

# BUDAWANGIA\*

AN E-NEWSLETTER FOR ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE NATIVE PLANTS OF THE NSW SOUTH COAST

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*Aims: To connect those interested in the native flora of the NSW South Coast, to share up to date information on the flora of the region and to broaden the appreciation of the region's native plants.*

## Editorial

This edition marks the 24<sup>th</sup> edition and two years since I started this newsletter. Thanks to readers and the various contributors for their support; the newsletter has proven to be successful and will continue into the foreseeable future.

This edition contains the second parts of the Cone Sticks - Drum Sticks piece, as well as the continuing Coral Tree story from Jamberoo Mountain. A reader's request has resulted in a piece on the Giant Stinging Tree and another mystery weed is presented. The Friends of Minnamurra Rainforest Volunteer Bush Regeneration Group has been working for one year and a summary of their effort to date is provided below. An index to editions 1 to 24 is also provided in this edition.



Flowering Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera*; a tree that flowers regularly in March each year. With few flowering plants at this time of year, Red Bloodwood is an important food source for many animals, from beetles to flying-foxes.

Photograph:  
Budderoo Plateau, 22 March 2014.

I would be pleased to receive appropriate articles, however small, on interesting observations, new discoveries, plant name changes, etc., up to two A4 pages, including some photographs.

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\* *Budawangia* is a monotypic, endemic genus restricted to the Budawang Range on the western edge of the South Coast region. The genus was named by Telford in 1992; the species *Budawangia gnidioides* (Ericaceae) was previously *Rupicola gnidioides*.

## Sorting the Cone Sticks from the Drum Sticks – Part 2 the Drum Sticks

Drum Sticks *Isopogon* is in the family Proteaceae. In NSW, there are seven species; our region contains three species. As explained in Part 1 last month, it is the shape of the cone that determines the common name. Drum Sticks produce rounded cones, while Cone Sticks have a more elongated cone. Photographs of all three species of *Isopogon* found in our region are provided below.

*Isopogon* is a shrub genus endemic to Australia; there are 35 species, found in all states. Three species of *Isopogon* occur in our region, two are common and widespread, the third, *I. prostratus*, is rare and restricted to the tablelands.

*Isopogon anemonifolius* – Broad-leaved Drum Sticks, widespread and common, south to the Ulladulla area.

*Isopogon anethifolius* – Narrow-leaved Drum Sticks; widespread and common, south to Braidwood district.

*Isopogon prostratus* – Prostrate Drum Sticks; a rare tablelands species and on the coast near Eden.



*Isopogon anemonifolius*



*Isopogon prostratus*



*Isopogon anethifolius*



Rounded cone of *Isopogon anemonifolius*.

## More on Coral Trees

From Les Mitchell (Kangaroo Valley): On my property in Upper Kangaroo Valley, I have very successfully killed large coral trees using 100% high strength glyphosate and applying into deep chainsaw cuts ("frilling"), leaving a 5 cm gap between each frill to allow the herbicide to move freely through the Xylem. With some of the larger trees I had to 'refrill' sections of trunk that had remained alive. The trees died *in situ* and gradually rotted away. Regeneration of predominantly native species has been dramatic in an area where the coral trees previously suppressed the understorey.

## The Giant Stinging Tree

Mandy Anderson (Mystery Bay) has asked for an article of the Giant Stinging Tree *Dendrocnide excelsa* (Urticaceae). The genus name literally means tree nettle; *dendros* – tree and *knide* – nettle. It was originally described as *Urera excelsa* in 1854, the type specimen being gathered by Ludwig Leichhardt, probably in Queensland. The tree was also named *Laportea gigas* in 1856 based on an Allan Cunningham specimen from the 'Five Islands Country' (Illawarra). The current name was established in 1965.

The specific name *excelsa* mean tall. This is one of the largest growing rainforest trees on the south coast. Some very large specimens can be seen in patches of subtropical rainforest from Wollongong to the Bega Valley. The large leaves and small stems are covered in fine silica hairs that can cause pain or at least itching if in contact with human skin. Although the tree is often not particularly tall, it can grow to over 30 metres in height and can be a very bulky tree with a very broad trunk. The tree often grows in light gaps in the forest, such as after tree fall or along tracks, where thickets of small trees can develop. The large, roundish, heart-shaped young leaves of the saplings are unmistakable (see photograph below). The fruit is a nut, which becomes enclosed in a jelly-like, purple mass of swollen stems; see photograph below.



Left. The very large leaves of a sapling-sized plant of *D. excelsa*.

Above. The purple, swollen stems of the fruit of *D. excelsa* enclose small nuts.

Below. The massive trunk of a large *D. excelsa*.



The timber of Giant Stinging Tree is quite weak and of no value as a construction timber. Because of this weakness, the tops of large trees can be blown off, leaving a rather short stocky tree with a huge lower trunk. Buttressing is very typical of this species, as shown in the photograph above. Some of these large trees must be many hundreds of years old. The Aborigines apparently used the inner bark of the tree to obtain a fibre from which fishing lines and nets were made. The fibre was used by Europeans to make a cloth; an old name for the tree is Fibrewood. The book *Bush Medicine Plants of the Illawarra* also reports that Aboriginal people boiled the leaves and bark to produce a soft mixture which was applied to areas affected by rheumatism.

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## Mystery Weed

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This weed is one for our friends on the tablelands; a prickly plant with a nationalistic common name.

Answer next issue.



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## Friends of Minnamurra Rainforest Volunteer Bush Regeneration Group

The Friends of Minnamurra Rainforest Volunteers have reached the end of their first year of activity. Co-ordinator Juliet Dingle (NPWS) has provided the following summary of their work to date (March 2013 to March 2014).

- One tonne of tradescantia, turkey rhubarb rhizomes and other weed seeds/fruit bagged and removed off site for high heat composting.
- On site rafting of lantana, turkey rhubarb, cape ivy, moth vine, mistflower, privet seedlings, farmers friend, potato weed, ink weed, fire weed, panic grass, wild tobacco.
- About 200 m<sup>2</sup> of primary and 100 m<sup>2</sup> of secondary weeding in light gaps and at edge of the rainforest EEC.
- About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of primary/secondary weeding below picnic areas between roadside and creek.
- Stem injected large leaf privet trees by creek – special thanks to Ian Bloodworth.
- A total of 500 volunteer hours, worked by 43 different volunteers, with about 15 regulars.
- Monthly average attendance of 11 volunteers and NPWS technical officer co-ordinator.
- Weed and native plant identification and minimal disturbance bush regeneration mentoring.
- One workshop/guided walk with Dr Kevin Mills and one guided walk with Juliet Dingle.

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## Joseph Banks off the northern Wollongong coast, 27 April 1770

“The surf was too great to permit us with a single boat and that so small to attempt to land, so we were obliged to content ourselves with gazing from the boat at the productions of nature which we so much wished to enjoy a nearer acquaintance with. The trees were not very large and stood separate from each other without the least underwood; among them we could discern many cabbage trees [*Livistona australis*] but nothing else which we could call by any name. In the course of the night many fires were seen.”

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## Coral Trees - Part 2

Nancy Pallin and Tein McDonald, January 2014.

### January 2014

On 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014, eleven enthusiastic people injected *Glyphosate* herbicide into each stem of the adjoining grove of coral trees near Misty Lane. The more drills the merrier! Mostly we worked in teams, one person drilling, the other filling each hole immediately.



Weather: although soaking rain had fallen a month previously it had been hot and dry since, so work was done in the morning between 9am and 1pm approximately.

Techniques: Minor changes from 2013 were:

- Drills were directed diagonally and down to cut across as much conductive tissue as possible
- Extra care taken to inject around each root and out along roots at the soil surface, most of which had been damaged by many years of trampling by cows
- Multi-trunked trees - great care was taken to inject all around every trunk and where they join.



Fallen branches put down roots and continue to grow. Finding ways to inject thin layers of living tissue along the sides and underneath fallen branches was a challenge. Often the best approach was to drill holes around where shoots and roots joined the main branch.



### Row of coral trees treated in 2012 and 2013

Tree 1 (western end of row) had a couple of branches which were still alive. In 2014 careful inspection showed that some live tissue remained on roots and base of the trunk which were injected.

Tree 3 had fallen over but had a lot of live bark. This had been basal bark treated in 2009 and was not treated in 2013 as a control. In 2014 all live tissue which could be reached was injected and leaves sprayed. (photos below)

All others appeared to be dead except for the most easterly one which was difficult to reach due to nettles and cape ivy (a weed). On closer inspection it is only fallen branches that will need injection once surrounding weeds, especially nettles, die after spraying with herbicide.



Effort January 2014: Volunteers contributed 73 hours to this Landcare effort over the two days and are keen to return to treat the next grove in 2015. The landowners Richard was the most enthusiastic and his wife Susie, with help from Colin's wife, put on a delicious dinner on Saturday night. We all had a great time and are now confident that the injection with *Glyphosate* works.

### Good news

Again, one week after treatment, the second group treated near Misty Lane are dropping yellow leaves.

### Even better news

Native trees, lilly pillies, sassafras, prickly shrubs which provide safe nesting sites for little birds and wattles are replacing the coral trees which were killed in 2013.

'Whoever, said it could not be done, was overtaken by those doing it.'

Right. View from uphill in January 2014.



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