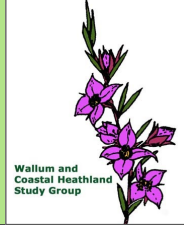




# WALLUM

AND COASTAL HEATHLAND STUDY GROUP



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All photos by Allan Carr unless otherwise indicated

*Caustis blakei* subsp. *blakei* at the Isambert Road site in July  
See also page 6 paragraph 2

## Our July Excursion

For our July excursion we visited an area recently acquired by Sunshine Coast Regional Council with funds from their environment levy. Our guide was Senior Environment Officer, John Birbeck. After gathering in Landsborough we met John and his wife, Stephanie at the end of Isambert Road for our walk along the old vehicle track into the property.

We recorded around ninety plant species, many of which we were familiar with from wallum sites previously visited. John Moss found a few Mistletoes amongst the foliage along with his usual butterfly discoveries and Richard Noske spotted the birds.

Some plants observed in flower or fruit were *Daviesia villifera*, *Cassytha filiformis*, *Lomandra laxa*, *Pultenaea villosa*, *Billardiera scandens*, *Persoonia virgata*, *Leucopogon pimeleoides*, *Pomax umbellata*, *Tetratheca thymifolia* and *Zieria minutiflora*.

The plant species list is available on request by email.

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## Excursion - 15 November 2020

For our last excursion of 2020 we will meet at  
**9.00am Sunday, 15 November**

The Gantry, D'Aguilar National Park, Sellin Road, Mt Mee,  
(UBD Map 44:F12).

Then we will walk in the mountain heathland area at 'A' Break  
nearby, (UBD Map 44:G14).

We can have lunch afterwards back at The Gantry.

**BYO chair, morning tea/ lunch.**

*Allan C.*



Jeanette Martin



## Our September Excursion

Our September outing took us to Grogan Park, a site in suburban Morayfield just west of the Bruce Highway. The park has about 1.5 km of wide walking trails through Melaleuca and Eucalypt forest, as well as some heathland spaces particularly one small area with many wallum species.

We puzzled over the identification of some of the Melaleucas, (See Robert Price's Feature Plant on page 4), and found seven Acacia species, four Lomandras and three Xanthorrhoeas, along with some familiar wallum shrubs such as *Baeckea frutescens*, *Gompholobium virgatum*, *Leptospermum polygalifolium*, *Platysace ericoides* and *Pultenaea myrtoides*. In all we saw about twenty species that we regularly find in other wallum heathland sites.

We covered about half the extent of the walking trails so it could be a site to revisit at some future time. The park has many tall Eucalypts and Corymbias and I'm sure we didn't identify all of them so that's a possible future task too. Surrounded as it is by suburban housing it is vulnerable to weed invasion and wildfires into the future.

The plant species list is available on request by email.

Allan C.



*Acacia hubbardiana* at Grogan Park

## A Letter from Betty Richardson

In Newsletter 46 you asked if anyone has grown *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, Blueberry Ash.

I live on a high ridge at the back of Dayboro within sight of Barbara's old home at Kobble Creek. I have successfully grown this, but with few flowerings and seeds. It is shaded by other larger trees, one of which is a *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, Firewheel Tree, also reluctant to flower. I very seldom water it and in our recent bad drought it died. Its companion soldiers on though. I kept watch after the rains and was delighted to see it sending up new branches from the base. The soil is fairly deep there and loamy, not so for the rest of the ridge top. As we have all those birds that eat the seeds that may be the reason for no new plants. I was delighted to see that it survived the dry.

Also, another survivor of about fifteen years was *Aotus lanigera*, Woolly Aotus, in full sun up until noon and then hours of shade until sundown. Totally left on its own to grow, it flourished and branched in my daughter-in-law's garden. But the recent dry period sealed its doom and I reluctantly pulled it out. I had enjoyed its bright yellow blooms but no seeds have ever grown. I regret the loss of our wallum.

Betty R.



*Aotus lanigera* at Bribie Island

*Lomandra elongata*





## The Lost Boronia

This item supplied by Barbara Henderson appeared in the Pine Rivers Branch Newsletter in February 1986. It was written by the late Joyce Ward of Mt Glorious.

There are several species of *Boronia* to be found in southern Queensland. Many of us have admired *Boronia amabilis*, *B. granitica* and *B. repanda* on excursions to the Granite Belt, *B. falcifolia* in wet wallum country, *B. rosmarinifolia* in sandy soils of open eucalypt forest, *B. rivularis* in damp gullies in the shade of trees on Fraser Island and adjacent mainland, *B. saffrolifera* in damp margins of shade from paperbarks and petite *B. polygalifolia* on rocky slopes or dry sandstones. Rarely seen was the tiny dainty *B. parviflora* which I was lucky to see on Emu Mountain and the nearby wet wallum of Marcoola.

Helen Moriarty has frequently shown another, *B. keysii*, an endangered species with a very restricted habitat in the Lake Cootharaba area. Helen, on one of her meanderings, came upon a plant a few years ago, took cuttings and produced a few plants, one of which I treasure. To date it grows successfully on Mt Glorious (1986) and I had hoped to propagate from it. My skills were obviously lacking as I had no success with either cultivation or propagation.

It has some unusual characteristics. The stems are hairy, golden brown on the young branchlets, leaves are opposite and can be simple to pinnate with five, seven or sometimes nine leaflets. On the flowering branchlets the upper leaves are trifoliolate and the lower ones simple. The flowers are in the leaf axils. The leaf is lanceolate in shape, widest in the middle and tapers off to a blunt tip. The upper surface is dark green, the lower surface a much paler colour. Both surfaces are glabrous and margins slightly recurved. Flowers are a deep rose pink and form umbels of two to six flowers. They are typical of many species, four petalled, starry, have quite a long flowering season – winter to spring and grow to a height of 6 to 7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m). For a long time, actually 62 years, it had not been seen. In 1909, James Keys, a teacher interested in natural history, on one of his visits to Tewantin, collected specimens of the plant while traversing areas adjacent to Lake Cootharaba. He sent specimens of the plant to his friend, F M Bailey, then Colonial Botanist of Queensland. It was described later by a Czech botanist, Karel Domin, in 1926 and given the name *B. keysii* to honour its finder. His specimen could have been one of those sent to Bailey.

It was in 1972 when Arthur Harrold of Noosa, a keen conservationist, was driving along a disused section of an old road to Cooloola and noticed an unusual plant. The Queensland Herbarium identified it as the long lost *B. keysii*. It only had to be compared with the original collection made by Keys to prove its identity.

It is included in *Extinct and Endangered Plants of Australia* by J Leigh, R Boden and J Briggs. What caused this plant to be almost lost? Its habitat is restricted, part of the area is within State Forest and trees have been cleared and replaced by pines. To the credit of the Forestry Service, areas have been left once they realised the *Boronia*'s plight. Botanist Beryl Lebler's leaflet 1176 DPI from which your scribe has obtained much of the information, wrote that the plant favours sandy soil, fairly rich in humus, with the water table only 2 to 3 feet (60 to 90 cm) below the surface. Trees dominating the forest are tall bloodwoods and white mahogany with a dense understory of mixed trees and shrubs.

Propagation is by cuttings which do not make roots readily, maybe because of the hairy stems. However, Geoff Butler of the National Botanic Gardens, recently visiting Brisbane whilst attending the ASGAP Biennial Conference (1986?) assured me that the Gardens have propagated plants successfully and are assessing their growth.

Barbara H.



*Boronia saffrolifera*



*Boronia parviflora*



Lake Cootharaba



*Boronia keysii*



## Feature Plant

*Melaleuca nodosa*

prickly-leaved paperbark

At a recent Wallum Studies Group walk in Grogan Park, Morayfield, there was some debate about identifying a species of paperbark flowering there in September.

Was it *Melaleuca nodosa*? Were the alternate leaves prickly enough for it to be the Prickly-leaved Paperbark? Maybe not. Were the flowers cream coloured? Sort of. Could it be *Melaleuca linariifolia*? As its common name Snow-in-Summer implies, you'd expect that paperbark's white flowers to appear a little later in the year and, unusually for a paperbark, *M. linariifolia* has opposite leaves. So no. Another small leaved paperbark was flowering nearby and identified as the Small-leaved Paperbark, *Melaleuca sieberi*.

Eventually, we agreed it was *M. nodosa*. The colour (which seems to be yellower further south in the plant's distribution) and globular shape of the flowers sometimes cause it to be mistaken for an Acacia, and the appearance of the flower bud is reflected in the small, round, woody fruit clustered on the stem.



*Melaleuca nodosa* habit



*Melaleuca nodosa* flowers and fruits

The species name *nodosa* is from the Latin for knot or node. The photo below illustrates the supposed origin of the genus name *Melaleuca*, from the Greek *melanos* for black and *leucos* for white: bits of bark burnt black by fire stand out against the rest, white and papery.

The natural occurrence of the plant is on sandy or clay soils in or close to wet heathland in coastal areas from Sydney to Southern Queensland. Being relatively slow growing makes it easy to shape into a small tree or bushy shrub. Other qualities include frost hardiness and tolerance of salt spray. With a fine display of terminal flowers in the spring, *Melaleuca nodosa* deserves a place in any garden.



*Robert Price*

Photos above by Robert Price

*Melaleuca nodosa* on Bribie Island







This item by the late David Hockings is from the Conference Booklet for the SGAP Queensland Wallum Yabba at Coolum in 1987.

Many wallum plants are mentioned.

**Please let us know about your successes or failures in growing these plants, especially those listed on page 7, in time for our next newsletter due in February 2021.**



*Grevillea leiophylla*



*Epacris obtusifolia*



*Phyllota phyllicoides*

## Horticultural Potential of Wallum Plants

Queensland's richest wildflower areas are the Granite Belt and the Wallum. These areas are not only very colourful in season but contain an immense diversity of genera and species. My personal opinion would place the Granite Belt slightly ahead of the Wallum in value, but strangely a surprisingly large number of species are common to both places.

Beautiful, wallum once covered a large part of the coastal strip north from the border at Coolangatta. When I first became deeply absorbed in native flowers in the early 1950s development was just starting along the South Coast (now Gold Coast). I was able to discover wonderful areas of Christmas Bells, Boronias, Banksias and even a beautiful stand of *Bossiaea brownii*. Mermaid Beach and north of Southport were my happy hunting grounds.

Unfortunately wallum doesn't even rate as history now on the Gold Coast, the areas are now under houses and there is little sign of wallum left other than the Coolangatta Airport reserve.

The Sunshine Coast is very quickly going the same way but with a few remnant patches still at this stage. I have somewhat unhappy memories of inspections of the Kawana Waters development from its early days and the mounting feelings of frustration and helplessness as street by new street, the whole area of really outstanding wallum flowers was converted to conventional gardens without any thought or feeling for the beauty that had been there.

I have friends who bought an allotment of choice wildflowers here at Coolum with the idealistic hope of at least preserving one little plot. After several years of harassment from the local council to mow their "neglected" block, and from the rapidly increasing neighbours to mow to get rid of the eyesore "rubbish" and vermin, and also from the garbage dumped there, they had to sell out.

I believe these experiences illustrate just how completely devastating housing development really is compared with say, mining and forestry, where remnants remain and areas can and do grow back. Agriculture (ploughed paddocks) is almost as bad as housing. It should be remembered that we have far more distinct plant communities than any other State.

In spite of all that is said about rainforests, 60% of our national parks are rainforest and so much other rainforest occurs on land that is so rugged nothing can ever affect it other than natural phenomena such as cyclones. We have substantially more rainforest in our national parks than the total area of rainforest in NSW. Do you think we should sacrifice other entire plant communities that could be built over or ploughed, for the sake of more rainforest, if the type of rainforest is already adequately represented in national parks?

The experiences at Kawana and Coolum also illustrate the urgency with which an organisation such as ours must seriously concentrate attention on seeking out plants with horticultural potential, to propagate and trial them as new plants for ornamental horticulture.

We are very fortunate indeed to have the excellent wallum national parks and reserves that we do have in Cooloola, Fraser Island, Moreton Island and Stradbroke Island. What a tragedy the unique value and beauty of this plant community and habitat was never recognised and acknowledged while areas still existed closer at hand on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. I wonder how many species, if not now lost from the areas, are now quite rare where they used to be so plentiful; perhaps even reduced to a few specimens still persisting along a verge or service line.

And so what of the horticultural potential of these wallum plants? The value of some has been proven by their exploitation (harvest from the wild) in times past. A visit to the Brisbane flower markets in season shows a little of this harvesting continues up to the present



continued from page 5

day (1987). *Blandfordia grandiflora*, *Boronia saffrolifera*, and *B. falcifolia* were once harvested in quite large quantities and sold on roadside stalls. Possibly of these, only *B. falcifolia* still appears on the markets. Other useful flowers such as *Conospermum taxifolium*, *Epacris obtusifolia*, *E. pulchella* and some *Leucopogons* still appear occasionally, as do *Lomatia silaifolia*, *Baeckea*, *Leptospermum*, *Melaleuca*, *Lycopodium cernuum* (now *Lycopodiella cernua*), *Macrozamia miquelii* fronds, *Persoonia tenuifolia* and the fruits of *Petrophile* and *Banksia*.

The greatest surprise though, is in the area of sedges. By far the most commercially valuable native plants in Queensland at present (1987) are *Caustis* and *Restio* (now *Baloskion*). They are exported around the world as “Koala Fern”. Not all originates from wallum areas, but they are harvested here under licence and the picking is carefully controlled and monitored so that the stands are not damaged.

As valuable as these plants undoubtedly are, none are being cultivated. To date there seems little serious interest in regarding them as crop plants. I fear we will miss the boat again because some other country will do what we should be doing.

A few wallum plants have gained a firm place in landscape and garden use. The best known that come to mind are *Austromyrtus dulcis*, *Banksia robur*, *B. collina* (now *B. spinulosa* var. *collina*), *B. integrifolia*, *Callitris rhomboidea*, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, *Tecomanthe hillii*, and *Melastoma affine* (now *M. malabathricum* subsp. *malabathricum*). I suspect that probably the form of *Melastoma* we have distributed over the years at flower shows is really a naturalised exotic.

There are a few other plants appearing fairly regularly now in nurseries: *Backhousia myrtifolia*, *Pimelea linifolia*, forms of *Phebalium woombye* and *Dampiera* ssp. We will see these and others at Fairhill Nursery. There are so many pretty little plants, plants that can be planted as flowering pots and which can be used in bedding displays. They have enormous horticultural potential.

What then of the cultivation of wallum plants? The fallacy persists that wallum plants must have swampy conditions. From time to time it is advocated that it is necessary to construct an area with a false water table in order to grow wallum plants; all very laborious and all so unnecessary. Wallum plants from Christmas Bells to *Epacrids* to *Boronias*, like other native plants, will grow much more successfully in deep, friable and therefore well drained soil, than they will in waterlogged conditions. Try it for yourself.

Quite apart from the unnecessary effort and expense the fallacy does the aim of bringing wallum plants into cultivation a grave disservice. To become accepted as garden plants, plants have to be able to be treated more or less like any other garden plants. Specially constructed areas of any kind will be a severe discouragement.

I have grown in the past and am growing at present on very light, bottomless, red, volcanic soil, a wide range of wallum plants including *Blandfordia*, *Baeckea*, *Bauera*, *Boronia*, *Epacris*, *Eriostemon* (*Philotheca*), *Selaginella*, *Sowerbaea*, *Phebalium*, *Goodenia*, *Villarsia* (*Liparophyllum*) and *Caustis*. Some are better specimens than you will find in the wallum and nearly all have never been watered in years since they were initially planted. Some are self-propagating readily as seedlings.

One important and overlooked factor is direct sunlight. Wallum areas, particularly the best flower areas, are usually of low vegetation and long sunlight hours. My successes with wallum plants have been on sites fully exposed to maximum hours of sunlight. Most home garden sites would receive a few hours only per day of direct sunlight.



*Boronia* for sale, Bribie Island, 1930s



*Petrophile shirleyae* fruits



*Bauera capitata*



*Liparophyllum exaltatum*



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Notable wallum plants that deserve special mention include the following: *Acacia baueri* possibly one of the smallest species with mature plants 4 or 5 inches ( 10 or 12 cm) high; the many showy pea flowers such as *Aotus*, *Daviesia*, *Dillwynia*, *Gompholobium*, *Hovea*, *Jacksonia*, *Oxylobium*, *Phyllota* and *Pultenaea*; the several *Banksias* including *B. aemula* for which the aboriginal name was wallum; *Bauera capitata*, *Blandfordia grandiflora*, several *Boronias*; the numerous sedges in a range of genera; the *Dampieras*, *Goodenias*, *Velleias* and *Scaevolias*; *Eriostemon queenslandica* (now *Philothea queenslandica*) *Epacris obtusifolia*; *Eucalyptus signata*, the scribbly gum (now *E. racemosa*); *Grevillea leiophylla*, perhaps the only *Grevillea* that grows in water; the several *Hakea* species; *Hibbertias*; *Leucopogons*; *Leptospermums* in six or more species; numerous orchids including one of Australia's showiest, *Phaius australis*; the beautiful Wedding Bush, *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*; the colourful *Sowerbaea juncea* and the bizarre *Xanthorrhoeas*.

David H.

Now look back at the request, top left on page 5, and make some notes if you have grown any of the plants mentioned in this article.

Send your information to the editor in time for the February 2021 issue.



*Phaius australis*

**"Fire should not be regarded as unnatural or catastrophic, but rather as a recurring event which influences the nature of the Australian landscape and the adaptations of its unique flora and fauna" – Garden Design Newsletter 112**



*Sowerbaea juncea*, land cleared for houses

## A Favourite Wallum Plant of Many

*Sowerbaea juncea*, vanilla lily, is probably the favourite plant of many wallum watchers. Not only is it delicate and colourful, but its perfume can be exquisite too.

The plant has thin blue-green leaves a bit like chives growing in a grass-like clump in moisture retentive acidic soils from southern Queensland to Tasmania. The flowers are borne in dense heads of more than 20 individual flowers on a single, unbranched stem to 50 or 60 cm. They are a delicate mauve shade with pink bracts and on rare occasions white flowers are seen.

Even though it is commonly called a lily, it doesn't have the tubers of a lily, but has fibrous roots. Plants can be grown in a container (like this one here at the home of Jan Glazebrook and Denis Cox) or around the edges of a pond, but unfortunately are only rarely seen in cultivation.

At present there are a few single stems of flowers along the Melaleuca Circuit of the Bicentennial Bushwalks on Bribie Island.

Allan C.



*Sowerbaea juncea*



# Moreton Island

In September Jenny Gursansky visited Moreton Island. Here are some of her photos.



*Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*



*Podolepis longipedata*



*Petrophile canescens*



*Banksia serrata*



View from Mt Tempest Lookout



*Jacksonia stackhousei*



View from Five Hills Lookout



*Blandfordia grandiflora*  
Christmas bells



**Happy Christmas to all our members**

**Wallum Hotspot**

Pine Ridge Conservation Park located at Runaway Bay, Gold Coast is a diverse area of coastal dune habitats containing five distinct plant communities - Wet and dry wallum heathlands, *Banksia aemula* woodland, Melaleuca wetlands and Scribbly gum/ Cypress pine woodland. Members of the Gold Coast Branch of Native Plants Queensland along with Barbara Henderson and Allan Carr visited the area in July 2018. The three bottom photos on this page are from that excursion. Notable flowering species were the vulnerable *Acacia baueri* subsp. *baueri* and *Caleana major*, flying duck orchid.

**“The way we use Earth threatens our future and that of many animals and plants.  
Species extinction is an inevitable end point.”**  
– Australian Geographic



*Leucopogon virgatus*  
Pine Ridge Conservation Park

Dune vegetation on the Gold Coast has all but disappeared and this remaining patch, including wallum heathland and woodland is certainly worth protecting for future generations. Surrounded as it is by a suburban housing area and main road, the site is vulnerable to weeds, overuse and wildfires.

*Allan C.*

**Reminders**

Check page 1 for details of our next excursion  
**9.00am Sunday, 15 Nov.**



Following that, the next will be **9.00am Sunday, 21 March**  
Meet 9.00am at Dowse Lagoon Park, Brighton Road, Sandgate. (UBD Map 110:P3)  
Then a walk at Deagon Wetland Reserve on Bracken Ridge Road. (UBD Map 110:H1)  
BYO morning tea/ lunch.



*Dampiera sylvestris*

Do any of you have appropriate garden or travel stories to tell us? **Send them for inclusion in our February 2021 newsletter.**



*Zieria laxiflora*  
Pine Ridge Conservation Park



*Dillwynia floribunda*  
Pine Ridge Conservation Park