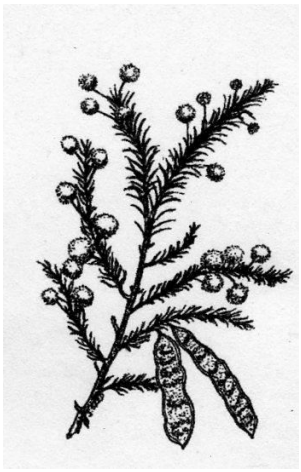

Acacia brunioides

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc.

ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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Note: If you wish to view or download previous Study Group Newsletters, they are available on the Study Group website.

The address is:

http://anpsa.org.au/acaciaSG

From The Leader

Dear Members

As always, the golden yellow flowers of wattle have been very conspicuous around Melbourne for the last several weeks, it seems to have been a particularly good flowering season. I find it interesting to reflect back on which particular wattles have impressed me for one reason or another, and I think there are a few worthy of mention.

Acacia gittinsii is endemic to the Blackdown Tableland in Queensland. Some years ago, it was suggested in our Newsletter (No. 116, March 2012) that it was not being commonly grown, at least not in Victoria. I was delighted recently to see a specimen growing in Maranoa Gardens (in suburban Melbourne), about 1½ m tall, graceful weeping foliage, and flowering brilliantly. This particular plant is only about 2 years old and has clearly been quite fast growing.

Acacia rhetinocarpa is a South Australian endemic species, classified as vulnerable (it was referred to in our Newsletter No. 139, December 2017). I don't previously recall having seen this in any garden, but I recently attended the garden of Bev Fox at The Basin (Melbourne) under an Open Gardens Victoria open day. At the very front of her garden, Bev is growing this species. It was probably just past its peak flowering on the day of the Open Garden, but the plant still drew the attention of a number of visitors, perhaps because it was a species they had not seen before.

In my own garden, one that has delighted me is *Acacia bracteolata*. Our plant is still fairly young, a low spreading plant that flowered superbly this year. This is a plant that Mike Williams had suggested to me as having huge landscape potential, along with *A. viscifolia* (which I don't currently have in the garden).

Finally, one that I am looking forward to for the future – a small growing form of *Acacia binervia* that I recently purchased from Phillip Vaughan. This is a tree that can get quite large, to 15m high and quite wide as well. The selected form from Phillip Vaughan is called *Acacia binervia* 'Sterling Silver', and it is described as a wonderfully mounding plant, 1.8m high and 3-4m wide, and noted as being useful as a low screen. In Melbourne, *A. binervia* has brilliant yellow rod flowers in late spring, and if this new dwarf form flowers just as well, it should make a great garden plant.

Thank you to all members who have paid their **membership renewals** for the 2018/19 year. If you have not already paid your subscription, it would be appreciated if you could attend to this (or let me know if you do not wish to renew).

Bill Aitchison

From Members and Readers

Merele Webb (Croydon North, Vic) wrote (23 July 2018) as follows:

"Thank you for the excellent newsletters which make interesting reading. *Acacia flexifolia* is still in full bloom near my front entrance, so I enjoy it many times each day. It's also right against my lounge window where a piece of prehnite is propped on the middle sill. Prehnite is a semi-precious stone of the same yellow as the Acacia. I bought the slice in the Salamance Market when in Hobart last year. A slice of NZ green turquoise is next to it."

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Des Nelson (Alice Springs, NT) wrote (30 July 2018) as follows:

"In the June Acacia Study Group newsletter, I note Victoria Tanner's comments about difficulty in distinguishing the Gidgees, *Acacia cambagei* and *A. georginae*. I spent quite a few years working in Gidgee country, in particular to the north east of Alice Springs up to and over the Queensland border. By far, *A. georginae* was the dominant species but *A. cambagei* did occur.

There are always exceptions to the rules but in general, *A. georginae* is a gnarled and twisted small tree, sometimes with several trunks, about 5 metres or so tall. *A. cambagei* tends to be erect, single trunked and may be taller than *A. georginae*. A good taxonomic difference is in the legumes. The pods of Georgina gidgee occur as flattened, wide circular, or even spiral forms. Pods of *A. cambagei* are flat, mostly straight, up to 12cm in length.

Here are some memories of my association with Georgina gidgee.

The dry wood is extremely hard. It burns with great heat. A camp-fire of Gidgee wood may appear as a blanket of fine white ash, but when you scrape this off there will be hot, glowing coals beneath.

When flowering or when wet from rain, Gidgee emits a powerful gas-like odour. Some find this obnoxious but those who live with Gidgee don't mind it too much. Flowering Gidgee near stock-yards can attract swarms of bush flies.

Unlike the seeds of most Acacias which usually feature a hard coating, those of *A. georginae* have a paper-thin delicate cover. The seeds are flat and circular, resembling little coins. When the Herbarium of the Northern Territory was established (1954) it had no air-conditioning for many years. Elements of the climate had to be endured. I noted that during periods of high humidity, the usually brittle phyllodes of dry Gidgee specimens could bend easily into a semi-circle or a bit more. This was not possible with some other Acacia spp. which I tested. Perhaps this hygroscopic feature may help Gidgee cope with life in arid areas.

To remind me of the times I spent among Gidgee I planted a seedling more than 20 years ago. For 10 years at least it remained small, about 40cm high. It then grew rapidly and is now over four metres in height. I have noticed some other long lived large Acacia spp. have this habit of remaining small for a long period before accelerating in growth. I guess they are at first occupied with establishing a good solid root system.

I was privileged to have worked with the late Ray Murray, a brilliant organic chemist who spent years investigating the toxicity of some Georgina gidgee trees which have caused livestock losses in Central Australia. Ray determined that the toxic principle in the trees to be **Sodium monofluoroacetate**, known as **1080**.

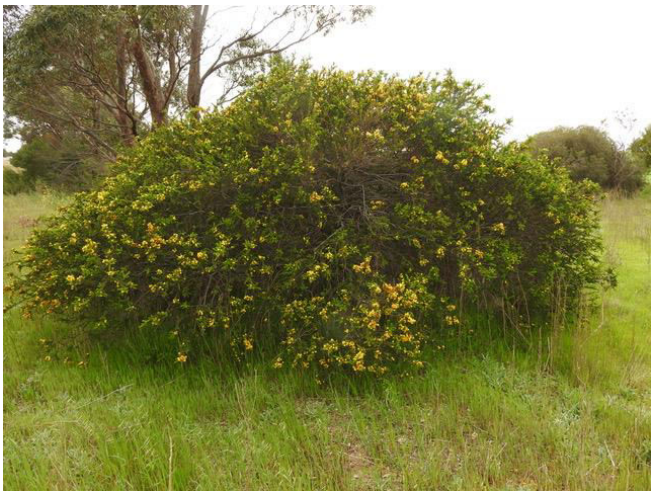
Finally, the last household dog we had was named Gidgee."

In a separate letter (12 September 2018), Des wrote as follows:

"*Acacia murrayana* and *A. victoriae* have started their annual flowering, first blooms noted on August 31st. We are enduring a protracted dry period, 150 plus days without rain but those two wattles flower on time every year regardless of conditions. Sometimes you find them together but *A. murrayana* prefers sandy soils such as exist on our block whereas *A. victoriae* likes soils with some loam present mainly."

****

Reference was made in our previous newsletter (No. 141) to *Acacia paradoxa*, and in particular where one might find bushy forms of it (our enquirer noted that the best bushy forms he had seen were on the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia. **Sandra McKenzie (Moonta, SA)** recently took the following photo of a plant growing on the side of the Moonta/Minlaton Road, a bushy form approximately 2m high x 4m wide, with a nice rounded shape.



Acacia paradoxa **Photo S McKenzie**

****

Marion Simmons (Legana, Tas) was interested in the reference to the Tasmanian *Acacia pataczekii* in our last newsletter. Marion comments that it was a great one for suckering, and came up vigorously in her carport which was of bitumen. It was very persistent and difficult to eradicate.

Marion also comments:

"Flowering has been great this year, too many of the plants are of Legana hybrid origin. I can't resist growing them on to see what I will get. I do, however, have one outstanding plant of *Acacia acinacea* that I certainly can recognise which has brilliant yellow flowers in stems reaching up to 57cms in length."

****

In 2006, **Ian Campbell (Sydney)** presented a talk at the FJC Rogers Seminar on Acacias, titled "Yellow-haired September": a reflection on the national floral emblem in AJ Campbell's Golden Wattle. This talk formed the basis for a paper subsequently published in 2007 in the Australian Humanities Review. Ian has advised that he has now added links to this essay, and this is available at http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2007/02/01/yellow-haired-september-a-reflection-on-the-national-floral-emblem-in-aj-campbells-golden-wattle1/

****

For many years, **Dr Wolf-Achim Roland (Solingen, Germany)** has maintained a website (acacia-world.net) dedicated to Acacias worldwide. Wolf has written (14 July 2018) with information regarding the future of this website.

Hello Bill

Thank you for sending me the ASG-reports. I am still very interested in Acacias s.l. – although I recently discontinued my own Acacia website. The data will be preserved in the website baumkunde.de – but they will not be actively managed any more.

As my wife Hanna and I often visited the Southern African states, my own pictures of Acacias are mostly from that area.

We are now both active on the website: https://www.inaturalist.org which is organized by the California Academy of Sciences and the magazine National Geographic. My wife is mainly interested in Moths of Southern Africa and I generally in trees.

Everybody can post pictures of his/her observations from plants and/or animals.

My Acacia s.l. pictures have been transferred from the English database ispot, which I formerly used. I have provided lists for applying the new Genus names to the African Acacia-species.

As of today, the website iNaturalist carries the following number of Acacia s.l. observations:

Acacia 7455
Vachellia 2393
Senegalia 1328
Acaciella 5 (179 *Acacia angustissima* should be transferred here)
Mariosousa: 13

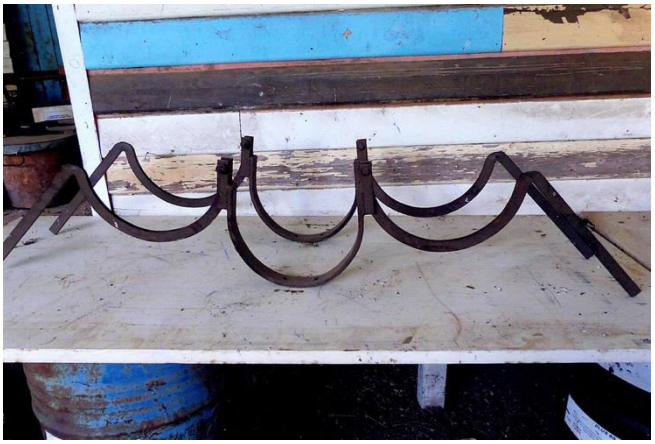
The high number for Acacia s.s. results in the confusion still mirrored in this database: Many American species, which should be renamed remain in the old Genus Acacia.

Maybe some ASG members like to post pictures of Australia Acacias on iNaturalist, too.

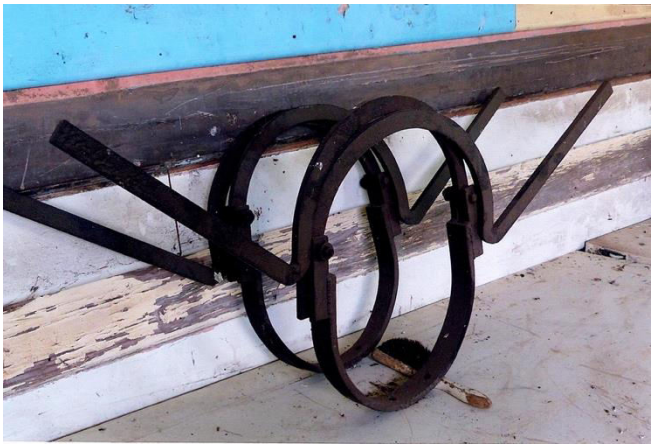
Best regards, Wolf

****

Reference was made in our Newsletter No. 137 to the Greenhalgh Tannery near Ballarat, Victoria, noting that this is probably the last tannery in Australia using vegetable tannins, from *Acacia mearnsii* bark. **Max Kerr (Wallinduc, Vic)** recently wrote to me, confirming that he also believes that this Ballarat tannery is the only one in Australia using the wattle bark method. Max also enclosed photos of a wattle bark clamp – open and closed.



Wattle Bark clamps – open **Photo M Kerr**



Wattle Bark clamps – closed **Photo M Kerr**

****

John Boevink (Port Sorell,, Tas) advises that he is a retiree who is very busy enjoying life – and one thing he is enjoying is the interest and challenge of propagating some of our native plants, both Acacias and others.

John notes that, especially in the central north of Tasmania where he lives, they are not that far off the conditions that would apply in Victoria – with slightly less hot summers that some plants seem to like. He has had trouble with some mainland species eg *Eucalyptus woodwardii* and *E. erythrocorys* from WA, but other species such as the Macadamias and *Allocasuarina torquata* do quite OK.

In his propagation of Acacias, John notes that last year his germination results were largely OK, but he experienced difficulty in getting the seedlings to grow on, despite surviving his seedling transplantation efforts. He came to the conclusion last year that the problem was with his potting mix (even though both banksias and hakeas did well with largely the same potting mix – a bit of a puzzle).

John has speculated that his lack of success last year with Acacias could have been due to the non-availability of nodulating bugs. In an attempt to get better results this year, he has mixed into the seedling mix some quite sandy soil from where local *A. melanoxylon* and *A. longifolia* ssp. *sophorae* are growing. He hopes that this will produce better results this year.

Does anyone have any comments or other suggestions as to how to improve the survival rate following the transplantation from seedbed into tubes?

A call for help for exciting new Acacia research

by Jenelle Patterson, PhD research associate, University of Florida

I am writing from the University of Florida (USA) horticultural department to ask for some help with a new research project focusing on a very special Acacia species, *Acacia georginae*. This species was identified in the early 1900's as being toxic to livestock in its native Western Australia, and in the 1960's, scientists identified the compound that causes its toxicity, fluoroacetate (FA). FA is essentially a sugar molecule with a fluorine attached to it, which makes it toxic. When an animal ingests FA, their body tries to harvest the sugar molecule for energy, but can't because of the fluorine. Because it cannot be broken-down normally, the FA accumulates and prevents other sugars from being broken-down. The abnormal build-up of sugars leads to heart failure, brain damage and, ironically, starvation. It's a truly horrible fate for the animal, but a very interesting one to a biochemist! The discovery of FA in *A. georginae* is fascinating because it is not a common compound in nature - only a handful of plants and microbes are able to produce it. Unfortunately, research looking into FA in plants essentially halted after its discovery, leaving scientists with so many unanswered questions: How do plants go about making FA in the first place? Do they make FA in a similar way to microbes or have they engineered a completely different process? If they are able produce it, have they also figured out a way to break-down and recycle fluorine-containing compounds?

Our lab specializes in plant biochemistry and we are hoping to answer these questions about FA production in plants. But, to do this, we need the plant material itself! We have found one commercial source in Australia for *A. georginae* seeds, but we are hoping to get a more diverse sample since it's reported that FA production can vary widely between plants from different regions or pedigrees. So, who better to ask for help than the Acacia Study Group? If there is anyone interested in helping us kickstart this exciting new research, either by collecting seeds from native plants or by connecting us with someone who might be able to, that would be much appreciated! I can be contacted through Bill Aitchison or directly by email at patterson.j@ufl.edu.

Coconuts and Elephants

by Dr. Fred Mazzaferri

I'm quite partial to fresh coconut, both its flesh and its juice. Yet what, you may well ask, does coconut have to do with our ASG? Not much, true. But just enough, I hope, to catch your attention and sustain your curiosity while I explain.

Coconut's delights come at high cost, especially if you prefer it fresh off its tropical palm. For the shell housing the goodies is shielded by a very thick, fibrous coat specifically designed to carry it intact and fertile across thousands of km of ocean to colonise still another distant beach. And it takes *repeated, **brute force*** to pierce, finally exposing the shell to be cracked impatiently, spilling all of its juice but preserving its flesh, or patiently, first carefully piercing at least two of its eyes with a corkscrew to drain all of its juice into a sparkling clean glass.

Our tropical Kimberley beaches house coconut palms aplenty. But their surrounds are home for another, totally distinct species, which is my prime focus. That species is *Acacia dunnii*, which has long fascinated me because of its aptly named elephant ear leaf, its beautiful big blossom, and its huge seed pod containing by far the largest seeds of the entire genus.

Its tenuous nexus with coconut is this. Its seed must open for its embryo to start its journey toward releasing its sensual delights. But its casing is proportionally as impenetrable as any coconut husk, consequently requiring apposite ***brute force*** if the many days required even by the summer monsoons to soften then penetrate it are to be bypassed. Despite the claims of some trusted internet sites, the routine treatment, overnight soaking in initially boiling water, which suffices to penetrate then swell almost all *Acacia* species, for *Acacia dunnii*, you'd best stock up with coconut since ***you're in for one long wait!***

The casing is usually worn thin in at least one area by abrading it with sandpaper for at least fifteen minutes, continuously monitoring the wound closely so that those very precious cotyledons within suffer the least possible damage, which is virtually unavoidable. Now treatment *with **warm** **not boiling water** lest the wound be harmed* will be fully effective as the embryo slowly swells away from that wound, although it may take a few more days than normal to finish.

Quite apart from the caveat that this procedure requires *three to four hours* to prepare any typical batch of twelve seeds for soaking, what with the fatigue factor, it suffers the significant disincentive of being *unwieldy*, even slightly *hazardous* to the practitioner. For each seed must be gripped tightly enough to facilitate the abrading, without damaging the embryo, which produces a slight bulge in the casing of any healthy seed. And this protrusion acts as *quite an efficient **pivot** about which the seed may freely **rotate***, increasing the grip pressure required for stability, and thus the risk of lethal damage. To boot, if the merely thumbnail-sized seed is foolishly gripped manually, not with pliers, your own skin will abrade before the seed!

Enter my far, far better, entirely safe method, easily able to prepare all of those dozen seeds *in only half an hour!*

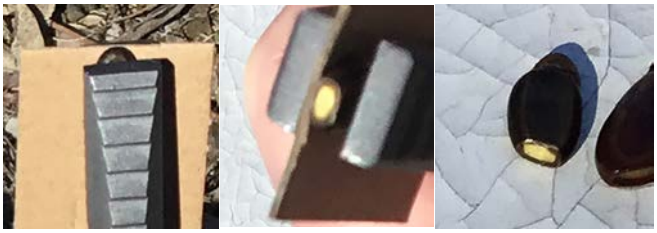
I grip the seed lightly in ***blunt-nosed*** *pliers*, then utilise ***sharp*** *side cutters* to nick away a small chip off its casing in only a few seconds. Fortuitously, as soon as their blades contact the seed case, *they provide a second, **stable grip point** during the entire process, totally **inhibiting the seed rotation***, at about half of the plier pressure otherwise required.

I use blunt-nosed pliers since a degree of precision is needed in the actual cutting process to inflict minimal damage on the cotyledons. The blunt nose is a firm, flat surface *fully **stabilising** the cutters* with slight side pressure during the swift snip.

One final factor is salient, *the **bevelled** **blades** of side cutters.* This primary feature pierces and forces apart their target, say, a piece of wire. But for an *Acacia dunnii* seed, the bevel permits it to be nicked *no nearer the pliers' nose than about **two mm***, inviting disaster, unless you can judge fine distances far better than me, or a very simple, speedy precaution is taken.

A. Make *a **gauge** exactly marking the blades' cutting plane* by holding a length of cardboard in the pliers, as far back as possible. Crop the surplus with the cutters held firmly against the nose. Secure it via adhesive till all the seeds have been treated.

B. Site the seed carefully with its leading edge just clear of the gauge *by no more than **one mm***. Steady it as the pliers are applied via a dab of thin, aqueous glue. Gently tighten them. Hold the open side cutters firmly against the nose just clear of the seed. Maintaining each hand's gentle pressure, slide them slowly and steadily forward, over and under the seed. Close the blades gently *until they **contact** **it top and bottom** upon its edge.* The critical second is here: ***one swift snip and FINIS!***



C. These images show the progress of the seed after the embryo emerges until the ***slightly** **damaged*** cotyledons give way to the ***entirely** **undamaged*** true leaves.

NOTE: I can nick just a sliver of seed case, ***leaving cotyledons fully intact***. But I started outdoors for the sunlight in such adverse conditions that my dexterity suffered, causing more damage than normal, although ***the outcome was perfectly successful.*** I'm running with this specific example instead of repeating it (*to parade my own prowess!?*) to encourage anyone to participate. For my system is so sound that ***this degree of success is well within almost anybody's reach***.

Myall Park Botanic Garden

Following the item from Graeme Serle on *Acacia wardellii* in our previous Newsletter No. 141, **Allan Carr (Bribie Island, Qld)** recalled having seen this species at Myall Park Botanic Garden, SW of Chinchilla, where several were planted prior to 2008 (two of Allan's photos appear below).

***Acacia wardellii* habit** **Photo A Carr**

***Acacia wardellii* flowers** **Photo A Carr**

Allan commented that personnel at Myall Park have been monitoring plantings at the Park and in local gardens to determine the long-term survival possibilities of this rare wattle. This species is in fact just one of an impressive collection of Acacias at Myall Park.

But Allan notes that the Park is struggling to keep their extensive collection of plants from all over Australia in good health due to the drought conditions being felt at present. He provided a letter written by Nita Lester, Director of the Garden, to friends of the Garden. The following is an extract from the letter:

"May I take this opportunity to bring you up to date re the Garden status? As many may know, the Garden has been led by volunteer Directors with the assistance from part time staff [administration officer and caretaker] and volunteers who partake in working bees and specific projects. The Garden has run on a 'shoe string' of both man power and funds for decades.

The Directors not only develop policy but run the day to day processes, which means being a Director is a huge role that most are unable to fulfil. Who can give a high percentage of their personal time to one venture?

At present, the story is similar but we have an emergency situation at present in that the irrigation system needs upgrading urgently. Cost is projected to total $25,000 - man power, hundreds of hours. This, with all the usual Garden activities has placed additional stress on the Directors.

Additional, funding needs to be found to employ a full time curator/manager to ensure the future of 'our special place' so the volunteer Directors can give their limited time to policy and embracing the current international trends.

May I request assistance on behalf of all those who have freely given time, energy and funding over many years. Is there a way funding can be obtained? Is there an institution that could safeguard the future of the Garden? Do you know of anyone or group who could contribute to the request for funding that will provide capital from which the Directors can draw and employ?

You know all as clearly as I do, this has been asked before, but this time it is urgent, Myall Park Botanic Garden is under threat.

Please share with others that the Garden has a tax-deductible fund if that would encourage gifts.

In hope you can think of a 'way' to save our special place,

Nita Lester
Director, Myall Park Botanic Garden
Glenmorgan, Queensland 4423"

If you wish to contact Nita, her email address is nita.c.lester@gmail.com.

Acacia neriifolia

by Warren and Gloria Sheather

This is part of a continuing series of articles on wattles of the Northern Tablelands of NSW.

This species is one of the 60 or so wattles that occur on the Northern Tablelands of NSW.

Acacia neriifolia **Photo W & G Sheather**

Acacia neriifolia will grow into a tall shrub or small tree. The phyllodes are long; narrow, 9 millimetres wide, 15 centimetres long with a prominent gland 2 centimetres above the base. Phyllodes are covered in dense hairs that give them a silvery appearance especially when the foliage is blown about by the wind.

The flowers are held in globular clusters with 20-35 individual blooms. They are a rich golden yellow and cover the plants in spring. Flowers are complimented by the silvery foliage.

Pods are narrow and about 15 centimetres long. They usually mature in mid-December.

Acacia neriifolia could be grown as a stand-alone specimen or as a component of hedges and windbreaks. *A. neriifolia* maintains its shape without the need to prune.

Oleander Wattle occurs in eastern NSW and southern Queensland. The species occurs naturally on our property, Yallaroo and our population is possibly the most easterly occurrence of the species in NSW. Extensive work on the road outside our property has caused a proliferation of *A. neriifolia* due to seed disturbance. Sections of the road are now lined with this attractive wattle.

The species was named in 1842 from material collected by Alan Cunningham on the Liverpool Plains of NSW.

The species name means having foliage resembling that of the oleander.

Propagate from seed which should be treated with boiling water before sowing and possibly cuttings.

Acacia conferta

by Warren and Gloria Sheather

Acacia conferta is another interesting wattle that appears in the Seed Bank List.

A. conferta, the Crowded-leaf Wattle, is a rounded shrub reaching a height of 2 metres. The linear phyllodes are 1.5 centimetres long and tightly clustered along the stems (hence the common name). There is a small gland at the base of each phyllode.

Bright yellow flowers are held in globular clusters of 20-35 flowers. A single cluster is carried in the axil of each phyllode. Clusters are held on slender peduncles that hold them above the foliage. In spring plants become covered in blooms.

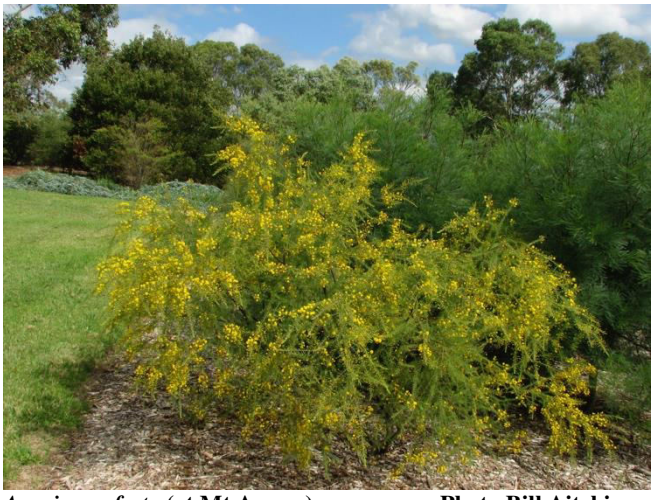
Pods are straight to slightly curved and constricted between the seeds.

Pruning after the flowers fade is appreciated.

A. conferta would be a colourful addition to a native garden bed. We grew the Crowded-leaf Wattle in a previous garden when it survived, thrived and bloomed bounteously throughout all weather conditions.

The species is common in the Pilliga Forest, central west NSW.

Propagate from seed and cuttings would also be worth a try.



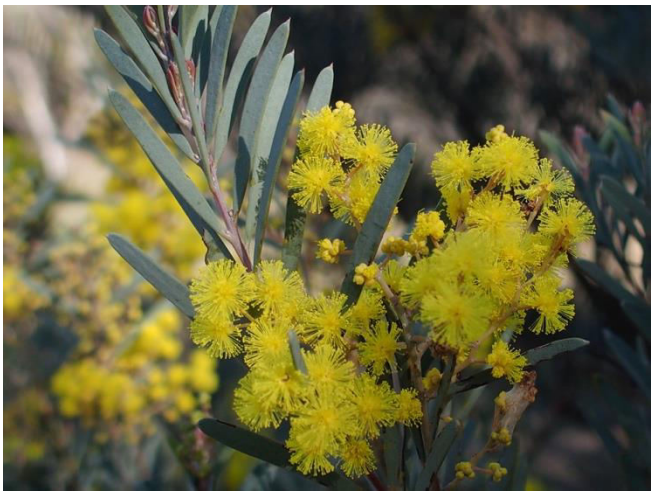
Acacia conferta **(at Mt Annan)** **Photo Bill Aitchison**

Acacia boormanii subsp *gibba*

by Neil Marriott

In the late 1980's I was on a botanical trip into NE Victoria, when we visited Mt Typo. Growing on the slopes of Mt Typo was a lovely dense shrubby wattle growing to around 2m x 2m, which was identified by a local friend as an unnamed species. I was fortunate enough to obtain some seed of this plant and soon had plants coming on at our property in the Black Range, east of the Grampians in western Victoria. Imagine my thrill when I was sent a copy of this Acacia's formal description and naming as *Acacia boormannii* subsp *gibba* named in honour of one of our great members Alan Gibb, who was one of the first to discover this wattle and recognise it as a new taxa for Victoria.

My plants grew, and in fact thrived, through both cold and wet winters and hot and dry summers, flowering heavily each winter-spring with massed racemes of bright yellow ball flowers. Seed set has been profuse, and in fact I have been reluctant to promote this beautiful plant due to its habit of germinating freely, without the stimulus of fire or flood. This is a real shame, as it is a most beautiful plant with its compact habit, attractive blue-grey-green phyllodes and massed seasonal flowering. However, this is really only a problem if, like us, you live in, or near natural bushland. For the home garden, it has proven to be a most hardy, long-lived and attractive Acacia, and its free seeding is normally a bonus.



***Acacia boormanii* ssp *gibba* (photo taken at Neil and Wendy Marriott's property) Photo Bill Aitchison**

Our plants have just finished flowering, and I will collect some seed and give it to Victoria for our Study Group seed bank. It will be interesting to hear if other members also find it to seed and germinate freely in their gardens as well. It is a rare plant in the wild, so it is important to spread plants around, so long as members are aware of its ability to spread. I always wonder how species such as this, along with other Acacias such as *Acacia baileyana* can be so restricted in the wild, and yet grow so freely once taken out of their own local habitat. Does anyone know if this has been studied by botanists or geneticists to try and find the answers?

More About *Acacia boormanii*

by Bruce Schroder, Montrose, Vic

Bruce Schroder is a long time Australian Plants Society member with considerable experience in growing Australian plants. He is currently President of the APS Maroondah District Group. He has written about an Acacia boormanii growing in his local area.

The *Acacia boormanii* is a dwarf suckering one I have been watching over the years growing on the road verge near the local primary school. It is no more than about 1200mm high and spread over an area of about 6 x 2 metres with numerous stems/growth points. It has never been any higher and is not pruned or slashed.

A couple of years ago I tried to strike it from cuttings after its flush of new growth but found it almost impossible to find material without newly developing flower buds in the leaf nodes rather than new leaf buds. It seems to develop the next season's flowering points concurrent with the new season's growth. No cuttings struck in my one attempt so the following year I decided to collect seed which was not plentiful, but I finished up with 30-40 seeds which I subsequently soaked in warm water. Most swelled within 24 hours and I sowed them in a tray of seed raising mix, covered with a layer of coarse quartz grit and placed the tray in my unheated green house. Overnight, each and every seed was "surgically" removed from the seed tray by rats. I will collect some more at the end of this season and try again - fortunately the neighbour's chooks have gone and it seems the rats with them! Any advice on striking cuttings would be most welcome.

Can anyone help Bruce with tips on how to strike *Acacia boormanii* from cuttings?

Wattle Day

Each year the **Wattle Day Association** presents the **Golden Wattle Award** in recognition of a person(s) who has brought Gold to Australia through their actions or achievements. The joint winners of the 2018 Award were **Craig Challen** and **Richard Harris**, the underwater rescuers of the young Thai soccer team.

This is the eighth year in which this Award has been made, the first winner in 2011 having been the cyclist Cadel Evans.

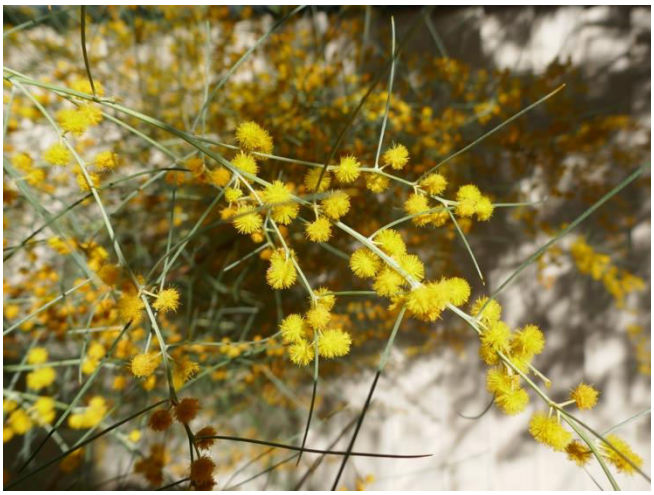
Rare Wattle Outing to Tara and Kogan

Leader: Len Hubbard

Date: Wattle Day 1st September 2018

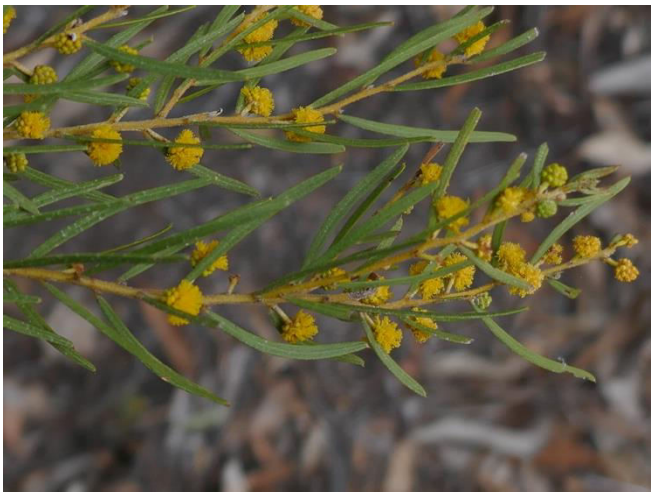
A combined gathering of Chinchilla Field Nats Club and Native Plants Queensland Group arrived at Kogan on the first day of spring. President Kath, Pam, Ruth, Denver, Greg and Karen from Chinchilla joined with NPQ Jan Glazebrook, Dennis Cox, Logan, Chris and Ross Reddick, Capalaba, Jim and Fran Standish, Woodenbong, Laylee and Steve Purchase, Toowoomba, Alan Gibb, Wangaratta, Native Plants Victoria, Len and Joan Hubbard Chinchilla, complete the group.

Our first stop to the south was Wambo Creek. *A. crassa* subsp *crassa*, *A. leiocalyx* subsp *leiocalyx*, *A. debilis*, *A. spectabilis* and *A. conferta* growing there were explained and discussed. Turning into Carstons Lane we admire *A. hakeoides*, *A. lineata*, and *A. ixiophylla* all flowering. Further along we find the rare long phyllode variant of *A. rigens*, *A. chinchillensis*, and over the table drain a large area of the purple *Homoranthus decumbens*. On the corner with Goranba Lane *A. neriifolia* was also in flower. A small population of *A. chinchillensis* growing in the table drain has recently had a rendezvous with the Council slasher with one remaining plant surviving. Round the corner on the Dalby-Tara Highway a few *A. burrowii* were found flowering. Closer to Tara, *A. everestii*, and *A. decora* made a colourful contribution to the countryside.



Acacia rigens **Photo Len Hubbard**

Lunch was enjoyed in the new camel park at Tara. Plenty of green couch in the middle of a drought. A few kilometres north of Tara towards Chinchilla we come to another very rare wattle, *A. lauta*, also flowering. L Pedley says "in the past it has been referred to *A. lineata* but it differs in the size and nervature of the phyllodes. It is an extremely attractive shrub which deserves to be more widely cultivated". Just round the corner a small clump of *Kunzea opposita* drew everybody's attention with its colourful pink flower display. Amongst a great floral display of *A. caroleae* a large prostrate plant in full flower was found. As the branches left the plant they folded down towards the ground and followed it to their ends. The phyllodes all come out from the stems vertically. Many cuttings were taken, so time will tell as we monitor its rare stature. Our next stop revealed a few plants (rare for this area) of *Dodonaea macrossanii*, and further along a small patch of *Philotheca sporadicus*, beside the road.



Acacia lauta **Photo Len Hubbard**

Farewells and thank yous especially to Denver for his great knowledge of botany, and his contribution to the day, were exchanged at the Crossroads, as a few went their separate ways. The convoy now travelled west to a gravel pit which contained a few plants of our rarest wattle *A. dietrichiana*. Len found this wattle over 12 months ago when it was flowering, waited and collected the seeds and forwarded them to Victoria Tanner at the Acacia seed bank in Canberra. Back to the Crossroads and to Grays gully, a very small stand of *A. microsperma* exists. Well out of its distribution area, has only flowered over the years and has never set seeds. Everyone commented on the magnificent display of most wattles in our Shire considering the dry times we are experiencing. Thanks to everybody for your support and contribution.

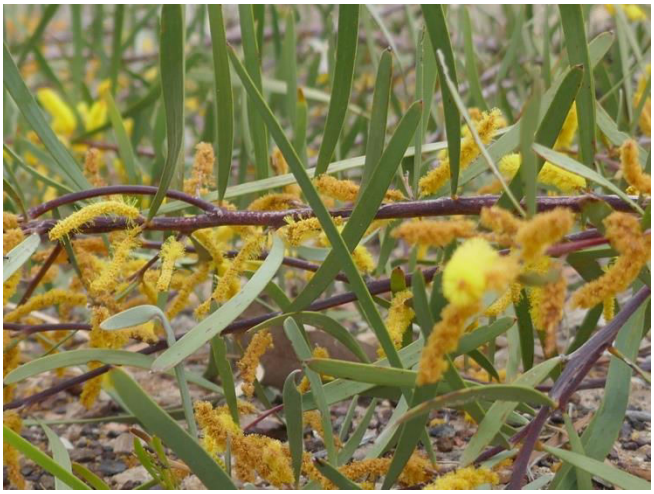
Rare Wattle Outing to Nudley-Ballon Forestry

Leader: Len Hubbard

Date: 2nd September 2018

A smaller convey on our second day, Jan, Dennis, Chris, Ross, Jim, Fran, Greg, Alan, Joan, and Len, left the Chinchilla TIC and headed out to Nudley Forestry. Travelling along the southern boundary we stop on a gravel ridge and admire a large area of prostrate *A. amblygona, A. caroleae* and *A. bancroftorium*. First two flowering. Back

on the main track we come across a lone specimen of *A. brownei*, budded. In previous years 50/60 plants were recorded in this area. A recent recce of the area found only 3 plants. Fire through the area may be the answer. Next stop was the Nudley Fire Tower area. *A. leichhardtii* dominates the area with specimens to 4 metres. Sterile, no flowers or pods. We turn up beside Girder Gully arriving at the Nudley caves. A few *A. crassa* subsp. *crassa* in full flower grow round the ridge. *A. spectabilis* looked a treat growing in the drainage lines as we exit the Nudley Forestry. A dusty, corrugated road connects us with Ballon Forestry to the north west. A change of soil running up to a sandstone ridge reveals an alley of colour. *A. crassa* subsp *crassa* to 10 metres, with its long deep golden tail flowers dominate this area along with flowering *G. longistyla*. *A. neriifolia* contributes with its many yellow ball flowers. Many other plants including hoveas, boronias, acacias, (*conferta* and *muelleriana*), not flowering grow here.



Acacia caroleae **Photo Len Hubbard**

After lunch at the Ballon Educational Centre we travel up the road past the remains of Simons Sawmill, and turn left across Durah Creek. Travelling up a rocky ridge we come to a very large area of *A. handonis*, flowering. With 1st gear, 4x4, low range we negotiate a very sharp gully and crawl our way up this rocky incline and finally reach the top. We cross Ballon Creek, turn north and beside a moist gully find a flowering specimen of *A. buxifolia* subsp *pubiflora*. On closer inspection, we view the hairy peduncle which identifies this subsp. Turning west, two *A. leiocalyx* subsp *leiocalyx* trees caught our attention, flowering with their long lemon tail flowers, much later than normal. Arriving at Turkey Mountain, many *A. striatifolia* were in flower with their golden tails. On top of the mountain many locations were pointed out. On descending we check out *A. penninervis* subsp *penninervis*, not flowering. On Dogleg road, *A. caroleae* in full flower formed an avenue of gold for some considerable distance. At the fiveways we turn west to another large area of prostrate *A. amblygona*, flowering. Down to Lepto Lane, on top of a high ridge we stop and point out our latest find after 30 years of observation. *M. groveana* was first found many years ago further up this ridge at a location called the "mother's day patch". Fires, and thick regrowth consumed the area, making access impossible. Time has allowed this species to find its way out to Lepto Lane. Further west we stop at a possible prostrate *A. burrowii*. Len found this plant 3 years ago, flowers every year, but never sets seeds, and is below 30cm in height. Cuttings taken for propagation. Once again members were impressed with the many plants in flower considering the very dry time we are experiencing. Thanks again to everybody for your support and contribution to the weekend.

Books

Wattles of the Mount Alexander Region By Bernard Slattery, Ern Perkins and Bronwyn Silver Published by the Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests (Mt Alexander Region) 2018, RRP $10

This book deals with wattles occurring in the Mount Alexander Region of central Victoria. In total, 20 species are covered in the book, being 3 wattles with true leaves, 13 wattles with phyllodes, 2 wattles that are rare in the region and 2 weed species.

For each species, a description of the plant is provided, as well as information on the derivation of its name, details of similar species and information on where to see them. Each species is illustrated with colour photographs and black and white line drawings.

The publication of the book pays tribute to the work of the late Ern Perkins (1934-2016), and notes that he is a continuing inspiration. Along with his wife Lesley and other field naturalists, Ern strove to discover and document the diverse flora of Castlemaine and surrounds over a period of more than 40 years. The information provided in the book is based on the notes that Ern made about wattles in the district over this period.

Knowing, Growing Acacia for Food and Conservation Written and published by Neville Bonney 2018

Neville Bonney comments in this book that he has more than 50 years experience working with and growing Acacias, and this is reflected in the various topics covered and information provided. The book includes sections on plant identification, seed collection, propagation, farm forestry, dryland farming, Aboriginal nation uses and history and the use as a food source.

It covers Acacias growing in more temperate, arid, semi-arid and open woodland climates, not tropical or rain forests.

A significant part of the book relates to Acacias as a food source, with information provided on a number of individual species, how to prepare seed for consumption, some notes on nutritional value and even some recipes utilising wattle seed.

But the book also includes information on a wider range of topics. For example, there is a discussion of the recent name change issue, a table of Aboriginal language names for selected species, a section on Acacias that have become weedy outside of their natural range, and even some profiles of some individuals recognised as having a passion for the promotion of Acacias.

One thing that particularly impressed me is the quality of the many colour photographs included in the book.

ANPSA Study Group Newsletters

Previous Acacia Study Group Newsletters are available on the ANPSA website (http://anpsa.org.au/study.html), except for six missing newsletters issued between June 1961 and February 1963. If you are able to assist in finding any of these newsletters that would be greatly appreciated (note, we already have put considerable effort, unsuccessfully, into finding these newsletters).

Over the last few years, **Sheryl Backhouse** has done an amazing job in tracking down and scanning old newsletters from a lot of the Study Groups, in fact she is now over the 1000 mark. These are now all on the ANPSA website. But there are still some missing newsletters. Other than the Acacia Study Group missing newsletters, Sheryl is still searching for the following:

Banksia - Pre Spring 2002 & 21 onwards; Report 3 page 9, 15, 19-26 missing.
Beaufortia and Allied Genera – 12, 14, 15+
Brachychiton and Allied Genera – 15, 16, 39+
Callistemon – 1, 2, post Aug 82 and pre March 83
Calothamnus and Allied Genera – 1, 2, 24+
Calytrix – 1-3, 18+
Container Plants – 1-11, 15, 22, 34+
Dodonaea – 33+
Eremophila – 107
Eucalypts – 1, 3, 4, 16+ in 1st series
Fern – 1-4, 34, 35
Indigenous Palm – 11+
Orchids – 32, 70, 75+
Palm and Cycad – 75, 102+
Prostanthera and Westringia – 1-18, 20, 28+
Regeneration – Vol 2/1, Vol 3/4+
Stylidium – 13+
Verticordia – 1-9, 17, 38, 49+
Wildlife and Native Plants (formerly Birds and Native Plants) – 22, 68+

If you can help with any of these newsletters, please contact Sheryl (sheryl.backhouse@bigpond.com).

Seed Bank

A list of species in our Seed Bank appeared in our Study Group Newsletter No. 139 (December 2017).

Although we do purchase some seed from commercial sources, we also rely upon donations of seed. If you are able to help with any seed donations they would be very welcome (we would ask you to post any donations to Bill Aitchison, who will forward them on to Victoria).

The procedure for requesting seed from the Seed Bank is as follows. Study Group members are entitled to lodge up to 3 orders per member per year, with 10 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of $4 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The $4 may be paid in stamps or by direct credit to our Group's bank account. Requests for seed may be lodged in either of the following ways:

1. By email to acaciastudygroup@gmail.com (emails to this address go directly to both Victoria and Bill Aitchison). If you make a request by email, you will also need to make the necessary payment by one of the above methods. If you are paying by stamps, these should be mailed to Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111
2. By mail (enclosing stamps if required). These requests should be posted to Bill Aitchison. Bill will then advise Victoria of the request.

We would like to maintain some data on your results in propagating seed from the Seed Bank. We would therefore ask if you could provide a report on your results, recording information on species, number of seeds sown, number germinated and days after sowing

Study Group Membership

Acacia Study Group membership for 2018/19 is as follows:
$7 (newsletter sent by email)
$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia)
$20 (hardcopy of newsletter posted overseas)

Subscriptions may be sent to:
Bill Aitchison,
13 Conos Court, Donvale, Victoria 3111

Subscriptions may also be paid directly to our Account at the Bendigo Bank. Account details are:
Account Name: ASGAP Acacia Study Group
BSB: 633-000
Account Number: 130786973

If you pay directly to the Bank Account, please advise us by email (acaciastudygroup@gmail.com).