



Australian Plants Society South East NSW Group

Newsletter 109
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Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

Next Excursion
SATURDAY 1st August 2015

BINGI DREAMING TRACK
Meet at start of Dreaming Track at Congo 10.30 a.m.

On Saturday 1st August we will explore part of the Bingie Dreaming Track near Congo, within the Eurobodalla National Park.

Members of the Bingie Residents' Association have completed over 13 kilometers of track stretching from Congo to Tuross Head.

The track follows part of the dreaming track used by Brinja-Yuin people prior to European development. The word Bingie means stomach in Dhurga - the Aboriginal language spoken south of Nowra to Narooma.

Dreaming Tracks traditionally linked every place visited by local Aboriginal people, then extended to connect every place utilised by neighbouring clans so that all Aboriginal people in Australia were connected by these unique highways.

The landscape you will pass through on the walking track includes many plant species, including a number of terrestrial orchids.

You can also find many heathland plants including *Leucopogon*, *Hibbertia* and *Patersonia* species, *Hakea teretifolia* and *Boronias*. Leaves of *Lomandra* which grows commonly along the track were worked into cordage and net bags by the Aboriginal people



**Look for the Bingie Dreaming Track sign
near the carpark to Bingie Beach.
This will be our meeting place**

See directions and map on page 2

As always, we suggest for our APS meetings that those attending bring along morning tea, lunch and a chair. The need to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather and the terrain is also advised. Note also that there are no public toilets within this section of Eurobodalla National Park



Directions:

From the north, travel through Moruya and take the Moruya Heads turnoff. After 2km, turn right onto Congo Road. After about 12km you will reach the Bingie Point carpark. From the south, at Bergalia, turn right onto Bingie Road, bearing left onto Congo Road after about 1km. The carpark is about 5km further on.

Michele Pymble

Presidents Message



Winter is a good time for reflection in the garden. Yes there is always weeding and tidying but things don't grow as rampantly as in the warmer months so there is time for sitting back and viewing, planning changes and new projects. What needs replanting due to death or just "not doing" over the previous year? Could the position have been too wet or too dry, too much or too little shade? You might imagine a spot for a shade tree, a garden seat, a pond, a new path..... A particularly difficult position might make a home for a garden sculpture, water feature or bird bath. Winter can also be a good time for transplanting if the plants are not too big and for dividing suitable plants to fill in gaps in the garden. And on those particularly cold and dismal winter days there's always APS journals to browse for new ideas!

Margaret Lynch

Committee news

Future activities

September 5th Visits to Narooma gardens of Margaret Lynch and Jenny and Peter John.

October 3rd AGM and meeting at 'Thubbul', the home of Architect and author Phillip Cox

Note the earlier AGM date, as the committee had planned a distant excursion which has not eventuated but we cannot pass on the chance to spend time at 'Thubbul' Thanks to Michele Pymble and Christina Kennedy for arranging this.

Yes it is that time again, time to consider putting up your hand to help the Group prosper. The Annual General Meeting is just 4 months away and members need to consider just what they expect of the Group, and how they can help the Group achieve good outcomes for the benefit of all members. The current committee is well organised and keen, but there is always a need for more help. Why not put up your hand. You might just have the ideas and enthusiasm needed. A call to President Margaret will confirm that all members have something to offer. Being a part of the committee is an opportunity to show that you care about APS, and are keen to share your love of Australian Plants.

November 7th A day out in Brogo, visiting the property of Graham and Denise Krake.

December 5th Picnic at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens

Your committee meets next on 12th August.

If you have any issues or ideas, any of the committee would appreciate your input.

Newsletter archives

Secretary Michele has chased up all the old newsletters, and thankfully Mark Noake offered to digitize the missing ones for us. So by the next meeting we will have a full set of newsletters available which will be progressively loaded onto our website for members use. Coming up to our 20th year this will be a valuable resource to celebrate this milestone. Thanks Michele and Mark for your efforts.

From Secretary Michele comes the following snippet, via Jim Mackay (Garden Caretaker) of Sylvan Grove Native Gardens

“ABC TV rang me a few days ago to let me know that the screening segment of Sylvan Grove will be televised on Gardening Australia on Saturday 8th August at 6:30 pm and repeated the following day at 1:00 pm”.

Most APS members from the Sydney District know of Sylvan Grove, having already visited them when our EHG has hosted visits, but I'd like to request that you pass this information onto all Regional and Metropolitan Groups to make them aware of this telecast. In doing this, we are bound to increase public awareness of these wonderful native gardens that local to the East Hills Group. They are open to the public and the admission is free.

See link below for further information:

<http://www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/index.aspx?nid=285>

All the great effort that Jim and Leonie have put into Sylvan Grove over many years surely deserves much recognition – it has become place we are all proud of...

Report on last outing “Karibara”, 765 Old Highway Corunna, Saturday 4th July 2015

Although the day started overcast and very cold by the time we reached the property of Len and Annabelle, the sun was breaking through. Mike the kelpie was kept busy greeting the many arrivals who had braved the cold weather and the north facing deck was soon full with members chatting with old and new friends over tea and cake.



Len and Annabelle discuss their options for the native orchard plants



Morning tea on the sunny deck

When we had all found a place to sit Len gave us an overview of the property and the ambitions he and Annabelle had for its development. The original property had been a more extensive block which was then divided into two. The previous owners had built the existing house and planted three orchards of native trees as well as retaining the old mixed orchard of plums, apples, pears etc. This old orchard also has an avocado which always has some fruit developing on it and a very prolific old macadamia tree overhanging the drive entrance.

Len and Annabelle were given scant information at handover as to the identification of all the plantings on the property and there were still some trees they could not identify. The orchards are mostly all well matured trees and the density of the planting along with the sloping terrain throughout the block makes maintenance and pruning a difficult task.

Producing a high quality crop though, is only the beginning of the process and Len and Annabelle are still at the early stages of researching techniques and equipment for value adding to the crops and then finding suitable markets for the quantities that they can produce. They are working hard to establish contacts with restaurants and retail outlets but as yet the demand for the fruits, nuts and oils from native species is small. Len and Annabelle are hoping that tastes will develop and that the use of native ‘bush foods’ is not just a passing fashion.

To a background of honking, clucking and quacking, Annabelle told us how they use the poultry for suppressing weeds and pest insects and just occasionally as a food source. They have guinea fowl, buff orpington ducks, settler geese and chooks which roam freely through the orchards during the day, protected from any would-be predators by Mike the kelpie. He reacts immediately to a shout of 'FOX' and Annabelle was convinced he even knew how to spell it.



We were then led on a tour of the property, past the old orchard up to the machinery shed which currently houses a dehydrator and dehusker that they use to remove the outer green layer of the macadamia nut down to the hard brown shell that we all recognise.



Dehusking machine and below Macadamia nuts with husk partly removed, but the hard work of cracking the nuts, one at a time is still to be done



The loudly honking geese escorted us through the first orchard, pictured above, which was planted with Macadamias (*Macadamia tetraphylla*), Riberry, (*Syzygium luehmannii*) and Lemon Aspen (*Acronychia acidula*) with Finger Limes (*Citrus australasica*), the fruit of which is shown below, interspersed between the trees.



The best examples of Citrus though were growing in full sun, appreciating less competition .

The fruit was shared around between the members, who enjoyed the tart but sweet taste. Consensus was that a little added to vanilla ice cream would prove a delightful summer sweet.

Heading north up the hill we came to a mixed planting containing Davidson Plum (*Davidsonia jerseyana*), Aniseed Myrtle (*Syzygium anisatum*) and Lemon Myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) with Bunya Pines (*Araucaria bidwillii*) along the boundary. Len told us that 30kg of cones from the Pines only yielded 300g of painstakingly extracted seeds! Down the hill past another row of Davidson Plums was the recently dug dam. Len and Annabelle are hoping it will retain its water having been treated with a polymer sealant and they have stocked it with 100 yabbies, again with fingers crossed. The third orchard, to the east of the house slopes towards a neck of the Corunna Lake, which is sometimes allowed to break through and flood the creek at the bottom of the slope. Here are more Myrtles, Lemon and Cinnamon (*Backhousia myrtifolia*) with Finger Limes between.

We straggled back to enjoy lunch on the sun-warmed deck as flocks of little brown birds flew through the branches of the over-hanging Pencil Cedar (*Polyscias murrayi*) and whip birds sounded in the forest of majestic eucalypts across the little valley.

After a brief show and tell of **Banksias** by Jenny John,



and **Grevillea irrasa** by **Mark Noake**, we thanked Len and Annabelle for allowing us the opportunity to see and think about native species as productive cash crops rather than the decorative enhancements to our gardens that we usually focus on.

Jenny John

Native Food plantings at Karibara

Most of the species were planted during 1999/2000. Numbers for each species varied between 20 and 50 plants, and the success rate is high, averaging over 90% .

***Acronychia acidula* Lemon Aspen** and ***Acronychia oblongifolia*, White Aspen** are members of the Rutaceae family. They are medium to large trees of eastern rainforests, flowering from late spring to winter. Flowers are about 10mm across, light yellow to white, and are highly fragrant. The angular or ribbed fruit produced from winter to spring is about 10 – 15mm across and is edible but very acidic. Only a small amount of flesh surrounds a large hard seed capsule, and is very difficult to collect in any quantity.

***Alpinia caerulea* Native Ginger** forms a dense clump of erect stems to about 2m tall rising from underground rhizomes. Given plenty of moisture and a protected position, plants provide a structural relief to shrubby plants. The native ginger produces terminal white flowers throughout the warmer months, followed by bright blue fruits about 15mm across. Indigenous use of the plants included eating the pulpy fruit surrounding the seed, and digging up the root tips, which have ginger taste.

***Apium prostratum* Sea Celery** is common around the coast of eastern and southern Australia. It was collected during Cook's voyages of discovery to Australia, used as a vegetable to ward off scurvy. Banks referred to it as 'parsley' and it was widely used in soups. No plants survive in the garden at Karibara, probably having been weeded out !

***Syzygium anisatum* Aniseed Tree** is a large tree in the rainforests of Q'land and northern NSW. In cultivation it is unlikely to exceed 10-12m. The leaves contain a high percentage of anethole oil, which gives the characteristic aniseed smell when leaves are crushed. This plant, previously known as *Backhousia anisata*, is widely grown for its foliage, which is dried and used in a variety of products for flavouring.

***Backhousia citriodora* Lemon Myrtle** makes an ideal garden plant, growing from 3 – 8m tall depending on conditions. It thrives in well drained moist soils, and tolerates full sun and quite cold conditions once established. The delightful lemon fragrance from the leaves derives from a high concentration of the essential oil citrol, a very powerful perfume. Plants are believed to have developed strong oily concentration to prevent being grazed by animals and insects, and it is just coincidence that we find some very attractive. This plant is more widely grown than most for its adaptability and profuse growth, which offers growers a reliable return.

***Backhousia myrtifolia* Cinnamon Myrtle**, is also known as Ironwood due to its very strong timber. Early settlers knew it as 'Neverbreak', and used the timber widely for tool handles. As a bush food plant, it is a reliable but slow growing plant, eventually reaching 8m. Given moisture and mulching with compost, it makes quite a handsome garden plant, very hardy and adaptable to cold conditions. Fluffy white flowers appear in late spring, followed by ripening seed from late summer. The sepals are an attractive feature, being yellowish and conspicuously surrounding the developing seed. Leaves have a cinnamon like scent when crushed.

***Cissus hypoglauca* Water Vine** is a very vigorous climber with usually 5 leaflets. This plant is generally too vigorous for home gardens, but can be trained to trellising and kept in control with plenty of pruning, as one would a Wisteria for example. Late spring the plant produces many small yellow flowers and by autumn these have developed into clusters of fleshy black fruit about 15mm across. The fruit is widely sought by birds and animals, and was collected by indigenous tribes during their travels.

***Davidsonia jerseyana* Davidson Plum** was previously known as *D. pruriens* var *jerseyana*. It is a very attractive garden plant with symmetrical foliage and often pink new growth. From late spring long panicles of pink flowers adorn the plant, and these are followed by large, dark brown to black fruits, hence the common name. These fruits are very acidic, but are prized for the jam which can be made using them. Grown in the garden, they do best in a warm protected site, away from drying winds. Many years ago they were commonly grown for use as indoor plants.

***Dianella spp* Blue Flax Lily** are widely grown as garden plants, but not so widely recognised as bush food. Little has been recorded of their use, but it is expected that the prolific fruits would have been included in an indigenous diet. Fruits are sweet and juicy, but have also been blamed for causing dizziness when consumed.

***Diploglottis australis* Native Tamarind** is an understory tree of rainforests from north of Durras to Bowen in Q'land. It makes a lovely garden plant with attractive foliage, but needs protection from winds to look its best. As a potted plant, where the conditions can be better controlled, the foliage is a unique feature. Birds and fruit bats are common visitors when the bright orange fruits are borne during summer. The orange fleshy part, actually an aril surrounding the hard seed, is tart and acidic, but makes a refreshing drink.

***Eleocharpus angustifolius* Blue Quandong** is a large tree 12m or more tall, and grows in northern rainforests. It has fringed bell shaped flowers similar to Blue berry Ash, *E. reticulatus*, from late summer, but the real feature is the large metallic bright blue fruits, which ripen from late winter. These are a favoured food for Cassowaries and Flying foxes, as well as the larger northern pigeons and figbirds. The fruit was used to produce an edible paste.

***Ficus coronata* Sandpaper Fig** is a common small tree of coastal forests. The leaves are very coarse to touch, hence the common name. In cultivation, this plant is quite easily grown, but does not like cold winds, which may cause the plant to drop its leaves. Figs begin to ripen during summer, and continue through to early winter. When ripe the fruit is dark, soft and with a taste somewhat similar to commercial figs, albeit much smaller at only 20mm. Another drawback is that the flavour is variable, and the fruit is covered with hairs which must be removed to make the fruit palatable.

***Macadamia integrifolia* Smooth Shelled Macadamia** is found in south east Q'land, where it grows to about 12m. Long racemes of white flowers are borne through spring, and large nuts, about 30mm across ripen through summer and autumn. Plants are quite easy to grow, but need good drainage and moist soils to produce well.

***Macadamia tetraphylla* Rough Shelled Macadamia** is found in northern NSW and southern Q'land, where it may grow up to 15m tall. Flowering is prolific, with creamy pink flowers held prominently in showy racemes from late winter through spring. Nuts about 30mm wide begin to ripen during late summer. Heavy crops are common when plants are grown in well drained moist soils with plenty of mulch and fertiliser.

***Citrus australasica* Finger Lime** is often a prickly shrub, but may reach 6-8m in its natural environment in south east Q'land where it often grows along streambanks. Plants are very slow growing, although plants can produce fruit at a young age. To grow successfully, plants prefer semi-shade and a moist well drained soil. Additional water during hot weather will help with fruit production. Flowering begins late summer through autumn, with attractive pink buds opening to show white petals. Flowers are sweet scented. Fruits begin to ripen in winter and may continue till early spring. When ripe the fruits may be yellowish, purple or red. Split open, they reveal many juice sacs which are pressed to release a strong sweet liquid.

***Planchonella australis* Black Apple** is a medium tree found in the coastal and subtropical rainforests from south east Q'land to the Illawarra. It is easily grown in cultivation, but does best without competition. Extra watering and fertilising will reward with heavier fruiting, although plants do not usually fruit every year. Flowering is through spring, with clusters of whitish bell shaped flowers, and fruits begin to ripen the following spring. These are large and round, 50 – 60mm, black with sweet red flesh when ripe, and are eagerly sought by many animals. Around the trees, many fruit litter the forest floor.

***Pleigynium timorensis* Burdekin Plum** is a very large adaptable tree, found in coastal and mountain rainforests of Q'land. It tolerates quite dry conditions, and could grow in southern areas with good drainage and plenty of sun. Plants are monoecious, with male flowers in long slender panicles to 150mm, and the female flowers in 50mm spikes, on the same plant, borne from late winter. Fruits begin to ripen early summer through autumn, and are about 35mm across, and somewhat flattened. When ripe the fruit become purplish to black, and quite soft, although the flesh only thinly covers the large seeds. Used for jams and jellies.

***Podocarpus elatus* Plum Pine** occurs in warmer rainforests from the Illawarra to around Cairns, and reaches 10 -15m over time. In cultivation it is slow growing, taking some years to reach 2m, but given good conditions it might reach 10m as a spreading tree. As a native food plant there is some conjecture. Most people feel that the fleshy stalk is tasteless.

***Syzygium australe* Brush Cherry** is a widely grown ornamental, with many forms, from low almost ground cover plants to tall trees up to 30m. Found naturally from the Shoalhaven region to north of Cairns, in coastal rainforests often along creeks. Flowers are white and fluffy, profuse during summer, and fruiting is usually heavy, through autumn and winter. When ripe the fruit is pink, red or maroon, about 20mm across, with crisp juicy fruit. Easy to grow in cultivation, and many cultivars have been developed, ranging from small hedging plants to quick growing screens.

***Syzygium luehmannii* Riberry** is a large tree of tropical rainforests. Found as far north as Cooktown, and in the coastal rainforests as far south as the mid north coast of NSW, it can grow up to 30m, but in cultivation is usually no more than 10m. With weeping foliage and colourful new growth, it is an attractive addition to any landscape. During early summer white to cream flowers are held in panicles towards the end of branches, whilst the fruit matures during summer to autumn. Fruits are red pear shaped berries about 15mm long, massed in tight bunches outside the foliage. Used as jams, jellies and sauces, the fruit has a taste of tart cranberry.

***Syzygium oleosum* Blue Lilly Pilly** occurs from the Illawarra to north Q'land, often along creeks in tropical and subtropical rainforests. Generally shrubby in cultivation, it can be a medium tree to 10m in its rainforest home. Foliage holds many large oil dots, and when crushed the leaves exude a lemony fragrance. Easily grown if given additional water to establish, and tolerant of all but poorly drained soils. Flowering occurs from late spring through summer, when small clusters of red buds open to fluffy, creamy white flowers borne in leaf axils towards the ends of branches. Fruit is shiny blue berries, small at only about 15mm across, but quite juicy and crisp with a pleasant flavour. In many areas flowering is only heavy sporadically, making this a difficult plant to rely on for fruit production.

***Syzygium paniculatum* Magenta Cherry** is found in the coastal rainforests of NSW, from about the mid Shoalhaven area, to the mid north coast, and in the wild it is considered vulnerable. However, because it has been so widely cultivated, some have suggested the possibility of weedy potential in suitable habitats.

In cultivation it is often a shrubby small tree, but can grow to 8 – 10m. Because of its adaptable nature, many have been planted in public parks. The plant flowers through summer, in small panicles of white fluffy stamens with pinkish centres, and by autumn large bunches of magenta fruit, up to 25mm across attract a range of larger birds. The fruit when ripe is said to taste similar to new seasons apples, that is tart and sweet, and is used for a range of jams and sauces.

***Tasmannia lanceolata* Mountain Pepper** grows in cool mountain forests from Victoria, Tasmania and NSW. Mostly an undershrub to 3m., some old specimens have been recorded as trees over 10m high. As a plant for cultivation, this has proved difficult to maintain, and it was interesting to note that none of the plants from the original plantings have survived at Karibara. At the ERBG, some were planted along Deep Creek, and I think they still are growing as open shrubs. In Tasmania, it is widely grown, but requires plenty of water during dry weather. If possible, plants should have plenty of light to grow their best, despite coming from dense forested country. Seeds are dried similarly to peppercorns, and used as such. The taste is peppery with a touch of cinnamon. Young stems and fresh leaves also have a pepper bite, and could be dried for use in stews and such.

Leptospermum liversidgei Lemon Teatree is a summer flowering shrubby plant growing in coastal wet heaths from about Port Stephens in NSW as far north as Bundaberg in Q'land. Foliage of the plant exudes a distinct lemon fragrance, and the leaves have been dried and used for making lemon tea. The essential oil citrol is used as flavouring. Another chemical found within the leaves is the oil citronella, leading to the plant being marketed as Leptospermum "Mozzie Blocker", with a claim that when planted in home gardens, mosquitoes would be repelled. Well it was a good story, but the oil was only partially released in hot humid weather. Better results came from drying and crushing the leaves, and placing in areas where you wished to relax. To keep this plant happy in the garden, regular watering is necessary, and pruning to promote new growth is also required. Dried leaves placed in cotton bags give a nice aroma to drawers.

John Knight

My Garden

Just recently I was confronted by a rather large 'roo, who had decided that *Lomandra confertifolia ssp rubiginosa* was just the thing for breakfast. When I went outside he stood at his highest and stared me down. I went and got the camera to take a picture before he hopped away, and was surprised that he wasn't going anywhere.

As I moved closer to get my picture, he gave a disapproving grunt, showed off his manly chest and those long front claws, and suggested that maybe I should be the one to move away. All the while he kept pulling out lengths of Lomandra, chewing nonchalantly.

We have quite a population of kangaroos in the surrounding bush, but this is the first time a large male has taken up territory. Although nice to have around, such a big boy could be a threat to our visiting grandchildren, so he had to move, please. Only when I climbed up on an adjacent mulch pile, so that I was taller than him, did he deign to move away, albeit only a few cursory (cursing ?) hops. By the number of calling cards littering the ground, he had been there a while.

The news from Victoria, by the way is that daughter Liane presented us with another granddaughter, Paige Victoria, 8lbs 4ozs and 51cm. Why is it that we still weigh babies in pounds? All is well, but we will be spending more time travelling south to visit. It is always nice to have a cuddle.

John Knight

**What you
lookin' at ?**



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Website can accessed by searching the APS NSW website, and access the South East NSW Group. austplants.com.au and follow the link to South East Region