

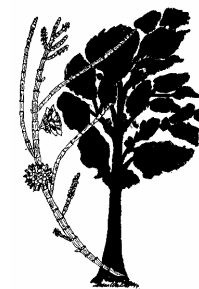
Australian Plants Society

Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc (A0026204P)

ABN: 68 053 689 781

Website: <http://www.bulokebulletin.com>

APS Victoria website: <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>



BULOKE BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER No. 113
October - November 2010

edited by David & Barb Pye. Send contributions for next issue via dabpye@gmail.com by Friday 14th January 2011

Wed 27th October - Gardening in the Southern Wimmera talk by Royce Raleigh

The conditions at Wartook have much in common with Melton and Bacchus Marsh, so that gardening there can provide valuable lessons for us. Royce will show how Jeanne and he prepared their garden, the plants they have been successful with, and plants that we might like to try.

At Dunvegan, Willows Historic Park, in Melton (Melway 337 C9)

Doors open at 7.30pm, Program commences at 8pm

Wed 10th November - Central Australia & Dryland plants..talk by Barb & David Pye

FMBG monthly meeting

at 7.30pm at the DJ Cunningham Centre, Exford Road, Melton South

Sat-Sun 13-14 November - SGAP Hamilton host Quarterly Gathering.

Saturday evening speaker will be Bryan Haywood on butterflies and their food plants. A trip to the Eucalyptus Arboretum at Coleraine is included in the program. More details in Growing Australian

Wed 24th November - END OF YEAR BREAKUP

from 6.30 pm at Dunvegan, Willows Historic Park, in Melton (Melway 337 C9)

Our last meeting of the year will be a BBQ at Dunvegan, our usual meeting place. There will be the usual flower table and raffle, and opportunity to look around our garden. If the weather is poor, we will eat inside. Barb & David Pye will also demonstrate potting up techniques.

We will start the BBQ at around 6.30pm. Members (and visitors) are asked to bring:

- either a salad or a dessert for sharing
- own meat and drinks
- plates, cutlery & glasses.

APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee

President Martin Grannas 5426 4748

Vice President Barb Pye 5428 9369

Secretary Gerry Monaghan 5367 0857

aps@hotmail.net.au

Treasurer

Cathy Powers 5369 4302

aps@hotmail.net.au

Committee

Joan Carr, David Pye, John Flanagan, Lucille McCarthy

COMING EVENTS

Wed 27th January, 2010 from 5.30 pm at the Pyes, Bullengarook	Potting Up for Plant Sale - to be followed by BYO Picnic Dinner Details in January newsletter Plants (Hakeas) will be potted up for sale by the group, with later distribution to members who can to look after them at home.
Wed 23 rd February	Local Frogs - talk by Ade Foster
Sat 19 th March	Quarterly meeting hosted by APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh, at Staughton Vale Hall. Volunteers required
Wed 23 rd March	Moths of the Geelong Region - talk by Marilyn Hewish
Wed 27 th April	Central Australia travels & Dryland Plants - talk by Barb & David Pye
Sat 21 st May	Annual Plant Sale
Wed 25 th May	A Walk in the Victorian Alps - panoramic presentation by Michael Marmach

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Judy Smith of Toolern Vale.

QUARTERLY MEETING HOSTED BY US.

At Staughton Vale Hall on Saturday 19th March.

We will need people to set up the Hall, and to assist with refreshments. After the meeting we will need to clean up the Hall. We also need someone to volunteer as Organiser for the day.

AGM AND NEW COMMITTEE

At the August meeting, the following new committee was elected:

President:	Martin Grannas
Vice President:	Barb Pye
Secretary:	Gerry Monaghan
Treasurer:	Cathy Powers
Committee:	Joan Carr, David Pye Lucille McCarthy, John Flanagan

GEORGE AND LINDY - report by Cathy Powers

Lindy Lumsden entertained the August meeting with her presentation on Australian bats but she was not the star of the evening. Read further to find out more.

Bats are the only mammal capable of true flight. After watching the flight attempts during Moomba, I can see why. The component which



creates the wing structure is actually a thin membrane between what we know as 'fingers' of their hand. The thumb is the only elongated finger with a hook.

There are fossil records from about 55 – 65 million years ago so they have been around a considerable amount of time. There is some speculation that the bats have actually evolved from a 'shrew'.



*Recent discovery:
Bats could fly
before they
could
echolocate*

Anywhere from 14 to 15 species can co-exist in an area. This is because they each have different flight areas, flight patterns and use different food sources. We can hear only one which is the White-striped Freetail Bat. All others make plenty of noise but this vocalisation is out of our hearing range.

This mammal has an interesting reproductive system with the males active over the summer breeding with the female in autumn. The female stores the sperm until spring and then ovulates (the sperm is still active). Bats usually have a single birth and the young is about 20% of the body weight of the adult. The young are ready to fly in 4 – 6 weeks and the mother usually flies with them kind of like during training for 'L' plates.

Home for bats can be tree hollows, caves (only two locations in Victoria), hollow depressions, under bark on tree trunks, fallen trees and even in logs on the ground. If you want to provide them with a home, you can download instructions on 'Bat Roost Box Kit' at www.bats.org.au One of the most serious threats are CATS. Other threats would be forest

clearing and loss of 'lone' paddock trees. We need to hang on to our big trees.



Some specifics:

The large bats are 'flying foxes'. These are fruit eating and the shape of the face is why they have the term 'fox' in their common name. The Grey Headed Flying Fox is a threatened species and this is of concern since they are important seed dispersers and pollinators. It appears that the numbers are increasing in the southern part of Australia with over 50,000 in Melbourne this year.



The greatest threat during the summer months is heat exposure because any temperatures over 42 degrees can kill them. They use the saturation of water on their fur for fluid and the intake is through licking their fur. Interesting to note, they have better eyesight than humans which is probably a good thing since they move about in the dark and in big groups.

Smaller bats are great insect eaters and during the winter they will go into torpor (mild form of hibernation) by dropping their body temperature and heart rate. Their heart rate is about 10/minute while in torpor, 400/minute while at rest and 1000/min when flying and hunting for food.

In one night, these little bats can eat up to 1/2 of their body weight by consuming beetles, moths, bugs and mosquitoes.



White-striped Freetail Bat



Lesser Long-eared Bat



Eastern Freetail Bat

By and far the star of the show was George. He was happy for all of us to handle him, touch his soft fur and enjoy watching him eat meal-worms while we continued our meeting. He will be long remembered by our members who attended such an informative evening.



GEORGE on Lindy's thumb

Thanks to Lindy for travelling to Melton and waiting to choose the plant of the meeting as well as sharing George with us. We had great fun.

EUCALYPTUS SIDEROXYLON by Martin Grannas

(August plant of the month)

Eucalyptus sideroxylon (ironbark) (sideros, Greek for iron, xylon, Greek for wood)

Our guest speaker for August, Lindy Lumsden, chose this specimen not only due to its nectar-rich flowers being a food source for small bats, but also for its tenacity. I mentioned at the meeting that I had cut the erstwhile say 6 m high tree down to ground level about 7 years ago - it was shading our solar hot water heater - and it had since coppiced into a multi-trunked tree that I keep pruned to about 3 m at most. It has also suffered the indignity of having a nearby 5-6 m

high Euc. leptophylla fall onto it due to the high winds and rainfall we had a few weeks ago, but fortunately this didn't do any serious damage.



The flowers in the image aren't at their best, again due to the recent rain, but despite this they attract many honeyeaters and insects.

SEPTEMBER FLOWER TABLE - report by Barb Pye

As usual in September members brought in a magnificent display of flowers. Flowering was a little later this year in most members' gardens due to the long cold winter. Some of the highlights of the night are listed here.

Paul brought in *Acacia cardiophylla* "Gold Lace" which is a beautiful prostrate form.

Alan's special plant was *Darwinia meeboldii* which was selected as the specimen of the night. His description is written up elsewhere in this newsletter.

John S has several thryptomene species and a lovely spray of *Dillwynia cinerascens* which is indigenous to his patch of bush in Toolern Vale.



Ann B brought in several specimens including a lovely orange form of *Eremophila maculata*.

Jenny P showed us several *eremophilas* and also a beautiful *Chamelaucium uncinatum* "Purple Pride".

Cathy also displayed some great flowers, with surprisingly only one *Hakea*, the very prickly *H. ulicina*, and her beautiful form of *Pimelea physodes* a fantastic grafted specimen from her garden.



Gerry brought in some interesting Grevilleas including *G. fililoba* - a plant which seems to thrive in Bacchus Marsh and flowers almost all year.

Ann G also displayed several plants including a yellow form of *Boronia megastigma* and a beautiful hybrid *Chamelaucium*.

Jean is definitely our *Eremophila* queen. Her flowers of *E. oppositifolia*, *E. mirabilis* and especially *E. glabra* x *georgeii* were spectacular.

David displayed some members of the family Proteaceae. *Dryandra Formosa* was particularly eye catching.



Joan as usual brought in some interesting specimens. We all particularly admired *Acacia extensa* which grows to about 3m with beautiful clusters of yellow flowers along the stems.

I (Barb) was particularly pleased to show *Acacia leprosa* "Scarlet Blaze" which was in full bloom. It is reputed to often be short lived, so best to appreciate it while you can. The double form of Bendigo Wax (*Philotheca verrucosa*) was also much admired.

Martin displayed *Hardenbergia violacea* which is screening his tank. *Hardenbergias* had a great flowering this year, due not doubt to the extra rain.

Lastly, Lucille brought in a beautiful floral display and invited members to guess how many different species she had in it. David guessed the correct number (37 I think) but Martin took home the prize with the next nearest guess. There were many beautiful flowers in her bouquet including several *Banksia* species.

MY DARWINIA SURVIVOR - by Alan Partridge (September Plant of the month)

An old and straggly *Darwinia Meeboldii* began its life in our garden about 15 years ago as a pot plant birthday present for me from our daughter. She wanted to give me an Australian plant which had very unusual flowers.

It is a grafted plant and had been in a pot for too long and was considerably pot bound. After freeing up some of the mostly fibrous type root ball it was planted into our front garden beside



the drive way. It soon established and made slow but steady growth to 1.5 metre flowering in late winter and spring for many years right up to the present day. A feature of this shrub is that it has been quite successful in being intermingled with a much faster growing *Hebe* which was planted near it some years later. Actually the *Hebe* helps to support it and protect from wind which otherwise could loosen it in the ground. Another interesting thing about its location is that for many years now a large and thick clump of *Dianella Revoluta* has completely surrounded the root zone.

My *Darwinia* has flowered faithfully every year and remained healthy though the drought years with minimum watering occasionally by bucket in hot weather. The heat of Black Saturday in 2009 took a toll with about a quarter of the branches dying out over the next year. The dead wood was removed and I gave it a generous solution of Seasol and water several times this past summer and autumn which has resulted in new healthy growth and good flowers this spring.

This old *Darwinia* has a lot of sentimental value in our garden and will be allowed to remain to the end of its life without the risk of being removed to make a space for some new Australian plant in a small and somewhat crowded town garden.

EXCURSION TO THE POWERS GARDEN & BRISBANE RANGES report by Barb Pye

On a beautiful day in late September (Sunday 26th), about 20 members visited Ron and Cathy's garden on the edge of the Brisbane Ranges National Park. Their garden is on a steep north facing slope – an ideal aspect for growing many Australian plants. They had not received as much rain as many other areas this year and the steepness of the block means that

any heavy rain runs off quickly so they have chosen to specialize in plants which suit these conditions. Hakeas and Eucalypts are very well represented in this garden being both drought tolerant and appreciative of the warm aspect.



The plant that immediately drew the most attention was *Acacia denticulosa*, the sandpaper wattle, with its raspy leaves and magnificent yellow catkins. Many of the Hakeas were flowering at remarkably small size. Closer to the house the beautiful views of canola fields were glimpsed between stands of indigenous Eucalypts, especially *E. polyanthemos* (Red Box). Near the house, there were garden



treasures planted behind an electric fence to deter possums and koalas. Ingrid and Sylvia particularly enjoyed the large hairy caterpillars which were common in this part of the garden.

After this great garden visit, we had lunch at Anakie Gorge car park. This area had previously been burnt out 5 years ago and had regenerated beautifully with the help of the Park Rangers. We elected not to walk here but to go to a prolific wildflower area near the Butchers Road Ballan Road intersection. This area was a picture with *Acacia myrtifolia* and *Spyridium*

parvifolium forming a beautiful yellow and white understorey to the larger trees. Closer inspection revealed lots of tiny treasures, especially in the slashed area close to Ballan Road. There were lots of orchids in this area – the highlight was a red spider orchid – a single bloom which was photographed by all and is reproduced here.



Next, we drove only a couple of Km down the road to Switchback Road. Here the understorey was totally different. *Acacia paradoxa* was the predominant wattle. Cathy found a few more orchid species but by this time most of the group had dropped off from exhaustion.

What a great day – many thanks to Cathy and Ron.

FLOWER TABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

report from committee meeting by Cathy

One of the highlights during our meetings is the opportunity to see and learn about the plants growing in our members' gardens. To encourage more participants and increase the variety, we are changing our flower table display procedure a little bit.

Everyone who brings samples can leave them on the 'flower table'. During the social time (between 7.15 and 8pm) members can select plants they would like to have more information about. These selections should be placed in the plant stand holders.

After our speaker/presentation is completed and we move on to our 'flower table' component of the meeting, one or two informed members will discuss the flowers selected. There will be no need for the owner of the plant to discuss the sample (unless they want to) and we hope that

this will encourage more members to become involved by bringing samples from their garden. There is no limit on how many plants you bring along but not all will be discussed – only shared.

PLANT SALE FOR 2011 - report from Cathy

At our recent Committee meeting, it was agreed that we would again conduct a plant sale.

21st May, 2011: 9am to 1pm
 Uniting Church car park, Bacchus Marsh

We also decided to propagate plants for sale by our group. We are trying to establish a reputation for selling hakeas and anticipate having about 22 species – some common types and others for the specialists like *Hakea scoparia* (below)



We will hold our January meeting at Suntuff Natives in Bullengarook with the main purpose to move all the hakea seedlings into larger pots. We always get many helping hands and since it is very important to get the potting-up right, we are having a demonstration (at our November meeting) on how to do this procedure in order to get the best results – this will be provided by Barb & David Pye.

We will be looking for volunteers to offer foster homes and care for these young plants. NOTE: The plants will be distributed at our February meeting. Please consider helping out. If all goes to plan, we will have over 300 plants to be looked after. Sharing the responsibility helps spread the load.

No doubt we will have a successful event with our plants being highly sought after and having up to seven other sellers with a variety of plants for sale.

Some of the hakeas successfully growing in my garden and flowering are:



Hakea cucullata

Hakea varia



Hakea elliptica

Hakea lissocarpa



RAFFLE REVIEW

report from committee meeting
 by Cathy

We have decided to change how our raffle is conducted during our monthly meetings.

To broaden the raffle prize choices, a member will be given \$10.00 to spend on a prize for the next meeting. Lucille McCarthy volunteered to be the first for our October meeting. The only requirement for the prize is that if a plant is the choice, it is to be an Australian native (more than one can be provided) or otherwise the prize can be a plant associated item (makes for an interesting choice if your ticket is drawn).

We have also determined that the raffle tickets will now be \$1.00 each. The odds for winning a prize remain the same (Martin = pretty good, Graeme = questionable).

If you want to volunteer to organise the next meeting's \$10.00 raffle prize/s, please let Martin know. There will continue to be other prizes on offer such as plants propagated by members or greeting cards, etc.

EUCALYPTUS ARBORETUM UPDATE

by David Pye

Progress is continuing although slowly.

Rocks donated by the Western Highway realignment project have been delivered to the site. These will be placed amongst the existing trees and will be suitable for sitting on.



A plan for site preparation has been agreed on although timing is still an issue. We plan to spray the area for weeds, rip to break up the soil and then cultivate prior to planting. Several weed control sprayings will be required before and after planting. The key factors affecting the plan are the need to fund it, and the need to sit down with Council staff and reach agreement before we proceed.

The primary paths have been marked out by a working bee, and recorded by GPS.

A grant application has been submitted to the Dahl trust for funds for site preparation including primary paths. Further grant applications are in progress.

It was planned that we would also revegetate an associated area by direct seeding of native grasses, but a funding application was not successful. We will continue to seek funds for this project which also involves the planting of several indigenous tree species.

Seed of more than 50 Eucalypt species has been purchased and sown. The first seedlings have begun to appear and will be potted up at an evening working bee in November, which will include a BYO BBQ after the work is completed. These plants will be ready for planting from May. It is expected that the FMBG will sell the surplus trees at our plant sale. This will be a great opportunity to obtain many different and exciting small growing drought hardy Eucalypts.

To be kept up to date with the project, send me an email request at dabpye@gmail.com.

