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NEWSLETTER MARCH 2019

AUST DAY STALL

This activity was disappointing with the hot weather being the main cause. People stayed away in droves and sales were much fewer than expected. Thanks to the helpers who came; there was plenty of time to sit down and chat. We had a hot day last year but not the run of very hot days that happened this January and kept people away.

A few members have expressed some opinions questioning the suitability of Australia Day for plant sales. There is the question of whether January is a good time to be selling plants; some also have concerns regarding the negative implications of the date for some indigenous people. The matter may need to be revisited.

FEBRUARY PROPAGATION DAYS

These were held at Bob and Celia's home where the wide back veranda provided excellent shade with plenty of space to pot up and move around. In all, sixty six pots of cuttings were produced. Each pot may have had at least half a dozen cuttings in it.

Calytrix tetragona topped the list with 12 pots. This is a plant that would fit in any garden; it flowers nicely in Spring and the fruits are attractive also. It is close to impossible to grow from seed but can be done easily from cuttings. It belongs to the Myrtaceae family. It grows on Rocky Hill and on the conglomerate at Greenwich Park and other places. I suspect that the propagation material came from somebody's garden.

Chamelaucium uncinatum is a WA plant known as the Geraldton wax and sports pink flowers. On the day, a form of that species was propagated - but just one pot.

Five of the ever-popular *Correa* species made the list - two of them varieties of *Correa reflexa* and the species commonly called the Chef's Cap *Correa* - *C. baeuerlenii* - named from the shape and colour of the flowers. This species is rare in the wild.

Nine different grevilleas were put in. One of these was *G. wilkinsonii* - also known as the Tumut grevillea - from its

natural occurrence. It has purple to mauve toothbrush - type flowers.

Grevillea crithmifolia hails from WA and is mostly a low spreading shrub. Flowers can vary from white to pink.

A form of the prickly *Grevillea juniperina* which produces red flowers was put in. This form is prostrate and the usual flower colour is cream to yellow. Locations where the flowers are red have been memorised.

Two tea-trees were propagated - both garden varieties. Structural features rather than flowers are the attraction. One has a weeping form and the other is prostrate.

A species with which I was utterly unfamiliar is *Microcitrus australasica*. The 'citrus' part of the name puts it in the wild foods category. It is a lime and there are apparently a number of varieties around. Its origins are in rainforest in northern NSW so it probably needs some special attention. I'm sure there will be keen interest in the progress of the cuttings.

As these cutting are potted up later in the year, they will be added to the 'plants for sale' list for the convenience of all.

CALENDAR INFO

I will just comment on a few of the calendar items. The April walk is to a relatively new reserve near Crookwell - Gillindich.

On Saturday 25, there is a trip to the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens. The purpose here is to visit the seedbank and the labs where the scientists do research on a range of topics such as potting mix and various methods of propagation. There is a limit of 15 on this trip as well as a cost of \$27. Closer to the time, we will take expressions of interest.

Saturday June 8 is a visit to see vegetation around Dalton near Gunning. One possible site is the Dalton cemetery. I will suggest that if possible we might move this walk to the Spring.

The presentation will be as usual on the first Saturday in July. At the AGM, there was support for a presentation dealing with garden design. Ben Walcott, a former leader of the Garden Design Study Group of APS will be the presenter. Ben is currently President of the Canberra Region ANPS and his wife is a former leader of the Study Group. As garden design definitely pre-dates Australian plants coming into cultivation, there will be some reference to non-Australian plants and

gardens. Ben will be detailing his own native garden in Canberra which has received publicity in the media.

The Alison Hone Reserve (August) is due a visit after several years. Ashlea and others have been there in the last few months.

In September we are due to visit Ettrema Gorge in the Morton NP/ Budawangs area. This trip was done by the group many years ago; initial reconnaissance suggests that the vegetation we need to walk through is much thicker now. Excellent sandstone flora and good views at the end await the visitors.

The October walk will take us to the Towrang side of the Cookbundoons and up into the hills. Bob will be leading this walk.

Penrose SF is the destination In November. A number of endemic and/or threatened plants grow here.

SEED TO FLOWERS IN A FEW WEEKS

The genus *Senecio* is a world-wide group of plants and belongs to the daisy family, Asteraceae. There are a number of *Senecio* native to Australia as well as some introduced ones. One well-known one is fireweed, *S. madagascariensis*, and is toxic to stock.

In the February newsletter, I mentioned seed of a *Senecio* (*S. diaschides*) that came to me fortuitously last year during one of our walks. The seed germinated readily some weeks back; a kind member offered to pot up the pot of seedlings. A few seeds had escaped from that pot (probably through wind or being splashed out by heavy rain) and germinated in a nearby pot. One of these was a very fast grower which I potted up myself. It produced buds and is in flower now.

. The picture below shows the *Senecio* in flower.



Senecio diaschides

You might be inclined to ask - 'when are the flowers going to open?'. Facts is that some *Senecio* flowers stay like that and don't 'open' as we would understand it. The reason is that they have a different structure - would take too long to go into here.



Senecio magnificentus

Photo: Brian Walters from

<http://www.anpsa.org.au/s-mag.html>

Some *Senecio* do have 'normal' looking flowers as shown above - *Senecio magnificentus*. *Senecio* species like this one would be in cultivation but the species pictured in the previous column has little horticultural appeal. In, fact I would regard *Senecio* species of this kind as having a 'weedy' look. These flowers that do not 'open up' are said to be non-radiate; flowers of *S. magnificentus* are described as radiate.

CALENDAR

Sat/Sun Mar 2/3	Little Forest Plateau
Thu Mar 14	Propagation
Wed Mar 27	Wetlands working bee
Sat Apr 6	Walk - Gillindich Reserve
Sat May 25	Mt Annan Facilities
Sat Jun 8	Walk - Dalton Reserves
Sat Jul 6	Presentation/Forum
Sat Aug 3	Walk - Alison Hone Reserve
Sat Sep 7	Walk - Ettrema Gorge area
Sat Sep 19	Propagation
Sun Sep 22	Propagation
Sat Oct 5	Walk - Towrang/Cookbundoon
Wed Oct 16	Wetlands working bee
Sun Nov 3	Riversdale plant stall
Sat Nov 16	Walk - Penrose State Forest
Sat Dec 7	AGM + end of year function

LITTLE FOREST PLATEAU WALK

We wish the participants a safe trip and enjoyable walk this coming weekend and await their report.