



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.

THE TNC NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Desraé Clarke

ALTHOUGH the year has been a strange one with the overshadowing COVID-19 the environment has been a salve for many.

Walks in the Toodyay districts reserves, the Bilya walk track to the John Masters Bird Hide to the historic Nardie Cemetery, listening for bird calls and working on their identification, are pleasurable activities. It has been really pleasing to continue to receive natural history queries, sightings and observations from the general community demonstrating that one does not necessarily need to belong to the club to be vitally interested in surrounding nature. It has also been gratifying to have so many people, who are, once again, not club members but eager to learn more by buying the Nat's latest publication, *'A guide to Exploring Toodyay..... naturally'*.

Although disappointing with the postponement of the April presentation from reptile expert, Bob Cooper, Bob has been rescheduled for the 18th March 2021 meeting.

The June meeting in the Ray Paynter and Wongamine Reserves was very pleasant with Jenny Donegan recording 16 bird species including the Inland Thornbill and the Collared Sparrow Hawk. It was also pleasing to welcome new member, Eliza Matthys and 6 month old Jerome; husband, Daniel, was at home with their second small boy, Gilbert.

The Annual General Meeting in July was well attended; it was followed by members presenting talks, photos and a display of the arid plant species of Eremophilas.

Monday 3rd August saw the celebration to unveil Redbank Noongar Interpretive Signs that are placed in the John Masters bird hide, the latter being a Nat's project funded by the Wheatbelt NRM in 2013. The artwork depicts how Noongar Aboriginal people lived at the site pre-European settlement. It was an amazing and emotive celebration!

A wonderful new group established within the Toodyay Shire by Robyn and Brian Foley is entitled 'Marsupial Mammals and Pappas'. The incorporated group has been formed to teach those people interested in learning to care for injured, orphaned or sick wildlife. With the vast knowledge accumulated over many, many years of caring for native creatures in need Robyn and Brian will educate in all aspects of wildlife care with the ultimate aim, if possible, of the release of the animal back to its natural habitat.

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A welcome is given to two more families of members, Gloria and Graham Richardson and Meryle, Stephen and Lex McLaughlin. \

With the With the gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions club members have several exciting months ahead with an excursion in September to Penguin Island.

Cover photograph (left to Right):

Noongar Cultural Consultant and Yued Elder Rod Garlett; Noongar Elder Auntie Pat Davis; Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation (NKAC) Committee member Iris Guilmartin; and NKAC Chairperson / Yued Leader Robert Miles at the unveiling of the 'Gnulla Moort (Our Family) @ Redbank' artwork in the John Masters Bird Hide.

Photo: Wayne Clarke

Gnulla Moort (Our Family) @ Redbank

ON Monday August 3rd a large group of people were privileged to witness the unveiling of the significant art work in the John Masters bird hide depicting the significance of the Red Bank Pool area. It is a registered site and Noongar cultural place, a camping and gathering place and a food and water source.

The Toodyay Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation (NKAC) Chairperson and Yued Leader and Master of Ceremonies, Robert Miles, introduced NKAC Director and Balladong Elder, Sharmaine Miles, to give Welcome to Country.

Rodney Garlett, Noongar Cultural Consultant, performed the Smoking Ceremony, a traditional Noongar ritual used to not only cleanse and purify a specific area but to cleanse the spirit, body and soul whilst on Noongar Country.

The Gya Ngoop Keeninyara Dancers, a traditional dance troupe led by Trevor Stack, performed part of an ancient and authentic dance; this performance was followed by the spectacular Spider Dance - complete with the web!

Finally the highlight of the morning - the unveiling of the art work by Noongar Elder, Auntie Pat Davis, and the Hon. Darren West MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region!

It was a moving and emotive meeting and, as Darren commented after the ceremony, the most deeply moving of the kind that he had experienced.



Above: Trevor Stack and the Gya Ngoop Keeninyarra Traditional Dancers performing a Kobori (Keeninyarra); [Gya Ngoop means one or first blood; Kobori is a Cooroboree]

Photo: Wayne Clarke

Naturalist(e) walking (Part 1)

Text Bridget Leggett,

Photos: Bridget Leggett and Anne Harris, May 2020

WHERE would you go to watch an osprey devouring its breakfast, a tiger snake slithering through the bush unperturbed by the audience, three species of cormorants, and oyster-catchers darting along the beach; yet often the only humans in sight are your two companions? Walking the Capes, naturally.

Walking the Capes

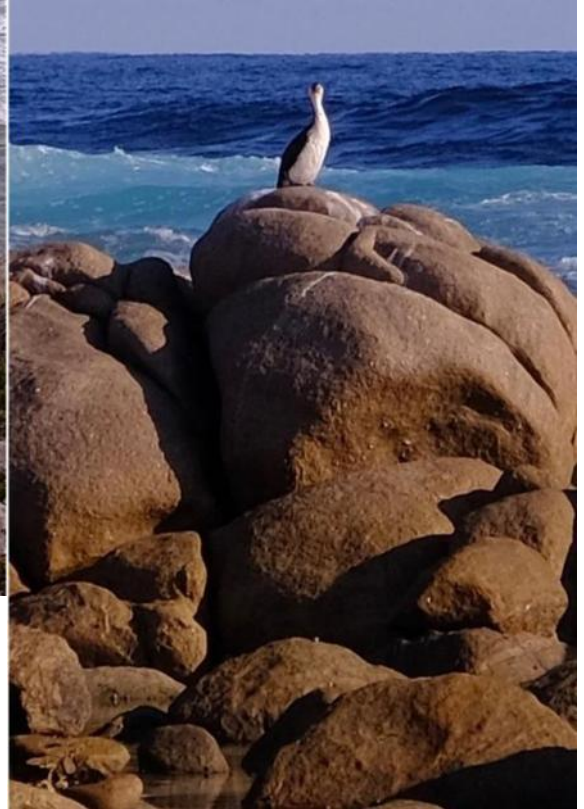


If, however, you choose to schedule your walk when there is to be a ‘once in a decade’ storm, you may be in for a few more surprises. Eight metre swells, driving rain, wind gusts that make standing upright challenging and massive beach erosion deterred us from completing the walk – this year. But we did see both Capes.

Naturalist(e) walking (cont)



Above: Fish for breakfast - Osprey



Right: Watching him watching us - cormorant

Two days walking out from Cape Naturaliste got us to Moses Rock. On both days we were treated to perfect walking weather with the occasional gentle tail wind and the spectacular views for which the track is renowned.



The limestone rocks with skeletonised root systems and petrified tree circles were mentally flagged for revisiting.

Left: Petrified tree circles

(Note: Further picture on Page 10)

Part 2 of 'Naturalist (e) walking in December Newsletter

Excursion to Charmian and Andrew St John's

by Jacqueline Lucas

SATURDAY morning, 8th of August 2020, was not promising for a wildflower walk. It was chilly, cloudy and windy. However by the time 1pm had come around the sun was out, and it was a glorious winter day.

After all gathered, we set off to see what birds and wildflowers could be found. Jen Donegan kept a tally of birds, and I kept tally of the plants.



Left: Members setting off to explore the treasures of Andrew and Charmian's property

Photo: Wayne Clarke

We headed to the bush on the left of the house, where we saw bird orchids, (*Pterostylis barbata*), Little pink fairy orchids (*Caladenia reptans* subsp *reptans*), Big Clubbed Spider orchid (*Caladenia magniclavata*), Banded Green Hood Orchid (*Pterostylis vittata*), and the Jug Orchid (*Pterostylis recurva*) all within the first 15 minutes! The shrubbery was laced with the Hairy Drosera (*Drosera hirsuta*) clambering over it whilst *Drosera menziesii* covered the ground.

The *Acacia lasiocarpa* and *Grevillea synaphea* were putting on a spectacular display, along with the *Gastrolobium epacridoides*.

Right: Acacia lasiocarpa (yellow flowers) and the white Grevillea synaphea

Photo: Jacquie Lucas



Excursion to Charmian and Andrew's (cont)

Then we began a downhill descent, always a worry when you go down is the knowledge you have to climb back up again. There were many Winter Donkeys on display (*Diuris brumalis*) amongst the Bearded Heath (*Leucopogon pulchellus*), and several different hakea species (*H. lissocarpa*, *H. trifurcata*, and *H. undulata*). Although the ground was very uneven, everyone remained steady on their feet, and I must thank Rob Boase for shepherding me along in light of my recent Achilles tendon injury.

After reaching a steep drop, where there were magnificent *Xanthorrhoea preissi* specimens, surrounded by Shrub Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina humilis*) and Rock ferns (*Cheliantes tenuiflora*). Charmian questioned the large flat leaves on the ground under a marri, which were a colony of Red Beak Orchids (*Pyrorchis nigricans*) as we started to head across the face of the block.

Charmian showed us an unusual specimen of *Allocasuarina humilis*, with unique grey foliage which was more curved than normal, and the nuts on the female form were smoother than normal. We found *Dianella revoluta* subsp *revoluta*, *haemodorums*, and numerous other little plants.

Alas we started to go downhill again, down the firebreak! Growing in the middle of the firebreak was a beautiful specimen of the Rough Scrub Daisy (*Olearia rudis*) and some *Macrozamia reidleyi*. The descent was well worth the effort as Jen showed us a little swirl in the leaf litter, probably done by the painted button quail, with a surviving little pink fairy orchid in the middle. A few steps further was a large cluster of Winter donkey orchids.

Then came the hard slog of climbing back up the firebreak to house level! I will not lie, it was hard work! No wonder Charmian and Andrew look so fit! On the way back up the hill we passed some *Hibbertia montana* and *commutata*, and at the top were rewarded by the sight of some tiny *Crassula colorata*.

We adjourned to the house for a welcome sit down, afternoon tea and to hear of Jennifer's impressive bird listing taken over the walk.



Above: *Caladenia reptans* subsp *reptans*

See page 8 for full list of plants and birds.



Above: *Drosera hirsuta*

Photos: Jacquie Lucas

Bob Frayne's Eremophilas in the Bideford House garden, Toodyay

AT my place in Drummond St, I have a native garden which I have been developing from scratch since the 1990s. Some 27 genera are represented, with multiple species and variants. Desrae has asked me to write about my Eremophilas.

The earliest are two prostrate *E. maculatas* which I transplanted in 2001 from my garden in Melville, WA. They have thrived and now cover a large area. Flowers are dark pink.

When Beth and I married in 2000, the Nats' Club gave us two *E. niveas* (Silky eremophila). One survives. Flowers are lilac. This year I have planted four more *E. niveas* and five *E. nivea x drummondii* hybrids to add to the half dozen already thriving. I have one *E. nivea x christophorii* hybrid surviving from two. This one is very vigorous. All the *E. nivea* crosses have variants of blue [mauve] flowers.

E. complanata does well when facing west. I have six or seven vigorous examples with pink flowers. *E. maculata* (Spotted emu bush) is represented by red, yellow, apricot, orange, silver or purple specimens. Very vigorous, they require hard pruning.

E. microtheca grows very well in the shade. They have blue flowers. The foliage gives off an odour when crushed. Also in the shade are my tallest, being an *E. bignoniiflora x polyclada* cross, known as Big Poly. I have several of these, having large creamy white flowers, with lilac spots. An *E. bignoniiflora x alternifolia* hybrid has very bright dark pink flowers. The latter I have grown from cuttings I harvested at the farm 'Woodendale' in Nunile, when owned by Nats' members Dawn Atwell and Ray Paynter.

Growing Eremophilas from cuttings is a pleasant hobby, and I have had mixed success. I put soil from the garden into a pot and dip the cutting in honey before potting. If that species likes my soil it stands a good chance. Obviously the soil is not universally suitable, so failures occur.

Two very showy species are *E. oppositifolia* (Weeooka, see photo) and *E. calorhabdos* (Red rod Eremophila). I have just planted four of the latter to replace earlier losses.

E. glabra comes in a great variety of forms and colours, which make up the prostrate and spreading component of this garden. *E. glabra 'Mingenew Gold'* is Beth's favourite. It has strikingly rich golden flowers. *E. gilesii* and *E. weldii* are amongst the many prostrate examples.

A short list of the other eremophilas to be found in my garden follows: *E. latrobii x gilesii 'Yanna Road'*, *E. serpens*, *E. racemosa*, *E. subfloccosa*, *E. eriocalyx*, *E. youngii*, *E. biserrata*.

Finally the *piece de resistance*: I have four flowering plants grown from cuttings of the unknown Eremophila found at Beverley, a few years ago. (*E. glabra* sp, Priority 1).

I welcome visitors to my garden at any time but I always point out that I am an amateur and really know very little. My preferred reference book is *Australia's Eremophilas*, by Bischen, Goods and Wait.

Bob Frayne, August 2020

(see photographs Page 9)

Continued from Page 7.

PLANT LIST

Acacia lasiocarpa; Allocasuarina humilis; Boronia ramose; Caladenia magniclavata;
Caladenia reptans subsp reptans; Calothamnus sanguineus; Cheilanthes tenuifolia; Corymbia calophylla;
Crassula colorata; Diuris brumalis; Drosera hirsute; Drosera menziesii; Gastrolobium ?epacridoides?;
Gastrolobium parviflorum; Grevillea synapheae; Hakea lissocarpa; Hakea trifurcate; Hakea undulate;
Hibbertia commutate; Hibbertia hypericoides; Hibbertia Montana; Leporella fimbriata; Leucopogon pulchellus;
Olearia rudis; Pauridia vaginata; Pterostylis barbata; Pterostylis recurva; Pterostylis sanguine;
Styphelia discolour; Trymalium sp.; Xanthorrhoea preissii

BIRD LIST

Silvereye; Brown Honeyeater; Grey Fantail; Tree Martin; Western Thornbill (6); Western Spinebill; Raven;
Dusky Woodswallow; Splendid Fairy Wren; Western Gerygone; Western Corella; Golden Whistler; Weebill
(Australia's smallest bird!); Galah; and the Australian Ringneck.

Bob Frayne's *Eremophila* garden (cont)



Above: *Eremophila glabra* ssp. *carnososa*



Above: *E. oppositolia* Weeooka

Below: *E. youngie* Photos: Beth Frayne



Photo Gallery



Above: Spectacular scenery on the Cape to Cape. See story page 4

Right: Hibbertia hypericoides at Charmian and Andrew's, one of three species of hibbertia found on the day.

Photo: Jacquie Lucas



Photo Gallery



Top: Carpet python in the vegie garden

Photo: Sharon Richards

Above: Brown honeyeater after feeding on an eremophila

Photo: Lyn Johnson

DID YOU KNOW...

The Shire of Toodyay is in the unique situation of being within three Noongar group's cultural lands: - the Whadjik - Yued - and Ballardong Peoples

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

FOLLOWING Bob's story of his love of the arid plant, the Eremophila (Emu Bush, Poverty Plant) Wayne and Desraé also have a story of plant survival.

We shifted into our new home in November 1989 and were given a little plant by friends as a welcome gift, an Eremophila. It was planted in the most inhospitable area, as can be seen by the photo, as this area was hoped to become a garden.

The plant survived - and is still surviving, 31 years later, currently flowering beautifully. It's name? Unfortunately, we have not been able to grow tip cuttings, nor have we been able to find its correct name.

A true survivor!!

After discussions with Dr. Lyndal Thorburn of the Eremophila Study Group it is more likely to be E. pterocarpa, but could also possibly be E. macgillivrayi. If and when it fruits we may have an answer!



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