

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY – NORTHERN GROUP
NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2010

Meetings are held on third Tuesday of each month (except December and January) at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road, Trevallyn at 7.30 pm when the Northern Group library is available to members.

A **Committee (business) meeting** will be held separate to normal meetings at least every three months as and when required. Notice to be sent out by e-mail.

Special welcome to new members: We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and other events.

Activities since April 2010 newsletter:

10 April Saturday PLANT SALE: The one day Plant Sale at the Max Fry Hall was considered a great success both financially and socially. Trevor's comprehensive advertising coverage certainly played a positive part in the outcome and numbers who visited the sale.

Four groups of four members volunteered to sell the plants for two-hour sessions, although some stayed longer. The 'flower colour' cards placed with plants not in flower (which was most of them) was appreciated by our customers and was an added incentive to buy. Sharon reported that the plant sale was the most successful we have ever held with 608 pots sold in total (404 of APS and 204 other members) and that she banked \$1479.90. It was an excellent result.

Our thanks to all those who participated in any way. Also special thanks goes to Ken for delivering the plants to and the remaining 13 trays from the venue and to Sharon for her considerable efforts and to her husband Mike for his support.

The shade house now has an active overhead automatic watering system in operation with a few more amendments proposed to assure its efficient operation. It has proved its worth during Sharon's absence.

13 April & 8 June – Committee Meetings were held at Trevor's home with 10 and 6 members attending and where many matters were discussed. There was more discussion regarding the State Get Together that Northern Group will be hosting from 29-31 October and centred at St Helens. Trevor has supplied a flyer with all details regarding venue and possible accommodation that is available on request. His e-mail address is: tyaxley@aanet.com.au or phone 6327 2684

20 April – Club Night –

Ken Saunders, our President, presented Margaret Killen with a letter of appreciation for her contribution to the Group, particularly as Treasurer over a number of years. She is now our librarian.

For the evening's entertainment Janet Hallam and Prue Wright had prepared a very interesting activity for the group that was designed to involve everyone present. All were asked to bring at least one favourite plant book to the meeting and what a variety were brought!

All the books were placed on a central table that we sat around. Each member (there was no escape!) was asked to speak about the book and why it was chosen. The range of books was quite impressive from a book produced in the 1800's with hand torn pages to up-to-date native plant books and all in between. It proved to be a most enjoyable and informative evening. Our thanks to the organisers for an excellent discussion.

22 April - Earth Day at Heritage Forest - Lynne's report

'The attendance at the working bee on Earth Day was not good. After distributing 200 flyers one local resident and I were the only people to attend. Due to my non attendance at the April APS meeting members were not reminded of the working bee and had obviously forgotten about it. Due to the poor response on Earth Day another working bee was held a fortnight later which I could not attend so again there were only two people present.

I have been to check the garden today (28 May), the weeds are coming up again! Until I get the Friends of Heritage Forest group established I still need help from some APS members to keep the weeds under control. The LCC mowed the grass areas yesterday and are keeping the fence lines free of weeds much better than previously but they are not doing any more than that. There will be another Heritage Forest Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday June 16th and I intend to voice my concerns at this meeting.' Thanks Lynne.

1 May – Saturday was **Plant Propagation Day**. Sharon was away but we still had a big group attend. Many more cuttings were prepared and planted by the industrious group and we were rewarded by afternoon tea supplied by Janet and Gilly for which we thank them.

18 May – General Meeting. **Plants of the Month** – we were fortunate this month we had two. The first one was presented by Rosemary Whish-Wilson. Her choice a creeping pine, the endemic *Microcachrys tetragona*. The beautiful prostrate fruiting specimen with trailing stems that she showed us is growing in a large pot and is 11 years old.

Second **Plant of the Month** was presented by Julie Nermut and she chose an equally interesting plant, a relatively newly discovered eucalypt *Eucalytus nebulosa*, serpentine peppermint. She showed us her potted specimen that was about half a metre tall. It had been described by Alan Gray in 2008 and published in *Kanunnah* Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery journal. It is closely related to *E. coccifera* and *E. nitida*, both of which are illustrated in Mary Page's book '*Eucalypts of Tasmania*'. *E. nebulosa* was not known at the time of writing. 'nebulosa' means misty, cloudy and refers to the smoky/hazy aspect of the bluish-grey leafy crowns as viewed from a distance. It is a small tree, 3.5-5 m tall with creamy white flowers present from December-March. It is restricted to a small area between two rivers west of Tullah on the west coast. It is the only eucalypt in this area with an understorey of *Acacia mucronata*, *Banksia marginata*, *Hakea epiglottis* (endemic), *Bauera rubioides*, *Spyridium gunnii* (endemic) and *Micrantheum serpentinum* (endemic).

Our speakers for the evening Margaret and Bill Chestnut of Inverawe Native Gardens of Margate were introduced by Roy Skabo. We were told that their garden had been featured in a recent 'Gardening Australia' TV programme.

Margaret and Bill arrived from NSW about 9 years ago and bought the 9½ hectares of land with stunning views overlooking North West Bay. They have developed a landscaped, sustainable, water wise native plant garden that frames and takes advantage of the long distance view down the bay. About 7000 native plants have been planted over the years, two-thirds of them Tasmanian. Careful choice of plants gives plants in bloom for 12 months of the year. They are keen to enthuse visitors with the early history of the place and to teach them about the sustainable waterwise gardening employed there.

Our speakers described some of the trials and tribulations they encountered developing paths and bridges, as well as the efforts needed to control rampant weeds and rabbit infestations. They have developed self-guided tours for visitors encouraging them to smell, touch and enjoy the wide range of plants there. They have plans to increase the total of Tasmanian plants in the garden.

The land varies from grassy river flats to more hilly terrain inspiring landscaping decisions that take advantage of the site and views. The landscaped gardens have been developed to merge into the natural bushland and plants chosen to encourage native birds to visit. To date eighty-eight different bird species have been recorded including the rare 40-spotted pardalote.

Members were invited to visit the gardens when in the area. Our group hopes to arrange a southern visit later in the year.

More on Colour in the Garden

Someone who obviously doesn't know much about native plants told me that he would not consider having a native plant garden because there was no colour in it. This made me stop and check what was flowering in our garden during May and this is the result.

Golden flowered paper daisies of several varieties that have been flowering for many months are spread throughout the garden. Correa bushes are laden with flowers of every shade of green, cream, pink or red. Croweas with the biggest bright pink flowers and the best flowering we have seen can be spotted through the garden. Of course there are acacias in flower as well, six species in fact, two of them Tasmanian. As well there are white, cream, orange, red, mauve and golden flowers of other species to add to the range of colours to be seen. No colour indeed!

5 June – Saturday – 1-3 pm. Propagation Day. We welcomed Sharon back from holiday. Eight members continued with the preparation of cuttings and much was achieved. The nursery plants and the earlier cuttings in the shade house are all looking fine. Our thanks to Janet for afternoon tea.

15 June – General Meeting: The speaker will be **Dr. Robert Barbour** who will speak on plant genetics. He has conducted research on pollen flow from plantations of non-Tasmanian eucalypts into native eucalypt populations that can lead to crossbreeding between these species, raising the potential for introgression of locally exotic genes. Hybridisation and introgression can not only impact on the integrity of native eucalypt populations, but also the community of fungi, insect, birds and marsupials that depend on these trees. This is an important topic for Tasmania, with its large areas of non indigenous timber plantations growing adjacent to native forests.

20 July - Club Night – Members journeys in photos.

1 August - National Tree Day when a large number of trees will be planted in Heritage Forest. Lynne would appreciate APS member support on the day.

7 August – Saturday – 1-3 pm **Propagation at the nursery**

17 August - Will Fletcher – **Bonsai with Native Plants**

Reminder and EARLY NOTICE of coming excursions and events:

Reminder of the Annual Members Get Together centred in St Helens –29-30 OCTOBER.

An interesting programme is being developed to visit a number of natural bushland sites in the area. Contact Trevor or Roy for more information.

25-26 September - Proposed weekend excursion to North-west Coast with a possible guided tour of Rocky Cape.

Proposed weekend trip to Hobart in **late November or early December** with several excursions already suggested including a visit to Inverawe Gardens. More details later or contact Roy Skabo

Launceston Environment Centre – A reminder that our Group is a member and that their extensive library is available to members from 9 am to 5 pm at their rooms opposite Design Centre in Tamar Street.

Launceston Field Naturalists Club Meeting:

APS members are welcome to attend LFNC meetings held on the first Tuesday of each month except January – at Scotch Oakburn College, Penquite Road at 7.30 pm.

6 July - Subject: Bats in Tasmania

Speaker: Lisa Cawthen

For more information contact K or N Manning 6344 2277

Next newsletter in August 2010.

Invitation to join a Fungi Group being formed by Roy Skabo – first outing to be held on Sunday **13 June**. This is an open invitation for anyone interested in the fascinating subject of fungi.

Here is an opportunity for fungi lovers or those who want to learn more about these fascinating organisms. Excursions and workshops are planned for the future

First excursion will be to Holwell Gorge on Sunday June 13th, meeting at the car park inside the northern entrance to Holwell Gorge at 9.30am. If you would like to share transport or just find out more please phone Roy Skabo on 63346787. Holwell Gorge is a beautiful area west of Beaconsfield. The track is good (although part of the track is closed and we will not be able to do the whole walk, which won't matter because we will be going quite slowly, looking at fungi.) Bring a cut lunch and wear long trousers tucked into thick socks because of leeches. Bring cameras, notebooks, fungi books etc.