

**AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY – NORTHERN GROUP NEWSLETTER**  
**AUGUST 2011**

**Meetings** are held on the 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 separately from normal meetings at least every three months as and when required. Notice will be sent by e-mail.

**Propagation Sessions** are held on first Saturday of each month at Sharon Percy's place at 'Grassy Banks', South Bridgenorth Road. Time is from 1 pm to 3 pm. Remember that Gardeners Friend Potting Mix is available at the nursery for \$6 a 25 litre bag, Osmocote native plant fertiliser for \$4 for 500 g. and plant name tags 50 for \$5. Contact Sharon on 6396 6107.

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

**Fagus trip to Cradle- April 2011**

Take a yen to see the Autumn show of Fagus (*Nothofagus gunnii*), a date around ANZAC Day, some OK weather, throw in lots of chit chat, laughter, 5 slightly potty APS ladies, and you have a very enjoyable excursion to Cradle.

April 28<sup>th</sup> was chosen, Jane, Gilly, Judy, Sharon & Prue raised their hand and Sharon kindly offered to be chauffeur. Grey sky and just a wee bit of cloud on the face of Cradle did not dampen our spirits; after a quick cuppa we set off (clockwise) around Dove Lake.

Hadn't gone but a few steps before we were puzzled by a flowering *Boronia* with very strange leaves. "...has to be..., no it can't be..., leaves are all wrong..., but the flower is right..., smells like..." (sound like APS members?) We eventually agreed that it certainly was *Boronia citriodora* - but that first bush did have very odd, flattened leaves rather than pinnate. No idea why, so we moved on to the next mystery ...and the next ...and the next. The white flowers of *Bauera rubioides* were rather beautiful, cameras were clicking, but we had to keep moving – short days, long way to go etc etc. Down by the lakeside a flowering *Persoonia gunnii* intrigued us, and nearby we identified the berries of *Trochocarpa gunnii*. A single flowering *Eucryphia lucida* was stunning amongst the Pencil Pines, Celery Tops, Leptospermums, Snowgums and Myrtles.

The colours of the *Nothofagus* on Marions Lookout kept beckoning us so on we pushed, from shrub to shrub, tree to tree, appreciative of the job Parks are doing with track maintenance. We waltzed through The Ballroom, cameras clicking with reflections of Fagus on the water, and before long were heading back towards the boatshed. Two dainty *Utricularia dichotoma* beside the track were a treat, and lichen with bright red "hats" - a final enigma for us.

Just a few of the other plants noted were *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, *Atherosperma moschatum*, *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*, *Cenarrhenes nitida*, *Telopea truncata*, *Allocasaurina monolifera*, *Gleichenia alpina*, *Sprengelia incarnata*, *Blandfordia punicea* and of course, *Richea pandanifolia*.

Prue Wright

## Activities since June 2011 newsletter:

**General Meeting 21 June 2011** - Ken Saunders' recent resignation as President of Northern Group caused an election which was held by Vice President, Janet Hallam who chaired the meeting. Janet was nominated and seconded for the position of President and was duly elected un-opposed.

Janet announced another resignation that had been received from the Secretary, Trevor Yaxley. Janet thanked him warmly for his work for the Society and for opening his home for business meetings. Nominations were called for both vacant positions of Secretary and Vice President to be forwarded to Janet by 5 July so an election could be held at the meeting on 19 July.

**Plant of the Month** – or **Genus** as John Duggin decided to treat it, which was a very innovative way of presenting the subject. This time it was banksias. As background John took us right back to when the Protea family was first recorded about 130 million years ago.

There are some 78 species belonging to Proteaceae family, all endemic to Australia except for one species that overflows into New Guinea and a couple of islands. Over 60 species are endemic to south-west WA and only one found through the Tropics (i.e. *B. dentata*).

John mentioned how proteoid roots allow Banksias to grow in impoverished soils, extracting nutrition from them through their fine roots. He discussed how they reacted to fire either regrowing from epicormic shoots or lignotubers or growing from seeds. By showing us photos of flower spikes he illustrated the presence of hundreds of individual flowers that are animal pollinated (birds, honey possums and small mammals). The fruits are hard and woody and open by fire or aridity.

**Club Night** was an enjoyable and interesting one with Prue inviting members to take a slip of paper from the 'lucky dip'. Each slip had either a genus or species name of a Tasmanian plant on it and we were invited to locate our other halves. We were then asked to speak about the plant we had been given. In some cases this meant reference to the Group library and use being made of some of our very good reference books. It was voted a very successful exercise.

**19 July – General Meeting** – First matter attended to was the election of Vice President, Rosemary Verbeeten was elected unopposed. No nominations for Secretary and Roy Skabo stepped in and offered to look after the role for a few months until a permanent appointment was made. Several matters were discussed before the speaker gave her talk. These involved arrangements for looking after the nursery while Sharon is away and what needs to be done to be ready for the Plant Sale on **Saturday 22 October at Max Fry Hall**.

Speaker : Jayne Shapter of Tamar NRM who also has had a long association with Landcare spoke on '**Weed Eradication in the Tamar Valley**'.

Jane spoke about how to recognise them, their removal and control to prevent spread. She mentioned a whole lot of weeds that are present such as ragwort, periwinkle, agapanthus, broom, banana passionfruit, budleya, cotoneaster, bridal creeper and some Australian natives like the climber *Sollya* from WA and some Acacias like *A. longifolia*, *saligna* and *baileyana* especially when they are planted close to bushland and usually outside their natural range.

She outlined the problems weed incursions caused such as reduction of productivity in farmland, poisoning of livestock, the cost of control and the destruction of complex

communities of native plants because the weed species grow much faster than the local natives, thus overwhelming them. Jane strongly emphasised that dumping of weeds or prunings in bushland or over fences should never happen. She made the point that it is easier and much less expensive to prevent weeds growing than have to control them after they are well established as is often the case. She mentioned the value of group weed eradication days and also suggested that individuals could hand pull, grub out and/or collect weedy plants that are in flower and bag them before they set or shed seeds.

There are plenty of pamphlets available from the Councils and NRM illustrating the problem plants and making them easier to identify.

**Plant Propagation Days** have been held on 1 May, 2 July and 6 August with good attendances at each with potting on of rooted cuttings and weeding pots in readiness for the plant sale.

Report for July: ‘The plants that were moved outside the shadehouse to harden off are coping well and are being watered every few days. There is not much growth at present but hopefully come September we will see plants and roots taking off ready for our Plant Sale on 22<sup>nd</sup> October at the Max Fry Hall. Thank you to those who have offered their services to help as this weekend coincided with the State Get together at Coles Bay.

The Shadehouse is full and no doubt with a lot of success and growth over the summer will give us the stock to have another sale in autumn. This has been due to the huge support at our propagating sessions, so members, keep up the good work.’ Sharon

A plant roster has been circulated for those who have volunteered to check the plants regularly while Sharon is away and another roster issued to help at the Plant Sale.

## **PROGRAMME:**

**16 August** - General Meeting – Speaker: Doug Friend on ‘Native Grasses’

**21 August** – Sunday – Visit glorious bush property of Sarah Lloyd and Ron Nagorcka at 999 Denman Rd. Birrale. Meet there at 10 am; walking shoes needed, byo lunch.

**3rd September:** Prior to Propagation session members have been invited to visit Judy Whish-Wilson’s beautiful garden at 605 Batman Highway (first on the left over the Batman Bridge from West Tamar). Meet at the gate at 10 am. This visit will be followed by our regular propagation session at Grassy Banks (bring your lunch).

**18 September** – Sunday – Gilly has invited us all to a picnic at her hideaway Hut on Camptons Rd, 1 km along Mitchelson’s Rd, off the Notley Fern Gorge Rd but stresses ‘weather permitting only’.

**Time** Midday. Bring byo lunch and something to share (edible), picnic rug or folding chair, plate, cup and utensils. Gilly can provide tea or coffee. Come prepared to explore if you wish, the vegetation is interesting and varied. Sanitation is "basic" as in a small chemi-loo in the bathroom in the hut- or behind a bush....

**20 September** – General Meeting – Iona Mitchell will speak on ‘Native Plants that will attract Birds and other Native Wildlife to our Gardens’.

**1 October** – Propagation Day – 1-3 pm. at Sharons

**15 October** – Saturday – 1-3 pm. Sharon has suggested an **Extra Propagation Day** so that we can complete the labelling of pots and pricing them ready for the plant sale.

**18 October** – Tuesday – **Club Night**. Prue advises that this programme will be about **Flower Arranging**. It will be hands on for everyone – men included! So be prepared for some fun and maybe even a prize or two!

**22 October** – Saturday – **Plant Sale** from 10 am at Max Fry Hall. A very important day as the plant sale provides the finances for the group to run its programme. We encourage everyone to come and support the efforts of the plant growing group!

**22-23 October** – APS Get Together Weekend at Coles Bay. Full details are in July ‘Eucryphia’.

**5 and 6 November** – **Saturday-Sunday** - Members are offered the chance to join LFNC members on a weekend excursion to Hobart primarily to visit Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens plus possibly Snug Tier and other interesting botanical spots.

**15 November** – **Tuesday will be Christmas Party time** – There will be a change this year as it was moved and seconded at the July meeting that the party should be held at this time in place of the usual December gathering.

**December** – Notice is well ahead of time. A day trip to the Miena area at southern end of Great Lake is proposed on **Sunday 11 December** depending on interest. Flowers, especially orchids are plentiful at this time. Please let Roy or Gilly know if you would like to join in this excursion.

### **Launceston Field Naturalists Club Meeting**

APS members are welcome to attend meetings held on first Tuesday of each month except January at Scotch Oakburn College, Penquite Road at 7.30 pm. Contact John at 6344 9303.

September 6 – Members Night – Judging of Photo Competition

October 4 – AGM

November 1 Speaker: Lesley Kirby – Subject: Royal Botanical Gardens

November 6 - Sunday – Field trip to the above Gardens in Hobart.

Next newsletter will be issued in October 2011.

Marion Simmons