



WALLUM

AND COASTAL HEATHLAND STUDY GROUP



A previous excursion at Beerwah Scientific Area No 1

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All photos by Allan Carr unless otherwise indicated

March Meeting and Excursion

For our first excursion this year we will meet at **9.30am Sunday, 15 March at Mill Park in Beerwah (UBD SC Map 106:C19)**. Then we will walk at Beerwah Scientific Area No 1, Mawson Road (UBD SC Map 116:N5).

The Department of Environment and Science oversees a large plantation area between Caboolture and Caloundra, and to the west. Due to the foresight of some far-sighted foresters back in the 1930s and 1940s, sections of native forest were set aside as the pine forests were established. After the Forestry Act of 1959 was passed, there was provision for such sections to become "Scientific Areas", to be used for scientific purposes, other than pine plantations.

Being the first such area officially declared in Queensland after 1959, the Beerwah section was therefore named "Beerwah State Forest Scientific Area No. 1". Since then it has been gazetted as a National Park. It is divided into blocks of varying size, which are burnt at different intervals and times according to season and weather.

The Beerwah Scientific Area is a 'collection' of different plant communities, from Eucalypt forest dominated by *Eucalyptus racemosa* (scribbly gum) to the reed-filled swamps. *Corymbia intermedia* (pink bloodwood) and a few other eucalypt species form a light canopy with the scribbly gums over an understorey of flowering shrubs, such as *Banksia oblongifolia*, *Daviesia umbellulata*, *Persoonia* spp., *Lomatia silaifolia*, *Grevillea leiophylla*, *Boronia rosmarinifolia* and others. These forests open out into wet Wallum areas, with *Boronia falcifolia*, *Bauera capitata*, *Conospermum taxifolium*, *Leptospermum semibaccatum*, *Grevillea humilis* subsp. *lucens*, and many other species. *Allan C.*

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Jeanette Martin

Barbara's Ramble

In March 1957, Arthur Swaby and others who were interested in bringing plants from the bush into their gardens, met and formed a group which would become the "Society for Growing Australian Plants". Sixty-three years later, this Society is still discovering wild plants to add to the beauty of our gardens. There have been many successes, as can be seen in the variety of native plants available. Climate and soils vary widely and we have to learn which plants will settle in while others struggle and die.

Within the Wallum and Coastal Heathland Study Group, one of many within the Society, our members attempt to grow the lovely, small, flowering Wallum species.

Forty years of studying these delightful plants, numerous "rambles" in their damp, peaty, sandy habitat, teaching and learning with other members of this Study Group, sees me no closer to having a mostly Wallum wildflower garden. My first garden – sandy loam at Redcliffe, might have succeeded, but I moved to Geoff's farm at Mt Kobble, near Dayboro. On a north-facing slope with beautiful brown rocky loam I had a lot of success. Even now a number of the "little treasures" have survived close to thirty years. Relatively successful, unlike where I am now in Moore, which lacks the coastal humidity combined with a heavy soil and bore water, few Wallum species will grow. An exception is the natural low-growing purple *Melaleuca thymifolia*, plentiful in the wet Wallum and often growing in company with the red *Melaleuca pachyphylla*. I have at least six in this garden, purchased from the Coolum Community Nursery, thus ensuring I have plants grown from local stock, collected and propagated by members of Coolum and North Shore Coastcare.

So much for my efforts, are other members of our Study Group trying to grow any of these beautiful but tantalizing plants in their gardens? I'm always sorry I can no longer get to outings where we have the chance to discuss our interests.

Members have had mixed successes with a Wallum garden. Back in the late 1990s we had permission to rescue plants at a property at Ningi. A developer was starting to clear a large area of beautiful Wallum, which included the lovely *Boronia saffrolifera*. Among the plant "rescuers" was a Gold Coast Branch and Wallum Study Group member, Bonni Yee who was establishing a mainly Wallum garden at Nerang. (More information about this on page 4)

Then in 2012/ 2013, Richard and Carole Green decided to try growing Wallum plants at their Toorbul weekender. (Toorbul is one of several small fishing and holiday villages along the western shore of Pumicestone Passage opposite Bribie Island.) Richard prepared a garden, brought in some soil, and then planted a mix of Wallum and other local coastal species. Working bees provided a few pleasant gatherings over the years, till the weather turned hot and dry in recent years. Sadly, when their Toorbul property was sold, we lost that Wallum garden experiment. *Barbara H.*



Melaleuca thymifolia



Melaleuca pachyphylla



Boronia saffrolifera

Feature Plant

Elaeocarpus reticulatus

blueberry ash

Pronunciation: el-ee-o-CARP-us re-tic-ewe-LAR-tus

ELAEOCARPACEAE

Derivation: *Elaeocarpus*, from the Greek, *elaia* – the olive tree, *karpos*, – fruit (a reference to the apparent similarity of the fruit of some species to olives); *reticulatus*, from the Latin, *reticulatus* – resembling a net (refers to the leaf venation).

Description: *E. reticulatus* is a tall shrub or small tree to 10 m tall, common in dry rainforests and coastal scrubs. This is the most widespread member of the genus in Australia, as it extends from Fraser Island in Qld south through NSW and Vic to the Bass Strait Islands of Tas. Though this is not strictly a Wallum plant, it is listed as a frequent species in Qld Regional Ecosystem 12.2.9 (Wallum).

Leaves to 130 mm by 30 mm are alternate with margins closely toothed and net-like venation. Old leaves often turn a brilliant red before falling as in the photo on the right.



Elaeocarpus reticulatus
ageing leaf and flowers



Elaeocarpus reticulatus
leaves and drupes

Flowers to 10 mm across are white, bell-shaped and fringed. From September to May these are borne on *racemes to 70 mm amongst the foliage. They have a delicate aniseed perfume and can be pink on some plants.

Fruits are bright blue, oval-shaped *drupes to 8 mm, each with one grooved brown stone containing a seed. These stay on the tree for many months, mainly from May to October and are eaten by various birds, including Crimson Rosellas (*Platycercus elegans*), Figbirds (*Sphecotheres viridis*) and Wonga Pigeons (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*).

The larvae of the Bronze Flat butterfly (*Netrocoryne repanda*) feed on the leaves of this and other species.

*raceme = an unbranched flower stem with flowers on stalks

*drupe = a fruit with a skin over a fleshy layer surrounding a woody stone containing a seed

Have any members grown *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* successfully? If you have, let us know about your experience so we can include your story in a future newsletter.

Allan C.

For Your Diary

9.30am Sunday, 15 March, 2020 - Meet at Mill Park, Beerwah (UBD Sunshine Coast Map 106:C19).

Then a walk at Beerwah Scientific Area No. 1, from Mawson Road (UBD Sunshine Coast Map 116:N5).

Lunch after at Scientific Area or Mill Park, Beerwah

9.30am Sunday, 17 May, 2020 - Meet at Buchanan Park, Progress Road, Burpengary. (UBD Map 68:L10).

Then a walk at Grogan Park, Grogan Road, Morayfield (UBD Map 58:H18).

- Each time you will need to bring morning tea, water, hat, walking shoes, lunch, (sunscreen and/ or insect repellent).

Grevillea humilis subsp. *lucens*
at Beerwah Scientific Area No 1



Bonni Yee's Wallum Garden

Some of you may remember that in June 2000, I took on the challenge of trying to create a Wallum Garden on my 3.4 ha property in Nerang, a dry sclerophyll ridge, backing onto Nerang State Forest. Thanks to Barbara Henderson, I had fallen in love with Wallum plants and could not resist trying to grow them. Barbara still has photos of the first 2 years! Here is the basis of my construction:

1. There is rock everywhere on this property- shelves of it in fact, which is why this ridge exists... but there is also clay strata causing some bog areas, if there is enough rain.
3. We chose an area where the runoff accumulated from the hill above and had an excavator dig a basin.
4. We filled this area with a truckload of Wallum sand (landscapers use it to mix it into their potting mix).
5. Barbara gave me a permit to collect seedlings from a Wallum site near Ningi that was being bulldozed for a Paulownia plantation. Mindful that Wallum plants need specialised microbial symbionts, we took trowels of sandy soil around each seedling, wrapped them in newspaper and kept them wet during transport.
6. These were planted immediately in our artificial Wallum Garden. Gardening in Wallum sand is very easy- like cutting butter, compared to our normal rock/clay soil!!!

Wallum Garden plantings 2000

The first 2 years were wonderful. The ones in bold have survived 20 years and those marked with a star * even set seed and new ones have come up.

Aotus lanigera

Baeckea frutescens*

Baloskion pallens

Baloskion tetraphyllum

Banksia integrifolia*

Boronia falcifolia

Boronia safrolifera

Dillwynia floribunda

Dillwynia retorta

Epacris pulchella

Gahnia sieberiana

Gonocarpus micranthus

Homoranthus virgatus*

Leptospermum

polygalifolium*

Leucopogon pimeleoides

Lobelia membranacea

Melaleuca linariifolia

Melaleuca thymifolia*

Mitrasacme paludosa

Patersonia sericea

Persoonia cornifolia*

Pimelea linifolia

Pomax umbellulata

Selaginella uliginosa

Sowerbaea juncea



November 2000



November 2001

Photos by Barbara Henderson

Plantings 2002-2005 in non-Wallum areas and surviving

Austromyrtus dulcis

Hibbertia scandens

Lygodium microphyllum

Melaleuca thymifolia*

Phebalium woombye

Philothea queenslandica

Pteridium esculentum

2017 Planting - *Acacia hubbardiana* was introduced and is doing very well

Continued on page 5

More on Bonni's Garden

New plantings in 2019

Continued from page 4

Acacia ulicifolia

Aotus lanigera

(two died, one survived)

Billardiera scandens

(one doing well)

Ficinia nodosa

(two survived)

Gompholobium virgatum

(one died, one survived)

Mirbelia rubiifolia

(all three survived)

Oxylobium robustum

(one died, one survived)

Daviesia umbellulata

Patersonia sericea

(all four survived)

Platylobium formosum

(two died, one survived)

Pultenaea myrtooides

(one died, one survived)

Strangea linearis

(two died, one survived)

Zieria exsul

(from Graham McDonald)

Zieria laxifolia

(from Graham McDonald)

The best survivors of all have been *Leptospermum polygalifolium*, *Homoranthus virgatus* and *Baeckea frutescens* which have set seed and new plants come up all the time now!

I think that my Nerang Wallum will never rival the natural habitats, but some things have survived and thrived. I think it has helped to get the Wallum sand/ soil in, but it also it needs consistent water and also renewal with peat and some fertiliser. I notice the Coolum Native Nursery uses slow-release fertiliser in their potting mix and the plants seem to thrive. In the natural environment, the plants are so dense, they provide their own nutrient cycling and protect each other with some shade, moisture and temperature control. I have certainly learned a lot and enjoyed this planting... but we need to preserve the natural Wallum areas.

Bonni Y.

Vale Betty Sykes

Betty passed away on 4 February, at the Sunshine Coast. Not many of our Study Group members met her, but her love of Wallum wildflowers knew no bounds. At age 94, she left a family of 8, and their children. I met her at a Sunshine Coast Environment Fair at Maroochydore, back in the 1980s. She became my "shadow", my first Wallum "disciple", following me around when I was up on the Coast.

Through all her learning, and up to her 90s she would never use a common name, only the botanical names. Thirty-five years of wildflower friendship with a wonderful person who passed on what she learned from me and others. She was farewelled on 13 February at a Requiem Mass at Coolum Beach and a "quiet gathering" the following Saturday at the wildflower patch in Keith Royal Park, Mudjimba which Betty's friends will now care for.

Barbara H.



Bonni's *Acacia hubbardiana*, July 2018



Homoranthus virgatus (Bribie Island)



Bonni's Wallum Garden, July 2018



Keith Royal Park

Betty Sykes' wildflower patch, Keith Royal Park, Mudjimba



Xanthorrhoea fulva

Heathland Street
Bribie Island National Park

There is an opportunity to catch up with Brisbane south side members at the NPQ Autumn Quarterly Gathering - 9.00am Saturday 21 March, Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre. (See details page12, NPQ March Journal)

Wallum Hotspot

A section of Bribie Island National Park at the eastern end of Heathland Street, Banksia Beach is a patch of wallum heathland that was subjected to a wild fire in September 2019.

One result of that was the amazing November flowering of *Xanthorrhoea fulva* that you see in the photo above. As you can see from that photo the site has a huge number of those Xanthorrhoeas but there are many other heathland plants as well as the *Melaleuca quinquenervia* beyond them.

The Caboolture Branch of Native Plants Queensland visited the area in August 2019 and the other photos on this page are from that excursion.

'When you go out there, you don't get away from it all. You get back to it all. You come home to what's important. You come home to yourself.'

Peter Dombrovskis

Tasmanian Wilderness Photographer



Lygodium microphyllum

Heathland Street, Bribie Island NP

This is an area that needs careful management with an appropriate burning regime as fires which are too frequent could cause a loss of species diversity.

On from the end of Heathland Street there is a track that continues all the way to the beach on the eastern side of the island so that would be a good area for the Study Group to explore in the future. *Allan C.*

Reminders

Check the details of our next excursions on page 3.

Our first outing for 2020 is on Sunday 15 March.



Hibbertia scandens

Jeanette Martin

Do any of you have interesting things happening in your gardens to tell us about?



Have you compiled a list of your Wallum plants yet?



Articles and photos are always welcome for others to read and learn about as we try to be the first to successfully grow *Aotus lanigera* or a wallum species equally challenging.



Dodonaea triquetra

Heathland Street, Bribie Island NP



Aotus lanigera

Heathland Street, Bribie Island NP