch Mat**, a top quality spunbonded polypropylene fabric which has high water and air permeability. The fabric also features good tensile and tear strength, and is UV stabilised material with at least a 5 year life when covered by mulch.



One of a number of recent plots being established. Each is planted with a mix of species, about 50 to a plot. Every plant, be it a tree or small shrub, requires sturdy wire cage protection, another time consuming but necessary task if the planting is to be successful.



The last part of Watery Fowls that we visited was the area around the house which includes a caged area of fruit trees and vegetables besides the groups of *Hakea* species, grass trees, saltbush, *Callistemons* and both *Doryanthes excelsa* and *D. palmerii*.

The spear lily had produced two flower spikes this year, with a third emerging from the cluster of large strap leaves that formed the plant. Both of the flowering stems were laden (one down to the ground) with seed pods, each pod containing a mass of winged

seeds which Cliff distributed in handfuls to us, telling us that they germinated really easily.

With around 150 species, the **Proteaceae genus *Hakea*** displays a diverse range of habit, from small shrubs to tree-like large shrubs. Whilst the quality of the plantings has suffered with the vagaries of a changing climate, Cliff still has an impressive collection of these hardy plants, with many Western Australian species. Pictured at right is *Hakea cristata*, a lignotuberous shrub to about 2 – 3m from the Jarrah forests. New growth is attractively coloured red, and the shrub can be pruned hard to maintain a smaller habit. White flowers crowd the leaf axils during winter. The prickly foliage might deter some, but smaller birds find safe refuge.



A tall, erect plant that looks remarkably like a Casuarina, *Hakea dohertyi*, is confined mainly to the Kowmung Valley in Kanangra Boyd N.P., but Cliff has managed to successfully grow this rare plant for many years.



Another Western species, *Hakea scoparia* is a dense shrub of 2 - 3m., widespread on various soils in the south west corner. It is fairly adaptable in cultivation provided the soil is well drained. Prolific flowering occurs from autumn to early spring, and attracts a wide range of pollinating insects.



Yellow Hakea, *Hakea nodosa* is a very hardy shrub found in swampy areas of southern Australia and Tasmania. Bright green foliage highlights fragrant yellow flowers through autumn and winter. This hardy plant grows happily in sun or semi-shade, and flowers reliably within a few years from seed grown plants.

The variety of habitats Cliff and Sayaka showed us and the intriguing information they imparted rendered any additional activities for the day unnecessary, so our meeting concluded and we wended our various ways home from Watery Fowls. **Jackie Miles kindly sought out the information she prepared for her reports, and if anyone would like further information, this can be arranged by contacting the editor.**

## Book Fair Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden



**Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June  
10am – 3pm**

**Join the hunt for the perfect book to get you through winter.  
Our annual preloved book fair is back, bigger and better, on the June long weekend!**

**Where:** The Banksia room, Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden, Deep Creek Dam Rd, Batemans Bay.  
It's going to be everyone for themselves when doors open for our mega two-day second hand book fair, so put on your skates and sharpen your elbows.  
Drop in to grab a bargain, or perhaps that special title that has been on the wish list for years.  
What better time of year to curl up with a good read on the couch in front of the fire and get transported to another world and remember that funds raised go to supporting the Garden.

**If you would like to donate some books for us to sell at the fair, please contact Dylan Morrissey on 02 4474 7471 or [dylan.morrissey@esc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dylan.morrissey@esc.nsw.gov.au)**

## In my garden

As Di mentioned, autumn is well and truly upon us, but we might be forgiven in thinking that winter has arrived, having been so unseasonably cold over the past weeks. Autumn is highlighted along the east coast by prolific flowering of *Banksia spinulosa* in its various forms. Selections of small growing coastal forms have appeared over the past 30 years, and many have proved very adaptable and popular in cultivation.

In another life, when manager of Austrafloora Nursery in Victoria, selections from the south coast of NSW were grown from seed and cuttings in the hope of finding a truly dwarf form which maintained its small stature when away from coastal influences. Over a period of 5 years, various clones were trialled, both in containers and open ground, to establish which if any would prove to be “the one”. Finally, the clone selected was registered as *Banksia* ‘**Austrafloora Birthday Candles**’, chosen for its compact growth, about 50 – 60cm high on a shrub spreading about 1 to 1.2m, with shorter, tightly packed leaves and well displayed terminal flower spikes about 50 – 75mm in length. It has since become the best selling Australian plant in the retail trade, surpassing the perennial favourite *Grevillea* ‘**Robyn Gordon**’.



*Banksia spinulosa* ‘**Austrafloora Birthday Candles**’, Photo Brian Walters

There is a bit of a problem however, as it seems the range of plants being marketed under the ‘Birthday

Candles’ name show wide variation from the plant originally released. The reasons for this I believe stem from the many sources of propagation material. Some must have been grown from seed from the original plants, as the variations in foliage length could not have been from the original clone. Also the flowers on some are settled inside the foliage, not sitting atop the plant as would candles on a cake. No one would complain that their plant was inferior of course, as all the small forms of *B. spinulosa* are worth growing. But they should not be marketed as ‘Birthday Candles’ unless they are guaranteed true to form, and reliably propagated vegetatively from original source material.

Another early release was *B. spinulosa* ‘**Cherry Candles**’, a very hardy shrub which was sold as a dwarf plant but over time grew to 1.5m x 2m wide. It too had well displayed terminal flowers with bright red styles. Because *B. spinulosa* develops a solid lignotuber, plants could be pruned heavily to maintain a smaller stature. Other variations on the theme include *B. spinulosa* ‘**Stumpy Gold**’, *B. spinulosa* ‘**Honey Pots**’, *B. spinulosa* ‘**Coastal Cushion**’, *B. spinulosa* ‘**Dwarf Red**’ and *B. spinulosa* ‘**Lemon Glow**’, all marketed as small growing plants ideal as horticultural subjects. Next time you are browsing at plants in the nursery, take a critical look at those marketed as *B. spinulosa* ‘**Birthday Candles**’ to be sure the premium price asked is actually giving you the real ‘Birthday Candles’.

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