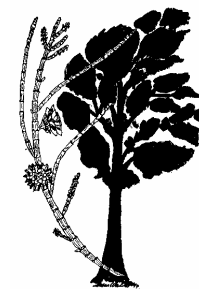


**Australian Plants Society**  
**Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc (A0026204P)**  
ABN: 68 053 689 781 Website: <http://www.bulokebulletin.com>  
APS Victoria website: <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>



# BULOKE BULLETIN

**NEWSLETTER No. 110**  
March-April 2010

edited by David & Barb Pye. Send contributions for next issue via [dabpye@gmail.com](mailto:dabpye@gmail.com) by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010

## **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March BONSAI in general, & with AUSTRALIAN NATIVES**

talk by Maxine Edgar, Geelong Bonsai Society, 7.30 for 8.00 pm at the Willows\*\*

Maxine has been a member of the Geelong Bonsai Society since 1990, and is currently President. She has a degree in horticulture and currently works with plants inside offices and buildings.

The topic of Bonsai has been strong in Australia only since the 1980s. However, there is a woman in NSW who has been working with Australian Natives since the 1960s. Most of the literature regarding Bonsai is from overseas but there are two or three books on Bonsai & Australian natives.

## **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April WA WILDFLOWERS – A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE BOABS, BOTTLETREES & OTHER WATERWISE SHADE TREES**

talk by Attila Kapitany 7.30 for 8.00 pm at the Willows\*\*

**Western Australian wildflowers - a different perspective.** A colourful visual tour of the lesser known and intriguing wild flowers and plants of the Western Australia wheat belt and the far North West. Including the strikingly attractive 'wreath' and 'feather' flowers.



**Boabs and Bottletrees and other Waterwise Australian Shade Trees** - Marvel at the majestic and spectacular giants of our continent, some grotesque and monstrous, others appearing in need of a hug. Trees both in habitat as well being used in gardens will be looked at and discussed. *Brachychiton acerifolius*, 'The Illawarra Flametree' and its more drought tolerant relatives are a highlight. Some interesting aspects of their usefulness in the garden will be explored.

The speaker and author will have a range of his books and plants available on the evening for both discussion and sale. He has travelled worldwide to further his experience with succulent plants and is the author of many books on the topic. Further information about him can be found on his website <http://www.australiansucculents.com/>

**\*\* Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month - at Dunvegan at the Willows Historical park in Melton (Melway 115/C10 or 337/C9)**

**DOORS OPEN AT 7.30PM, PROGRAM COMMENCES AT 8PM**

## COMING EVENTS

Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> , Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> April	Geelong Plant Sale, at 40 Lovelybanks Road (formerly 350 Purnell Road), Lovely Banks (MEL431 D6)
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> May	Eucalypts – talk by Frank Udovicic (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne)
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Annual Plant Sale 9am to 1pm at the Bacchus Marsh Uniting Church
21-22 August	FJC Rogers seminar on Grevilleas at Bairnsdale. Early bookings desirable. See Growing Australian

## NEW MEMBERS

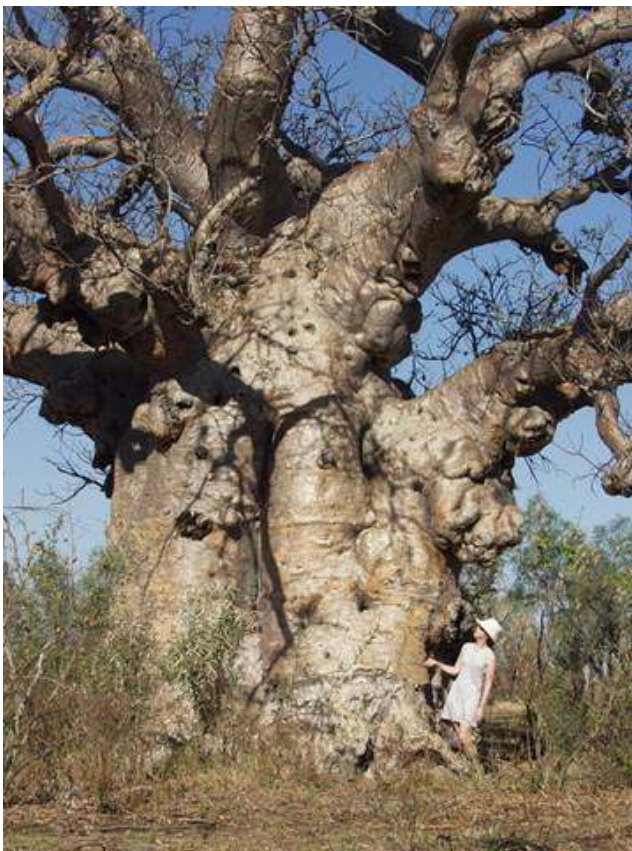
We welcome Matthew Mason of Sydenham

wood close to the branch with new growth emerging from the end of the “brush”. This 2009 early summer, flowering has been the best so far and will probably be better as more “old wood” is set.

### WATTLE BILL SAY?

*Report on February meeting by Cathy Powers*

Bill Aitchison was our guest speaker for the evening and with fantastic images accompanied by detailed explanations, we were taken on a trip around Australia to see our very own *Acacia* species.



Boab tree – to be featured at April meeting

### MELALEUCA COCCINEA – Goldfields Bottlebrush

*note by Joan Carr*

This plant is native to WA goldfields area growing in sand among granite boulders. My plant was obtained in 1993 and is now 2m tall, growing in dry, well drained soil against a boundary fence facing north, receiving plenty of sun. The habit is open, (I have not pruned at all) upright. The new branches are arching, with small neat somewhat angular leaves 4mm wide x 8mm long, arranged in opposite pairs at right angles. The leaf tip is pointed and reflexed but not pungent. The flower heads are red and bottle brush shaped, 6 cm long, growing on old



One of Bill's opening slides showed us the *Acacia glaucoptera* (Clay Wattle) which is from the Fitzgerald National Park in Western Australia. The plant shown had its beautiful contrasting leaf colour with the traditional green of the mature growth and the beautiful reddish new leaves. It was noted that judicious pruning is required to stimulate new growth.

Acacias belong to the family Mimosaceae and are related to the other two families of Caesalpiniaceae and Fabaceae by their leguminous fruits. This means that they produce seeds, similar to the garden bean, in seed pods of various shapes and sizes.



There is speculation that the plants which gave rise to the acacias originated in the tropical areas of Gondwana but, despite our desire to claim the acacias as strictly our own, the earliest fossil record is in North America.

Regardless of the history, it takes only a cursory glance at any book detailing the acacia to soon realize the diversity of one genus. For the most part, the flowers are some degree of yellow (bright to pale) with only a couple that can lay claim to reddish flowers. The leaves can be smooth, prickly or very sharply pointed. Growth habit can be from prostrate to very large trees. Although they have a dubious reputation of being short-lived, many acacia live for most humans' life span.

**So what did I learn?** The following are some of the points worth mentioning:

- Dalwallinu, WA (250km NE Perth) is considered the Wattle Capital of the world with 185 species in the district.
- The Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne has about 375 acacias comprising of 100 species. At Cranbourne 28 (in 2007) species.
- In northern Australia, more than half the acacias have spike or rod flowers heads. In Victoria about 80% have globular heads.



- Most acacias have hard coated seeds that need pre-treatment, but the seed coat of *Acacia harpophylla* is thin, permeable and needs no pre-treatment. Unfortunately, the seed is only viable for about 12 months.

- Some acacias are known for the bark on the trunk/branches. One such is *Acacia cyperophylla* (from Birdsville area. It has what is known as mineritchie bark - grey bark that curls off in narrow strips to reveal inner reddish bark.
- *Acacia handonis* is extremely rare and was previously known only from the Barakula area, north of Chinchilla in SE Qld. Now a new population has been found in an area of about 300 acres, 20km away in Barakula Forest.
- *Acacia kempeana* is known as the Witchetty Bush - Aborigines used witchetty grubs from the roots. It occurs in all mainland states except Vic and NSW.
- Raspberry Jam Wattle – *Acacia acuminata*, acquired its common name because the cut bark smells like raspberry jam.
- *Acacia calamifolia* seed is a basic part of the natural diet of the Mallee Fowl.
- The acacia with the largest leaf form is *Acacia dunnii* or Elephants Ear Wattle.



- We are not finished yet, more species are being identified such as the newly described species in Tasmania – *Acacia derwentiana*.

**Garden species:**

Bill presented a number of examples for garden specimens. The following highlight some of the species and reasons why they could be recommended:

- ✓ *Acacia pulviniformis* – strikes readily from cuttings, has prickly foliage and usually very prostrate growth habit.
- ✓ *Acacia congesta ssp cliftoniana* – beautiful groundcover, prostrate plant and good for embankment planting.

- ✓ *Acacia howittii* - very versatile in the garden as a specimen tree, a hedge, a pendulous standard; there are prostrate and dwarf forms. Very hardy and fast growing. Phyllodes have a spicy aroma and flower heads are perfumed.
- ✓ *Acacia willdenowiana* - the Grass Wattle will flower for the whole of winter and prefers dappled shade or partial sun, rather than full sun.
- ✓ *Acacia adunca* - Encyclopaedia describes this as one of the showiest of the wattles. Tall shrub or small tree. Very hardy and will adapt to either deep sands or heavy clays.
- ✓ *Acacia* 'Spicy' - Was *Acacia aff. verniciflua* 'Avenel', now being marketed as *Acacia* 'Spicy'. Also called Sigma Weeping Wattle. It is always small dainty weeping and tough as nails.
- ✓ *Acacia merinthophora* – This has lovely rod like flowers and attractive foliage that grabs on to everything, mounds up on itself and becomes an intricate web.
- ✓ Scarlet Blaze - This seems to do well for a lot of people but some have trouble with it. Current view seems to be that it likes a well drained moist soil in full sun to dappled shade, but be careful not to over-water it.



**Close by:**

If you want to see wattles in flower during the winter months, take a walk in the Brisbane Ranges. According to the book *Wildflowers of the Brisbane Ranges*, there are 17 species in the area.

Trees are *Acacia dealbata*, *implexa*, *mearnsii*, *melanoxylon*, ***pycnantha***, and *verniciiflua*.



Large shrubs are *Acacia acinacea*, *aspera*, *genistifolia*, *mitchellii*, *myrtifolia*, *oxycedrus*, ***paradoxa*** and *verticillata*.



Small shrubs are *Acacia aculeatissima*, *brownii* and ***gunnii***.



**Some recommended reading:**

- *Wattles of Tasmania* – fairly new publication.
- *Wattles of Ballarat* – produced by the Field Nats group.
- *Wattles of Pilbara* – new publication
- *Grain of Truth* – a tale of wattle dust and forensic investigations to find the villain.

Well, if you were not motivated by the images, certainly Bill's enthusiasm for and wealth of knowledge about acacias is inspirational.

We are lucky to have the ANPSA Acacia Study Group leader as a member. Join the group - it has a fantastic seed bank, the newsletter should be the goal of all study groups and Esther is always willing to share her garden experiences with everyone. Its email address is [acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com)

Thank you Bill & Sue (his road crew) for offering us so much information and a wonderful virtual discovery trip around Australia for WATTLES.

### **EUCALYPTUS ARBORETUM – MELTON BOTANIC GARDEN.** *Note from David Pye*

At our meeting in April last year, John Bentley described the proposed Melton Botanic Garden and the plan that had been professionally developed for the garden. The Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG) are looking at the development of the Melton Botanic Garden and which parts of the plan can be implemented. They wish to start at some stage this year on the Eucalyptus Arboretum. To see this goal through, they would like this to be a partnership between APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh, Melton Shire Council, and themselves. It would be appropriate to form a working group to oversee and steer this project, and we have agreed to be involved.

The issues that a working group (or project team) need to look at include feasibility, costs, funding, plans, production and acquisition of plants, landscaping, weed control, project timelines, etc. A project leader will need to be appointed from one of the partners, and I have volunteered for this role.

It is believed that the Eucalyptus Arboretum is a suitable project in the Melton Botanic Garden that can be largely undertaken by volunteers given funding for the landscaping, plants etc. We should seek funding such as carbon offsets from VicRoads and other bodies.

It is important to start this project soon as we need to begin to source plants and get some of the large numbers into propagation as it could be 2 years before some are suitable to plant out. The project requires several thousand plants including not only Eucalypts but understorey shrubs and ground covers such as Eremophilas, Acacias, Grevillias, etc.

A meeting to establish a working party is to be held later this month (probably Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 1pm). APS members who would like to be involved should get in touch with me (5428 9369 or [dabpye@gmail.com](mailto:dabpye@gmail.com)), or John Bentley (9743 3819 or [president@fmbg.org.au](mailto:president@fmbg.org.au)).



Wreath Leschenaultias –featured at our April meeting

### **LOCAL NATIVE PLANT NURSERIES**

(within 30 minutes from Melton)

Melton Native Nursery (John Forrester), 505 Harkness Road, Melton 9747 8884 (Weekends only)

Newport Lakes Native Nursery, 2 Margaret St, Newport, 9391 0044 (discount to APS members, indigenous flora)

Suntuff Natives, Barb & David Pye, 1220 Bacchus Marsh Road, Bullengarook 5428 9369 (Ring first)

Western Plains Flora (Ian Taylor) 628 Wildwood Road, Wildwood, Melway383 K2, 9740 3178 (indigenous flora, retail section closed during summer)

Wild about Wattle, Visit Wattle Display garden (West Melton) by appointment only. Call Esther: 0411 148 874. (Plants for sale, orders welcome)

### **SEMILOCAL NATIVE PLANT NURSERIES**

(approx. 1 hour from Melton)

Vaughan's Australian Plants, 1060 Port Arlington Road, Curlewis 5250 5592

### **APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee**

President	Barb Pye	5428 9369
Vice President	Martin Grannas	5426 4748
Secretary	Gerry Monaghan	5367 0857 <a href="mailto:aps@hotmail.net.au">aps@hotmail.net.au</a>
Treasurer	Cathy Powers	5369 4302 <a href="mailto:aps@hotmail.net.au">aps@hotmail.net.au</a>
Committee	Joan Carr, David Pye, Catherine Pevitt, John Flanagan	
Webmaster	Tim Grosvenor	