Program

31 March, 10 am – Dee’s garden

If you have not been to visit Dee Stuebe’s garden here is a chance to see a clever environmentally friendly house snug in the hillside with a living roof of natural vegetation looking out into a very attractive garden setting.

This is how you get to Dee’s garden: In Bathurst proceed down Durham Street towards Eglinton; take a dogleg into Ophir Road. Continue straight ahead approximately 18 km and turn to the right into Pine Ridge Road. Past the Rock Forest Bushfire Station, about 2 km, Dee’s rust-red gate is on the right hand side.

Proceed down the track to the sheds: first parking spot. There is parking space further down the track near the house. If you are energetic, park up on Pine Ridge Road and enjoy the local flora on the way down.

Reporting on the visit to Dee’s garden: Like Australian Plants Online, the Internet version of our newsletter adds new contents in between issues (on the last page called ‘next newsletter’). We will try and report on this and future events as soon as possible, and welcome ‘in-between’ contributions from members as well. As well as making for better communications, it makes the editors’ job easier when it’s not all concentrated at the deadline. So …. please email or write to us!

19 May - TBA

See “next newsletter” section for information as we get this day planned.

21 July - Burrendong Arboretum

It is the gem of the west with its extensive collection of native plants from all over Australia. It will be Hakea time with flowers strange and beautiful to see as well as a lot more.

23/26 September – Pre-conference tour

One of the tours preceding the biennial ASGAP conference in September will pass through the Bathurst and Oberon areas. This will be an all-hands-to-the-pump exercise as we show our fellow plant enthusiasts from all over Australia the best of the Central West in gardens, parks and wilderness areas.

20 October – Cemetery visit

Cemeteries across Australia have been recognised as ‘life saving refuges’ for some of our most endangered native plants, indeed entire ecosystems. The Central West is no
exception. Come and see what treasures lie buried. Cemeteries will include Carcoar (with a nice picnic spot on the river) and probably Woodstock.

17 November – Propagation
A new venue (SHIPS nursery, Ophir Road, Orange) for an ever-popular activity of learning or pursuing the productions of plants for your garden.

Message from Marcia

Hello to members old and new, we do value your membership, even if you can’t always get to our outings. We have only a few, and the dates are in this newsletter, so write them in and make a special effort this year. It’s great to put names to faces.

The AGM at the TAFE building in Orange went well. We have declared the position of President vacant, and I am a Vice-President, as is Terry Rath. Secretary is still Sue Wakefield, Publicity person is Fiona Ogilvie, Cilla Kinross is Treasurer, and Geoff Windsor is our expert on plants.

Terry looks after the Library, and we have quite an extensive collection of books, so if you need or want a book about Native Plants, see Terry. Isobel and Hans Guldberg have taken on the job of Newsletter editors once again, thank goodness.

So all is well at committee level for a short while, but we do need to change president every three years to comply with our constitution.

We were treated to a great talk and discussion on climate change, and the effect it will have on our animals as well as on climate. The speaker was Ray Mjadwesch, who is the most enthusiastic person you could imagine …… a young man with a mission. Thanks, Ray.

Planning for the 2007 APS tour from Newcastle is going ahead, but we will need helpers, as we have to welcome the visitors and feed them and generally make them feel at home.

Special thanks to Mick Harvey for allowing us to use the TAFE premises, and for giving up his day to look after us.

See you very soon, on March 31, at Dee’s house and garden..

Marcia

Other diary dates

Annual Grevillea Study Group plant sale in new location

Autumn On-Farm Plant Sale and Native Garden 2007

“Silky Oaks”, Oakdale - 140 Russell Lane Oakdale.

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April, 10 am to 4 pm.

Access: M5 to Picton. Turn left at Picton into Argyle Street, then first right into Barkers Lodge Road. Russell Lane is on the right at Oakdale.
Alternatively, train to Macarthur then bus to Camden - change bus to Russell Lane Oakdale.

Entry Fee is $5 per person. Seniors half price. Accompanied children under 18 free.

- Extensive Program of Speakers and Workshops - Speakers on both days include Don Burke and Angus Stewart.
- Visit the extensive native show gardens where native plants are grown to perfection in a timeless open parkland setting.
- Grevillea gardens
- Rainforest Garden
- Waratah Garden
- Gardens feature choice banksias, boronias, correas, dampieras, eremophilas, grevilleas, leschenaultias, verticordias, waratahs and many more
- Expert garden and horticultural advice will be available from Merv Hodge, Cas Liber, Neil Marriott, Ray Brown, David Shiells.

Largest Range of Native plants for sale in one place at the one time. Tumblers available from $4.

Catalogue and Program – download from April 1.

Sponsored by: The Grevillea Study Group of the Australian Plants Society, P.O. Box 275 Penshurst N.S.W. 2222. Contact: Phone 02 4659 6598.

PS from Co-ed:

It seems to me that an alternative route for Central West people is to follow the Great Western Highway/M4 to the Northern Road turnoff near Penrith, then follow the Northern Road all the way to Narellan. Turn left at Narellan into Camden Valley Way and after about 500 m right into Narellan Road towards Campbeltown. About 400 m along Narellan Road turn right into the Camden Bypass. Pass Old Hume Highway to the right south of Camden and 300 m later turn right into Burrogorang Road, which leads to Oakdale via The Oaks.

However, I don’t want to rock the boat and unduly mislead people with this possible alternative and perhaps all will be revealed when the website is opened on 1 April!

Articles

Content

Due to our travels we seem to have no real articles for this issue so these pieces will have to do! Anyhow, we are always on the lookout for contributions, and will put them on the ‘next newsletter’ page until we put it together formally in May. Please consider sharing your knowledge with other members through the newsletter!

Ed’s note on ’seeing red’ in Trinidad, we hope, provides colour though it about another flora and fauna. The subject of Dee’s poem on ‘vegie or weed?’ originated in China (as far as we can determine), but we liked it (the poem)!
On leaving one’s garden for a whole summer

Due to an extraordinary combination of family events, Isobel and I ended up spending almost three months in America between early December and late February. While it was delightful to spend a whole month quietly together in a little fishing village named Puerto Morelos on the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, and see grandchildren including a new one in Los Angeles, we were aware that the unseasonably hot and dry climate persisted back home, and were naturally worried about the resilience of our Oberon garden. We were off the Internet during most of February after proceeding to the Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago near the Venezuelan coast for my sister’s birthday, and so didn’t know that the rain and cooler climate came at last.

We definitely don’t want to be away for such a length of time ever again, even though good friends and neighbours kept an eye on the property and we had arranged for Kerrie and Andrew M’Crystal from Talking Trees in O’Connell to water our young plants (which they did eleven times from 11 December to 7 February, as well as making a major assault on the weeds in February).

At a time when the climate seems to be changing more rapidly than scientists have predicted, three months is too long to be away, especially in the high season. It is extraordinary, however, that very few of the mature plants died despite not being watered (our instructions), and even the little ones generally survived, with some watering as mentioned.

Our greatest worries concerned our rarer ‘treasures’, a recently acquired Wollomi pine and the two surviving specimens of Acacia clunies-rossiae from seeds supplied by Thais Eisen’s Acacia Study Group. This is the threatened
Kowmung wattle which grows only in a few locations in the Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks. It is named after the Kowmung River, which flows from the eastern edge of the Oberon Plateau through the Kanangra-Boyd into Cox’s River.

Both our Kowmung plants showed signs of stress before we left for America, so we were worried that we might lose them. As it happened, the larger plant (pictured as it looks now) did lose its original main growth (the brown stick on the photo), but it was successfully replaced by new growth from below. And the smaller one we had worried over before leaving now looks healthy, though it remains small. We are grateful, of course, to Kerrie who took her responsibility for keeping these two exemplars of a threatened species alive very seriously indeed.

So we were happy to contemplate a jungle on our return following the February rains! The kitchen garden was absolutely overgrown, especially with Peruvian blue potatoes that had proliferated, to put it mildly (they taste good, though). But our Australian native garden was also looking very lush after the February rains. As far as the Wollomi is concerned, it presented an extraordinary reflection of (short-term) climate change. When we left in December it had not started sprouting new growth since we planted it in September, and the original branches went very yellow during the stressful December and January periods. But by the end of February its branches and top had sprouted bright green additions in strange contrast to the original branches. Although further rains during March have benefited all parts of our fossil tree, the contrast is still visible (photo).
Climate change

Ray Mjadwesch spoke on this subject at the AGM in February, as Marcia reports. We don’t think many members are in much doubt that climate change is with us; that it is extremely serious for future generations and increasingly for our own; that it is largely caused by greenhouse gases and other man-made influences; and that it may be accelerating unless we all take action – locally as well as globally.

We think it is important to research and study the likely impact of climate change in our Central West region, and how we can help alleviate its effects and preserve biodiversity through our efforts as gardeners, by influencing the public, and by learning from local academic institutions and environmental groups, as well as national bodies like the CSIRO and the Australian Greenhouse Office, and their equivalents in NSW. While many of us joined the APS as gardeners, the environment is being forced into our perspectives because of the apparent rapidity with which our climate is changing. Let’s work to understand these issues better in 2007, and try acting accordingly!

Co-ed

Seeing Red

With the world focus on cricket in Trinidad we feel privileged to have seen the actual cricket ground on our recent visit there for family reasons, where some World Cup matches are being played in Port of Spain, the capital city.

So many Trinidadians (Trinis for short) wear brilliant red. I was tempted to go out and buy a shirt in that colour but then I realised it wouldn’t look half as good against my pale skin.

Red has a tradition of thousands of years in the island - something we learned, strangely enough, on a visit to the Caroni Bird Sanctuary, near Port of Spain. There
we motored quietly in a small wooden boat among the mangroves in this magnificent wetlands area of 40 sq km. Our goal was to see Trinidad and Tobago’s national bird, the red, or scarlet, ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*) coming home in scarlet clouds at sunset to roost in the mangroves. The young are grey/black but adults brilliant scarlet. The colouring is attributed to their diet of shrimp and other crustaceans. Earlier these birds were forced to migrate to other areas on the mainland of South America (Venezuela is close by) but now due to the conservation of their habitat they can remain in the area year round.

The dominant species of mangrove is *Rhizophora mangle*, a red mangrove. Until recent times the bark was harvested to make the scarlet dye used in fabrics. Now it is prohibited to do so.

Red is the magnificent Double Chaonia, *Warszewiczia coccinea*, the national Flower of Trinidad and Tobago. Apparently this form of Chaonia came from a single plant found on the roadside which just goes to show that roadsides are important the world over.

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**Prince of Wales**

First gardening days, young marrieds;  
Raised brick bed, new river soil;  
Black, rich – set like clay!  
Tender seeds sown with love;  
Anxious scanning, careful watering;  
Flush of green, proud tending;  
Thorough weeding, luxuriant growth;  
Spiky heads of grey green plumes.
Aunty Sel, veteran gardener,
Calls and sweeps yard with one look.
Nothing said, until leaving.
‘Better pull those weeds out darling.’
‘Weeds? They’re flowers! Surely, surely..?’
“Prince of Wales weed, see the feather?”
Devastation settles in.

Vegie gardening years and years on.
Bed of carrots, new soil topped,
Grows a robust crop of weeds.
Carrots swamped, Prince of Wales
Waves his feathers once again.

Refugee from Kampuchea
Visits, stares and clicks ‘Tch, tch’
I bow my head and humbly nod,
Weeds, I know. They must come out.’
‘No, No, not weed. Very good. Very tasty, try with chicken.
Very healthy. Clever gardener.’ Tch, tch, good.’ (Tch, tch’ good?)

Prince of Wales, you sly deceiver.
Are you friend or are you foe?
Wave your feather, ridicule me.
Weed or vegie? I don’t know.

Dee Stuebe, Rock Forest, 18/1/07

**Weed or non-weed?**

Do you know the Prince of Wales Feather weed or non-weed? Searching the net it would appear to be an *Amaranthus hypochondriacus* L. which was apparently introduced from China into USA. The “L” after the name indicates that it was named by the great Linnaeus himself, as far back as 1753 according to *Flora of North America*). The photo is from an Australian seed operation (Eden Seeds).

I [Ed] have bought amaranth seeds in an Asian shop grown it and eaten it. *Amaranthus hypochondriacus* is advertised on the Internet in Australia as a cereal, rich in protein, higher than corn or wheat. It is available from major Australian supermarkets and some health stores.

The information on the Internet is not entirely consistent, and does not really solve the ‘friend or foe’ issue. *Flora of North America* says that *A. hypochondriacus* is widely cultivated as ornamental, pseudo-cereal and fodder crops in many tropical to warm-temperate regions of the world. It notes that it sometimes occurs as escapes near the places of cultivation, but that there are no reliable reports that it has become successfully naturalised. It may be different in Australia of course, so Aunt Sel hasn’t yet been proven wrong.  

*The Eds*
NSW Flora Vol 2 has gone AWOL!!!!

Remember that we have an extensive library for members’ use available for loan from our Librarian, VP Terry Rath (6336 9091). It did have volumes 2,3,4,5 and 6 of NSW Flora. Unfortunately Volume 2 has been misplaced no doubt through oversight. We need it back. Please look on your shelves.

Office bearers

President: Marcia has served three years and our Constitution requires that we find a new one!

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