



Australian Plants Society Armidale & District Group

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Crowea exalata ssp magnifolia
image by Maria Hitchcock

Spring Edition 2020 - 4



Xanthorrhoea flowering at Malacoota after fires

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From the Editor: John Nevin

We have certainly had a year to remember with 2020! Our whole pattern of living has been changed by COVID-19 and the changes will be with us until such time as our scientists come up with a safe and effective vaccine against the infection.

Early on, local travel was restricted, and although we live 10 Kilometres out of town, a tank of petrol lasted our car almost three months. Once local travel was allowed, I relished the opportunity to go bush again and inspect the recovery in progress from the devastating drought and fires.

Many of us confined to home by the quarantining process have rediscovered gardening. Certainly, the nursery trade reflects this, as most outlets have been largely bought out of stock. The border closures have precluded visits to my favourite nurseries up and down the east coast. Consequently, I have concentrated on planting what plants I have, and have weeded, pruned and mulched trying to remedy the year of neglect during the drought.

I would hope to get planting in the Autumn, by which time the borders should be reopened and the nurseries restocked. Climate change now means that Autumn, and not Spring, is the time to plant. Our Summers are too hot now to allow for recent plantings to flourish.

Many of us have become familiar with computer APPs such as ZOOM, and we have put on a few virtual meetings of our own using this technology. Thank God for the NBN! It has also been possible to sit in on the meetings of other

groups with ZOOM and I enjoyed Victoria's Fred Rogers biannual seminar on Prostantheras that I was also able to watch on ZOOM. Maria Hitchcock, Ian Telford and Prof Jeremy Bruhl gave interesting presentations for this. However, internet presentations are no substitute for pressing the flesh and face to face networking.

Our group has mainly confined itself to outside activities such as garden visits, bush walks and working bees. These seem to have been relatively well attended, possibly reflecting the 'cabin fever' with which we have all been affected and the basic human need to socialise.

Shortly, we will be having our Christmas gathering, Annual General Meeting and our Planning meeting. So, put your thinking caps on – what activities would you like to see next year. Don't be afraid to join the committee – you will not be left stranded with all the decision making and planning. We are a group and the essential ideal is to enjoy our plants together.

Grevillea Study Group Day

by Barbara Nevin

On Sunday 11th October, John and I attended the activity of the NSW section of the Grevillea Study Group. Peter Olde has recently taken on the leadership of the NSW section of this group and his first activity was held at the garden of Peter and Margaret's home at "The Oaks" near Camden and Picton.

For those who have not been there, Peter and Margaret's garden is on many acres and is set out to highlight Australian plants, especially Grevilleas. It has been in many open garden displays and for some time was the site for the annual Grevillea Study Group plant sale.

They are running a B&B as well as starting up a flower growing garden as part of the cut flower trade. On arrival at the garden I was astounded by the sheer number of brightly coloured plants. Of course, many of these will not grow in Armidale and those that will were many weeks ahead of us with their flowering – Drool! Drool!

Prior to the meeting commencing, we walked around the cut flower garden full of avenues of Grevilleas, Proteas, Waratahs, Chamaleuciums and many others

that the florists desire. Even in a lovely garden like this it was reassuring to see many plants that had suffered greatly from the severe drought.

The guest speaker for the activity of the day was Ewan Mills, a horticulturalist from the Botanic Garden at Mt Annan. Ewan does much of the propagation for Mt Annan and Peter Olde has formed a close working relationship with him, sending material collected on his field work for grafting or cutting growth. The main lesson for us was grafting techniques.

Ewan prefers cutting grafts. We have had a workshop in Armidale by Phil Trickett a few years ago on this. Essentially, a rootstock is selected that strikes easily from a cutting. A cutting is taken from this plant and the scion grafted onto the cutting and then planted as a grafted cutting. The advantages of this technique are the ready availability of rootstock to graft onto when those plants are grown in the garden; the ability to match cutting size to scion to match the cambium layers and ease of manipulation of the grafting tape (Nescofilm or Parafilm).

For Grevilleas, he finds that *Grevillea semperflorens* is very suitable as a rootstock. The other is *Grevillea 'Carrington Falls' (rivularis X acanthifolia)*. Both of these grow readily in Armidale and would be available for those seeking to graft Grevilleas.

He emphasised the importance of sterility and uses alcohol to sterilise secateurs and a dilute bleach solution for the cuttings. As he does a lot of grafting, he prefers good quality equipment and has secateurs of Japanese origin used in Bonsai work. A wedge graft is used and high quality disposable box cutters are used rather than a scalpel (easier to use).

The material is disinfected in the bleach solution, washed with water and then put into a solution of "Easy Root" hormone. Alternatively, the "Easy Root" powder, or the green "Clonex" gel may be used to promote root growth. The graft is wound with grafting tape (Nescofilm) and this holds things together. The tape biodegrades in time, not needing to be removed.

The cutting grafts are put into 30 mm peat plugs and into a mini greenhouse that holds about forty grafts. This is placed onto a heated cutting bench until graft union and roots of the cutting appear. They can then be potted up into potting mix to further develop and harden off until planted out.

There were a lot of questions asked and Ewan was very helpful with his answers. He also indicated that Mt Annan had a data base of what plants were most compatible for grafting and indicated that he would arrange for Peter to get a copy to include in the Study Group Newsletter.



Dryandra polycephala at Silky Oaks, the Olde garden Sydney

Other issues dealt with included propagation of *Persoonias*, a group of plants that are notoriously difficult to propagate. They graft onto *Persoonia pinifolius* rootstock with good success. They also propagate from seed and find the secret is to crack the hard seedcase to let water in. They do this using a vice so as to apply controlled pressure to the seed to crack the case without damaging the seed within. This sounds very similar to the methods developed by the *Eremophila* Study Group to germinate *Eremophilas* from seed. This had been notoriously difficult and since being solved has led to the entry into cultivation of many *Eremophila* hybrids.

After the presentation there was a plant sale with people bringing along plants that they had propagated for sale, all at very reasonable prices. Peter then took everyone around on a guided tour of the garden. We missed this part as we had arrived early and had a look around before things started. We managed to get back to Armidale by dusk.

All in all, a great day. Peter is hoping to have regular meetings and to move the meeting venue around to enable people to see other gardens. If people do not belong to a Study Group, then they should. It is inexpensive and no special knowledge is required, just a love of the Australian flora.

Wattle Day Visit to Nevin Garden

by Deirdre Waters

Wattle day 2020 was celebrated on Sunday September 5th in the garden of John and Barbara Nevin. Nineteen plant lovers gathered including some new faces. Rosemary from Uralla came with Pat Laher and Bar (Barbara) from Ben Lomond, came with Liisa Atherton. It is always great to meet and welcome new people when they come and join in our gatherings.



Some of the group admiring a pruned specimen of *Acacia flexifolia*.
L to R: Lee Horsley, Rosemary, Pat Laher, Phil Rose, Bar, Liisa Atherton, John Nevin,
Colin Mulquiney (red shirt), Colin Wilson and Deirdre Waters



Acacia amoena
from Apsley Falls
area near Walcha

The Nevin garden was such an appropriate venue as there were 63 different species of Acacia to see. John had prepared a list of wattle species in alphabetical order and everyone received a copy of this and a supply of pens was also available to allow for note taking and comments. Some of the species had (S) after the name indicating that John had seed available for anyone who wished to use the small envelopes provided and take some seed home to grow.



Acacia pycnostachya
(Bolivia Hill Wattle)
with flower buds yet
to open

John conducted a walk around the garden identifying the various Acacias with info as to where they grow naturally and from where he had managed to

acquire the plants. Acacias flower at varied times with *Acacia irrorata* also called the 'Christmas Wattle'. This one is seen at Wollomombi Falls. *Acacia diphylla* can be seen in flower in December at Bakers Creek Falls Lookout, and some Acacias still had tight buds that would be open much later than September. Two prostrate form Acacias were *Acacia baileyana* and *Acacia pravissima*. Heights varied with *Acacia ingramii* causing us to look up quite high to see its brilliant golden display



Penelope takes a close look at the phyllodes of *Acacia flexifolia* (also known as the 'bent leaf' wattle)

Naturally gardens are rarely if ever just one Genus and other Australian native plants created interest as well as the wattles. Several Phebaliums had survived the drought conditions of 2019 and were in flower.



Above: *Brachyscome formosa* (Pilliga Posy) and L: *Hovea lanceolata*

Afternoon tea revealed to those who did not already know, that 5th September was John Nevin's birthday. Barbara Nevin had organised individual iced carrot patty cakes and the appropriate candles while Happy Birthday was sung of course. It was a great friendly sociable way to conclude the celebration of Acacia, such a widespread and important genus in Australia. Liisa Atherton thanked the Nevins for making their garden available and for their warm hospitality.

Acacias in Nevin Garden

by John Nevin

Acacia acinacea

Acacia boormanii

Acacia adunca

Acacia beckleri

Acacia amoena

Acacia binervata

Acacia baileyana prostrate

Acacia buxifolia (S)

Acacia baileyana upright

Acacia caerulescens

Acacia caesiella

Acacia diphylla

Acacia cardiophylla

Acacia filicifolia (S)

Acacia fimbriata (S)

Acacia chamaelon (S)

Acacia flexifolia

Acacia coventyi

Acacia floribunda

Acacia conferta

Acacia granitica (S)

Acacia dawsonii (S)

Acacia harpophylla

Acacia dealbata

Acacia howitii

Acacia deanii

Acacia implexa

Acacia decora

Acacia ingramii

Acacia irrorata

Acacia ixiophylla

Acacia lanigera

Acacia leprosa 'Scarlet Blaze' (S)

Acacia leptoclada

Acacia lineata

Acacia longifolia (S)

Acacia mearnsii

Acacia melanoxylon

Acacia montana (S)

Acacia muelleriana

Acacia neriifolia (S)

Acacia nova anglica (S)

Acacia paradoxa (S)

Acacia penninervis (S)

Acacia pravissima

Acacia pruinosa (S)

Acacia pubifolia (S)

Acacia pycnostachya

Acacia rigens

Acacia rubida (S)

Acacia serpenticola

Acacia sertiformis (S)

Acacia sicculiformis

Acacia spectabilis

Acacia stricta

Acacia subulata

Acacia torringtonensis (S)

Acacia triptera

Acacia verniciflua

Acacia vestita

Acacia viscidula (S)

Acacia wilhelmiana

Seed also available for the following Acacias:

betchei, *burbidgeae*, *falciformis*, *hispidula*, *imbricata*, *latisepala*, *mitchellii*, *nana ssp nana*, *venulosa*.



***Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'**

This plant was a colour form found in one plant amongst a group of *Acacia leprosa* in Victoria. The original plant has since died but cuttings were grown from the original by the Botanic Gardens in Victoria.

It was sold by the Botanic Gardens as their plant to celebrate the centenary of Federation in 2001. They have the PBR on the plant and profits for its sale go to the Botanic Gardens.

It is long lived (>20 years), about three metres in height and tolerant of frost and drought.

Seed has been trialled by the Acacia Study Group and the red colour is incompletely penetrant with about half the plants red in colour and others shades of red or yellow. The true form is obtained by propagation by cuttings.

Goonoowigall State Conservation Area by Patrick Laher

When APS members visited this area recently, the walkers were met by a sea of blue. There were millions of Blue Bells (*Wahlenbergia*) strongly growing and flowering. The severe fire about a year ago exposed the ground dwelling plants to sun and reduced competition from the trees and shrubs.

Goonoowigall (“Wallaby Rocks’]) covers an area of 1057 ha and parts of it have been a flora and fauna reserve since 1920. It is granite country with low hills and large boulders. Tin mining began in the 1870s, which was manually extracted, by digging with pick and shovel and then washing the alluvial tin. There was also a large presence of Chinese miners.

The 5 km walk was on well-formed tracks and led walkers through a range of vegetation types. Because trees and shrubs had been burnt out, it was the small ground growing plants that got our attention, such as the spectacular flowering stalks of the Bloodroot (*Haemodorum*), some of which were nearly 2m tall. In many areas, seedling of beautiful *Acacia leptoclada* (Tingha Wattle) were densely packed together and the survivors will be a picture when they flower next year.

Two plants that some of us were familiar with from our days of exploring the nearby Howell area were *Homoranthus prolixus* and *Commersonia amystia*. Just near the parking area at our section of the Armidale Arboretum, there are plants of the *Homoranthus*. They are very attractive small plants with grey foliage and massed tiny yellow scented flowers – a great sculptural plant. The white flowered *Commersonia* is unfortunately short lived but worth growing for it’s beautiful foliage and flowers. Mole Station has previously grown both species of plants.

Lomandra multiflora was just starting to flower. The male scented flowers vary in colour from brown to yellow and are the most attractive flowering Lomandras. Chocolate Lily, Brachyscome, Paper Daisy and Lobelia also stood out amongst the lightly vegetated plants.

Many years ago, John Nevin and I were tricked by a small growing mallee tree which we thought was a *Eucalyptus* but it had no seed pods! We saw this plant again on this trip growing in cracks on a granite shelf alongside Middle Creek. It is in fact *Leptospermum brachyandrum*, which has beautiful trunks and branches that change colour from shiny brown to cream to green as the bark is shed. I have pruned three of my four plants to a single trunk, and in better soils the plant could grow to 5m. It makes a lovely small tree, well suited to suburban gardens. John has a mature plant in his garden. This frost hardy plant also grows along the Mole River and is grown from cuttings by Sarah. Goonoowigall should be on our visit again next spring.



Above L *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* flowering after fire.

Above R *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*.

Below L *Wahlenbergia stricta* flowering after fire



Leptospermum brachyandrum
growing on the granite rock
dome.

Unlike most *Leptospermum*
plants that retain their seeds in
woody capsules, this one sheds
its seed.

Originally, it was termed *Kunzea*
brachyandra by Ferdinand von
Mueller and later put into the
genus *Leptospermum*



One of the branches of
Leptospermum brachyandrum
showing the colourful shedding
bark that is a feature of the
plant.



Podolepis omissa



Dichopogon strictus – Chocolate Lily

There were fields of this growing amongst the *Wahlenbergia*



Homoranthus prolixus – a rare plant limited to the granites around Goonowigall and Howell on the Northern Tablelands

Below – *Bulbine bulbosa*

R – Track through the burnt out trees with *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Wahlenbergia stricta* and regenerating *Acacia leptoclada*.



A New Site for Commersonia amystia

by John Nevin

One of the finds at Goonoowigal was *Commersonia amystia*. This plant was originally collected by Lachlan Copeland at Howell in 2003 and named by him in 2006. It is uncommon, although it has been found in the granites around Tenterfield and the Stanthorpe district.

There was no record of it at Goonoowigall and we came across about 100 plants growing in a drainage channel below a rock shelf alongside the walking track. It grows to about a metre across and 50 cm high with white flowers. It seems to be a fire ephemeral as other findings of the plant have been reported following the widespread bushfires in the last twelve months.

We have collected a pressing for the Herbarium so as to document where this uncommon plant occurs.



N.C.W. Beadle Herbarium (NE)
University of New England

HOLOTYPE

Commersonia amystia C.F. Wilkins
& L.M. Copeland
Det.: L.M. Copeland 23.12.2011

N.C.W. Beadle Herbarium (NE)
The University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351 Australia

Notification of change of determination would be appreciated by NE

NE081406A

Malvaceae s.l.

Rulingia sp. nov.

Australia. New South Wales: North Western Slopes:
Howell, 20 km SSW of Inverell, 300 m N of Howell Dam.

29° 56' 45" S 151° 1' 50" E 760 m

Large rock outcrop; E aspect.
Skeletal sandy loam in crevices in granite.
Heath dominated by *Babingtonia densifolia* and *Acacia triptera*.

Common, localised, c. 100 plants seen. Decumbent shrub to
30 cm tall. Flowers white. Fire-ephemeral shrub growing in
abundance approximately 10 months after the outcrop was
burnt.

Coll.: L.M. Copeland 3615

16 Oct. 2003

Det.:

Rep(s) to: BRI, CANB, K, MEL, MO, NSW, PERTH.

NSW DATA
DATABASE

The Holotype of *Commersonia amystia* collected at Howell in 2003 by Lachland Copeland – Photo from PlantNet at State Herbarium.



Commersonia amystia growing at Goonoowigall SRA

Plants seen at Gooniwigall

by Phil Rose

Goonoowigall Plants seen 17th October 2020

Zamiaceae	<i>Macrozamia humilis</i>
Apiaceae	<i>Platysace ericoides</i>
Araliaceae	<i>Trachymene incisa</i>
Asparagaceae	<i>Dichopogon strictus</i>
	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>
	<i>Lomandra multiflora</i>
Asteraceae	<i>Biden pilosa</i>
	<i>Brachyscome multifida</i>

Brachyscome stuartii

Chrysocephalum apiculatum

Gamochaeta americana

Podolepis omissa

Senecio pinnatifolius

Vittadinia dissecta

Campanulaceae *Lobelia andrewsii*

Lobelia dentata

Wahlenbergia gracilis

Wahlenbergia stricta

Celastraceae *Stackhousia viminea*

Commelinaceae *Commelina cyanea*

Murdannia graminea

Convolvulaceae *Dichondra sp. Inglewood*

Dilleniaceae *Hibbertia riparia*

Ericaceae *Brachyloma daphnoides*

Fabaceae *Acacia fimbriata*

Acacia leptoclada

Acacia neriifolia

Acacia penninervis

Acacia pruinosa

Acacia triptera

Glycine clandestine

Hardenbergia adesmiifolia

Hardenbergia violaceae

Lotus australis

Geraniaceae *Geranium solanderi*

Pelargonium inodorum

Goodeniaceae *Goodenia bellidifolia*

Goodenia hederacea

Haemodoraceae *Haemodorum planifolium*

Hypericaceae *Hypericum gramineum*

Iridaceae *Patersonia sericea*

Lamiaceae *Ajuga australis*

Lentibulariaceae *Utricularia dichotoma*

Malvaceae *Brachychiton populneus*

Commersonia amystia

Myrtaceae *Callistemon pungens*

Eucalyptus spp.

Homoranthus prolixus

Leptospermum brachyandrum

Leptospermum brevipes

- Pittosporaceae *Bursaria spinosa*
Rhytidosporum procumbens
- Rubiaceae *Pomax umbellata*
- Santalaceae *Choretrum candollei*
- Solanaceae *Solanum cinereum*
Solanum elegans
- Xanthorrhoeaceae *Bulbine bulbosa*
Dianella longifolia
Xanthorrhoea johnsonii
- Cupressaceae *Callitris endlicheri*
- Adiantaceae *Adiantum hispidulum*
Cheilanthes distans
Cheilanthes sieberi
- Dennstaedtiaceae *Pteridium esculentum*



Dichopogon strictus (L) and *Lotus australis* (R)

Photo by Eric Sinclair



Murdannia graminea (L) and *Goodenia bellidifolia* (R)

Photo by Eric Sinclair



Eucalyptus prava (Orange Gum) in burnt out landscape.

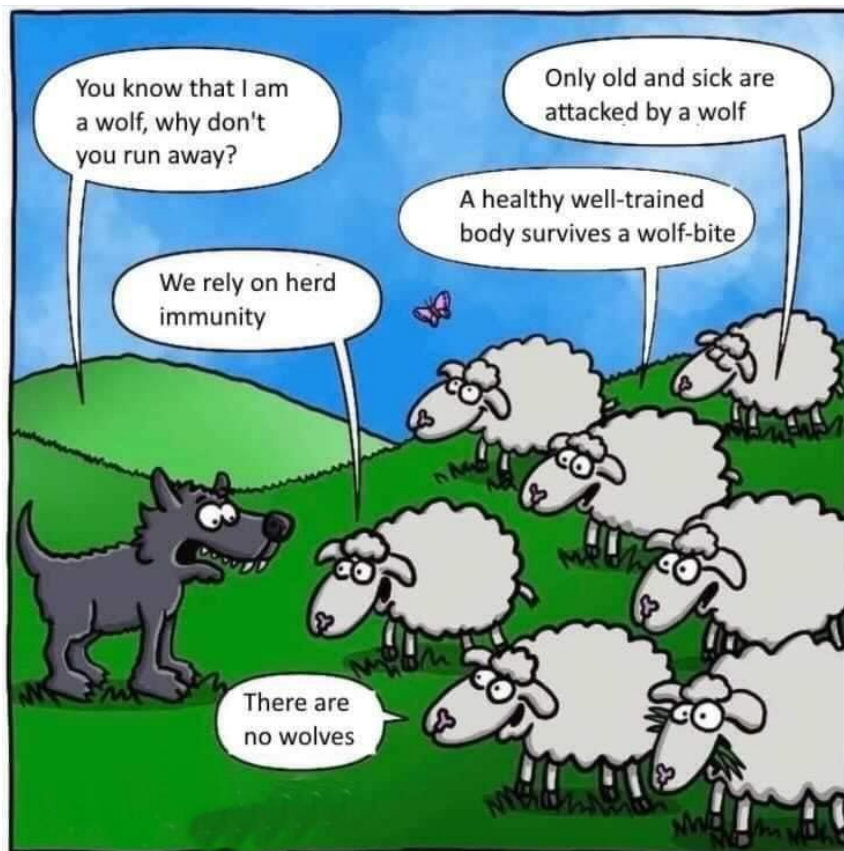
Solanum cinereum emergent post fire



Some Humour

Everyone leaving Victoria
once borders open







What's Coming

Friday 6th November 9 am - Arboretum Working Bee to plant 30 + plants – bring your planting gear and morning tea.

Saturday 10th November 2 pm – cutting propagation workshop at Maria Hitchcock's property. Numbers limited to 18 because of COVID-19 so register your interest with Penelope Sinclair. This is an opportunity to learn how to propagate your own plants for your garden.

Saturday 5th December 11 am at Phil and Julia Roses – Get Together Christmas Function and Annual General Meeting. Bring your own lunch. No communal foods this time because of COVID-19. All positions on the Committee will be declared vacant. Think about making yourself available for the Committee. This is the way to get experience if you feel you have no experience. Your input is needed to plan and organise ongoing activities of the group. If you have surplus plants, bring them along and exchange them with other members.

Friday 11th December 2 pm at Tree Group – Planning Meeting to set out activities for 2021. Any member may attend. If you have some ideas about activities that you would like included for next year come along and suggest them.

ANPSA Biennial Meeting

You will have already received information about this. This meeting was due to be hosted by the NSW Group in September 2021 at Nowra. Due to the uncertainties brought about by COVID-19, the meeting has been deferred for a year to the same time in 2022. Hopefully, by then we will have a vaccine and COVID-19 will be a nightmare of the past and we will be able to fully socialise again.

For those who have never been to one of these meetings, they are held every two years in a different State. A week of meetings, workshops and garden visits is bookended by a week of touring to the plant hot spots of the state led by the local experts. This is a great opportunity to network, see and experience the best of the flora of a State and to learn from the experts – so make a note in your diaries.
