



# The Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden *Port Augusta Incorporated* Newsletter

February 2011

## President's Message

A very happy new year to all Friends and supporters of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden! Those who do not live near Port Augusta rely mainly on this newsletter to maintain contact and hear of Friends activities and developments. It was good in November to welcome Friends and supporters of the AALBG, Ian and Carol Clark from Brisbane to the Garden. If you are coming to or passing through Port Augusta and have time let us know so some local Friends can meet you. It is always a pleasure to welcome Friends from afar. Shirley Mundy and Shirley Moy been very willing workers for the Friends, the AALBG and a number of other community organisations in Port Augusta for many years. It was wonderful to hear that they were nominated for the Port Augusta Citizen of the Year Australia Day Award recently. Congratulations and thanks for all you do for the Garden and your community.

Since our inception in 1984 our membership subscriptions have been maintained at \$8.00 single and \$10.00 family membership. The committee has decided to increase these to \$15 single and \$20.00 family membership and this will be effective

from 1st July this year. Despite the increase our subscriptions will still be considerably less than most similar organisations. A message enclosed with the last newsletter mentioned that the South Australian Government was considering selling off both Mount Lofty and Wittunga Botanic Gardens with land to be subdivided for housing! There was a great deal of correspondence generated on this issue and eventually government released a statement stating that these gardens would not be sold. Since then though, there have been further staff reductions at these gardens and the Adelaide Botanic Garden, which does not auger well for the future. A public committee is being established to closely monitor the SA Government's handling of these three state run botanic gardens. It is interesting to note that the operation of these three major botanic gardens costs less than 1% of the state's environment budget yet it seems that the government does not consider them important enough to maintain the current level of funding which many see as inadequate anyway. (The AALBG is operated and funded by the Port Augusta City Council and is not part of the state run system of botanic gardens in South Australia). Friends are thanked for protesting

against the sale of these gardens as it was the volume of protests from all over Australia which eventually forced the government to respond. We look forward to seeing those who can make it to our next meeting where we will hear about the innovative Seawater Greenhouse Project on the coast near Port Augusta, where sea water is condensed and used for irrigating food crops in a huge greenhouse. This development has quietly gone ahead in less than two years and is now supplying fresh produce locally and further afield. This year we will be planning and refining the program for the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens conference which we will be hosting with visitors coming from all over Australia in 2012. This will be a great opportunity to showcase the AALBG.

**John Zwar, President**

## Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden will be held on the 26th of February the 1pm in the herbarium / meeting room at the Visitors centre AALBG.

**Guest speaker will be Mr Reiner Wolterbeek, Project manager Seawater Greenhouse**

The Seawater Greenhouse represents a unique solution that enables year-round crop production in some of Australia's hottest and driest regions, using seawater and sunlight. The project is underway near Highway 1 at Winninowie / Port Patterson.

A timely project, considering the shortage of fresh fruit and vegetables due to the floods in Queensland and Victoria. The tomatoes they have grown are being sold here at Port Augusta. A very interesting and informative afternoon so come along and hear for yourself all about this amazing company.

### DATES TO PUT IN DIARY

ABC Gardening EXPO 12 - 14th March 2011

Laura Folk Fair 2 - 3rd April 2011

Desert Detective Day at AALBG - April 24th 2011  
A day of school holiday activities for young and old

Australian Plants Society Port Augusta Group AGM  
2nd March 2011 at Garden Club Hall  
Elizabeth Terrace Port Augusta at 7pm



## Botanic Gardens Are Not For Sale

Minister for Environment and Conservation Paul Caica today reassured all South Australians the State Government is not selling the Adelaide, Mount Lofty or Wittunga Botanic Gardens. Mr Caica said despite speculation in the media, there are no plans to sell the Botanic Gardens.

"I want to put to rest any concerns that the Government is selling, or even considered selling the Botanic Gardens as part of savings measures in the last State Budget. The Sustainable Budget Commission did not recommend this saving to Government in its final report, and the Government did not consider a sale in delivering the significant cross-government savings task.

"An early working document from the SBC which was leaked to the media, had included an option to sell the Wittunga and Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens, but even this was rejected by the SBC in the preparation of their final report. The Botanic Gardens are a much loved South Australian icon and the State Government is not selling the Adelaide, Mount Lofty or the Wittunga Botanic Gardens. This Government will continue to preserve our Botanic Gardens for the ongoing benefit and enjoyment of our community now and in the future."

**Friday, 3 December 2010**  
[www.premier.sa.gov.au](http://www.premier.sa.gov.au)

# Curator's Report

Well Happy New Year to you all and what a start it has been!

Certainly a not so happy start for many, with the shocking floods of Queensland that are now causing damage in other states and that have wreaked havoc on lives and property for so many. The clean up goes on and will continue for some time and we may never know the real cost. My thoughts also go to several Queensland Botanic Gardens that have suffered significant damage to infrastructure and living collections. Losses will continue to become apparent for some time as plants succumb, unable to cope with such extended inundation.

Here at the AALBG it is all go, our newly located and expanded retail and plant shop at the Visitor Centre is almost complete and visitors will be pleasantly surprised at our now much more spacious foyer area. Our aim is to improve our visitors experience and offer a larger range of uniquely arid related products, locally made wherever possible.

We have continued planting in the Courtyard area in front of the Visitor Centre and now boast a substantial planting of Sturt Desert Peas all flowering beautifully.

We are also planning a couple of plant collecting trips this year so will be able to start beefing up our plant collections with fresh material and hopefully some new species.

We are also gearing up for some great events like the ABC Gardening Expo March 12-14, the Laura Folk Fair April 2-3 and for the very first time a day of school holiday activities (for both big and little kids). This new event is called the Desert Detective Day and will happen on the April 24. Volunteers play such a vital role in the success of these events so if you can spare any time to help please give us a call.

Some of the exciting projects that will be started this year will be the planning of the bush tucker area and redesigning of the Eremophila Garden. Some of the unexciting projects will be a redesign and possible relocation of the Visitor Centre septic systems and some inclusion of additional storage and office space to the Centre.

We continue to have our important band of merry men and women carrying on voluntary work in our nursery each Wednesday, taking tours on week days and occasionally helping out in the Visitor Centre and in the gardens. We also welcome two new part time staff members Bernadette Reichstein and Marie Storey. They will be the cheery faces to greet and help visitors at the Visitor Centre.

This is set to be another busy and progressive year at the AALBG and I look forward to keeping you all informed, check out our website for updates;

[www.aalbg.sa.gov.au](http://www.aalbg.sa.gov.au)

'till next time

**Michael Anlezark - Curator/Manager**  
**Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden**

## Mesembryanthemum crystallinum



### Common Ice Plant

*Is a prostrate succulent plant that is native to Africa, Western Asia and Europe. The plant's leaves are covered with sparkling wart-like glands, reflected in its common name. Its leaves are edible, as with some other members of the Aizoaceae family.*

Source - Wikipedia

It is considered a weed here in SA and has adapted well to our climate. When it dies all the salt in the bladders leach back into the soil and makes it even more salty. You will find it growing profusely after heavy rains along saline and in sandy soils. A very attractive plant when young with parts of the plant red in colour.

**Chris Nayda**



New shop at AALBG Visitor Centre. Note door on left, access to Garden Centre



Section of Garden Centre

# A Biological Survey Of The AALBG (continued next newsletter)

PORT AUGUSTA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

March 27 - March 31, 2006

By Bernhard Haase

## PREFACE

This survey of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has been conducted to update existing information on vertebrate animals and vascular plants that have been found previously on the site.

The exclusion of stock and the control of rabbits for the past twelve years has resulted in an increase in vegetation density and diversity, this in turn has increased the animal species able to exist on the site, both as permanent residents and seasonal itinerants.

The original lists of plants occurring naturally on site, and lists on mammals, reptiles and birds, have been greatly increased during the last 12 years from observations by garden employees and volunteer plant and bird enthusiasts. The establishment of a botanic garden has introduced many new species of native plants to the area, but there is still a large area of naturally existing and predominately undisturbed vegetation, with its fauna. These are the areas chosen to be surveyed.

## ABSTRACT

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden covers an area of approximately 200 ha. It encompasses predominately:

- Low chenopod shrub land plain dominated by *Maireana pyramidata* (Black Bluebush)
- Areas of low sand dunes,
- *Zygochloa paradoxa* (Sandhill Cane Grass) and *Acacia ligulata* (Sandhill Wattle)
- Some low lying clay pan soaks,
- *Atriplex vesicaria* (Bladder Saltbush)
- Open low woodland,
- *Acacia papyrocarpa* (Western Myall),
- A coastal gulf waters tidal fringe,
- *Avicennia marina* (Grey Mangrove) and *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* (Beaded Glasswort)

The areas that have been developed for the botanic garden take up approximately 50 ha, and have introduced other native plant species from the southern Australian arid zone. These plants are artificially irrigated and have probably increased the number of animal species able to exist in the area, especially during drought periods.

Survey methods over the past years have been mainly by observation, either organized searches or occasional sightings. Others are by accidental encounters during other activities whilst working in the garden areas.

## THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The site comprises of low sand dunes on the southern side which are stabilized by a good covering of plants, predominately:

- *Zygochloa paradoxa* (Sandhill Cane Grass)
- *Acacia ligulata* (Sandhill Wattle)
- *Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *angustissima* (Narrow Leaved Hop Bush)
- *Maireana pyramidata* (Black Bluebush)

The soil consists of mainly loamy / sand, with a pH of 7. The Stuart highway passes along the southern boundary next to the sand dunes. An area of low, open woodland adjoins the sand hills and consists of mainly:

- *Acacia papyrocarpa* (Western Myall)

Since the site has been fenced off to keep out stock and rabbits, there has been some regeneration of these trees, which is a very encouraging sight. On the western boundary a railway line runs along its entire length. Along this area there are low lying clay pans, dominated by:

- *Atriplex vesicaria* ssp. *variabilis* (Bladder Saltbush)
- *Disphyma crassifolium* ssp. *clavellatum* (Round Leaved Pigface)

The soil here is a clay / loam, with a pH of 8-9. On rare occasions these areas are inundated and become very boggy mud and standing water. On part of the eastern boundary there is a area of coastal gulf inter tidal fringe which is dominated by:

- *Avicennia marina* ssp. *marina* (Grey Mangrove)
- *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* (Beaded Glasswort)

The most abundant area is the low, chenopod, shrub land plains, dominated by:

- *Maireana pyramidata* (Black Bluebush)

The soils here are a calcareous sandy/ loam, pH 8-9. The site pH ranges from 7 (neutral), in the sand hills, to 9 (alkaline), in the lower areas. There are no rock formations or surface strew on the site.

## ELEVATION

The elevation of the site ranges from 0m. at the gulf beach, to 25m on the highest sand hills. The survey area lies within the co-ordinates of, Eastings 75710 to 75850, and Northings 640410 to 640550.

## CLIMATE

The climate is arid, with a annual rainfall of 250mm. (appendix 5). The summers are hot and dry, with temperatures climbing to above 40°C frequently. The winters are cold and most rainfall occurs during this time. Temperatures can drop to below freezing and severe frosts can occur, but are not common.



*Young Bearded Dragon (Pogona vitticeps)*



*Scorpion*



*Sand Centipede*



*Striped Skink (Ctenotus brooksi)*



*Smooth Knob-tailed Gecko (Nephurus levis)*

# A Visit to North West Cape WA

In 2010 Ronda and I visited North West Cape for the first time. On the road into Exmouth one of the first plants you will notice is *Acacia gregorii*, a low growing wattle to about 0.5x1.2m. It forms mounds in amongst the Spinifex and is very eye-catching. Another common wattle is *Acacia pyrifolia* or Kanji Bush, an outstanding plant with its grey phyllodes (leaves) and bright yellow flowers. The name *pyrifolia* refers to its pear shaped phyllodes. Aborigines used to drop the green seed pods into burning Spinifex and lightly roast them before eating. In summer a sweet gum which exudes from the stems was also eaten. It was a mild laxative and antiseptic. *Acacia pyrifolia* is widespread in the Pilbara. When young pods begin to form on the plant Aborigines knew that galahs were nesting. By the time the pods were brown the young birds were ready to fly.

Another plant on the road into Exmouth is *Pimelea ammocharis* (Silky Pimelea). This plants contrast greatly with its harsh surroundings with its soft silvery grey leaves and pendulous branches with large flower heads. It is a very dense shrub to about 1.5m.

If you visit North West Cape you must go to Charles Knife Canyon in the Cape Range National Park. It is very spectacular and very rugged.



Osprey

You drive along the top of deep gorges looking down on the rock formations with the sea not far away in the background. A plant that you will spot, if you can take your eyes off the scenery, is *Eremophila forrestii ssp capensis*; this *Eremophila* only grows on the North West Cape. It grows to a height of about 1.5m and has velvety oval shaped leaves covered with golden hairs which contrast with the pink bird attracting flowers.

Also you will see *Hibbertia spicata ssp spicata* standing out from the rocks with its dark green leaves and bright yellow flowers. It grows to about 0.5x1.5m. Also worth a visit is Shot Hole Canyon where you drive along the bottom of the canyon and look up at the very different scenery. There were some unusual coloured Sturt Peas growing in the area when we were there.

After driving to the other side of North West Cape from Exmouth you will see *Brachychiton obtusilobus* the Cape Range Kurrajong, a species restricted to Cape Range. It has large dark green shiny palmate leaves, grows to about 6x5m, has creamy flowers, is very dense and stands out in the area that it is growing in. Coastal hibiscus, *Alyogyne cuneiformis* is also found on this side of the Cape. It grows to about 3x2.5m, has pale lilac flowers and was cultivated as a glasshouse plant in England in the 1870s. *Solanum diversifolium* (Bush Tomato) also is found in this area. It was called Karlumbu or Warurla by the Aborigines who roasted the fruit and ate it or sun dried it and stored it for later.

You might see Osprey perching and nesting on power poles around the Cape. The Western Bower Bird is also found around North West Cape and inland to about the Northern Territory border. If you have a chance to visit this part of Western Australia do so, and remember Ningaloo Reef is also in the area.

**Peter Hall**  
Photos by Peter Hall



*Alyogyne cuneiformis* (Coastal Hibiscus)



*Acacia pyrifolia* (Kanji Bush)



*Pimelea ammocharis* (Silky Pimelea)



*Brachychiton obtusilobus* (Cape Range Kurrajong)



*Swainsona formosa* (Sturt Desert Pea) with unusual colouring

## Contacts

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PO Box 2040, Port Augusta, South Australia 5700

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Port Augusta Incorporated

May 2011

## President's Message

We are now well into the year and Friends have been busy in a number of areas. In March the ABC Gardening Australia Expo was held in Adelaide at Wayville Showgrounds and the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden staff and Friends mounted an impressive display. A number of Friends volunteered their time and travelled to Adelaide to help Garden staff talk to thousands of people and hand out promotional brochures and information on the Garden and on Port Augusta. They had many positive and favourable comments about the Garden and the city. The annual Laura Folk Fair, a large regional event, was also held recently and as usual plants produced at the Garden were sold there. Friends stalwart Shirley Mundy helped Garden staff with plant sales. Some Friends continue to volunteer their time propagating plants in the nursery at the Garden as well. Because of sickness and other commitments we currently have only four volunteer Garden Guides who do a wonderful job providing guided tours for visitors to the Garden, both individuals and those on bus tours. Bus tour groups visiting the Garden are increasing in number and there is an urgent need for additional guides. If you live locally and think you might be able to help please speak to Chris Nayda. Prospective guides are given comprehensive training and notes to help them when conducting tours. You may like to join a tour with our Guides and see what is involved. You do not have to be a plant expert; the training and notes will help you. Our Guides each have different interests and give slightly different tours. They meet interesting people from all over the world and find the job rewarding. Besides all this, tours raise funds for the Friends which are committed to improving the Garden.

Please help out if you can, and even if available only occasionally our overworked small group of guides will greatly appreciate your assistance. To those Guides on the sick list, get well soon - we need you!

Treasurer Geraldine Davis secured a small grant from BHP Billiton, enabling bird information signs in the two bird hides at the Garden to be upgraded and replaced. These feature the artwork of Peter Langdon, Friends committee member and acclaimed bird artist. Geraldine is currently seeking information on having this information and art work produced in brochure form as well.

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Strategic Management Committee met for the first time in April. The Gardens former Reference Group ceased operating about two years ago with no explanation. The purpose of this new Committee is to provide direction to the development and management of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden to ensure that it becomes an internationally recognised centre of excellence for arid land plants and outback visitor experiences. Membership is made up of elected city council members, council staff, local business and tourism interests and the Friends. (I am the Friends representative). At the first meeting an AALBG general overview was presented, the vision plan for the Garden explained and an overview of the Café and Conference Room operations presented.

I presented an outline of the pivotal role the Friends have played in lobbying for and promoting the concept of the Garden from 1984 to the point where it was eventually taken up by the City Council, with Corporate funding (WMC Resources), State and Federal Government funding and Council funding jointly enabling development to proceed with Stage One eventually being opened to the public in 1996.

I highlighted the Friends role in voluntarily undertaking many roles at the Garden when there was only one and later two employees, our very significant fund raising for the Garden, plant collecting expeditions, establishment and operation of the Gardens nursery for 10 years and support in many other ways, both financial and practical, which continues to this day.

I am certain that had the Friends not persevered in keeping the concept alive through the 1980's the Garden would never have eventuated. My comments on the very significant role the Friends have played, especially in early years before the Garden even existed were intended to provide the majority of Council and Garden staff and community business representatives present most of whom were not living in Port Augusta in those earlier years, background on the Friends role and explain why we are so passionate about the Garden. This new Committee is the fourth "management" committee set up over the years for the Garden and I hope it operates successfully to the benefit of the Garden.

Our last Friends meeting featured a fascinating presentation on the amazing Seawater Greenhouse project established south of Port Augusta. Our next meeting will feature Jan Forrest speaking on butterflies. Jan is the recently retired Curator of Collections at the South Australian Museum and has a wealth of knowledge on natural history, but butterflies are a particular passion.

**Cheers for now! I look forward to catching up with some of you at our next meeting on May 28th.**

**John Zwar, President.**

**Singing Honeyeater**  
(*Lichenostomus virescens*) 17-22 cm



**White-browed Babbler**  
(*Pomatostomus superciliosus*) 20 cm



**Nankeen Kestrel**  
(*Falco cenchroides*) 31-35 cm



**Fairy-wren**  
(*Malurus sp.*) 12-15 cm



# A Trip to the Gammon Ranges

I went specifically to see the rare *Acacia araneosa* (Spider Wattle, Balcanoona Wattle) and see if they have been regenerating after the rains.

The trees are restricted to a small area from Nudlamutana Well to near Balcanoona along the range to Arkaroola; endemic to North Flinders Ranges (Rosemary Pedler. Plants of Northern Flinders Ranges)

The area has had significant rain over the last two years with the last being 5 inches earlier this year when some roads were washed away. In the drought preceding this, Marg Sprigg from Arkroola said the Spider Wattle had been starting to retreat to a smaller area.

After a very bumpy 4 wheel drive along a ridge top I was very pleased to see many seedlings about one metre high growing near the mature trees which were about 4-8 metres high. It is a very graceful small tree with pendulous phyllodes up to 60cm long and very slender. Overall it has a wispy and cobwebby appearance, hence its name. Many of the trees were flowering. The only other tree nearby was *Eucalyptus gillii* (Curly Mallee) with an understory of chenopods, scaevola and grasses so they looked lovely on the hillsides.

The Spider Wattle is now classified as vulnerable. There are a few specimens in the AALBG with a couple flowering now.

Chris Nayda

Unless where noted, all photos Chris Nayda

## Next Meeting

Saturday 28th May at 1pm at the herbarium/ meeting room at the Visitors centre AALBG.

**Guest Speaker is Jan Forrest OAM leading authority on Butterflies, Honorary Research Associate, Terrestrial Invertebrates.**

Jan is recently retired from Adelaide Museum where she worked with butterflies for many years.

In a season that has provided thousands of butterflies and other creatures, it will be an excellent opportunity to discover which ones are native, whether they are harmful, how they improve our gardens and what plants are the ones they love.

### DATES TO PUT IN DIARY

Guided tours by our knowledgeable guides are conducted every weekday morning at 10am. Tours last for approximately one and a half hours and you can book at AALBG by ringing (08) 8641 9116. Group tours can also be booked for other times.

Wattle Walk tours will be held every Sunday at 1pm during August and September 2011.



Spider Wattle (*Acacia araneosa*) on ridge-top early evening at Arkaroola - Photo Heather Adams



Spider Wattle (*Acacia araneosa*)



Stand of *Eucalyptus gillii* Curly Mallee



Spider Wattle (*Acacia araneosa*)

# Melaleuca faucicola (formerly Callistemon pauciflorus)



Found in Centre Australia around Serpentine Gorge in the McDonnell Ranges. *M. faucicola* is a small tree with slightly pendulous limbs growing to about 4m x 3m with red flower spikes 2-4cm long and 2cm wide.

This year at the AALBG, unusually one of the trees had cream flowers on one limb and red flowers on the others. (see photo) Normally these trees are not that conspicuous because they only have a few flowers but this year they were a picture, completely covered in flowers.

Chris Nayda / photos Chris Nayda

## Lysiana exocarpus (Harlequin Mistletoe)

*Lysiana exocarpus* is very prolific this season and looks very pretty with its red flowers tipped with green. Photo shows it growing at the AALBG. It is widely spread in inland regions of all mainland states. If the host plant is healthy it can cope with the mistletoe but if the tree is under stress and has much mistletoe attached to it, it may perish. Some say it is the lack of possums in some areas which have made it more prolific as they eat the seed.

Chris Nayda



## Desert Detective Day

Desert Detective Day was held at AALBG on Easter Sunday 24th April as a day out for Families during the school holidays. It was great to see many families walking around the Garden being detectives for a day looking for clues to find out where Clarissa the Crested Pigeon's babies, Chris and Cristina had gone.

Chris Nayda

Right: Ronda Hall giving on propagation demonstration



# A Biological Survey Of The AALBG (continued from previous newsletter)

In the past the survey areas native flora and fauna had been degraded by stock grazing, wood cutting, sand mining, rubbish dumping, (two areas were municipal dumps), off road vehicles, hunting and recreational pursuits.

In 1986 a rabbit and stock proof fence was built around the site, some pest and weed control was done and large amounts of rubbish removed. This was done by volunteers and work groups. The denial of easy access by the general public reduced the impact of rubbish dumping and off road vehicles.

After the first permanent workers were employed the rabbits were all but eliminated, boxthorns eradicated, Buffel grass and other weeds controlled. Foxes and cats have been periodically controlled, but impossible to eradicate due to the low boundary fence.

All this work has resulted in a big improvement in the quantity and quality of the native flora and fauna. For this reason it is necessary to monitor progress of the recovery by constant observation and biological surveys.

Since the establishment of the botanic garden there has been the introduction of native plant species from other unrelated arid areas and some will undoubtedly spread naturally further into the site. This will change the natural flora of the area and it would be worth while to monitor this as time goes by.

The increased flora will result in an increase of the fauna and the area would become a refuge for the local animals during hard times, such as droughts, or from nearby over grazing or the expansion of local city developments.

It is recommended that a suitable vermin proof fence, able to exclude pests such as foxes and cats, be erected around the site to remove the pressure on the native fauna.

This would make it possible to reintroduce animals that would have existed in the area in the past such as:

- Echidnas
- Dunnarts
- Numbats
- Bandicoots
- Bilbys
- Possums
- Bettongs
- Stick-nest rats
- Hopping mice
- Native rats and
- Reptile species.

This would add a broader dimension to the garden and give the public more interesting attractions to see and learn about.

**Bernhard Haase, Former Head gardener, AALBG  
Dip.of Hort., Dip.of Cons.**



Yellow faced whip snake  
(*Demansia psammophis cuprieiceps*)



Beaded Gecko (*Diplodactylus damaeus*)



Bynoe's Gecko (*Heteronotia binoei*)



Southern Sandslider (*Lerista labialis*)



Bolami's Mouse (*Pseudomys bolami*)

## Bird Watching Programme

Sunday 19th June 2011	Alligator Gorge	Meet at Wilmington Pub 8am
Sunday 3rd July 2011	Albury Creek	Meet at Stirling North Roadhouse at 8am
Sunday 14th August 2011	Telowie Gorge	Meet Gorge car park 8am

Phone: Peter 8642 5723 / Greg 8648 6882 / Shirley 8642 4013

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August 2011

## The next AGM of the Friends of AALBG

The Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden AGM will be held on Saturday the 10th September at 1pm at the herbarium/meeting room at visitors' centre at AALBG.

**Our guest speaker will be Dr Peter Hayman**

**Title: The relevance of Goyder's Line in the current and future climate**

The presentation will include a brief history of Goyder's Line of reliable rainfall, an analysis of how the line sits with current climate and land-use and a project that SARDI is conducting with Adelaide University called TREND - the Transect for Environmental Decision Making.

Peter is especially interested in local input on the history of Goyder's Line and vegetation clues that Goyder may have used to draw his line in the 1860s.

Dr Peter Hayman is the Principal Scientist in Climate Applications at the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) based at the Waite Institute, a position he has held since May 2004. Prior to moving to Adelaide he was coordinator of climate applications for NSW Agriculture.

He is an agricultural scientist with an interest in applying climate information to dryland and irrigated farming systems with a recent focus on impacts and adaptation to climate change in the irrigated wine grape industry and low rainfall grains industry.



Dr Peter Hayman

## President's Message

Recently the Curator of the Garden, Michael Anlezark handed in his resignation to Council. Since then the Port Augusta City Council which owns and operates the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has reopened communication with the Friends. A meeting was arranged to talk to members of the Friends committee about the future direction of the Garden and how best the Friends can participate in the operation of the garden, making use of the wealth of volunteer expertise and labour as well as our financial contributions.

A couple of weeks later Council held a social function to thank the Friends for their years of involvement. This was attended by volunteers and council staff and Garden employees as well, and was a gesture appreciated by those Friends who were able to attend, following years of little communication and a period of greatly reduced opportunity for Friends to undertake a range of tasks in a voluntary capacity which they had done in the past. This new spirit of openness and cooperation is a breath of fresh air and I think will help the Garden move forward, making the best possible use of our volunteers, many of whom have wide ranging skills which will be utilised to benefit the Garden and help catch up with outstanding work and improve neglected areas of the Garden.

At present the Garden is being managed by Council Senior Staff member Michael Dunemann. Some would see a possible problem in a group of volunteers charging recklessly ahead, but I am sure that with good communication between Friends and the new

manager, works done will be properly planned and be undertaken in an ordered manner.

On Friday 29th July the Garden's recently re-established Management Advisory Group will meet for the second time, and I expect the future management of the Garden will be an agenda item. The appointment of a new curator will no doubt be discussed as well. I am the Friends representative on this committee. Following this meeting Michael Dunemann has called another meeting with the Friends to discuss ongoing management issues directly with us. Also later on this day a small ceremony will be held acknowledging a donation to the Friends by BHP Billiton, which enabled the panels featuring Friend Peter Langdon's bird paintings and descriptions to be updated and remade and mounted in the Garden's bird hides, to help visitors identify birds they are likely see from each hide.

We hope this will be the beginning of an ongoing relationship with BHP Billiton. Had it not been for the financial generosity of the former WMC Resources and their persistence in lobbying governments to help with initial funding it is unlikely that the AALBG would have eventuated. Such corporate sponsorship is invaluable and it would be wonderful if BHP Billiton could follow where WMC Resources left off. Peter Langdon is one of Australia's best bird artists and we are fortunate to have his input. Our thanks to Friends Treasurer Geraldine too for applying for the grant and for liaising with BHP, council, Peter and the panel designer to make it all happen.

On the same day, in the evening the Friends Conference Planning Committee will meet to continue with planning the Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens from Australia and New Zealand which we are hosting in Port Augusta in August next year. There is already interest from interstate.

With good rains again this year late winter and spring should be a wonderful time to visit the Garden which is looking more established with every year that passes. Best wishes to all Friends and thanks for your ongoing support of our wonderful garden. To those too far away to visit enjoy this newsletter which we hope is a useful link with the Garden.

**Until next time, John Zwar - President**

### Dates to Remember

Conference of Friends of Australian Botanic Gardens at Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden  
**Port Augusta 18th -19th August 2012**

Expressions of interest forms for this event will be available on the Friends of AALBG and Friends of Botanic Gardens of Australia website from 1st September 2011

#### Wattle Walks

Every Sunday in September at Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at 11am  
(Please note change of time)

# A Day Trip to Andamooka

For those of us who live in the 'Jewel of the North' at the cross roads of Australia it's just a day trip to Roxby Downs and Andamooka and because of more than usual rain-fall, 2010 was a good year to make that trip if you were interested in plants and scenery.

Leave Port Augusta early in the morning out past the Australian Arid Lands gate, about a kilometre up the road on the left Dempsey's Lake was and still is full. If the sun is in the right place the Tent Hills are reflected in the lake and can be spectacular. On up the highway past island Lagoon which is usually surrounded by red rocks, which were still there last year but you couldn't see them as much because there was a sea of pink. The Frankenias had grown and were flowering. Continue on and veer right at Pimba and on past Woomera. From Woomera on is where the colourful plants started, pink and purple pea species and the orange-red flowers of *Swainsonia stipularis* really showed up.

There were some Sturt peas but not as many as a few years ago, turning on the Andamooka road plants changed a bit, there were poached egg daisies and *Ptilotus* with a few Sturt peas mixed in. On nearing Andamooka the sand rises were covered with purple peas mixed with daisies. *Swainsonia stipularis* was there too. On into the distance on the flats the little pop-salt bushes with their grey leaves and pink fruits added to the colourful scene; very different to the usual trip to Andamooka. What difference a decent amount of rain makes.

Peter Hall



*Swainsonia stipularis*



*Polycalymma sturtii* (Poached egg daisy)



Unidentified plant found near Roxby Downs.  
Can you identify it?



*Eucalyptus youngiana* (Ooldea Mallee)  
This beautiful Eucalypt grows in the arid and semi arid areas of Southern Australia to approx. 8 metres. Flowers yellow or red.



Brachet fungi on an eremophila at AALBG.  
Photo C Nayda

## Bird Watching Programme

Sunday 18th September 2011

Bernie's Block

Meet Mambray Creek parking bay at 8.00am

Saturday 1st - Monday 3rd October

Bimbowie Conservation Park Camp Out

Sunday 13th November

Blanche Harbour

Meet at Shack Road turn off at 7.30am

Phone: Peter 8642 5723 / Greg 8648 6882 / Shirley 8642 4013

# *Acanthocladium dockeri* (Spiny daisy) at AALBG



In immediate foreground; *Crotalaria cunninghamii* (Regal Bird Flower or Rattle pod bush), behind this is Spiny daisy (*Acanthocladium dockeri*)  
Large round bush at far left; *Acacia schelosperma* (Limestone wattle), in background; *Eucalyptus brockwayii* and *Eucalyptus woodwardii*  
Tree far right back; *Myoporum platycarpum* (Sugarwood) Photo C Nayda

## CONSERVATION STATUS

The Spiny Daisy is classified as critically endangered under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999). It is classified as endangered under the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act (1972) and presumed extinct under the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995).

## DESCRIPTION

The Spiny Daisy is a low blue-grey shrub that grows to about 0.5 metres in height. Branches often have pairs of sharp spines at their ends forming a 'V' shape. Leaves are small and oval shaped. The leaves and branches of the Spiny Daisy are covered in a whitish to blue-grey fur. Flowers are small and yellow with grey bracts (a modified leaf surrounding the flower).

This species is a member of the Daisy family; Compositae (referred to as Asteraceae outside South Australia).

## HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Due to the small number of populations and a lack of information, it is difficult to define the habitat requirements of the Spiny Daisy. The five existing populations all occur in remnant native grassland on low hills and plains in the Mid North of South Australia. Soils are light brown clay to clay loam.

Information from historical collections indicate that the Spiny Daisy may have also previously occupied a habitat with different rainfall patterns, soil type and landscape characteristics

## ECOLOGY

The Spiny Daisy suckers readily from exposed roots and shoots. Despite regular flowering, it produces very little viable seed and no seedlings have ever been observed in the wild. Genetic studies have shown that all plants at each site are a single clone, but that the different populations are distinct from each other. This means that, in genetic terms, there are only five known Spiny Daisy individuals, making this one of the world's most endangered species.

## DISTRIBUTION

Very little is known regarding the historical distribution of the Spiny Daisy. The species was first collected in 1860 from central-western New South Wales, during the Burke and Wills Expedition. A second collection was made from the South Australian Riverlands in 1910. Despite searches of these areas in the 1990's, no populations were relocated and for many years this unique daisy was thought to have become extinct.

Fortunately this was not the case and, in 1999, a population was located growing along a roadside just outside Laura. The Spiny Daisy is now known to occur in five locations, all situated on roadsides outside the towns of Telowie, Laura and Hart in the Mid North of the State.

## THREATENING PROCESSES

- Small isolated populations
- Competition from weeds
- Lack of seedling recruitment
- Habitat destruction
- Insect attack
- Stock grazing

## CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY

Projects that will aid the Spiny Daisy, include:

- Continued management of existing sites, through weed and snail control
- Translocation to new sites to increase the number of populations
- Cross pollination trials to attempt to induce sexual reproduction
- Searches to locate further populations of the species
- Monitoring of known Spiny Daisy populations
- Further studies into the ecology and reproductive biology of the daisy

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Report any sightings of the Spiny Daisy to the contacts below.
- Protect any native plants and habitat on your property from grazing, clearance and weeds.
- Become involved in a local conservation group such as the Biodiversity and Endangered Species Team (BEST) - Ph: (08) 8841 3402



# Some Eremophilas Around Mount Magnet

*Eremophila glandulifera*



While travelling in Western Australia last year (2010) we decided to stay a few days in Mount Magnet, we had been through before but never stayed. Mount Magnet is 560kms north-east of Perth and is an old gold mining town.

After booking into the caravan park and setting up our caravan we went for a walk around the park and ran into the park manager who was walking around with a small nugget of gold worth \$500 in his hand that (He said) he had just picked up in the park. I picked up a lot of rocks after that but no luck.

*Eremophila fraseri ssp parva*



While at Mount Magnet we went on their tourist drive. This takes you up the local lookout called Warrambo Hill, a steep rocky hill that overlooks the town and old gold mine sites. Growing on Warrambo Hill was a very small leaved form of *Eremophila latrobei* but not flowering.

Further along the drive we came to *Eremophila platycalyx* with its creamy grey (to my eyes) flowers with lilac spots and pink calyx, a very pretty shrub to about 2metres. There were several colour forms of *Eremophila georgei*, with pink to mauve flowers, also found were some very very old plants of *Eremophila oldfieldii*, and at the same spot was *Eremophila oppositifolia* with cream flowers. This species also grows around Port Augusta so it is very wide spread.

*Eremophila georgei*



Further still along the tourist drive was the very pretty *Eremophila glandulifera* with its felty grey oval leaves and bright pink flowers; a shrub that grows to about a metre. Further along was another grey leaved *Eremophila* of about a metre. This time the beautiful *Eremophila lachnocalyx* with its lilac to purple flowers; one of the prettiest *eremophilas*. Next came *Eremophila fraseri* with its unusual in this case brownish flowers and large pink calyx. The last *eremophila* found was *E. miniata*. A large dense shrub to about 5 metres. Flower colour is variable from yellow, orange, pink through to red. Well back to the caravan park where I never did find a gold nugget.

Peter Hall - Photos: Peter hall

## Bird Hide Opening

Mr. John Zwar President of Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden introducing Mr Chad Menzies Senior Advisor - Community Relations BHP Olympic Dam HSEC to formally open the new Bird Display Boards at the Bird Hides at AALBG.

The Friends of the Australian Arid lands Botanic Garden were successful in obtaining a Community Grant from BHP Billiton for \$3,200 to upgrade the Display boards which were designed by Mr. Peter Langdon.

*From left - Peter Langdon, Geraldine Davis, John Zwar, Chad Menzies, Bruce Leane and Fay Poole.*



## Contacts

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PO Box 2040, Port Augusta, South Australia 5700

Issued August 2011 by Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Inc. Port Augusta Designed and Produced by Multi Print SA Port Augusta ~ Telephone: (08) 8641 0900



# The Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden *Port Augusta Incorporated* **Newsletter** November 2011

## President's Message



*ANPS members on tour with guide Dennis Dobson*



*Busy bee at AALBG*

Our last meeting for the year is approaching and Christmas is almost upon us. It has been decided to hold our Christmas get together immediately after the meeting on 3 December from 4.30 to 6.00pm (details elsewhere in Newsletter). Instead of a dinner later in the evening the Christmas function will be an informal get together with nibbles drinks and snacks, held in the Visitor Centre and catered by the Bluebush Café staff. There will be a moderate charge. We hope this will be more convenient for all, especially those who travel long distances to attend meetings, as formerly when we had a dinner, we would all leave the meeting at 4pm and return to the Garden for the dinner a couple of hours later. I take this opportunity of thanking all members for their support and extend best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year.

Our Conference organizing Committee continues to plan for the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens conference which we are hosting next year in August. We expect about 200 Friends of Botanic Gardens from many parts of Australia and possibly New Zealand as well to attend. Sponsorship is currently being organized and the conference catering and venues are finalized. This will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase our Garden and our part of South Australia. We continue to be delighted with the co-operation and support being shown by City Council. Chris Nayda stated recently, 'The council has been wonderful and we now feel we can walk in to see them anytime we wish.'

We were thrilled to hear that former Gardener at the AALBG, Bernie Haase is to return to the AALBG and work two days a week. He was the first employee at the garden and worked there by himself right from the beginning with occasional volunteer and council help, until after some years a second employee was appointed to work with him.

He is passionate about the garden, has a great deal of knowledge on the Garden and his knowledge of arid zone plants is second to none. He will be a real asset. He recently assisted AALBG employees on a plant collecting expedition seeking additional plants for the Garden.

After almost three years of delay, work in the large circular courtyard adjacent to the Visitor Reception Centre is progressing with drip irrigation installed and more plants planted. It was to have been completed more than two years ago and former plantings were cleared, some basic work done and then left largely bare. There have been adverse comments about the bare area and associated drift sand nuisance. The Friends donated \$25,000.00 to facilitate this work more than two years ago. Friends volunteers have helped with propagating and planting in the courtyard and hopefully it will be complete in the new year.

Tourism numbers have increased considerably this year at the Garden, especially those undertaking guided tours. With rains and Lake Eyre filling again and inland waters and vegetation in abundance bus and air tour companies stop at Port Augusta en-route on tours to see inland waters, and bring their groups to the Garden for guided tours.

This has really overtaxed our small band of trained tour guides and it is pleasing to hear that two more guides are currently in training. This will help spread the load considerably.

**Again, my best wishes to all for Christmas.  
Until next time, John Zwar, President**

## Next Meeting

Next Meeting of the Friends will be held at the: Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Conference Room on Saturday 3rd December 2011 at 1pm.

**This will be followed by a Christmas get-together with drinks and nibbles at the Visitor Centre from 4.30 - 6.00pm**

We hope all Friends and visitors are able to join us for this. There will be a small charge.

Our guest speaker will be Mr Daniel Duval, Technical Officer - Seed Collections & Research Seed Conservation Centre Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

He will be talking about some of the rare and interesting endemic flora collected in the Arckaringa and Copper Dam area north-east of Coober Pedy last year.

## FRIENDS OF AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN COMMITTEE FOR 2011-2012

President - John Zwar  
Honorary Secretary - Chris Nayda  
Honorary Treasurer - Geraldine Davis

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bernie Haase, Peter Langdon, Peter Marmasch, Julie Owen, Fay Poole, Ronda Hall

# Out and About in the AALBG

Many eremophilas are flowering now especially the *Eremophila maculata* with one showing an unusual form (see photo). Dr Bob Chinnock advises us that 'This is an occurrence occasionally seen on *Eremophila maculata* and *E. racemosa*.'

In the AridSmart Gardens *Hakea francisiana* has been a picture, flowering for the first time and the mint bush *Prostanthera aspalathoides* growing around the urn looks and smells wonderful.

*Grevillea magnifica*, also flowering for the first time, looked magnificent near the Rare Plants entrance. *Acacia ramulosa* (the horse mulga) has legumes hanging around it like candles. They are green striped and almost straight.

In the courtyard the garden staff have been busy putting in a watering system and planting more plants including *Ptilotus obovatus* (Pussy Tails), *Swainsona formosa* (Sturt peas) and *Eremophilas*. More work is expected there in the near future. They have also been mulching around the car park and cutting down weeds.

A small working party spent a few hours last month, planting a series of plants along the main path into the centre. Among those still growing are *Goodenia varia*, *Lotus australis* (Australian trefoil), *Acacia toondulya* and *Senecio magnificus* but the *Wertaloona* Daisies have disappeared.

## GUIDE NOTES

The guides have had the busiest 3months ever, with at least two buses visiting the AALBG every week (sometimes three on one day). This has certainly helped showcase the garden and most of these people have been amazed at the variety and diversity of ARID plants.

Members of the Australian National Plants Society pre conference tour had a wonderful day at the AALBG taking three different tours each. There are guided tours every weekday at 10am and these also have been very well attended.

Chris Nayda - photos Chris Nayda



*Eremophila maculata* (purple) unusual form



*Grevillea magnifica*



*Hakea francisiana*



Legumes on *Acacia ramulosa*



*Samphire* with emergent stamens



*Thysanotus Fringe lily*

## Arid Lands Recipe - Quandong Rocky Road



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 100g Packet Quandong Fruit Leather, roughly chopped
- 400g chocolate chips or chocolate block
- 2 cups (250g) dry-roasted peanuts OR 250g broken sweet biscuits
- 1 packet (250g) marshmallows, roughly chopped

### METHOD

1. Grease & line a 22 x 33cm baking tray or slice tin with baking paper.
2. In a medium size microwave-safe bowl (or use a double boiler), melt the chocolate. Stir occasionally until chocolate is smooth. Stir the remaining ingredients into the chocolate, combining well and breaking any bits of biscuit that look too big.
3. Pour into prepared tray & chill until firm. Cut into squares.

# Preliminary Notice Conference of Friends of Botanic Gardens 2012

September 2011  
PRELIMINARY NOTICE

Dear Friends,

RE: Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens conference Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th August 2012 to be held in PORT AUGUSTA SA.

Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (FAALBG) are now deep into planning for the next Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens conference which we are looking forward to hosting here in Port Augusta SA on the Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th August 2012.

We have been working closely with the staff of the Garden as well as the Port Augusta City Council to produce an enjoyable, stimulating and interesting conference for all garden lovers.

As always we plan to space the program to allow time to network and tour our unique garden as well as some most interesting speakers covering aspects of our theme: **'MANGROVES, MYALLS AND MORE'**

There will be time for other Botanic Gardens to present a static display of their gardens, and time will be allocated in the program for short presentations of interesting and innovative developments of your gardens. If you would like to participate in this part of the Program please forward a precis of your presentation before March 15th 2012

Registrations will become available on the Association's web site during February 2012: [www.friendsbotanicgardens.org](http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org)

**Key Guest speaker: Professor Chris Daniels**  
Director of the Barbara Hardy Institute, Division of Information Technology, Engineering and Environment, University of South Australia, and Presiding Member of the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Natural Resource Management Board

The title of his talk will be: **'Backyards: the most important room in the house'**

**PLEASE NOTE:** To assist us with planning for this bi-annual conference, we would value your indication if some of your members are planning to attend thank you.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Christine Nayda - Hon Secretary FAALBG  
Phone: (08) 8642 4684 • Mobile: 0434 717 382  
Email: [b.nayda@bigpond.com](mailto:b.nayda@bigpond.com)

## AridSmart Nursery Report



*Volunteers busy propagating at nursery AALBG*

The AridSmart Nursery has been kept very busy during the last 3 months propagating plants both for sale and more importantly for the gardens botanical collection. Bernie Haase and I ventured on a plant collection trip to the far north of the state to Mungeranni Station during the week of the 5th - 9th September. Many new and interesting plant varieties were collected, both seed and cuttings. As usual we were too early for some of the Acacia varieties and too late for some of the others, but a great selection was collected. Many of the cuttings that were taken have since struck and have been potted on for hardening and will be planted in the garden during early Autumn and a lot of the annual seed will be planted at this time. Rhonda and Peter Hall have also been supplying us with many eremophila cuttings from both their collection and Ken Warnes extensive collection and these are being propagated for the upgrade of the eremophila collection.

A comprehensive audit has been conducted of the eremophila garden and we have lost a lot of specimens and varieties from the garden. These cuttings have all been processed by the gardens volunteers and many of the earlier collected specimens are now being potted on. We have been very busy propagating Sturt's Desert Peas at the nursery in time for Christmas. Around 150 seeds are planted each week into peat tubes and we are having a great success rate propagating by this method. The plants are to be marketed as 'Baby Sturt Peas' direct for garden planting and also in large bright red pots and hanging baskets for Christmas gifts.

**So until next time Happy AridSmart Gardening,  
Deon Schumann, AALBG Collections Co-Ordinator**

## Unusual Eremophilas



*Eremophila mirabilis*

These few lines and photos are about some of the more unusual Eremophilas, the first is *Eremophila mirabilis* (*mirabilis* means wonderful), it has grey-green warty leaves about 2cm long and 2-3cm wide, with a blunt tip they are furrowed down the centre. The flowers are pale yellow with purplish spots on the outside, the calyx is large and pinkish in colour and stays long after the flowers are finished, it grows to about 1.5 metres high. I have seen this plant growing at Niagra Dam near Kookynie an old gold mining town in Western Australia.



*Eremophila rigida*

The second plant is *Eremophila rigida*; the name refers to the stiff rigid leaves that are grey-green and shaped a bit like a short garden trowel that is only about 1.5 centimetres long, the flowers are cream tinged with yellow, it grows to about 1.5 metres high and is one of the most unusual looking Eremophilas with its rigid foliage, it grows in central Western Australia.

**Peter Hall  
(continued on page 4)**

# Native Flora near Lake Gilles, Eyre Peninsula SA

'Friends' of AALBG Thelma and Austin Eatts took us to their property to see the plants in the paddock which they have had declared a Heritage area. It has been surrounded with an electric fence. After the very good rains in the area it was great to see many plants flowering. We found Boronias, Velleias, Acacias, Ptilotus exaltatus (Mulla mulla), Eremophilas, Calytrix, Westringias, Goodenias, Eucalyptus and Halganias just to name a few. To see such an amazing array of native plants in such a small area was a sight worth seeing.

Chris Nayda - photos Chris Nayda



Foreground - *Calytrix tetragona* / Background - *Acacia calamifolia*



*Boronia coerulescens* / Blue Boronia



*Calytrix tetragona*



*Ptilotus exaltatus*



*Velleia connata*

## Unusual Eremophilas (continued from page 3)



*Eremophila rotundifolia*



*Eremophila grandiflora*

Another Eremophila that is a bit different is *Eremophila rotundifolia* named for its stiff silver - grey roundish leaves, flowers are pale to deep lilac and sometimes pink. It grows to 1.5 metres in height and about 1 metre in width, and is usually mushroom or umbrella shaped. This species occurs in South Australian and just into the Northern Territory, it grows up the Stuart Highway and starts a bit north of Glendambo.

Another unusual plant is *Eremophila grandiflora*, this time because of its flower size and shape. The flowers are up to 5-6cm across, flower colour is pale mauve with purple spots and brownish throat. The leaves are a bright shiny green and are about 10cm long and 1.5cm wide. *Eremophila grandiflora* is again from Western Australia.

Peter Hall

## Contacts

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