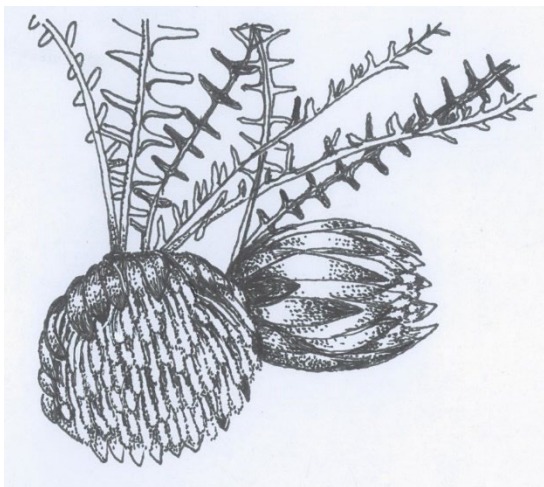


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DRYANDRA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 80



AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETIES (AUSTRALIA)



Dryandra polycephala

Margaret Pieroni

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LEADER

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Welcome to the first newsletter of the new year/decade.

What a terrible year 2020 was. I do hope it was better for you than it was for me – I spent a fair lot of it in hospitals so I was unable to go on any of the field trips that I'd hoped to, even after the travel restrictions within the state were lifted. During the first few months of the year, we were unable to travel outside our Great Southern area without special permission. I had to be flown up to Perth three times for surgery and treatment of complications. The good news is that the cancers have been removed and I'm looking forward to some field trips this year, hoping that there will not be any further hindrances to interstate travel.

I have heard that interstate members who would otherwise have come to WA, were able to spend more time in their gardens.

The Facebook page, Dryandra Lovers Group has been very successful with members Lyn Alcock and Kevin and Kathy Collins from the Banksia Farm posting information and photos regularly. I have chipped in from time to time, trying to help with identifications. A few dryandra photos that have been posted have baffled us and they may well be hybrids. Hybrids within *Dryandra* are quite common but as I have often pointed out not between *Dryandra* and *Banksia*.

I am about to collect some seeds of *Dryandra serra* which occurs naturally on my block. It is one that sheds its seeds annually and the best time to collect them is at the hottest time of the year, in February, just before the capsules open and the seeds fall out. This species no longer exists in the areas where it used to grow on Albany Highway and on Millbrook Rd, north of Albany and the population on my and neighbour's blocks and a nearby reserve has decreased since I have been living here. It is a conservation priority 4 but that means nothing to the Shire workers who have destroyed all of the plants on or near the road verges. I'm hoping to grow some more plants for my place and some of the neighbours and possibly to plant back in the reserve. It tends to live (and flower) fast and die young.

Over the years I have been compiling the index to the Study Group newsletters which was originally drawn up by Tony. Where the article contains a description of the species, where found in the wild and if there is an illustration, is indicated in the entries after the name of the dryandra. I have found the index very useful when writing an article and need to refer to a previous one. If you would like a copy of the index, please let me know.

Margaret Pieroni 4/2/21

Correction

In the last newsletter, in my article *Underground-branching Dryandras*, on page 4 and also quoted in Tony's editorial, I made an unfortunate mistake. In the second paragraph, the second line should read: Most of them form clumps with upright leaves.

Dryandra polycephala

One of the first dryandras that I planted in my garden in Attadale, a suburb of Perth, was *Dryandra polycephala* along with *D. formosa*. The reason being their suitability for flower arrangements.

In the seventies and eighties, my parents were living on the south coast of NSW, at South Durras and had joined the Garden Club at Tuross, further down the coast. My mother had taken up flower arranging and had become so good at it that she often took out most of the prizes at the local show. Once, a woman observing the prize exhibits was heard to mutter "Yes, but she has her stuff sent over from Western Australia".

After I moved to Perth in 1974, with my husband and son, my parents visited often and we would go on botanical excursions. They grew quite a few WA plants in their Durras native garden but dryandras and banksias were not easy to grow there.

Back then, dried flowers were very popular for flower arranging, especially the everlasting daisies, banksias and dryandras but they seem to have declined in popularity. In 2000, over 20,000 stems of *D. polycephala* were harvested for both fresh and dried flowers – all from plantations.

D. polycephala is a medium to large shrub with masses of small, bright yellow flowers. The narrow leaves are dark green and are what I term 'scratchy' rather than prickly. It grows in laterite soil in *Eucalyptus wandoo*, open woodland in a restricted area, between New Norcia and Bindoon, where it often forms dense thickets. Because of it having been heavily exploited for the cut flower trade and the area being substantially reduced through land clearing and road widening, its conservation status is Priority Four and it can no longer be cut from the wild.

On Great Northern Highway, at Udumung Reserve, *D. squarrosa* occurs with *D. polycephala*, both flowering in late winter to early spring in a magnificent display. I have not observed hybrids of these two, although *D. squarrosa* is the 'villain of the piece' when it comes to hybridizing with other dryandras such as *D. subpinnatifida*.

D. hewardiana grows further west and can be seen on

Brand Highway. On Mogumber West Road, which links this road with another north-south road, Midlands Road, occurs *D. echinata*. In one population, about half-way along the road, the plants are all different from one another. I think that *D. echinata* is probably a stable hybrid of *D. polycephala* and *D. hewardiana*. (See newsletter no. 72 P 4).



D. polycephala at Udumung Reserve

Margaret Pieroni

Growing Dryandras in Victoria

I have been planning on writing this article, following on from Tony's original article for far too long! So now is the time to put pen to paper.

We have been growing dryandras on our property in western Victoria for many decades now. Sadly, there are only a handful of species that ever appear in our native plant nurseries over here in the East. However, I have been very fortunate in being a long-term friend of Keith Alcock. Back in the 1980's Keith gave me a load of unnamed species of dryandra with his collection numbers for identification. Many of these are still going in the old garden where I planted them, when we used to live at Deep Lead, to the north of Stawell.

In 1991, I moved to the Black Range, just to the east of the Grampians, where I had deep, free-draining, granite sands and sandy loams to plant in. This has proven to be wonderful for growing dryandras in and regular visits to the bush in the West with Keith and Margaret soon led to a good collection back home in the Black Range. After eradicating rabbits, I first began planting in 1994 and now, in 2021, a good number of those original plants are still alive.

Sadly, we have had two major calamities with our gardens. In 2006, a major bushfire went right through our property, destroying many of the gardens, resulting in the loss of most early plantings. Then, in mid-summer in 2011, a massive tropical cyclonic flood saturated the soils in the heat of summer and this was too much for many of our dryandras and banksias, with most dropping dead within a week. Also killed were many boronias, correas, phebaliums and many, many more. However, a good number have survived and lots more have since been planted. Today, we have the opposite problem, with our annual rainfall dropping from an average of around 600-700 mm to around 300-450 mm per annum. This massive change in climate has also resulted in extremely long and hotter summers, short winters and now, rarely any spring rains. The effects of this are the gradual loss of many of our large old banksias in particular, but now we are losing beautiful, old dryandras.

I think that the oldest surviving dryandra in our garden is a huge specimen of *D. longifolia* subsp. *longifolia*, planted straight into un-prepared ground in 1994. Last summer, it went awfully yellow with the extremely long, dry summer but has pulled through and is now coming into full flower again in its 27th year.



D. longifolia subsp. *longifolia*. Old and shaggy but still going in its 27th year
Neil

It doesn't look it in the photo but it is now over 5 m wide and over 2m tall.

Not far behind is *D. lepidorhiza*, several of which were planted in front of the house in 1995. Two of these are still looking healthy and flower well, (well hidden, also) each year, setting abundant seed.



Large, old *d. lepidorhiza* creating a lovely, dense groundcover.
Neil

Another ancient plant in our gardens is *D. sessilis* var. *sessilis* planted in deep sand in our cut flower plantation down in the valley. It was planted in 1996 and has seeded successfully and now grows in a patch

of around half a dozen beautifully erect, tall plants, much loved by our wattlebirds and other honeyeaters. I regularly dig up young plants from around these to plant elsewhere on the property. It is also a popular plant with our Yellow-tailed Black cockatoos that feast on its seeds.



Entrance to Dryandra Garden with *D. fraseri* var. *fraseri* and var. *ashbyi*, *D. speciosa*, *D. nervosa*, *D. obtusa*, *D. sessilis* var. *sessilis*, *D. longifolia* subsp. *archeos* and subsp. *calcicola*.
Neil

Growing nearby is *D. formosa* – a low form from a coastal headland at Albany. This was planted in a group in 1997, along with other specimens elsewhere in the garden. Sadly, with climate change, all but one are now dead – it's clearly a species that just won't survive without some subsoil moisture.

In 2002, I developed a series of raised terrace gardens on our north-facing hillside. These were made by building up long, curved beds with around 1 metre of free-draining, deep granite sands over sandy loam. In these I planted an extensive range of grevilleas, banksias, dryandras and many other genera. Most thrived, with the majority still prospering today. Unfortunately, the 2011 floods killed many of the dryandras and banksias but those that survived have grown on well and continue to flower well each year. Most notable of these would be: *D. bipinnatifida*, *D. calophylla*, *D. conferta*, *D. drummondii* subsp. *drummondii*, *D. ferruginea* several subspecies, *D. fraseri* var. *ashbyi*, *D. glauca*, *D. idiogenes*, *D. ionthocarpa* subsp. *ionthocarpa*, *D. lepidorhiza*, *D. longifolia* subsp. *archeos*, *D. longifolia* subsp. *calcicola*, *D. nervosa*, *D. obtusa*, *D. speciosa* subsp.

speciosa, *D. quercifolia* and *D. subulata*, most of which have grown steadily, flowered well and many have set seed. Of special mention is our *D. idiogenes* which flowered profusely last winter so we are now hoping that it is setting some seed. We generally have good seed set from most of our dryandras, possibly due to the large and diverse honeyeater populations we have in the garden but also possibly due to the large numbers of Yellow-footed Antechinus, *Antechinus flavipes*, which I have seen feeding on the flowers of some of our plants.



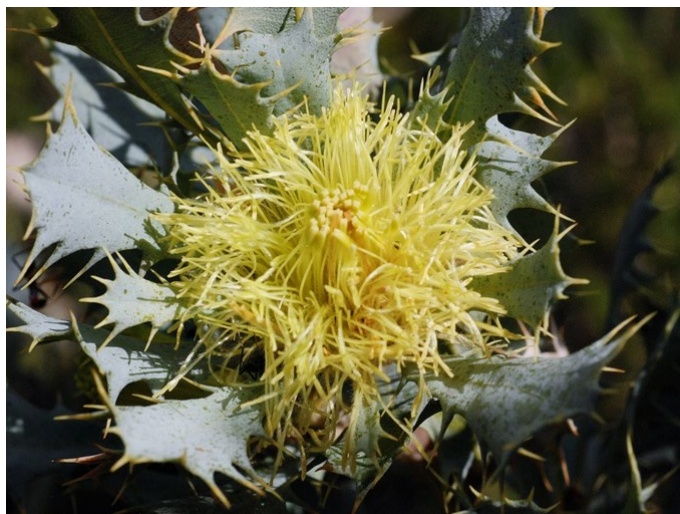
Beautiful old *D. idiogenes* thriving still at 18 years of age
Neil



D. subulata now 17 years old and covered in flower buds.
Neil

Elsewhere in the various gardens on our property, we have numerous other dryandras that are at least 10 to 15 years old. *D. catoglypta* thrives in most gardens as do: *D. armata* var. *armata*, *D. bipinnatifida* subsp.

bipinnatifida, *D. calophylla*, *D. conferta*, *D. drummondii* subsp. *hiemalis*, *D. glauca*, *D. lindleyana*, *D. nivea*, *D. polycephala*, *D. squarrosa* and *D. praemorsa* var. *splendens* which self-seeded profusely following the bushfire that ran through the property in 2006. these have also proven to be very popular with our Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos which come in flocks to feed on the large seed heads during spring.



The spectacular but prickly *D. glauca*

Neil



Beautiful *D. praemorsa* var. *splendens*

Neil

Before Keith departed for the UK, he gave me a large collection of seed of some of the very best *Dryandra* species. These are now up and growing strongly and it will be exciting to be able to plant out the dozens of superb, sadly now extremely elusive dryandras we have travelled far and wide to collect in the West. It seems to me that we in the East absolutely treasure

the rare and unique flora of the West, while the WA Government authorities pay lip service to its protection. They constantly turn their back on the wanton destruction of priceless stands of roadside plant communities, excusing the shire grader drivers by stating that they are only carrying out essential roadside maintenance, Too many times Keith and Margaret have taken us to rare *Dryandra* and other WA treasures, only to find that we have been beaten by the grader. As a result, many of these unique plants will now be more common in gardens in the East than they are in the wild in the West. I will be supplying Cranbourne Botanic Gardens with a collection of *Dryandra*, as Alf Salkin, Tony and Keith have years ago proven that most of them grow there superbly.

As a footnote, can I say just how wonderful Margaret and Tony and Keith before, have been, at the helm of the *Dryandra* Study Group for so long now – we will surely miss you but I'm sure we will not hear the last of you. Margaret and Keith know the locations of just about every rare plant in the West – not just the *Dryandra* and we have been on many wonderful 'Dryandra Crawls' with her, Lyn, Keith and many other great members. Here are a couple of pics to remind us of their wonderful trips into the wilds:



Margaret showing us the 'Proteaceae Patch' she discovered on the South Coast Highway

Neil

Dryandra Lovers Facebook Page



Keith photographing one of his favourites, *D. ferruginea* subsp. *tutanningensis* Neil



Another photo of Neil's garden showing three different subspecies of *D. ferruginea* now almost covering the pathway, with *D. longifolia* subsp. *calcicola* behind. Neil

Around this time last year, discussions took place between Margaret Pieroni, Karlo Taliana, Kevin Collins and myself, regarding the possibility of creating a page dedicated to *Dryandra* versus them being included on Karlo's *Banksia* Lovers page. Despite *Dryandra* being absorbed into *Banksia* some years ago, the discussion group felt it important to differentiate the genera and allow people who are interested mainly in dryandras to have an avenue to post their photos and learn about these fabulous plants.

I agreed to set up the page and on January 29th 2020, the page dedicated to *Dryandra* was commenced. Karlo and Kevin are co-moderators and the page is slowly becoming known.

Karlo and I have regularly advertised the new page on the *Banksia* page and that continually adds to the current total of 246 members. As dryandras are only native to WA, the page will never achieve the popularity of the *Banksia* Lovers Group page, but the comments and posts have been encouraging and many comment on what they have learnt.

Kevin's posts of dryandras on his Mount Barker property give an on-going picture of what is flowering. My plan is to slowly add information about the flowering times and general locations of the species, in the wild. It has been interesting to note that some flower at different times in cultivation compared to in the wild.

There is still the occasional person who posts dryandra photos on the *Banksia* page but Karlo gently suggests that they move these to the *Dryandra* page. There will always be the odd person who challenges the separation of the genera by us but this is easily handled by explaining that anyone has the right to commence a page for whatever they wish, on Facebook and we have chosen to separate *Banksia* and *Dryandra*.

A highlight was when Brian Walters completed the *Dryandra* Study Group web page on the ANPSA site.

This site lists photos of all the *Dryandra* species, subspecies and varieties with the equivalent *Banksia* names and provides an invaluable resource to the public. The link to this is as follows:
<http://anpsa.org.au/dryandraSG/DryandraImages/?fbclid=IwAR3sUoYtEerISk-2DPYExFX4GprkluWGT7oW81J9BKjgfzODVA-vkFfIKc0> and this is shown on the Facebook page for anyone to access.

We look forward to continual growth and development of the Dryandra Lovers Group on Facebook and many more people growing to love dryandras.

This is the link to the Dryandra Lovers Group Facebook page;
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2478665772406567>

Lyn Alcock 29/1/21

News from Tim Darrington in Lyon, France

In early November, last year, Tim sent two photos of dryandras just coming into flower in his greenhouse. He wrote that it was very mild for November (max. 18°C, min. 12°C) and that it was the first time that he had seen *D. longifolia* in flower.

I replied to his email saying that I was mystified by his photo of '*D. longifolia*'. The flowers look more like *D. comosa* but the leaves are wrong. *D. longifolia* has more flowers in the head, rusty hairs on the tips of the limbs, shorter, narrow bracts and the flowers are a brighter yellow.



D. foliosissima - the first flower

Tim

Later, Tim himself was able to identify it as *D. foliosissima* and photos taken of subsequent flowers confirmed this. He commented that he had been surprised that the foliage was less dense than he expected and indeed it is, as can be seen in the photo. Normally, *D. foliosissima* has foliage so dense as to completely hide the flowers so Tim's straggly plant, showing the flowers is not such a bad thing.



D. foliosissima – normal flowers Tim



D. foliosissima Tim

Perhaps aborted buds and the first, small flower head occurred just because the plant was taking time to settle in and adjust to the Northern hemisphere. I guess it would be understandable.

The other photo Tim sent was of *D. quercifolia*.

Later, in November, Tim sent photos of his oldest dryandra, which was in bud for the first time. It is more than 10 years old. At the time of writing the buds are still not open. We think this one is *D. fililoba*.

Margaret Pieroni 31/1/21

These are some of the dryandras to which Neil gives a special mention, in his article.



D. idiogenes

Margaret



D. subulata

Margaret



D. longifolia subsp. *longifolia*

Margaret



D. sessilis var. *sessilis*

Margaret

DRYANDRA STUDY GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1/7/19 – 30/6/20

Cash at bank 30/6/19		\$1,883.82
Income		
Member's subs.		155.00
Donations		67.00
Total		<u>2105.82</u>
Expenses	Stationery and newsletter expenses	<u>100.00</u>
Cash at bank 30.6.19		<u>\$2005.82</u>