AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

ACN 002 680 408

SOUTHERN TABLELANDS GROUP

President Tim Hayes
4822 4949
Secretary - Bob Galland:
0407 248 154


# NEWSLETTER JUNE 2018

## MAY 2018 GRIFFITH TRIP

A pleasant change from most of our walks where we usually head east, north, or south of Goulburn, the May weekend walk had us travelling west to Temora and Griffith to explore two Nature Reserves, the Ingalba NR 10kms SW of Temora, and the Cocoparra Nature Reserve 25km NE of Griffith. Jenny had organised for us to meet at the Zest café in Temora which worked well as we all arrived within minutes of each other. We then headed to Ingalba Nature Reserve, a remnant woodland lying between dryland cropping paddocks of the Riverina Plains. The woodland was dominated by *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* (Ironbox) and *E. dwyeri* (Gumbark) with *Cassytha melantha* (Mallee strangle vine) twining around trees and shrubs. At ground level we found *Astroloma humifusum* (Cranberry heath), *Micromytrus sessilis* (Heath myrtle) and *Cheilanthes sieberi* (Mulga fern) - hardy plants able to cope with the dry conditions. The flowering *Grevillea floribunda* (Rusty spider flower) was found in a more densely vegetated spot close to the rocky rise to the trig. To get to the footpath leading to the trig we first had to do a bit of track clearing to drive around a fallen tree. The terrain in the reserve was quite flat and when we drove up to base of the Mt Wharrun trig point we realised the highest point was only about 90 metres higher than the surrounding agricultural land. The view from the top revealed to us how extensive the reserve was and how important it was to preserve this woodland gem in the expanse of cleared agricultural land.

Saturday morning after meeting up for a hearty breakfast we made our way out to the Nature Reserve in the northern section of the

The amphitheatre in the Cocoparra National Park - look carefully and you will see an APS member lurking in the shadows.

Cocoparra National Park. After a slow winding trip into the Reserve on the Whitton stock route road we started our walk along Store Creek. This reserve was also suffering from the dry season and the ground was littered with dead wattles. The path meandered through woodland alongside a washed-out creek bed. Predominant trees were *E dwyeri* (Gum bark), *Callitris endlicheri* (Black Cypress pines) and *E macrohyncha* (Stringybark) and the distinctive *E populnea* (Bimble box), named because the leaves resemble poplar tree leaves. In the understorey we found *A deanei* (Deane's wattle). The *Pittosporum phylliraeoides* (Butterbush) was quite distinctive with graceful drooping branches. As we moved up the narrowing valley large outcrops of sandstone boulders lined the sides and towards the end it turned into a gorge with tall cliffs. When the path ended we clambered over enormous rocks to reach the top of the valley which ended in a beautiful natural amphitheatre. Sadly no waterfall was flowing. After checking out a few other walks we then went to the top of Mt Bingar where we found many of the endemic *Pomaderris cocoparanna* (Pomaderris) plants growing on the rocky hill where they shared their location with ginormous radio transmission towers.

The advantage of staying in the lovely town of Griffith meant we could enjoy delicious Italian meals for the two nights we were there. Thanks to Jenny's planning it was a successful and fun weekend away with our APS friends. And thanks to Celia for that report. The full flora list is on the last page.

## PROPAGATION

A propagation morning was held on Thursday last (May 24) and cuttings which had developed roots were potted up. Among these were species of Crowea, Correa, Phebalium and Eremophila. Seedlings of a number of pea plant species were too small to be potted up. The potting up was done by recess time and later some general tidying-up was done Thanks to all who could come.

## ROADSIDE VEGETATION

All members will have received an email from Bob including a document produced by the OEH (Office of Environment and Heritage) which details threatened flora of the Windellama area. It specifically included species found along roadsides - some of which would also likely occur on nearby land. Native plants on roadsides are at risk from a number of sources and we are urged to be on the lookout for human activities which could pose a risk. I am a relatively frequent visitor to the area and I intend to have in the vehicle some pages from the document - including the maps and the introductory pages.

There is a fairly well-known incident that occurred in the early nineties in the Tumut area. In 1981, a local bushwalker found a new species of Grevillea in a weed-infested area near a local river. This species did not get much attention until the early nineties when the botanists got to see it. On one visit to examine the species staff from the then-equivalent of the OEH arrived at the scene to find a grader driver from the local council about to clear weeds and of course the little-known Grevillea. Two of the visitors stood in front of the grader to help prevent any destruction. After some discussion, the grader driver decided not to go ahead with his

allocated task and the plants were saved. As a result, *Grevillea wilkinsonii* lives to this day.

**SATIN EVERLASTING**

Earlier in the year, I potted up some things I had propagated from seed. I also experimented with potting mix as I had bought some in bulk from Divalls and some in brand-name bags from Bunnings. I also made up a mix from well rotted cow manure (left over from several years ago) by adding some coarse sand. I tried two species in this cow manure mix. One was the pea *Kennedia prostrata* and the other a paper daisy, *Helichrysum leucopsideum* or the Satin Everlasting. Both species are not particularly common locally. In particular, the Helichrysum is uncommon - over the years I have seen it in four places that I can remember. The biggest colony I had seen was a patch along the road verge on Tyces Lane. However, widening of the road - still a good few years ago - decimated this population and only the occasional plant can be seen now. It is found in slightly elevated areas occupying locations similar to those occupied by the sunshine wattle, *A. terminalis*. They certainly occurred together in the Tyces Lane locality. It flowers in Spring and the seed was collected on New Year's Day 2017.

All of the *K prostrata* (a crate of them) were put in the cow manure mix and four, I think, of the daisy. The pea plants did not like the cow manure, as old as it was. They stopped growing and the leaves began to look decidedly unhealthy. After a month, I repotted them into a different mix. They are just holding their own at the moment and it may well be Spring before they revitalise.


Seedlings of H. leucopsideum along with some mainly I. australis (at A) and Pultenaea villosa (small seedling at B). Inset is a flower opening - the centre will age to a typical yellow. Some leaf reddening can be seen at photo centre and towards lower left.

The four daisies put in the manure mix grew well and three developed buds - one bud per plant (those put in a more standard mix grew well but did not produce buds). Just recently the flowers have opened up and are shown in the photo.

Back to the peas. I suspected at first that perhaps the cow manure was still alkaline. A quick pH test with the simple kit you can buy at hardware or garden shops revealed a pH of 5.5, acidic but quite ok for most natives. Perhaps it was phosphorus that was the problem. It is known that some of the pea plant family are susceptible to excess phosphorus. Many Australian soils are deficient in phosphorus and many genera have adapted to survive this state of affairs. The element is fairly immobile in soils and I thought that the same might be true for manures. The genus which is must susceptible to damage from excess phosphorus is the Proteaceae ( banksias, waratahs etc).

The daisies may be showing one of the symptoms of excess phosphorus and that is a reddening of the older leaves. However, the plants in the standard mix also have leaves that are reddening so it does not seem that excess phosphorus is the culprit.

One of the problems with investigating plant nutrient deficiencies is that the nutrients in plants can interact; another is that some nutrient problems can cause similar symptoms. It is known that high iron levels can help counter high phosphorus levels. It is clear then that rigorous systematic research is needed to draw definite conclusions re effects of applied plant nutrients with variables strictly controlled. There are a lot of sources of information re plant nutrition. One website you could visit is http://sesl.com.au/uploads/articles/Feeding_Native_Plants.pdf. The article is quite readable but its a complex topic and simple answers are hard to come by.

**PROGRAM**

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| Sat Jun 2 | Laggan Nature Reserve |
| Sat July 7 | Forum/presentation: Soil Improvement/ Plant Selection - speakers tba |
| Sat Aug 4 | Bullio Tunnel Trail |
| Sat Sept 1 | Walk - Nattai National Park |
| Thu Sept 13 | Propagation |
| Sun Sept 16 | Propagation |
| Sat Oct 6 | Walk - Nadgigomar West Nature Reserve |
| Wed Oct 24 | Wetlands Garden Maintenance |
| Sun - Tue Nov 11 - 13 | Walks - Nature Reserves near Mudgee |

**RUSTY SPIDER FLOWER**

Grevillea floribunda as seen in bud in the Ingalba Nature Reserve near Temora has a common name that reflects the persistent rusty appearance of the buds and flowers.

This species is widespread in the inland - mainly on the Slopes but also further west.

The well-known book which details plants suitable for growing in Canberra states that it can be grown in a warm spot. Size is about 1.5m x 1.5m.

Next page has full list for Griffith trip - thanks Celia.

**Ingalba NR**

Acacia baileyana - Cootamundra wattle

A flexifolia – Bent-leaf wattle

A hakeoides – Hakea wattle

Astroloma humifusum – Cranberry heath

Callitris glaucophylla – White Cypress Pine

Cassinia laevis – Cough bush

Cheilanthes sieberi - Mulga fern

Cheilanthes lasiophylla – Woolly cloak fern

Callitris endlicheri – Black Cypress Pine

Cassytha melantha – Mallee strangle vine

Dianella revoluta - Black anther Flax-lily

Dodonaea cuneata – Wedge-leaf Hopbush

Einadia hastata – Saloop

Eucalyptus dwyeri – Gum bark

E microcarpa – Box bark

E sideroxylon – Iron bark

G floribunda – Rusty spider flower

Hibbertia sericea – Silky Guinea-flower

Lysiana exocarpi – Harlequin Mistletoe

Lomandra sp

Melaleuca uncinata - Broombush

Melichrus urceolatus – Urn heath

Micromyrtus sessilis – Heath myrtle

Olearia pimeleoides – Showy daisy bush

Bracteantha viscosa- Sticky everlasting

**Cocopara Nature Reserve -Store Creek walk**

Acacia deanei – Deane's wattle

A doratoxylon - Currawang

Cassytha melantha – Mallee strangle vine

Brachychiton populneus – Kurrajong

Bursaria spinosa – Sweet Bursaria

Callitris glaucophylla– White Cypress Pine

Callitris endlicheri – Black Cypress Pine

Hakea tephrosperma– Hooked needlewood

Hydrocotyle laxiflora – Stinking Pennywort

Dodonaea cuneata -Wedge-leaf Hopbush

Eucalyptus dwyeri – Gum bark

E populnea – Bimble box

E macrorhyncha – Stringybark

E microcarpa – Box bark

E. sideroxylon – Iron bark

Exocarpus cupressiformis – Cherry ballart

Grevillea floribunda – Rusty spider flower

Pandorea pandorana – Wonga vine

Pittosporum phylliraeoides – Butterbush

Vittadinia cuneata – Woolly New Holland daisy

**Mt Bingar radio towers**

Pomaderris cocoparanna - Pomaderris

Splendid fairy-wren - seen on the Griffith trip