ANPSA
Correa Study Group

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Correa reflexa—Mt Richmond White

Newsletter No 60 December, 2019

LEADERS' COMMENTS

Hello to all you correa lovers.

The end of the year is nigh upon us. Looking back, it has been a good year for us in Victoria but not for everyone else.

Rainfall has been just right for us, with 674mm by the end of November. Regarding correas, many did well, some have perished, while more have been planted out. This last week we have spread a 16m3 load of mulch over much of the garden, so now all looks set for the family visits over Christmas.

There are a few outcomes out of all of this. Firstly, a gardening friend confirmed our belief that one does not replace an aging, dying correa with a new correa plant in the same position; which correa does one plant from those potted correas eagerly awaiting a spot in a crowded garden? We have more desirable correas coming on than there are positions to plant them. What is the answer? In a word, we are now required to exercise choices.

In our collection of correas we have special plants that reflect our past years of involvement with correas. Some plants are associated with special correa people, eg. Alby Lindner and Davids Red, our names to reflect their sourcing. On the other hand, Red Empress now registered by the ACRA, is a brilliant plant, (formerly known as Neil's Best). Others came as an outcome of a Correa Crawl, e.g. Mt Richmond White. Then there is Fat Fred, an old friend indeed. Special plants such as these to us must be covered while we have correas growing in our garden.

On the market these days there are numbers of deliberately bred hybrids, some highly attractive and we can admire these plants.. We, however, have a stronger attraction to the natural variations, even if they may at times be less stunning, because they reflect the natural world from where they were sourced. That is part of our approach to selecting correas because we cannot have them all. Some must come before others.

As is standard for us, we propagate more plants, including correas, than we can use ourselves. If we require one plant, we still prepare 4-5 cuttings, with any excesses being shared elsewhere. We were once told that the best way to preserve a plant is to share copies with dedicated gardening friends. This we have found to be very true.

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Leaders' Comments cont.

We enjoy and value time spent with our correa comrades. As is usual, we would welcome you special people to drop in for a chat, a garden stroll, a cuppa and maybe a few bits and pieces to take home. May next year be even better than this year and you and your gardens flourish.

Dot & Bob

Maintaining a collection in times of severe drought
Maria Hitchcock OAM
National Correa Collection
Armidale NSW

This mother of all droughts started in the spring of 2013. I had offered to organise the annual state-wide get-together of the Australian Plants Society in NSW. My small committee agreed that the second week in October would be a perfect time to showcase our gardens. That year summer arrived in the second week of September with high temperatures and hot dry winds. The garden bloomed prematurely and then promptly dropped all its flowers so that by October there was hardly a flower to be seen. The dry spring turned into a dry summer. Waterholes in the district that had never dried up were now bare earth.

This was New England – one of the most reliable areas in the country for rainfall. Most rain occurs in the warmer months with thunderstorms and rain depressions being the norm. The average is around 800mm per year with the occasional drought usually only lasting a couple of years. People in Armidale were convinced the town would never run out of water – Malpas Dam was designed for a population of 60,000 plus. The current population of Armidale is around 23,000. Armidale is currently on level 5 water restrictions. People are in shock! Gardens all over the district are dying. The bush is dying. The Tablelands are burning.

We are in uncharted territory and the future is not looking very bright. The past six years have been difficult with occasional wet periods followed by long dry stretches. This has been coupled by a gradual increase in summer temperatures and high evaporation rates. When I first moved to Armidale in early 1974, summer came on a Tuesday. It was unusual to get summer days over 28C. We rarely had temperatures of 30C – that has now changed. Last summer we had weeks over 30C with the highest being 37C. Armidale is almost 1000m above sea level and I live at 1100m. The Tablelands are known as cool climate country.

I hold the National Correa Collection with almost all the species and hundreds of cultivars. Correas are generally thought to be drought hardy plants suited to temperate zones with low humidity. Up until now I rarely had to water my well-mulched garden. We have rainwater tanks and a reliable bore which is used for the nursery and garden. This year we have had to run bore water through the house for months. I move sprinklers around the garden to ensure each area gets a good deep watering once a fortnight but that has not been enough. One by one my new plantings from two years ago have died and I am now starting to lose well established plants like *Correa alba*. I have not been able to do any planting since 2017. It's been a disaster.

Fortunately I am able to strike cuttings with a good success rate. The collection is now being held in pots waiting for the drought to break. This year I've changed from a 140mm pot to a Space saver 100mm size. It's been a good move as I can now stack 20 pots to a crate as opposed to 12. With such a sizeable collection space is important. For large species which outgrow that size pot I go to my Nursery Stock pot which is much larger and similar to an olive pot. It is a tall square pot 145mm x 220mm deep. Most Correas don't mind the alkalinity of my bore water so that's not a problem. Those that struggle get a dose of liquid sulphur or a fertiliser suited to hard water conditions. It's important to keep good records of any plant deaths to ensure there are replacement plants. It's always frustrating when something dies and there is no way of getting another. I do put a call out through the Correa Study Group newsletters for cutting material but this can be a bit hit and miss.

Correa glabra (hybrid) -Ivory Beacon

Correa pulchella—Wreck of the Ethel

Maintaining a collection in times of severe drought (cont)

The drought has unearthed a few surprising results. *Correa eburnea* which is very rare and endangered in the wild is growing strongly without any ill effects. A grafted *C. reflexa* 'Longfellow' (grafted onto *C. glabra var turnbullii)* is also surviving. The very large C. 'Vanilla Ice' (*alba x calycina*) is thriving. I was given this plant as a cutting from a garden seedling by the late Tim Boehm (Vic) many years ago. It is now 5m across by 1.5m high. We prune it regularly and it is very dense. Many of my *C. glabra* seedlings are surviving as are the *C. glabra* 'Coliban River' and the *glabra* hybrid 'Ivory Beacon'.

Correa eburnea - Deep Creek

Correa alba X Vanilla Ice

Correa backhouseana from the west coast of Tasmania is a survivor but the Tasmanian *C. lawrenceana var lawrenceana* has died. Sad! It was a beautiful shrub. The other *C. lawrenceana* forms are hanging on but looking a bit wilted as is the rare *C. calycina*. The hardy *C. decumbens* hybrids such as 'Karwarra' are struggling and C. 'Dusky Bells' is looking terrible. The *pulchellas* seem to be enjoying the drier and warmer conditions and C. 'Little Cate' is still growing and flowering well.

So what can we learn? We know that climate change (I prefer to call it climate disruption) will lead to a re-think on how we garden. People in fire-prone areas have to mulch with gravel depleting the soil of nutrient renewal that occurs with organic mulches. I predict we will see many more deep-rooted trees rather than shrubs and hedges. There will always be a place for annuals and perennials during good seasons but these may become less popular. Landscapers in my area tell me that the market for indoor plants is booming. The problem is the sheer unpredictability of the weather across the whole continent. It will change the way we farm and possibly eat, as products no longer appear on the shelves.

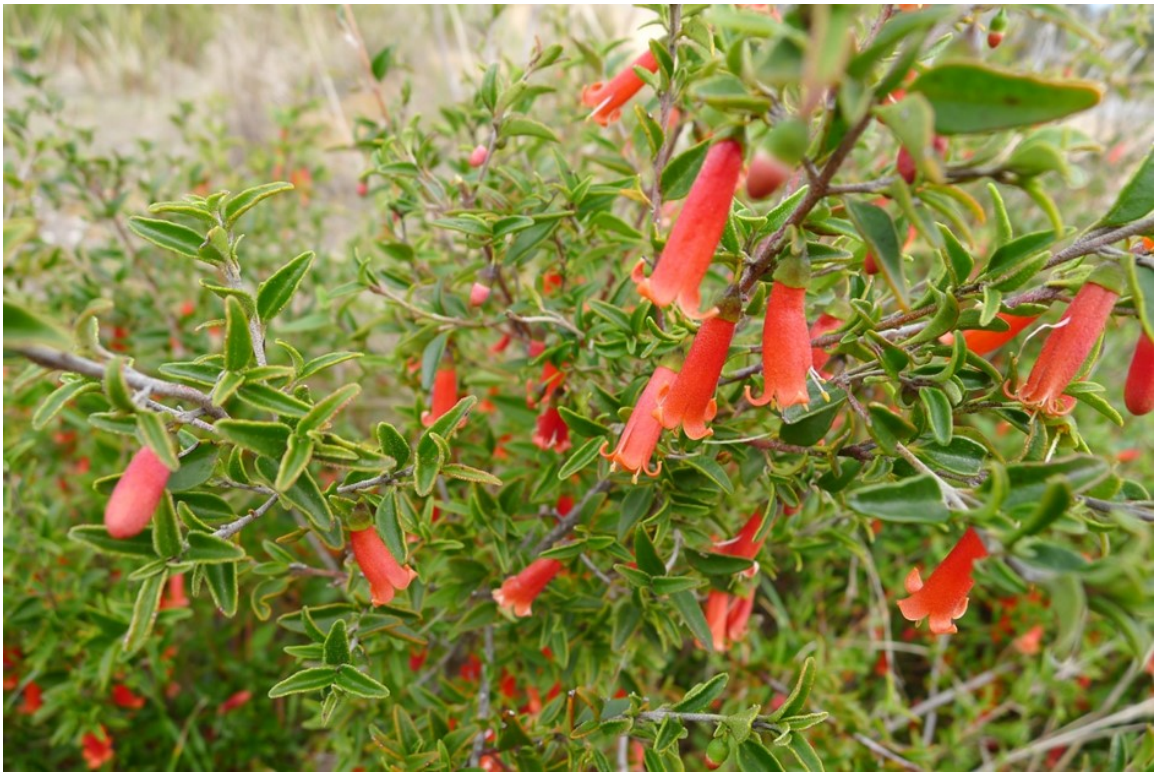
Correa pulchella X Little Cate

Correa glabra - Coliban River

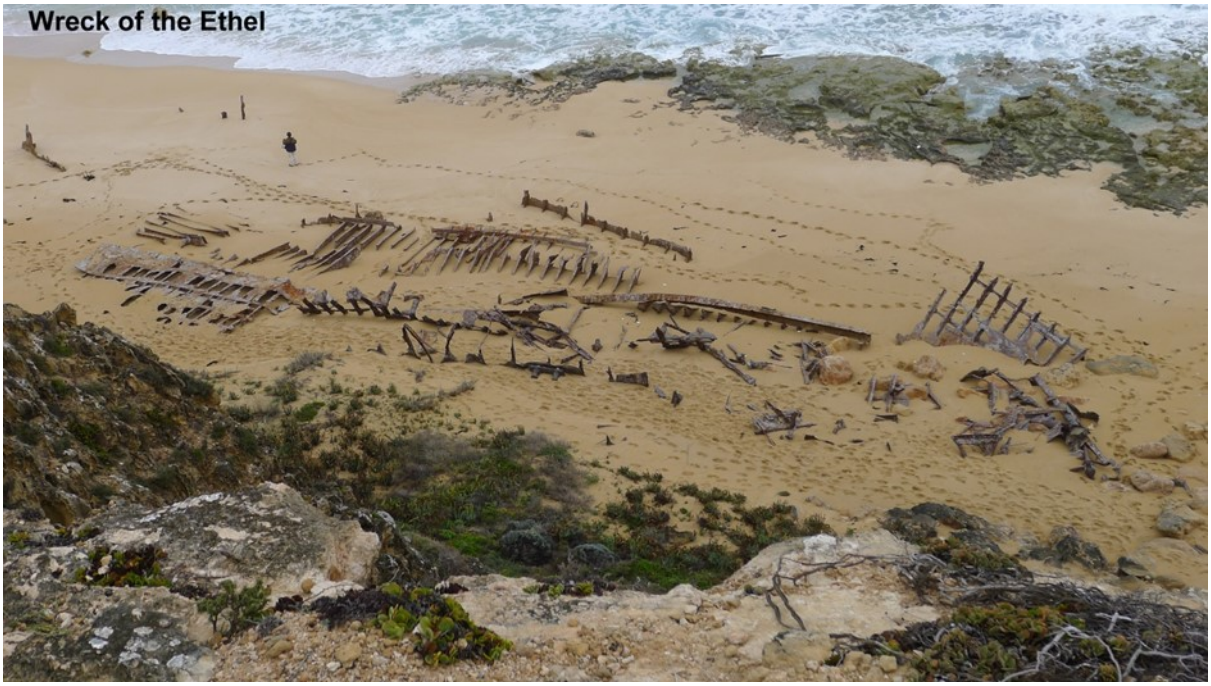
As for Correas, many are shallow-rooted shrubs. At one time they were ideal plants for amenity plantings such as around shopping centres, carparks, etc. Their popularity may wane if droughts, such as what we are currently experiencing in New England and the North west of NSW, become more frequent. The range of habitats, that Correas can be successfully grown in, may also shrink. So let us enjoy the wide range of cultivars, flower colours and forms that currently exist. They may not be around in years to come.

In Search of Correa pulchella - Barb Pye

In July 2015 David and I went to South Australia in search of Correa pulchella on the Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas. The Correa pulchellas were all very similar throughout the region with only minor differences in leaf shape and size and slight colour variation. This photo is from the Streaky Bay area on the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula. Note the relatively narrow leaves. These specimens were amongst the tallest that we found, but were still under half a metre in height.



Furthest away from Streaky Bay we went to Innes National Park on the southerly tip of the Yorke Peninsula. Here the plants were more prostrate with wider leaves. They were growing in limestone. This area is near the Wreck of the Ethel which used to be used to describe the correas from this region until other names like Mallee Fire took over. Everywhere we went the pulchellas were growing in very well drained areas.



In Search of Correa pulchella (cont)

Perhaps the most spectacular specimen we found was on Whalers Way on the south of the Eyre Peninsula. Here the plants were almost prostrate and were growing in sand over limestone.

From our observations most of the size and colour variations attributed to Correa pulchella appear to have arisen on Kangaroo Island.

Editors' Reply
We are very interested in your article Barb. Our experience in visiting the Yorke and Eyre peninsulars was so very different. We found considerable differences in size and colour of the flowers. Likewise differences in size and shape of the foliage in some of the areas we visited. Bob and Dot

Great News for all members.

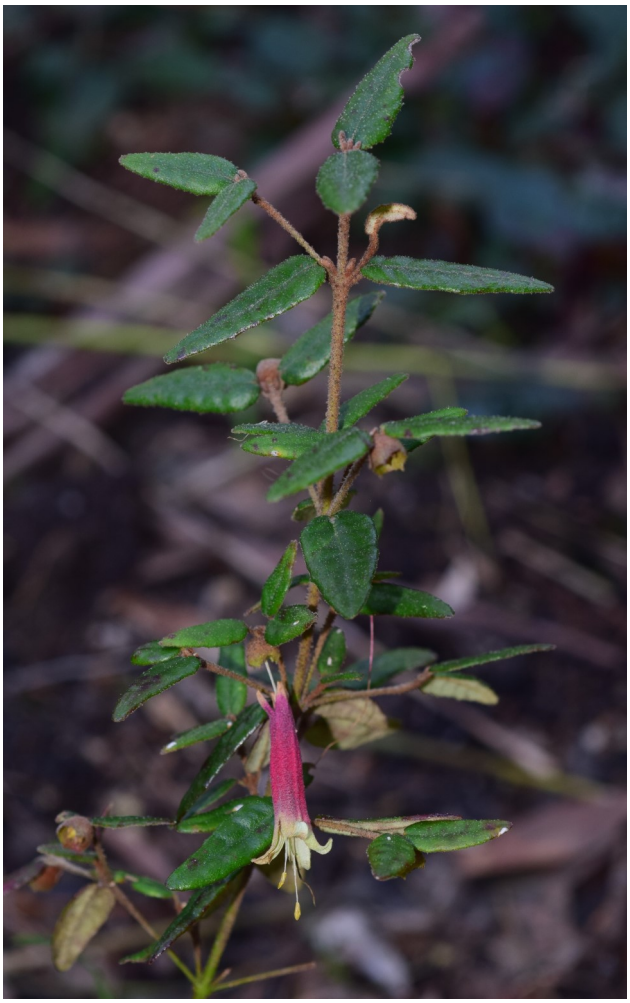
Just advising that due to some dedicated scanning work by Sheryl Backhouse, all Correa Study Group newsletters (issue No.1 onwards) are now available on the Group's website (except from those published in the past 12 months).

We suggest you check up as there's a lot of excellent information in those early issues.

http://anpsa.org.au/correaSG/CoSG-news.html

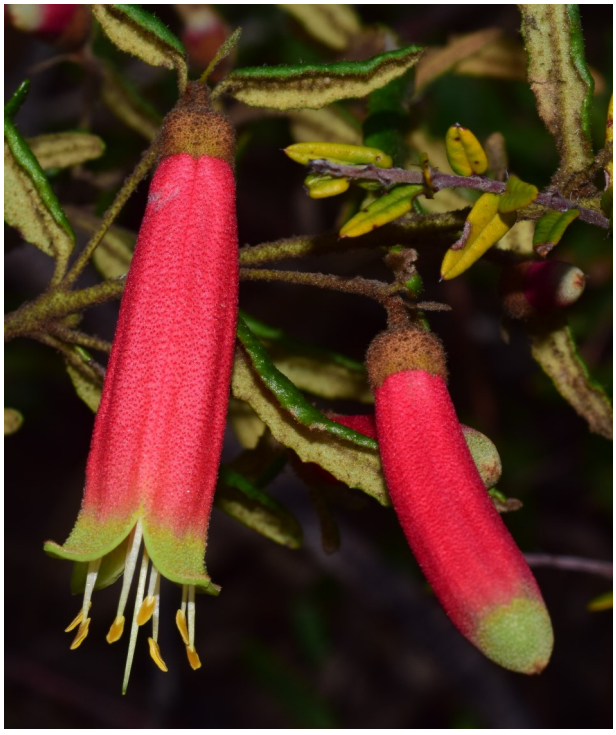
Correa Update – September 2019 – Mike Beamish

After a very dry start to 2019 (125mm to the end of April) I was impatient for the autumn break to get some cuttings and gifts into the ground, before we went overseas in early May. In the end, I had to take a punt and plant out anyway, but luckily the rains did arrive, with 132mm falling in May in our absence. Into the ground went my remaining cuttings of *Correa backhouseana* var. *orbicularis* and *C. reflexa* var. *reflexa* "Wellington Green", as well as gifted plants of Correa 'Winter Bells', Correa 'Dusky Bells', *C. eburnea* and *C reflexa* var. *reflexa* (Anglesea narrow leaf form). Only the Winter Bells had flowers on it when planted in early May.



Correa reflexa var reflexa Anglesea
Mary's Choice

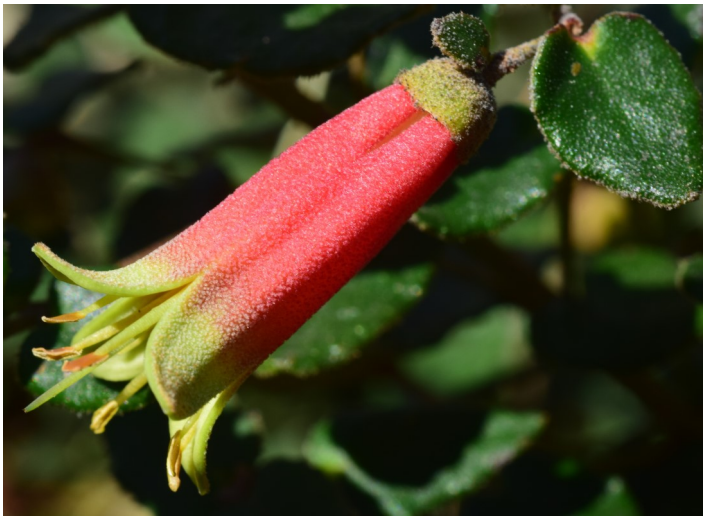
Correa reflexa var reflexa "Buchan"
(Nowa Nowa)



Correa reflexa var reflexa
Traralgon (Right) →

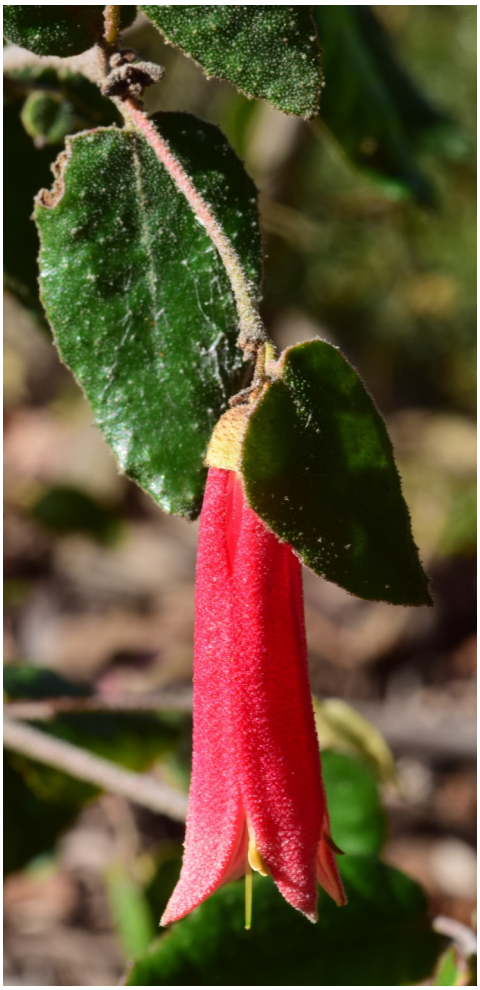
Correa Update – September 2019 – Mike Beamish (Cont)

Once we returned from overseas in late July, there still weren't many flowers on the Correas, so I assumed we had missed the main flush. The Wilsons Promontory form of *C. reflexa* had the best display, with single flowers only on C. 'Winter Bells', *C. pulchella* (orange form), *C. reflexa* var. *reflexa* *'B*uchan' (from Nowa Nowa), *C. glabra* var. *turnbullii* and *C. reflexa* var. *reflexa* "Wellington Green".



Correa reflexa var reflexa - Wilsons Prom

The *C. glabra* var. *glabra* 'Coliban River' that was suffering dieback is now completely dead, but I did take some cuttings from it, without any expectation that they would survive winter and the lack of attention while we were away. I was pleasantly surprised that they seem to have coped ok and I will need to pot them up shortly. All the other Correas in the garden are pretty much as they were in my last report.

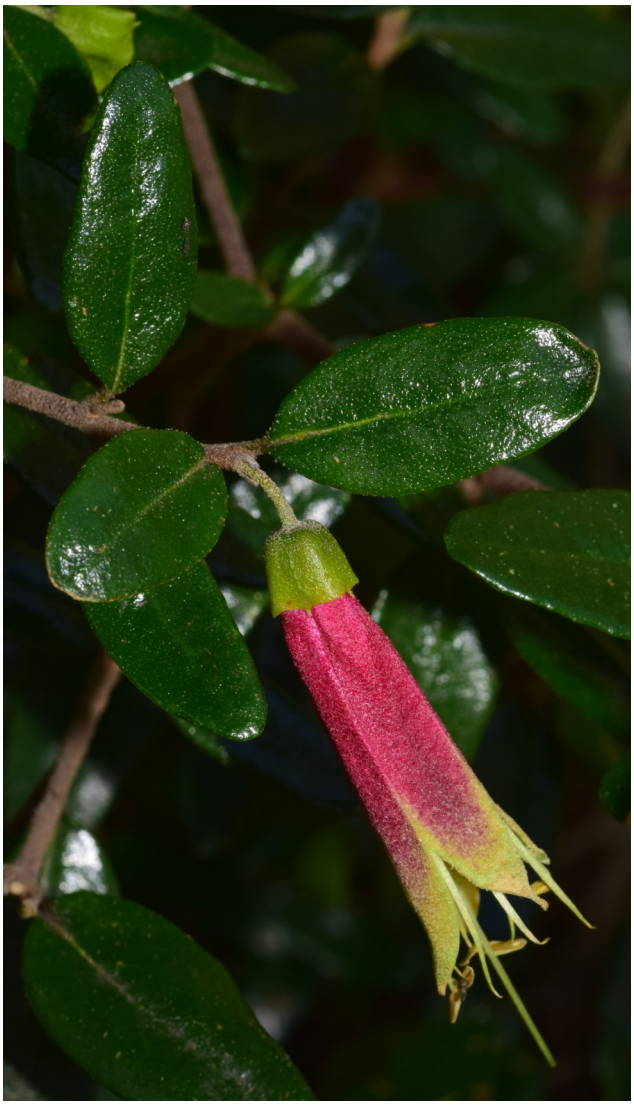


Correa Winter Bells

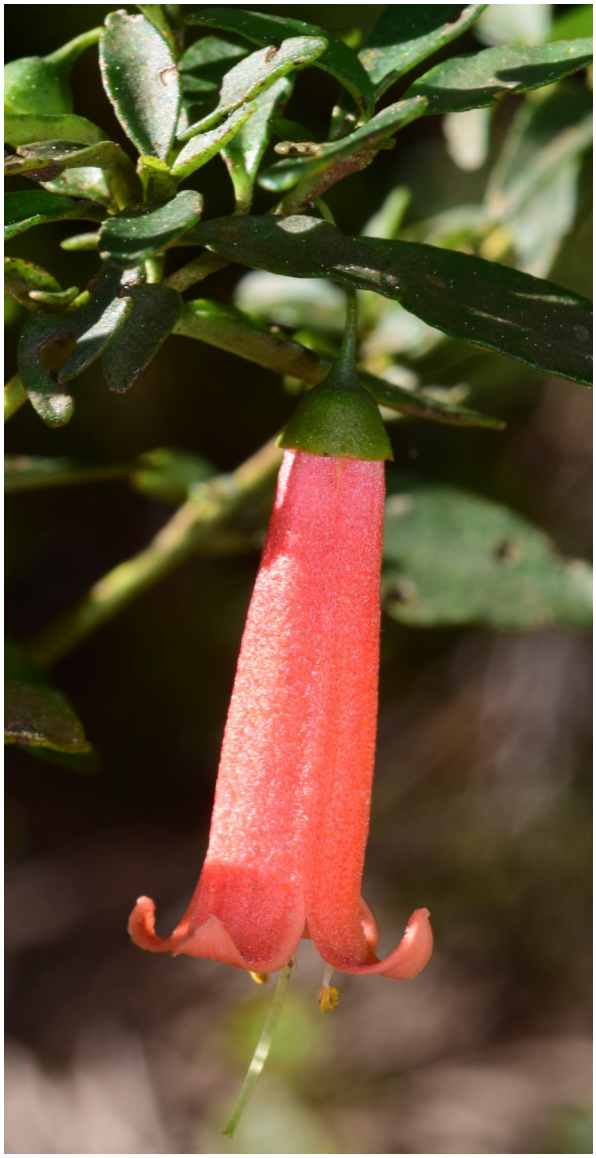
Correa reflexa var reflexa - Wellington Green

Correa Update – September 2019 – Mike Beamish (Cont)

After a very wet and cold August (207mm, apparently a record for the district), the lovely and warm first weekend of September enticed us out and about. A trip down to the Wonthaggi Heathlands proved to be a bit too early for their rare orchids, but *Correa alba* was plentiful along the coastal dunes. A visit to the Traralgon South Flora and Fauna Reserve found most of the local wattles, heaths and Grevilleas in full flower, with the occasional bright red flower of the local *C. reflexa* lighting up the under-growth.



Correa glabra var turnbullii



Correa pulchella

Correa alba

Vale Howard Black

It is with sadness that we let our members know of the passing of Howard Black on the 1st September 2019. Howard was one of the early members of the Native Plant Society. He had been in ill health for a number of years which had stopped him from being an active member of our group.
Howard loved his garden and had a real passion for native plants. Although ill health prevented him from attending correa functions he was still a very interested member of our group.

Correa Ainslie which is registered with the ACRA was developed in Howard's former garden in Sutherland near Sydney. The Sutherland garden was full of natives and Howard had a special love for correas. Howard named the correa after one of his daughters. It is a hybrid believed to be C. decumbens and C. Dusky Bells.

Photo provided by Maria Hitchcock

In the Wild – Eyre Peninsula

Mike & Cathy Beamish

For 6 weeks from late September, October and early November 2019, Cathy and I toured around the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia, keeping an eye out for any Aussie natives that might be putting on a display. Correas are obviously part of this list, but given the time of year, we weren't expecting to find very many flowers and this expectation turned out to be accurate. Plenty of plants were observed, such as *Correa reflexa* var. *scabridula* around the Rocklands Reservoir area on the western side of the Grampians on the way over, and thousands of *Correa pulchella* plants down the western coast of the Peninsula, but we didn't see our first Correa flower until we reached Coffin Bay NP on the south-western tip of the Peninsula in late October. Even then there were only a couple here and there.

Our most interesting find though, was of perhaps 2 dozen plants on a headland covering about 200 square metres at Speed's Point, not far south of Streaky Bay, near Yanerbie. Again, no flowers, but the leaves look very much like Correas, particularly the *Correa* 'Eucla Gold' that I used to have in my garden and they have that fruity chewing gum scent when crushed. The photo shows a plant in the foreground, with Cathy standing on the 'mainland' in the distance. Between us is a low, rocky neck that would that would discourage, but not prevent, browsers such as kangaroos, rabbits, goats and sheep from accessing the plants, and there is no cover or protection for such animals on the headland.

To the right (southwest) is the Great Australian Bight, to the left (northeast) is an un-named bay. No similar plants were found nearby on the 'mainland', nor anywhere else along the coast that we visited. The plants are all growing on limestone and were all ground-hugging, as were all the neighbours, no doubt due to the effects of salt and wind exposure.

I suspect that these plants are *Correa backhouseana* var. *coriacea*, which is listed on the Electronic Flora of SA website as *Correa reflexa* var. *coriacea* and has no listed collections of the species anywhere near Speed's Point. The Atlas of Living Australia was better, at least it was listed as *C. backhouseana* and there were collection records relatively nearby. Even the collection locations listed in the Correa Book, Yardea (in the Gawler Ranges, northern Eyre Peninsula), Greenly Island (off Coffin Bay NP, southern Eyre Peninsula) and Sandy Creek Conservation Park (near Gawler, northeast of Adelaide) are all a long way away from Speed's Point.

So I wonder what the future holds for these plants? Eventually of course, they will be washed into the southern ocean as the headland they are on continues to erode in the teeth of the south-westerly winds. But in the meantime, I hope that they can reproduce and that there are other populations out there and they can all withstand grazing pressures, the effects of climate change and anything else that comes their way. Should I have illegally collected some samples? Or would this have contributed to the risks of disturbance that the plants are already subjected to?

Correa lawrenceana var genoensis - Bob O'Neill

This species has a restricted distribution along the banks of the Genoa River which straddles the Victorian, New South Wales border. It was first discovered by Ferdinand van Mueller in 1860, achieving its variety status in 1998. The plant grows to approximately 2m, producing yellowish green flowers that occur singly on short stalks.

Being somewhat of a collector, I had been seeking this plant for years without success. Last year I was fortunate enough to purchase 2 plants at a Cranbourne Botanical Gardens Plant Sale. Since then they have both been planted out into our garden.

Interestingly, the 2 plants are responding differently. The more vigorous plant is growing strongly, to the point that I could remove cuttings to forward to Maria Hitchcock, who has had some success in striking them.

Currently this plant stands a sturdy 70cm by 70cm. It is in a well- protected, mulched position with adequate sunshine.

The second plant is more sparse in its growth and smaller in stature. Its position is likewise mulched and has adequate sunshine, so my guess is that there must be a soil variation to cause the growth difference. It is comforting to have the backup of a second plant, as per our correa collection procedure.

Being special plants, they will receive close, ongoing care. They have just received a dose of Seasol and will be hand watered if the conditions require this.

Soon cuttings will be taken. Then in due course they will be made available to other correa collectors. We have a number of Correa l lawrenceana variations, all going well, so I anticipate the Genoensis will likewise grow well in our conditions.

Bob O'Neill.

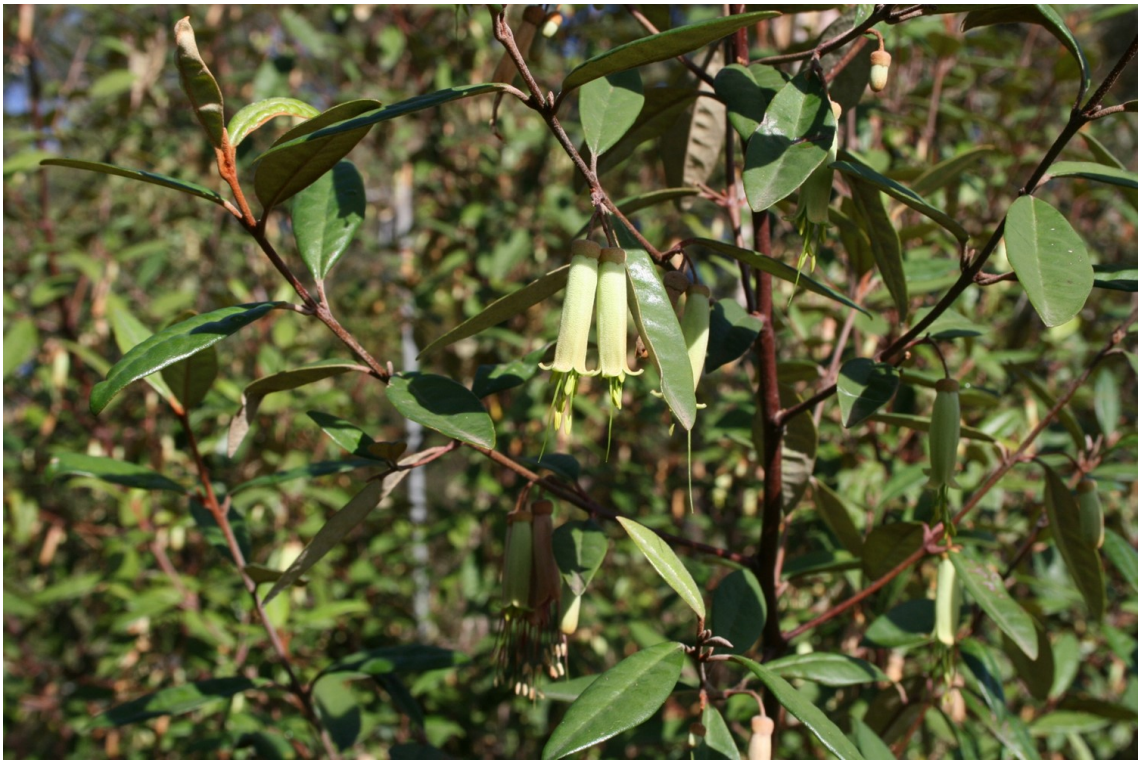
Correa lawrenciana

Correa lawrenciana - Christmas in July

Correa lawrenciana - Grampians

Correa lawrenciana - Red Flowers

Correa lawrenciana



Correa lawrenciana Green Flowers

FUTURE CORREA CRAWL - 2020 or 2021

Some members expressed an interest in a correa crawl to Kangaroo Island in 2020 This, unfortunately did not have sufficient support.

A suggestion has been put forward by David Pye.
David wrote, "We could consider basing a Correa Crawl west of Melbourne, to include the Brisbane Ranges, Enfield, Bullengarook (green forms of Correa reflexa), Werribee Gorge (Correa glabra), and perhaps other areas near Ballarat.

It might be possible to include the Melton Botanic Garden on the Monday morning, prior to the usual lunch and return home.

Do we want it next year or return to the 2 year interval?

Financial Report

Bank Balance 24/6/2019	$1,026.11
Donations to the Study Group	$70.00
Bank Balance 30/11/2019	$1096.11

Membership

Currently we have a membership of 61 individual or couples.