

Banksia Bytes

Native Plants Sunshine Coast



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Native Plants Queensland

Newsletter

August 2018 Number 16

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From the Editor



Photo: Nita Lester

Is winter over here on the Sunshine Coast? Joan says spring is here with lots of colour. There are a couple of blue-tongue lizards out and about at our place, and in "The Wilde Woode" the hoveas, both purple and white forms, are in full bloom.



Photo: Nita Lester

Myrtle rust continues its relentless march around Australia. However, Spencer has some good news having found a rust-resistant *Decaspermum humile*. Our beautiful tree was our first major casualty from myrtle rust and I would recommend a resistant variety to everyone.

We have recently returned from a family visit to Canada, and in particular the Yukon where it never got dark! It started me thinking about the amount of photosynthesis going on and the energy put into plant growth during the long days of their brief summers. Extra energy is just what is required there if you plan to grow food crops. An account of times in the Klondike area around the 1920's, recorded storing soil in the basement so that seedlings could be potted up in tins inside, ready to go out once the river ice broke and the risk of late frost was low. In the town of Inuvik on the McKenzie River delta, in an area of permafrost, an ice-hockey rink has been converted into a large community greenhouse so the locals can

grow plants if they wish. One can only speculate how reliable or unreliable the fresh food supply can be in countries where nature rules so strongly.

Enjoy our lovely year-round sunshine

Wendy

Dates for your Diary

Sunday September 9: 9.00 am for a short meeting, morning tea and a long garden ramble at the Dillon's. BYO cup and a plate to share. John will meet us at the gate to organise parking and transport for anyone who can't manage the steep driveway. 803 Hunchy Rd, Hunchy. See the lovely photos of John and Joan's garden on page 6.

Saturday September 15: 7.30am-2.00pm [Natives Naturally](#) at the Maroochy Botanic Gardens, Tanawha. The pollinators - Birds, Bats and Bees are featured this year and there is great line up of speakers. NPSC will have a display. See extra information on page 13.

September 15/16: Spring Wildflower Show & Plants Market at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt. Coot-tha. Saturday 9.00-4.00 and Sunday 9.00-3.00. NPSC will have a display in conjunction with Pollinator Link. See the flyer featured on page 13.

September 21/23: Yabba at Warwick, hosted by Warwick Branch with Maria Hitchcock as keynote speaker. See your June Journal for full details.

Sunday October 14: a morning walk at Ewen Maddock dam, led by Ken McClymont from Sunshine Coast Council.

Sunday November 11: a morning at Butterfly Hill Nursery, Petrie Creek Rd, Nambour. As well as specializing in butterfly plants, they have a butterfly house and we will get a guided tour – cost \$7 per head. BYO for morning tea in the nursery picnic area.



Sunday December 9: 9.00am to 12.30pm approx. Mary Cairncross theatrette, Mountain View Rd, Maleny for an enlightening morning on habitats. Details will be sent as the program is developed.



For Information about outings contact....

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Marie	0427 152 022
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Decaspermum humile Silky myrtle

With Spencer Shaw from Forest Heart EcoNursery

One of the success stories we've had with Myrtle Rust is this species. I recall it was the first plant we saw infected by Myrtle Rust when it arrived in Maleny in early 2011. The disease devastated most of our beautiful specimens; some have been removed, some still struggle. But luckily, we found a specimen that we had collected locally that has demonstrated high resilience to Myrtle Rust. The mature plants have produced flowers and fruit, which is great news for this important habitat plant that also has horticultural potential.

Although this spectacular small tree or shrub has an extensive natural range - all the way from Gosford NSW to the Torres Strait and then throughout South East Asia to India - the plant is surprisingly poorly known in cultivation.

Decaspermum humile naturally occurs in rainforests and wet sclerophyll communities. In the forest it can become a small tree up to 20m with a stem diameter of 45cm! However, on forest edges and in cultivation it may be more commonly seen at a height of 3 to 6 m.

For foliage alone this plant is a star, with its silky new foliage and overall glossy appearance ... but wait there's more - in spring the beautiful white blossoms are produced en masse, with a rich honey scent - very popular with bees. The flowers are followed by black fruit, approx. 5mm across and very tasty for a wide variety of fauna - including myself!

Decaspermum humile grows moderately fast and prefers a fertile, well-drained, sunny position. Sun hardy and naturally very bushy, they can make ideal hedge plants that need little or no pruning to maintain their form. The Myrtle Rust resistant form that we are growing has a nice red tinge to the new growth.

Decaspermum humile is a stunning and bountiful plant for the garden and for revegetation.



Nature and wildlife are key values for our tourists

Nature and Visit Sunshine Coast, Director of International Marketing is quoted in the Glasshouse Country and Maleny News 25 July 2018:

“While wine and food are a big tourist pull which has led the way for some years now, a national and international visitors survey showed that over a five-year period nature and wildlife had the biggest growth of 10.6% compared to 7.4% for food and wine.”



It seems some recyclers can be recycled themselves!

From Gretchen Evans

You are all probably bored with hearing that fungi are great recyclers. But at our last meeting we heard about beetles which recycle some fungi. These beetles inhabit polypores (wood-rot fungi). They are minute, being only 0.5-5mm long. They are dark brown or blackish with a short, convex body. Larvae or adults burrow into the tissue. They have a life cycle of about 2 months.

A new member from South America is working on Cis beetles (tree-fungus beetles) and has asked us to collect some fungi for her. As with fungi there are hundreds of unidentified insects in Australia and not much money is given to research. She gave us a really inspiring talk so some of us have decided to collect wood-rot fungi like polypores. The specimens can be kept in small polystyrene containers. The beetles don't need any other food or oxygen and can live happily in the container for months. So easy? The catch is we need to ID the fungi, and polypores are very difficult.



From the Archives:

While Olive was trawling through her old Bulletins she found this item (note and poem) which she thought would be a fitting response to my article in the last Banksia Bytes "Beware the Grasshoppers"

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL By Margaret Vickerman

So many people ask us what to do for grasshoppers and this timid bantam did the most good in the shortest possible time. Only one hen at a time on the prowl is the secret, though we have used two sometimes.

*When people wail and carry on about the
chewings of a throng
Of hoppers hungrier than sharks
They ought to loose one bantam hen ... and hark
at her contented clucking
As she strolls in shoals of hoppers ... pecking.
A goose when loose, will taste all herbage
But bantams stick to insect garbage mostly.*



(Reprinted from SGAP Bulletin, August 1975)

From the archives: Our mention of the Red Cedars at Deb Wagner’s place in Banksia Bytes 15 reminded Olive of this article in an SGAP Bulletin from 1989.

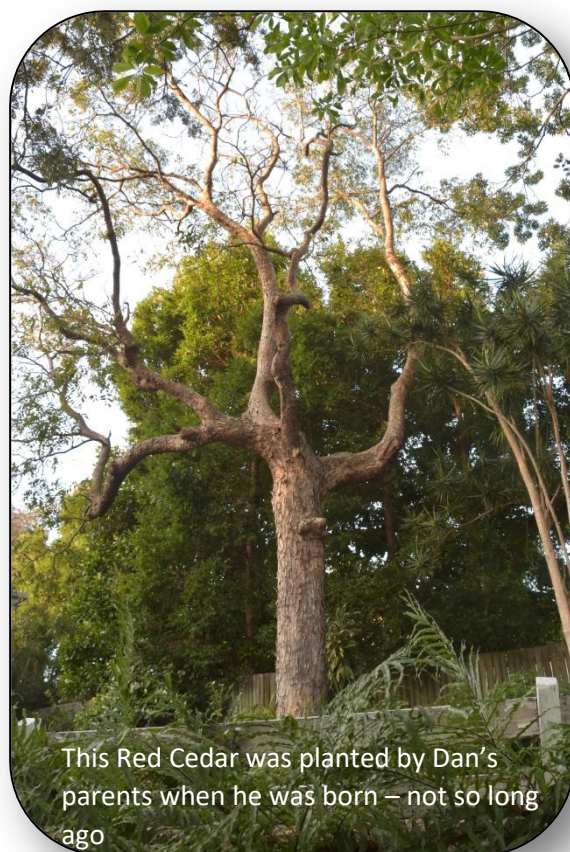
THE GLORY OF RED CEDARS

By Jean Edgecombe

Why aren’t you planting Red Cedar?

Member of an illustrious family, the *Meliaceae*, which includes the mahoganys and other valuable cabinet timber trees, the Australian Red Cedar (*Toona ciliata*) has close relatives in New Guinea, India and South East Asia. One of the very few Australian deciduous trees, it loses some or all of its leaves in winter – adds another growth ring to its trunk – and lights the green forest with coppery-red young leaves in spring.

Large sprays of small white flowers appear in September – sometimes over the whole tree, other times on just one side, or on one branch – followed by dry capsules holding 25 winged seeds at each end. Planted in March when they are fresh, these grow readily. Cuttings are also successful. After a big tree has been felled, there is usually regrowth from sprouts or suckers, and also a good crop of seedlings, which seed in turn in about 7 years. The greyish bark is rough and scaly, the leaves pinnate, with up to 12 or more leaflets attached by a short stalk to the centre vein.



Every part of the tree is useful. In India the leaves are fed to cattle. An infusion of bark is used to treat fever and dysentery, and said to be nearly as effective as quinine. The white flowers produce a permanent brown textile dye, the bark tans leather to a purplish colour, while hams smoked with cedar sawdust are said to have a flavour no modern delicatessen can match. Heartwood is resistant to white ants. Wood of logs left in the forest for 16 years, then in water for 3 or 4 years, was found to be in perfect condition and beautifully coloured just 2cm from the weathered outer surface.

(Reprinted from Townsville Branch Newsletter, February 1989)

Spring Colour

by Joan Dillon

Spring has certainly arrived with the hoveas in full flower and wattles flowering sequentially from June on.

The best two as I write in late July/early August are *Acacia amblygona* and *A. chinchillensis*. The latter is found naturally in the Darling Downs Pastoral District and appears to be available from various sources. I grew mine from seed obtained via the Acacia Study Group and is I think my favourite garden wattle, growing to about 2m tall and 1.5 wide. It has grey-green feathery foliage and masses of golden ball flowers that retain some colour even when dried.



About 18 months ago I purchased a supposedly white flowered *Hovea acutifolia* which did turn out blue but has a much better form than the usual hoveas. Widely spreading branches, and larger

blooms stacked along the stems plus more noticeable perfume make it an outstanding garden specimen. I'll be growing as many as I can from seed, provided of course it sets seed. The resulting plants will no doubt vary but it will be interesting to see if any are the same as the parent plant.

Creamy *Phebalium woombye* has commenced flowering, pink *P. nottii* which flowered right through winter hasn't quite stopped and yellow *P. whitei* has just started. *Leionema lamprophyllum* has clusters of tiny white flowers and the philothecas are unfurling their waxy white flowers from the pink buds. It's a lovely time in the garden!



Last month, I was privileged to present the first ever Healthy Habitat award at the 2018 gala dinner and awards night for Healthy Land and Water. Several of our members' properties are registered with Land for Wildlife or we belong to landcare and bushcare groups, so it was good to see recognition given to healthy habitat, which does after all, underpin healthy land and water. Austinville Landcare won the award for their Austinville Valley Riparian Restoration Project. Stingless bees featured in the awards also with Bob Luttrell winning the Science Innovation Award and Tim Heard the Sustainable Agriculture Award. It was quite a night!

Preventing extinction from Myrtle Rust and habitat loss: saving our most imperilled plants

Dr Jarrah Wills, Queensland Herbarium, The University of Queensland

Myrtle Rust: what is it?

- Plant disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Austropuccinia psidii*
- Affects Myrtaceae
- Neotropical origin
- Several different strains globally
 - Australia has the pandemic strain
- Introduced to Australia in 2010 and spread rapidly
- Can infect >358 native species across a range of habitats
- Kills growing tips, young leaves and reproductive tissue

Myrtle Rust: Impact in Australia

- Early work - Geoff Pegg, Angus Carnegie and Bob Makinson
- No broadscale surveys of the impact on Australian plants
- Building a database of MRs impact on Australian plants
 - Incorporates existing data, expert observations and field surveys from around Australia
 - >620 populations comprising 460 field surveys
 - >106 species

Myrtle Rust Survey

- Impact is species specific and ecosystem specific
- Worst impacted are rainforest/margins myrtle species
 - Mainly in the tribes Myrteae and Kanieae
- Severely impacts
 - range restricted endemics
 - once common-wide spread species
 - keystone ecological species
 - culturally significant species
- Also can infect paperbark and eucalypt species
 - Particularly the regeneration after disturbance/fire

Myrtle Rust: Impacts in Queensland

Range restricted endemics

Gossia lewisensis, Mt Lewis.

Gossia inophloia, Mt Glorious.

Gossia gonoclada, Logan River.

Once common and widespread species here in SEQ

Rhodamnia rubscens, South-east Queensland.

Rhodomyrtus psidioides, South-east Queensland.

Keystone ecological species

Melaleuca sp. Particularly fresh growth after fire or reforestation plantings

Ristantia pachysperma, The Boulders, Babinda and Russell River NP

Tristaniopsis exiliflora, Golden Hole, Russell River

Myrtle Rust: what can we do?

Misconception that we can't do anything

- Monitor and assess the ecological impact
- Prevent other strains from entering Australia
 - Can have different host ranges including eucalypts
 - Increase the chance of sexual recombination
- Translocation outside of MRs range
- Resistance breeding and rewilding of resistance genotypes
- Seed/germplasm storage

Peachester School Initiative



Peachester State School have a thriving indigenous Forest Walk Track cared for by the school Enviro Club. This year their focus is on plants for native birds and their school emblem is the Black Cockatoo so they are planting plenty of Banksias.

NPSC have donated a bundle of our brochure *Native Plants for Native Birds* to encourage the wonderful activity being under taken by the students.



How a humble Australian bee could help the world's plastic problem

From ABC Radio Brisbane



Photo: Vanessa Harwood-Stevenson
This native bee creates a substance for its nest that could become a plastic alternative.

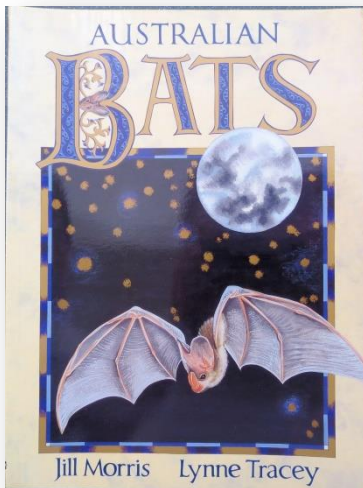
There's a buzz among researchers across the Tasman as they recruit native Australian bees to fight the war on waste by helping create a new bioplastic.

The biotech start-up Humble Bee aims to take the nesting material from Banksia bees to produce a water-repellent and flame-resistant form of natural plastic.

The New Zealand-based company is attempting to reverse engineer the material to create a biodegradable alternative on an industrial scale.

Founder and chief executive Veronica Harwood-Stevenson has been collecting Banksia bees (*Hylaeus nubilosus*) in south-east Queensland with the help of Chris Fuller from Kin Kin Native Bees.

Special Thanks



Many thanks to the multi-talented Jill Morris who has closed her Greater Glider publishing business and has donated copies of her books to NPSC.

Australian Bats, Australian Frogs - Amazing Amphibians, Australian Kangaroos - Magnificent Macropods, and Koala Number One will delight the children who take home a gift copy from Natives Naturally on the 15th September at the Maroochy Gardens.

We are lucky to have Jill as a member of Natives Plants Sunshine Coast. Learn more about Jill's amazing achievements at www.greaterglider.com.au

Reports on Outings and Events

Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve, May 2018 by Eric Anderson



The May outing to Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve was more than ably led by Spencer Shaw. There were 11 lucky attendees and 7 apologies. The small number present meant that we were all individually looked after. We were introduced to the diversity and beauty of the flora of Mary Cairncross. We identified many of the plants using leaf characters, and when leaves were not visible, were aided by trunk features. Seen was *Litsea reticulata* (Bolly Gum) whose trunk is smooth, scaly and marked by large shallow oval depressions. It was of interest to learn that those plants that have coppice shoots had Gondwanan origins. Examples seen included *Castanospermum australe* (Black Bean) and *Pouteria australis* (Black Apple). The image of the blue-black plum-like fruits of Black

Apple were taken the previous October.



Birds and Conservation, 26 May

Birdlife Australia, Sunshine Coast organized a very successful Congress at the Maroochy Botanic Gardens. Almost 70 people attended and listened to a great range of speakers on both birds and the efforts to conserve their habitats.

Greg Roberts gave an inspiring talk on the fight to save the Yandina Creek Wetland and Prof. Daryll Jones entertained and educated us about people feeding birds. Dr Dominique Potvin delighted all with her talk on the modern evolution of Australian bird song. A range of speakers covered the conservation issues for both the Sunshine Coast and beyond.

NPSC were invited to put on a display to highlight the importance of native plants for native birds and at least 12 NPSC members were spotted in the audience.

Congratulations to John Birbeck and the team from Birdlife Australia for this richly informative day.



Baroon Pocket Section of the Great Walk, June 2018

The first stage of the Great Walk, from Baroon Pocket was a feast for plant lovers. Marc Russell has a remarkable knowledge of the plants and his explanations for spotting the differences between species are so practical that even the plant gurus like Joan Dillon were making notes.

Our thanks go to Marc who gave up a day of his long service to lead us on a most memorable walk in the forest.

Afterwards – many of us had to take sustenance at Secrets on the Lake!



Corybas aconitiflorus

Glasshouse Mountains Walk, August 2018

A large group of NPSC members went for the walk, starting at the Soldiers Cemetery near the Beerburrum SS, and moving through from the low-lying areas to the rocky hillside area. The changes in vegetation were quite distinct, from the sedges, ferns and melaleucas to the eucalypts and more dry-tolerant shrubs. There were flowers on the little yellow peas (including *Daviesia umbellulata*, *Pultenaea myrtooides*, *Pultenaea villosa*, *Pultenaea retusa* and *Pultenaea petiolaris*), wattles (including *Acacia hubbardiana* and *Acacia complanata*), and little Hovea (*Hovea heterophylla*), to name just a few, and the *Leptospermum microcarpum* was budding ready for a great show. A special moment for me was seeing and feeling the soft and hairy reddish fruits on the *Dodonaea rupicola*. We were very ably led by Gwen Malcolm and her friendly and knowledgeable team.



Daviesia umbellulata



Dodonaea rupicola



Grevillea leiophylla

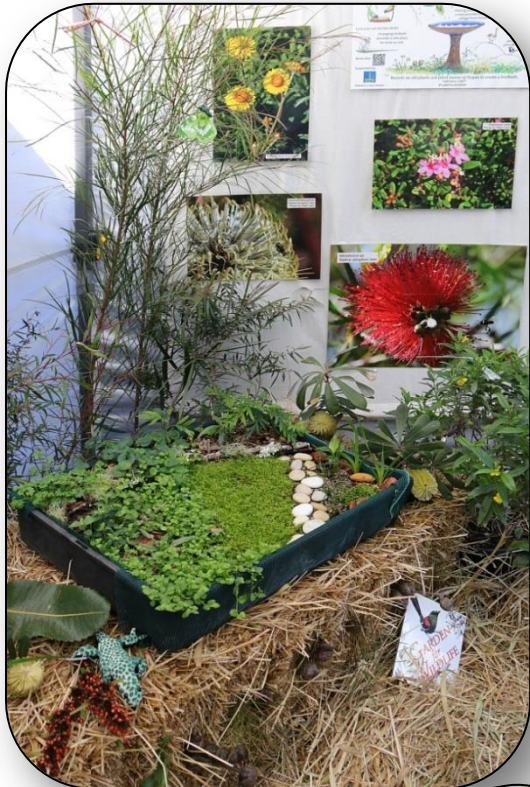


Queensland Garden Expo 2018

Brilliantly sunny winter days encouraged a record attendance at the Expo this year and we handed out more brochures than previously. It seems native plants and what they can do to encourage native birds, bees and butterflies is striking a chord with gardeners.

As always, a magnificent team effort: the setup team of Anne, Jim, John, Joan and Marie all had to don hi-vis vests this year – very fetching.

Thanks to Allan Carr from Caboolture Branch for his



magnificent

photos and his help on both Friday and Sunday; Michael Fox from Pollinator Link for his posters and help on two days.

The ever-willing NPSC team of Joan Abercrombie, John Birbeck, Gretchen Evans, Jackie Hansel, Joan Horgan, Frank McGreevy, Anne Windsor and Jim Wolz manned our display and enthused the gardening public about native plants.

Joan Dillon developed a miniature garden for wildlife (shown left) which added zest to our display, and thanks to the creative talents of Jodie from Kwerky Kafe in Beerwah the hand-knitted blue-banded bee created interest. Is it a male or female bee? How can you tell? This kept the visitors guessing. Do you know?

Many thanks to all those who contributed to a very successful event. Without you this would not be possible.

Marie



Natives Naturally
for Your Garden

Saturday, September 15, 2018, 9.00 – 3.00
Birdwalk 8.00am

BIRDS, BATS
and **BEEES**

A one day family event in beautiful surroundings.
PLANT sales, FREE advice, DISPLAYS, Family ACTIVITIES
FREE guided walks

Managed Fairy Wren, Erica Stage!



FIND OUT

- How to attract birds, bats and bees to your garden
- About the variety of birds, bats and bees you may expect to visit your garden
- Which plants are best to plant in your garden

Arts & Ecology Centre,
Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens
www.friendsofmaroochybotanicgardens.org.au

PROGRAMME

7.30am - Early Morning Bird Walk registration and breakfast BBQ

8.00am - Bird Walk led by Faunawatch

9.00am - Childrens' activities + Frankie the Fruit Bat
Plant sales
Bird, bat and bee information + displays

9.30am - Bee Talks – Bob Luttrell
'Bringing stingless bee hives and honey collection into the 21st century'
Talk by Ryan Newis (USC)
'Use of tree resins by stingless bees'

10.45am - Bat Talk – Dr Les Hall
'Bats as pollinators'

12.00pm - Friends walk
'Plants to attract pollinators'

1.30pm - Talk – Joan Dillon, Horticulturalist
'Gardens for wildlife'

2.00pm - Bird Talk
Ken Cross, Birdlife Australia, Sunshine Coast sub-branch
'Birds in backyards'

Throughout the day: bird, bat and bee friendly plant displays and sales – BBQ in the Gardens; drinks, tea, coffee, cakes, biscuits and sandwiches sold throughout the day at the Café.

Friends of MRBBG
Our mission is to support the establishment of a world-class botanic garden for our region.
Our voluntary support guarantees the continued growth and maintenance of the plant collections through gardening, construction, maintenance and bushcare as well as guiding, information services and community consultation.
We have fun too – NEW MEMBERS are welcome!

Presented by:
Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens
and
Native Plants Sunshine Coast



BYO Cash Only

WILDFLOWER SHOW
and
NATIVE PLANTS MARKET

Sat 15 Sept, 9am - 4pm
Sun 16 Sept, 9am - 3pm

Brisbane Botanic Gardens
Mt Coot-tha Auditorium



- Low Prices!
- Superb display of wildflowers
- Expert advice - talk to the growers
- Popular and rare plants available
- Displays by local eco groups
- \$3 Entry



Native Plants Queensland
NSPAP trading as NPQ

Join a branch and learn more about native plants!
www.npq.org.au



The End of Banksia Bytes 16