



Wildflower Society of WA Northern Suburbs Branch

***Celebrating
30 years ~ 1985 - 2015***

Newsletter - February 2015

Next Meeting :- February 24th

7-30pm, Henderson Environmental Centre, Groat St. North Beach

Allen Lowrie

“Carnivorous Plants of Australia”

Coming Events :-

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 24 March | Kristina Lemson, ECU - “Ericaceae” |
| 28 April | Paul Doughty, WA Museum - “Frogs in Perth” |
| 26 May | Hazel Dempster, Sally Page & Jeff Mountstephen
“Red Trees at Ant Hill” |
| 23 June | Northern Suburbs Branch 30th Anniversary
“Members’ Memories of 30 Years” |
| 28 July | Andy Young - “Tiny Moth Pollinators of
Boronias & Leucopogons” |

Last November’s Speaker

Mark Brundrett - “Wheatbelt Orchid Rescue Project”

Mark Brundrett was the guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting in November. Mark spoke about the Wheatbelt Orchid Rescue Project, which studied five highest priority rare orchid species over several years with the aim of conserving Critically Endangered orchids in the WA wheatbelt. The project was funded by Lotterywest and was a collaboration between the WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group (WANOSCG), UWA School of Plant Biology, the Friends of Kings Park and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.



Western Australia is an orchid biodiversity hotspot, with over 300 of the 1,500 species in Australia found in the South-west. The genus *Caladenia* has a high proportion of its species listed as priority and Declared Rare Flora. As you would expect, threats to our orchid populations include land clearing, salinity, invasive weeds, climate extremes, feral animals and small populations of some species. Most orchids in the Wheatbelt favour lower lying landscape areas, with an increased salinity threat.



The five species which the project studied were: Granite Spider Orchid (*Caladenia graniticola*); Ballerina orchid (*Caladenia melanoma*); Williams Spider Orchid (*Caladenia williamsiae*); Lonely Hammer orchid (*Drakaea isolata*); and the Western Underground Orchid (*Rhizanthella gardneri*). WANOSCG volunteers took on the survey task, with a large group turning out at Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve in the Eastern Wheatbelt to survey the Granite Spider Orchid, discovering a new sub-population.

Mark told us that the Lonely Hammer Orchid is known from one 10 hectare location only, with about 300 plants found. Survey results included a total of 297 leaves found and 52 flowers. Many flowers are grazed by kangaroos and the habitat is salt



affected, increasing the threat to the species.



Mark gave us an outline of the other species, all of which can be found on the Friends of Kings Park website at <http://friendsofkingspark.com/volunteer-group-news/44-wheatbelt-orchid-rescue-project> , along with the full reports of each aspect of the project.



Broadly, the work undertaken in the Wheatbelt Orchid Rescue Project produced some valuable results. The Project species surveyed had from 300 – 3000 individuals, many species don't flower every year and many are confined in a small area of from 1 to 10 hectares. Over the survey period many plants only flowered once, so one of the biggest issues is seed set, which is affected by factors such as rainfall, grazing and spasmodic flowering. 68% of the surveyed plants emerged only once in 4 years and 25% emerged only every 2 years.



Northern Suburbs

Free guided nature walks.

Each Month

Run approx 1 hour.

Start at 8am.

1st Saturday Landsdale Conservation Park.

Meet in Landsdale Rd approx 100 metres east of Evandale Rd, Darch.

Contact Phylis 93499105

2nd Saturday Koondoola Regional Bushland.

Meet in Koondoola Ave Opposite Burbridge Ave.

Contact Phylis 93499105

3rd Saturday Lake Gwelup Reserve.

Meet Scout Hall car park near tennis Courts, Huntriss Rd, Gwelup.

Contact Christine 94472983

4th Saturday Star Swamp Bushland

Meet at the Henderson Centre at the end of Groat St, North Beach.

Contact Christine 94472983

5th Saturday Trigg Bushland

Meet in the car park between St Mary's School and Millington Reserve (off Elliot rd) Karrinyup. contact David 94489192

Conservation measures undertaken in an integrated way to protect the survey species included:

- Control of grazing – DPaW assisted with fencing of areas of Ballerina orchid
- Cages were erected inside the fenced areas for further protection against predators
- Seed collection

Seed has proved difficult to germinate away from the local habitat, due to a lack of the necessary mycorrhizal in the soil. However, laboratory experiments have had some success with propagation and some plants have been put back into the field. But more work needs to be done on these and many other orchid species, over a much wider area, as Mark is sure that many more orchid species will be found to be in danger in the Southwest.

Text: Christine Curry Photos courtesy of Mark Brundrett

2015 marks the Northern Suburbs Branch's 30th Anniversary. The Branch was formed in June 1985. The June meeting will be a Members' Memories Show & Tell and everyone is encouraged to come along with stories from the past and with photos and other memorabilia. We are also hoping to make the June newsletter a special commemorative edition, so if you have a story to tell, please write it down and if you have photos or other documents, please dig them out. We'll provide details of who to give/loan them to closer to the time.

Supper Note : Rather than relying on a few trusty members to bring along supper each month to feed everybody, the Branch will supply an assortment of biscuits to go with your tea and coffee, starting this month.



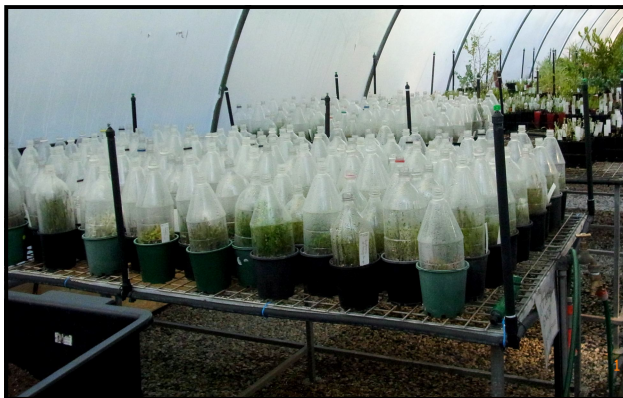
Plants for Sale!!
WA Specialties
Plan now for your autumn planting.

The Northern Suburbs Branch nursery volunteers have been busy at their nursery at Landsdale Farm School over the summer months. Despite the heat, our cutting grown selections have progressed rapidly, with lots of interesting and uncommon species

We are looking forward to catching up with our many customers who are enthusiastically increasing the biodiversity in their home gardens and enjoying the opportunity to widen their choice of our spectacular WA flora.

For those who can't visit us on Saturdays, some members do attend the nursery on Thursdays from 10.00am to 3.00 pm for plant sales and information.

Newcomers to propagating our flora are always welcome to learn the processes with the help of our experts.



Cuttings galore to keep volunteers busy



The white felty foliage of *Dicrastylis* species makes a great architectural contrast



Our great range of *Verticordias* includes this delightful *V. halophila*, which flowers right through summer.



*Wildflower Society of WA
Northern Suburbs Branch*

PLANT SALE

Assorted tube-stock

from \$4-00

Saturday April 25th

9-00am to 3-00pm

at

Landsdale Farm School

Cnr Landsdale and Evandale Rds

Darch

*Grow with us &
Link with Nature*

