



Australian Plants Society South East NSW Group

Newsletter 120

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Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

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Next Meeting

Saturday August 6th 2016 10.30am

at the home of Carolyn and Mark Noake

Glendeuart, North of Moruya

Grevilleas with Mark Noake

The central focus of this activity to be held at the Glendeuart home and garden of Carolyn and Mark Noake will be local species of Grevillea.

Their garden comprises three and a half acres of Australian plants in a setting inspired by open grassy woodlands.

Those who attended a previous meeting at Glendeuart will notice significant developments including terraced landscaping and dry stone walling to accommodate a growing collection of Grevilleas and other Australian plants.

Grevillea arenaria identifying features

Photo by Mark Noake



An introductory talk will include a short tour of our Southeast Group's website, showing how to easily access a wealth of information.

Then follows a simple explanation of the plant features used by botanists when identifying Grevilleas, which will be illustrated with lots of images and no exams.

Carolyn and Mark's inspiration for growing Grevillea species as found in the wild and the fun to be had trying to protect rare and endangered plants will be discussed. Support will be sought on dealing with their inability to walk past a "different" plant in a nursery without purchasing it.



The after lunch garden tour will showcase nearly fifty natural species of Grevilleas and several cultivars.

To get to Carolyn and Mark's, travelling from Batemans Bay and other points north, along the Princes Highway towards Moruya, turn right off the highway at Larry's Mountain Road, which is just 1km south of the North Moruya industrial area in Shelley Rd. From the south, Larry's Mountain Rd is the first turn left off the Princes Highway after leaving Moruya.

Once on Larry's Mountain Rd, travel 1km and turn left on Glendeuart Grove, and continue for about 800m to the next corner on your left (Maclean Place).

Our venue, 20 Glendeuart Grove, is on this corner. You can tell you have arrived when you come to the obviously native garden with Eucalypts and other obvious clues, and the APS sign will be put out just in case.

As always, bring morning tea and lunch, and a chair, and wear suitable footwear to enjoy the garden walk.





President's Message

At this time of year when flowers are generally at a minimum in the garden it can be a good time to look at other plant features.

There are many plants which have stunning foliage and/or a particular form which can either be used as a feature or to provide contrast within a garden.

I particularly like the large, tough, leathery leaves of *Banksia robur* and *Banksia blechnifolia* which are as much a feature as their beautiful flowers.

Then of course there are many grey-leaved plants to provide contrast. Two of my favourites are *Zieria littoralis* and *Eremophila nivea*.

But the plants that are often absent from many gardens are the group generally together referred to as "grasses".

Yes most Australian native gardens will have a kangaroo paw or two (*Anigozanthos* spp.) but there are many other grasses or grass-like plants which can add beauty and contrast either planted in swathes, borders or scattered throughout an area. *Lomandra* species such as the small *L. confertifolia* "Little Con" and many larger fine-leaved varieties are now available in many shades of green. Then there are some wonderful true grasses such as *Poa* spp. and *Cymbopogon* spp.

Other worthwhile garden plants in this group include *Conostylis* spp., *Bulbine* spp., *Dianella* spp., *Patersonia* spp. and of course the iconic *Xanthorrhoea* to name a few..... So next time you're considering what to plant think foliage not just flowers!



Once again, as 2 years ago, our group faces the prospect of a depleted committee to represent members and conduct the necessary business to ensure the group remains viable. Some current members, who pledged in 2014 support for 2 years to help keep the group active, are about to complete their promised term, and will not be seeking re-election, and it is time now for others to step up to help the group.

At the AGM in October, we are seeking members to join the committee. All members are asked to give serious consideration as to their involvement in the group, and how each of us can assist in promoting the benefits of growing Australian plants.

The alternative, if members feel unable to fill the necessary committee positions, is to consider again whether the group can continue.

Please call me to discuss the possibilities and prospects for the future of the Australian Plants Society in South East NSW.

Margaret Lynch

Welcome to new members

We are delighted to welcome the following members to our SE NSW Group, and look forward to seeing each of you at our meetings.

Mary-Jane O'Brien from Narooma, **Leonie Kestel** from Depot Beach

Melanie Nolan from Central Tilba, and **Julian Nimmo** from Tuross Head

We also welcome back **Fran Tomkins** from Bodalla

Plant of the month,

Leucopogon juniperinus: a prickly shrub of open forest and woodland

Most of the Australian 'heath' species, that is, species commonly thriving on acidic, poor quality soils, were placed in their own family, **Epacridaceae**, as they were considered to be sufficiently distinct from the species in the Northern Hemisphere family, **Ericaceae**. However in 2002, after some years of investigation using modern techniques of research, it was agreed that the Australian heath species should be included in the larger family **Ericaceae**, but grouped into several subfamilies. So the family **Epacridaceae** is now obsolete.

Leucopogon is in the subfamily **Styphelioideae**, the members of which have leaves with palmate venation; that is, the veins arising from the one point at the base of the leaf. But because these leaves are often very small, the venation of these leaves often appears to be parallel, an incorrect description.

Many of our local flowering plant species do not have a 'wow!!' factor. They go about their business in a quietly unobtrusive manner, flowering, setting seed and germinating, according to their own particular rhythm.

Leucopogon juniperinus is one of these. It is a small woodland and grassland shrub, about 1 metre high, with small, very sharp leaves pointing in every direction, crowded on the stems. Some plants have bright green leaves; the leaves of other plants often have a distinct yellowy tinge. I suspect that this difference is due to differences in the soil composition.



*A typical shrub of **Leucopogon juniperinus**, growing as an undershrub in dry sclerophyll forest*



*A branchlet with scale rule, demonstrating the size of both leaves and flowers of **Leucopogon lanceolatus***

The flowers, that appear in autumn through winter, are white, tiny, and tubular, about 5-7mm long (or less in poor specimens) and with a growth of hairs in the throat and around the edges of the pointed lobes.

These hairs and the white flowers are common to all *Leucopogon* species and give rise to the name; the Greek *leuco* meaning white, and *pogon* a beard. The specific name, *juniperinus*, refers to the Juniper-like foliage. Juniper berries are the flavouring in the alcoholic drink ‘Mother’s ruin’ – gin.



Close up, you can see the white hairs on the petal tips. The dark structures are stamens.

If you look hard the sharp spines are visible at the end of each leaf. Note also the venation, appearing to be parallel

Bushwalkers well know these plants, for the spines penetrate trousers readily. Ouch!

All photos by Jenny Liney



Fruit are small white berries, sweet and succulent, but with such a thin flesh that it would take lots and lots to make a filling dessert.

There must have been some confusion between *Leucopogon*, *Lissanthe* and *Styphelia*, as all these names were applied at different times to various species in the then **Epacridaceae** family. Reference to *Leucopogon juniperinus* first appeared in the scientific literature in a paper by the Dutch botanist Christiaan Persoon, of *Persoonia* fame. The Type specimen was collected by the prolific botanist Robert Brown in 1810, and was deposited in the Vascular Plants collection at the Herbarium of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

So next time in the cooler weather when you are walking in the bush and brush against a prickly shrub, take a closer but careful look at the under side of the sharp leaves and note the tiny hairs on the tips of the very small flowers.

Jenny Liney

Report on last meeting by John Knight Acacias

A good roll up of members, along with a couple of visitors, filled the meeting room at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens to discuss the role of Acacias in our gardens. With up to 1000 species occurring naturally in Australia, the Acacias or Wattles comprise the largest genus of all Australian plants. Ranging from low spreading ground covers to tall forest trees, Acacias are found in high rainfall areas and arid inland deserts. Their range is the broadest of all our woody plants, and their diversity of form, flowering time, and tolerance of garden conditions suggests that these hardy plants should find a home in every garden.

Botanists have suggested that Acacia evolved prior to the separation of Gondwana. It is believed that the plants which gave rise to those found in Australia originated in the tropical areas of Africa and South America. The subgenera of Acacia and *Aculeiferum* from these areas were also found in the area now known as India and prior to its separation from Northern Australia these two subgenera were evolving into the subgenus *Phyllodinaea*, which were dispersing into northern Australia, along with a few early species of the subgenus *Acacia*, taking advantage of the drier areas which existed between the widespread rainforest.

Following separation of Gondwana and the southern drift of the Australian continent, the dry areas expanded, enabling these early *Acacia*'s to diversify and spread into the developing woodlands and semi-arid areas.

L. Pedley Assistant Director of Queensland herbarium (retired in 1988) has suggested that the phyllodinous species evolved around the time of Gondwanan separation, and the pinnate species evolved from these.

Other botanists argue for different evolution processes, but in any case Acacias are believed to have been part of the Australian flora since the beginning of the Tertiary period some 65 million years ago.



***Acacia elongata* is a feature in damper sites, and is easily grown in home gardens. Pruning early can keep the plant manageable. The sweetly perfumed flowers are out now, and attract many beneficial insects, and birds looking for a feed as well.**

Those attending were first introduced to the groups into which the Acacias are divided to assist with identification. A simple **Key to the Acacias of South East NSW**, as illustrated here was used to help.

Mature leaves bipinnate Group E Bipinnate Group

Plants in this group include

Acacia blayana *Acacia dealbata* *Acacia decurrens*
Acacia filicifolia *Acacia irrorata* *Acacia mearnsii*
Acacia nano-dealbata *Acacia olsenii*
Acacia parramattaensis *Acacia sylvestris*
Acacia terminalis *Acacia trachyphloia*

The features identifying each species was illustrated, the information then being used during a later walk around the Gardens to re-inforce the newly acquired knowledge.

Some plants which are widely cultivated, but not local to the South East include:

Acacia baileyana *Acacia cardiophylla* *Acacia elata* *Acacia spectabilis*



Group E
eg *Acacia terminalis*

Mature leaves reduced to phyllodes

Phyllodes with 2 or more longitudinal veins

Flowers in spikes Group A Juliflorae Group (Juliflora = flowers in catkins)

Plants in this group include

Acacia binervia *Acacia floribunda* *Acacia georgensis* *Acacia longifolia* *Acacia longissima*
Acacia maidenii *Acacia mucronata* *Acacia obtusifolia*



Group A **eg *Acacia longifolia***

Phyllodes penniveined (i.e. feather like, more than 1 main vein, and minor veins)

Flowers in capitate heads

Phyllodes flat, or ± terete not pungent pointed

Group B Pluriveined Group

Note that all the species in this group locally have anastomosing veins, that is the main veins are connected by many smaller veins

Plants in this group include

Acacia binervata *Acacia cognata* *Acacia elongata*
Acacia implexa *Acacia melanoxyton* *Acacia subporosa*

and the widely grown *Acacia howittii*

Group B
eg *Acacia melanoxyton*



Phyllodes ± terete or tetragonous, pungent pointed

Group C Phyllodineae , section ulicifolia

Acacia aculeatissima
Acacia brownii
Acacia genistifolia
Acacia ulicifolia

Group C
eg *Acacia brownii*



Phyllodes with 1 main vein, occasionally more, then obviously penniveined but not reticulate or anastomosing
Flowers in capitate heads on simple peduncles

Group D Phyllodineae Group

This includes the largest group of local wattles

Acacia covenyi *Acacia falcata* *Acacia falciformis*
Acacia hamiltoniana *Acacia kybeanensis* *Acacia kydrensis*
Acacia lucasii *Acacia mabellae* *Acacia myrtifolia*
Acacia obliquinervia *Acacia paradoxa* *Acacia penninervis*
Acacia rubida *Acacia stricta* *Acacia suaveolens* *Acacia vernicuflua*

Other Acacias which are widely cultivated, but not local to the South East include:

Acacia acinacea *Acacia boormanii* *Acacia cultriformis*
Acacia fimbriata *Acacia leprosa* *Acacia linifolia* *Acacia*
podalyriifolia *Acacia pravissima* *Acacia prominens*
pycnantha *Acacia retinodes* *Acacia saligna* and *Acacia vestita*

Group D eg *Acacia stricta*
Acacia



Acacia floribunda, this form with weeping foliage, makes a pleasant tree for gardens,

whilst *Acacia covenyi* is a larger shrub, needing a bit of room to accommodate it.



Many Acacias have been cultivated in the past, but seemingly fewer and fewer these days. This may be due to the fact that many are quick growing pioneer species, which become woody and untidy. Also the widely held belief that most are short lived. However, at the meeting, quite a range of plants were brought along for the display table, and the growers were enthusiastic about their value as garden plants.

There is a number of newer collections becoming available, and reputedly more suitable for modern, smaller gardens.



In particular forms of *Acacia cognata* seem to have gained popular acceptance. Above, the typical open, weeping habit of local bush plants, and to the right, above *A. cognata* “Mini Cog” and below, *A. cognata* “Green Mist”, both now widely grown, although I prefer the open tree form myself.



Prostrate forms of larger shrubs, such as *Acacia baileyana*, *Acacia iteaphylla*, *Acacia pravissima*, and as shown below, *Acacia cultriformis* have widely grown.



For sheer brilliance of flowering, one can't beat *Acacia acinacea*. Gold dust Wattle. This taller form is growing near Bendigo in Victoria. There is a range of lower growing forms ideal for well drained sunny gardens, and growing about 50cm high with a spread of 1m. Pruning after flowering is recommended to keep the plants vigorous.



Oddities, such as this red flowered form of *Acacia leprosa* “Scarlet Blaze” are found from time to time. As yet this form has proved difficult in cultivation, but many are trying to find the key to its survival.

Similarly there is a very fine, pink flowered form of *Acacia terminalis* which occurs in Tasmania. It will be a stunning garden plant if its propagation is successful.



Amongst my favourite wattles is *Acacia spectabilis*, Mudgee Wattle. This photo is of a plant growing along the Darling River near Louth, western NSW, from which I collected a few seeds. One is now in the garden at Batemans Bay, and just about to burst into flower.

References;

Acacias of South East Australia, Terry Tame 1992

Acacias of New South Wales, Inez Armitage 1993

Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants suitable for cultivation, Vol 2
W. Rodger Elliot and David L. Jones 1982

Committee news

APS South East NSW Group 20TH ANNIVERSARY

The inaugural meeting of the APS South East NSW Group was held in May, 1997 and as part of our 20th Anniversary celebrations the Committee has considered holding a Quarterly Get-together for NSW members.

The committee is seeking support from any of our APS members who would like to join a working group to explore the feasibility of holding this activity. The intention would be to then tackle the implementation. Some members of the existing Committee have offered their assistance, but more help will be needed to ensure a suitably grand celebration.

You might find this such an enjoyable exercise that you would then consider nominating at our next AGM to join the Committee.

For further information call John Knight 0434674347 - email: johnonvista49@outlook.com

Future activities

Your committee continues to work on an evolving program of interesting meetings for this year, activities which will hopefully add to our knowledge of Australian plants, and encouraging all members to get involved.

- September 3** Grasslands, with Friends of Grasslands date to be confirmed
October 8 AGM Meeting at Horse Island
November 5 Garden visit to Cliff Williams property, and driving Western Distributor Road looking at spring flowers

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

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