



*Acacia brunioides*

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc.

## ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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**Note: If you wish to view or download previous Study Group Newsletters, they are available on the Study Group website.**

**The address is:**

**<http://anpsa.org.au/acaciaSG>**

### From The Leader

Dear Members

Sadly, we recently learned of the death of **Jack Fahy**, founder of the Wattle Day Association, on 31 March 2018. An obituary, written by **Terry Fewtrell**, who is the current President of the Association, appears on page 4. I never had the opportunity to meet Jack, but I did have some email correspondence with him a few years ago, and I was always so impressed at how devoted he was to wattles, and the Wattle Day Association. He also always seemed such a nice person and a true Aussie.

Note that on page 4 of our Newsletter there is an article from Terry, titled Wattle: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. In that article, there is an invitation to Acacia Study Group members to take part in a survey of Australians' recollections about Wattle Days past, and how we celebrate National Wattle Day today.

The ANPSA Biennial Conference was held in Hobart in January. I did not attend the Conference, but would like to extend our very sincere thanks to John Boevink for organising our Study Group display. I have been told that John did our Study Group proud with the display – thank you John! The whole Conference was an outstanding success from all the reports I have had, and congratulations should go to the APS Tasmania Organising Committee. The next Biennial Conference will be held in Albany, WA in 2019.

A question – does anyone have experience in growing *Acacia hilliana*? If you do, I would appreciate any comments on your experience with this species.

Bill Aitchison

# Welcome

Welcome to the following new members to the Study Group.

Graham Ellis, Canterbury, Vic  
Sue Johnson, Cudal, NSW  
Jim Mackay, Engadine, NSW  
Mandy Thomson, Cranbourne, Vic  
Darren Williams, Bli Bli, Qld

Mandy Thomson works at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, where she is Team Leader Nursery. She recently gave me a tour of the nursery and in particular showed me some of the Acacias currently being propagated. These included a number of *Acacia dunnii* – hopefully these will eventually find themselves a spot in the Gardens and become a highlight, perhaps in the Weird and Wonderful Garden. A photo of one of the small seedlings appears below.



*Acacia cretacea*

Photo V Tanner

*Acacia rhotinocarpa* – This was referred to in our previous Newsletter No. 139. Victoria advises that she bought one of these about 4 years ago from the Bendigo Native Plant Group, at their Acacia sale. It has not grown much but she was careful where she planted it, under other plants (shade) and where she would see it often to ensure it was watered (back patio area). She doesn't recall it ever flowering, but it looks healthy enough, about 40cm high now.

*Acacia enterocarpa* – Victoria is growing one of these that has an anomaly in the stem. The stem is very thick and thin and has been this way for a long time. Victoria asks if someone can explain this (see photo below)?



## From Members and Readers

**Victoria Tanner** grows a number of interesting wattles in her Canberra garden, and she wrote (1 February 2018) about some of them.

*Acacia cretacea* – this has been referred to our recent newsletters. Victoria advises that she bought a plant at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (Port Augusta, SA) on her way back from a trip to WA. She put it in a pot thinking that it would be slow growing, but it has grown about 30cm in 3 months. The soil in the pot was from her compost heap and clay, so it seems to tolerate that.

The Flora of Australia volumes 11A and 11B, (the two volumes that relate to Acacias) have been out of print for some time, and not readily available as second hand copies. I did a recent internet search and found a set of the two volumes at a price of \$500. However, the good news is that some of the Flora of Australia volumes (including the Acacia volumes) have been made available online, and can be freely downloaded.

**Ross McDonald (Upper Ferntree Gully, Vic)** wrote (31 January 2018) in relation to this:

“Late last year, when ABRS announced that some volumes of Flora of Australia were made available online, I tried to download both volumes of Acacia.

Volume 11B was OK, but volume 11A would not download.

I contacted the Department of the Environment, and was advised that Volume 11A was corrupted, and needed to be re-scanned.

I have just been advised that Volume 11A is now available, and I downloaded and opened it without any problems.

You may want to pass this on to other members who may be interested in having both volumes on hand.

The link is:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/science/abrs/publications/flora-of-australia/vol11>”

Thanks to Ross for this advice. I can confirm that it is very easy to download both volumes, and the search function works very well.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Doug White (Longwood, Vic)** wrote (10 February 2018) as follows:

“I have a potentially interesting development. As a consequence of bush fire, there are widespread growths of various wattles in my garden. Recently this growth of past grown wattles I found to include several plants of *Acacia aphylla*. There are about 6-7 plants of this species, and the plants are spread quite a bit. Visitors to the garden have been struck by the cactus appearance.

I’ll keep you in touch with developments. The plants are growing among granitic rocks, as I’ve read is their natural point of survival. It may be, if the plants produce seed, we’re on the way to a natural rare species living in a home like fashion.”

It is interesting that a species such as *A. aphylla*, which is rare in its natural distribution, is both easily and commonly cultivated. In addition, in cultivation there is evidence that it can self-seed. Apart from Doug’s report above, I also

note that on our Study Group’s visit to Neil and Wendy Marriott’s garden in 2017, Neil and Wendy noted that *A. aphylla* was self-seeding throughout their garden (refer to the report in our Study Group Newsletter No. 136) – again, maybe a consequence of bush fire).

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In our recent newsletters, there have been references to the use of “Balah” or “Belah” as a common name. In Newsletter No. 139, Eleanor Handreck noted that, in South Australia at least, the name “belah” is applied to *Casuarina* species.

**Barbara Henderson (Moore, Qld)** noted the discussion with interest, and advised (9 March 2018) that in Queensland, the name Belah is applied to *Casuarina cristata* (a species found in some inland areas of Queensland and NSW).

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**When Victoria Tanner** visited WA last year, one of the wattles that she observed in the Stirling Ranges was *Acacia veronica* (Veronica’s Wattle). According to Flora of Australia, this is an “aromatic glabrous shrub or tree usually 3-10m high”.

Victoria, however, found it interesting that the plants that she observed were much smaller, no higher than 30cm. The following photo was taken at the base of the Mount Talyuberlup Walk. Victoria understands that the species only grows at the base of the mountain, and was surprised that they are reportedly much higher.



*Acacia veronica*

Photo V Tanner

Over the course of two days, Victoria ran the three highest peaks, including Mount Talyuberlup. The sign at the base of this walk (which is very rough) read as follows:

**Mount Talyuberlup Walk**  
**Trail Classification – Class 5**  
**Height: 783m Distance to Summit: 1.3km**  
**Allow 3 hours return**



*Steep Gradients. Surfaces may be rough and uneven or wet and slippery.*

*The Mount Talyuberlup walk offers the unique experience of looking through a hole in the mountain. The walk starts with an uphill walk through Talyuberlup mallee and Veronica's wattle and then changes to a difficult, steep scramble up to the base of a cliff face. Follow the trail past a large cave. Do not enter the cave (no access allowed – overhanging rocks are unstable and may fall). Instead, continue along the trail around the mountain to a difficult, short, near-vertical ascent close to the peak. It is then an easy walk to the very top.*

## Vale Jack Fahy

by Terry Fewtrell

Australia's wattles lost one of their greatest champions, with the death in Canberra of Jack Fahy on 31 March 2018. Jack was a passionate advocate of wattle as Australia's national floral emblem and for the celebration of National Wattle Day, on 1 September each year.

In the early 1980s Jack established the 'Week of the Wattle' celebrations in Canberra to recapture the earlier practice of celebrating wattle as a symbol of Australia. Then in 1998, in conjunction with his wife Florence, Jack took the very practical step of founding the Wattle Day Association Inc., with the twin objectives to promote the celebration of wattle as our floral emblem and National Wattle Day. Since that time the Association has had a significant impact across the country in promoting wattle as Australia's pre-eminent symbol, the natural expression of the green and gold.

While a great fan of the official wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, Jack's favourite was *Acacia podalyriifolia*, also known as the Mt Morgan wattle. But it was the beauty of any wattle blossom that inspired Jack. He cultivated his Mt Morgan wattle in his Canberra garden, reminding him also of his Queensland heritage. Jack fought valiantly for many years, against an all too premature diagnosis of cancer. His dedication to the cause of Australia's wattles was unquestioned and his legacy is greatly appreciated and continues in the work of the Wattle Day Association. [www.wattleday.asn.au](http://www.wattleday.asn.au)

## Wattle: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by Terry Fewtrell

Many people have memories of celebrating Wattle Day. Often, they involve school events, songs and stories. Sometimes the memories centre on community activities and shared celebrations of the beauty of the wattle blossom. In all cases the association is clear: Wattle is an authentic symbol of Australia and Wattle Day is a celebration of Australia.

Wattle Day celebrations have a great social history across Australia. Since the first co-ordinated celebrations in 1910 in NSW, Victoria and South Australia, Wattle Day has been a day of community engagement, often linked to a good community cause. Those 1910 celebrations were such a success that it was only two years later that the then Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, had the Australian coat of arms redesigned to incorporate wattle. Fisher was born a Scot and that made him all the more aware of the significance of wattle as coming from this land and symbolising its bounty and confidence.

The Wattle Day story has had its ups and downs over the past 118 years. At times it has been front and centre of national identity. At others it has tended to be overshadowed by other events. It was not until the bicentennial year in 1988 that wattle was recognised and proclaimed, officially, to be our national floral emblem. Then in 1992, 1 September was gazetted as National Wattle Day, an official day for celebrating Australia.

Since 1998 the Wattle Day Association has promoted wattle as our national symbol and the celebration of National Wattle Day. In this, our 20th year, we invite you to take part in a survey of Australians' recollections about Wattle Days past and how we celebrate National Wattle Day today. You can find the short survey at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HTFB6KC> or at our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WattleDay>

Our wattle is very patient and has evolved in Australia for more than 30 million years. As such it has welcomed all people to this land and is the great witness to the whole of the Australian story. Today, wattle is part of our lives in ways that we often overlook. For example, wattle is:

- the central design element of our highest awards, the Order of Australia;
- an ingredient used by top chefs to bring the authentic flavour of Australia to modern cuisine;
- featured on the caps of the captains of Qantas airlines criss-crossing the globe; and
- in marquetry inlays in the Speaker's Chair of the House of Representatives.

There are many examples and that Wattle is coming back into our national life; on our stamps and banknotes for example. That process is set to increase in the years ahead. The growing calls for a rethink about Australia Day celebrations on 26 January open the possibility that, in time, National Wattle Day could become our national day. Clearly this has become a mainstream issue, perhaps due to the success of reconciliation processes in local communities around the country. Certainly, the Association suggests that wattle and National Wattle Day offer us a means of thinking

our way through this issue. Wattle's history may be great, but perhaps its potential is yet to be realised as a unifying symbol. Just as it does in gardens throughout the country, our patient wattle, is there, ever ready to serve.

We are all advocates for and devotees of wattle. The Wattle Day Association has members across the country and would welcome more. You can check us out at: <http://www.wattleday.asn.au/support-us/Membership>.

## Report from ANPSA Biennial Conference

### Acacia Study Group Display

by John Boevink

My task was to set up and attend the Acacia Study Group display at the Hobart conference. Since this is not a good time for flowering acacias the emphasis was on the wonderful variety of leaf shapes in wattles.

I included *A. subulata* with flowers and fine leaves and *A. retinodes* included for its very nice flowers (a particularly good year for *A. retinodes* flowering on our block).

The leaf shapes were from: *A. alata*, *A. aphylla*, *A. cardiophylla*, *A. denticulosa*, *A. drummondii*, *A. fimbriata*, *A. floribunda*, *A. longifolia* ssp *sophorae* (showing some seeds), *A. mucronata*, *A. podalyriifolia* (including seed), *A. pravissima*, *A. riceana* (weeping), *A. spectabilis*, *A. subcaerulea*, *A. terminalis*, *A. vestita* (cross?).

I used the display vases of our North-west Group of APS Tasmania and filled the table provided for the display as you can see in the pictures attached.



The display vases were filled with water containing 1% of domestic vinegar, about 100mL of the solution, each. The Study Group display at the Queensland conference showed that water with some vinegar is optimal for extending wattle

flower life. And it worked a treat for me for the leaf matter too. I collected the cuttings on Saturday morning from our collection of plants.

And nearly all made it till the Friday closing day. *A. denticulosa* looked as good as when first cut. *A. spectabilis* had started dropping bits of phyllodes by Friday. I used garden clippers for the collecting, but re-cut the stems with a sharp blade before putting them in the vinegar solution. Low leaves and side stems were also removed with the blade. They were transported to Hobart the same day standing in the 1% Vinegar in 2 bunches, wetting only the bottom of the stems.

On Wednesday I checked liquid level in the vases and found most stems had used a fair bit of the "water" provided. And I replenished with fresh 1% vinegar water: They are consuming the vinegar!

The *A. cardiophylla* stem had used it all! and no longer looked OK, but I left it in the display anyway. It was not a big stem at all. It suggests that *A. cardiophylla* plants won't do well under dry conditions, when they have much more leaf matter than my display twig.

For the photographic display "board" I used mainly your photographs, but added my photographs of *A. saligna*. I think "my" *A. saligna* has a beautiful flowering display. But several people were not very enamoured of *A. saligna* as it had taken over areas they were aware of.

In a previous Study Group Newsletter, I discussed "my" *A. saligna* as possibly a hybrid with very little seed formation. The mother plant of the seed I used to grow it was near our bottom gate and I never noticed any volunteer *A. saligna* there. Perhaps Tasmania is just a bit cold for *A. saligna*. But it grows excellently, also from the Study Group seed I germinated last year: getting big in a hurry (quite opposite to *A. pendula*).



Talking about Wattles

Photo Jane Fountain



We had a bit of a Study Group members meeting during the Wednesday night, but I was not well prepared for that. About 7 people participated but not all at the same time. By hindsight I should have prepared a list of topics they might have wanted to discuss.

3 visitors to my stand said they intended to join. Let us hope they do. Actually, it is my impression that the stand had more visits from Study Group members than from others. All visitors were appreciated.

## ***Acacia glaucoptera***

by Warren and Gloria Sheather, Yarrowyck, NSW

*This is part of a series of articles by Warren and Gloria Sheather on interesting species in our Study Group Seed Bank.*

*Acacia glaucoptera* is another interesting wattle that appears in the Seed Bank List.

*A. glaucoptera*, the Clay or Flat Wattle, is a spreading shrub reaching a height of about one metre with a spread of up to 2.2 metres.

The phyllodes are blue-green, wing-like in shape with triangular lobes. They are continuous along the stems. New growth may range in colour from maroon to scarlet.

Flowers are bright yellow, held in ball-like clusters and carried at the base of each phyllode on short peduncles (stalks). Spring is the main flowering period but plants may burst into bloom, at other periods, after good rainfall. Black pods are coiled and twisted. Because of the species adventitious flowering, plants may carry flowers and pods at the same time.



*Acacia glaucoptera*

Photo W & G Sheather

*A. glaucoptera* has many attractive and interesting features. Growth habit, unique foliage, colourful new growth, bright blooms and unusual pods are all eye-catching features.

Lightly prune to maintain dense growth.

Clay Wattle could be grown as a foreground plant in a garden bed or draped over walls and embankments. *A. glaucoptera* occurs in the southwest corner of Western Australia.

The species name refers to the phyllodes blue-green colour and wing shape.

Propagate from seed that should be soaked in boiling water before sowing.

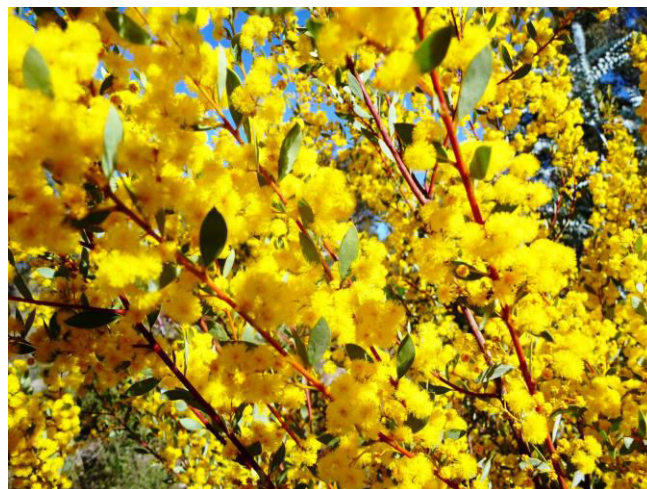
## ***Acacia buxifolia***

by Warren and Gloria Sheather, Yarrowyck, NSW

*This is part of a continuing series of articles on wattles of the Northern Tablelands of NSW.*

*Acacia buxifolia* is one of the 80+ species that occur on the Northern Tablelands of NSW.

*A. buxifolia*, Box-leaf Wattle, is a medium shrub that will reach a maximum height of 4 metres. There are populations, on the Northern Tablelands, that are much shorter than this.



*Acacia buxifolia*

Photo W & G Sheather

Phyllodes are from 2 to 3 centimetres long by 1 centimetre wide with a soft point. There is a small gland near the base of each phyllode. There is a form (origin unknown) that has attractive blue-green foliage.

Flowers are held in globular clusters with anything from 3-29 flowers per cluster. Blooms are yellow and appear during the usual spring season. As with most wattles, the Box-leaf Wattle benefits from having the spent flowers cut off. This will encourage new growth that in turn carries the next season's flowers. Pruning also keeps plants growing vigorously and increases their life expectancy.

*A. buxifolia* has a wide distribution along the coast and ranges of eastern Australia and is found in the 3 eastern mainland states.

Some Northern Tableland's populations reach a height of only 1 metre. In one area plants of the smaller form line one of the entrance roads to Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, east of Armidale.

The Box-leaf Wattle is a hardy, long-lived and free-flowering shrub. Some specimens in our garden are over 10 years old.

Propagate from seed that has been soaked in boiling water before sowing. Cutting propagation may also be possible.

## *Acacia trigonophylla*

by Bill Aitchison

*Acacia trigonophylla* is an ornamental wattle that is commonly cultivated. It is a WA species and occurs naturally from the Geraldton Sandplains through to the Avon Wheatbelt and the Mallee Bio-Regions and probably also the eastern Jarrah Forest Bio-Region.

However, a recent report notes that it has begun to invade wetlands and banksia woodland on the Swan Coastal Plain. This has resulted from its extensive use in roadside and revegetation plantings in areas outside of its natural distribution.

The Swan Coastal Plain includes the Perth Metropolitan Area, an area where fragmentation and disturbance of the remnant bushland has greatly increased the need for revegetation, rehabilitation and restoration of these areas. It is here that *A. trigonophylla* has been inappropriately been used in revegetation projects in a number of locations, and where it has now become naturalised and invasive outside of its natural range.

The report suggests that this species has the potential to become a major environmental weed in Perth's urban bushland, and it is recommended that it be excluded from future revegetation projects in this region.

### Reference:

Keighery, Greg & Longman, Vanda & Brundrett, Mark. (2017). Weedy and natural distribution of *Acacia trigonophylla* (Fabaceae). *The Western Australian Naturalist*. 31. 53-62.

## New \$50 Note

The Reserve Bank of Australia recently announced that Australia's new \$50 banknote will be released in October this year. As for all of the new series of banknotes, the \$50

note will feature a species of *Acacia* – in this case *Acacia humifusa*.

This species is found across northern Australia, ranging from the Kimberleys, WA, across to Cape York in Queensland.

## APS South Australia Plant Sale

This notice will be too late for those members who receive a printed newsletter, and may also be too late for email newsletter members.

However, on the weekend of 21.22 April, APS South Australia is holding its Autumn Plant Sale.

The sale is held at the Adelaide Showgrounds at Wayville, from 10.00 am each day.

I have been fortunate to get to two of these Sales in the past, and if you can get to Adelaide, it is a sale not to be missed.

More information is available on the website: [www.australianplantssa.asn.au](http://www.australianplantssa.asn.au)

A list of species for sale (some in small numbers) is available on the website. *Acacia* species listed for this sale are:

*acinacea, araneosa, argyrophylla, beckeri, boormanii, extensa, fimbriata* (dwarf), *floribunda, glaucoptera, glaucoptera* (dwarf), *idiomorpha, imbricata, iteaphylla, notabilis, paradoxa, podalyriifolia, pravissima, pycnantha, rheticocarpa, spectabilis, spinescens, toondulya, victoriae, whibleyana*.

And while referring to SA, a reminder about the annual plant sale held by the **APS Northern Yorke Peninsula Group** on Saturday 12 May, from 10am to 3pm at the Kadina Showgrounds Exhibition Hall. A large range of plants will be available including several species growing on Yorke Peninsula.

## Seed Bank

A list of species in our Seed Bank appeared in our Study Group Newsletter No. 139 (December 2017).

Although we do purchase some seed from commercial sources, we also rely upon donations of seed. If you are able to help with any seed donations they would be very welcome (we would ask you to post any donations to Bill Aitchison, who will forward them on to Victoria). It also helps enormously if you are able to clean, sort and label the seed correctly. Also, we would like to have provenance information for all seed in the seed bank – so if you donate

any seed, could you also provide any information you have in relation to provenance.

Our thanks to Annie Treasure and Doug White for recent donations of seed.

The procedure for requesting seed from our Study Group Seed Bank is as follows. Study Group members are entitled to lodge up to 3 orders per member per year, with 10 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of \$4 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The \$4 may be paid in stamps or by direct credit to our Group's bank account. Some members include an additional payment with their annual subscriptions to cover the Seed Bank charge. Note the increase from \$3 to \$4 covers increases in costs incurred by Victoria in packing and posting seeds, and in the purchase of seeds.

Requests for seed may be lodged in either of the following ways:

1. By email to our Study Group email address, [acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com) (emails to this address go directly to both Victoria and Bill Aitchison). If you make a request by email, you will also need to make the necessary payment by one of the above methods. If you are paying by stamps, these should be mailed to Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111
2. By mail (enclosing stamps if required). These requests should be posted to Bill Aitchison (address as in the previous paragraph). Bill will then advise Victoria of the request.

We would like to maintain some data on your results in

propagating seed from the Seed Bank. We would therefore ask if you could provide a report on your results, recording information on species, number of seeds sown, number germinated and days after sowing

## Study Group Membership

**Acacia Study Group membership for 2017/18 is as follows:**

**\$7 (newsletter sent by email)**

**\$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia)**

**\$20 (hardcopy of newsletter posted overseas)**

**Subscriptions may be sent to:**

**Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Victoria 3111**

**Subscriptions may also be paid directly to our Account at the Bendigo Bank. Account details are:**

**Account Name: ASGAP Acacia Study Group**

**BSB: 633-000**

**Account Number: 130786973**

**If you pay directly to the Bank Account, please advise us by email ([acaciastudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:acaciastudygroup@gmail.com)).**