PENTACHONDRA

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Pterostylis curta

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Promoting the cultivation and conservation of Australasian plants, and their closest relatives, in northern hemisphere gardens

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(Winners of Categories 1, 3 and 4 of the Photo Competition)

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APS NEWS

From the Chairman

Having battled relatively unscathed through the major long term roadworks at the M25/A3 junction to reached the RHS Wisley Gardens for our first APS event of the year we had a sudden sense of foreboding when informed that the glass houses were closed to the public for its annual spring clean. That sense of foreboding swiftly turned to one of elation when our host for the day, RHS horticulturalist and APS member Hugo Danckwerts informed us that we would in fact have the whole of the RHS Wisley main glasshouses practically to ourselves!

Hence twelve APS members and guests found ourselves touring the new orchid display house, the tree fern displays and the Macrozamia plant beds in the main glasshouse together with the support glasshouses. The latter contain the newly acquired National Collection of Pelargoniums (including a variety of Australian species), the large potted specimens overwintering before being displayed outdoors for most of the year, and the large collection of Australian



Gary Firth

We had the RHS glasshouses practically to ourselves

dendrobiums and many other orchids in the specialist orchid house. I was particularly impressed with the flowering quality of the Australasian dendrobiums that Hugo had achieved, and with his work studying different mounting media for the orchids for future display in the main orchid house when in flower.

After two hours or so touring at leisure with a perfect and knowledgeable host, members of the group dispersed to view the many other delights of Wisley. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day; 'wonderful' according to one of our Plant Heritage colleagues! Thank you Hugo.



Gary Firth

Hugo Danckwerts explaining how orchids are mounted on rocks for display in the orchid house



Judy Clark

***Dendrobium* 'Dancing Flora'**



Judy Clark

Dendrobium speciosum* var. *hillii

The numbers of APS visitors may have been down a bit thanks to all the adverse publicity about the roadworks but in fact a dozen was a perfect number for this type of visit, enabling everyone to clearly hear what was being said and see what was on display. We would love to be able to hold more similar intimate events across the country but with the majority of your committee based in the south east this can be difficult. We would love to support members coming together to meet and view Australasian delights in parks and gardens throughout the UK. If you can identify suitable sites together with a proposed date and itinerary we can do the rest in terms of contacting local members, putting them in touch with you together with any necessary liaison with the proposed venue. We already have a possible venue for the south west but if you think that you can arrange something anywhere else in the UK we would love to hear from you.

Gary Firth



Judy Clark

***Callistemon subulatus* 'Packer's Selection' at Wisley**

Events

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Horsham, W. Sussex

Sunday 16th June (10am – 3pm)

The APS will have a sales stand at this brand new plant fair. In 2019, Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens opened its doors after a closure of 10 years. This magnificent Grade I listed garden was nearly lost forever and has been the subject of the largest garden restoration in England. One of the best collections of Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias in the country, including a Plant Heritage National Collection of Loderi and Leonardslee Rhododendrons.

Hole Park, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent

Sunday 18th August (11am – 4pm)

We will have a stand at the Hole Park Plant Fair. This is one of the best-known gardens in Kent, a winner of Visit Kent's Garden of the Year award in 2016. Four generations of the Barham family have created a wonderful 16 acre garden in a magical parkland setting.

Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Sunday 15th September (10am – 3pm)

The APS will also have a sales stand at the Borde Hill Gardens Autumn Plant Fair. Listed by English Heritage as being of Grade II historic importance and set within 383 acres of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the High Weald, Borde Hill is of national botanical importance and features one of the largest collections of privately owned champion trees in the UK, with over 70 specimens. Many specimens are original material grown from seed brought back by some of the great

plant hunters, including Kingdon Ward, Rock, Wilson and Forrest.

Other events currently being considered for 2024 include a visit to Wakehurst Place and the Great Dixter Rare Plant Fair.

Admission fees apply for all gardens except for members helping on the stand.

For further information on any of these events or if you are able to help on our stands please contact Gary and Maria Firth at **themyrtleman@gmail.com** or phone 07842 951602. Helping at plant fairs is great fun and you get to meet lots of fellow plant enthusiasts.

APS Photography Competition

Winners 2024

Twenty eight photos were entered in the 2024 APS Photography Competition. Entries were displayed without identification of the photographer, so images were judged on their merits. The winners were chosen by members present at the 2024 AGM (excluding the organiser of course) who voted for their favourite in each category. As you can see from the winning images the standard was very high. Voting was close, especially in categories 1 and 2. Many congratulations to the winners, who are:

Category 1: Individual plant growing in the northern hemisphere (10 entries) **Gary Firth** (see front cover)

Category 2: Close up of any plant of Australasian origin showing diagnostic features, taken anywhere in the world (12 entries) **Jeremy Spon** (see below)

Category 3: Group of Australasian plants in a garden, anywhere in the world(3 entries) **Colin Kitchener** (see back cover)



Waratah on Isola Madre (see article on Gardens of Lake Maggiore)

Category 4: Australasian plants in a landscape in Australia or New Zealand **David Renouf** (see back cover)

Maria Firth is taking over the organisation of the photography competition and 2025 winners will be voted for at the 2025 AGM.

Seedlist news

At our recent AGM, the future of the seed-list was discussed, and two changes were agreed which are have now come into force.

If you recently received the seed list by email you will know about the first. To help save on postage costs, and to enable the list to be updated in a more timely and regular fashion, it was decided that the list would from now on be sent out by email. At the end of May the list and order form were sent out to all members except for those few for whom the APS does not have an email address.

If the APS has an email address for you but you have not received a seed list contact membership secretary Jeremy Spon at **membership@anzplantsoc.org.uk**. Don't forget to check spam/ junk email before you do so.

If you do not communicate by email and you would like a copy of the seed list please contact Judy Clark (see address and phone number inside the back cover) who will arrange for a paper version to be sent to you.

Second, it was agreed that given the increasing cost of obtaining seed from Australia and New Zealand, and of postage costs within the UK, the charge made for seed orders should be increased. A relatively small proportion of members actually order seed (we would be very happy if more did so) and these members are currently receiving a considerable subsidy relating to their membership benefits compared to other members, so it was felt it would be fair to impose a significant increase in the charge. The charge this year will be £6, and this will increase again next year to £8. We hope that given the rarity of much of the seed on the list, and the number of packets that can be ordered (20 per year) members who do order seed will still feel that this represents very good value.

Could you collect seeds for the APS seed list?

It remains difficult, and expensive, to source seeds from Australia and New Zealand, though we hope we have found a solution to this problem. This makes members' donations of seed all the more valuable. Both seed collected from your Australasian plants and any leftover seed you have hanging around will be very welcome. If you have any questions about collecting seed please contact Judy Clark at **editor@anzplantsoc.org.uk**.

Label collected seed with the name of the plant you collected it from. Don't worry if you don't know the (full) scientific name. A common name is fine and some people like surprises! See the May 2023 Pentachondra for some tips on collecting seed.

The best leftover seed donation is that packet you purchased but never got around to sowing, and hence never opened. Don't worry about how old the seeds are. Some species (for example many pea family members) produce seed that remains viable for many years. If the packet has been opened then seeds will deteriorate more quickly, so they should be donated as soon as possible after you've sown what you want.

Send donations to APS seed manager Janet Miller; her address can be found inside the back cover. Seed donors get an extra packet of seeds from the seed list for each species donated.

Metrosideros excelsa seed

Some seeds lose their viability really quickly. In early May member Alan Bryan contacted your editor with a very generous offer. He had been given some fresh *Metrosideros excelsa* (Pohutukawa, New Zealand Christmas Tree) and wanted to share it with other APS members. As Pohutukawa seed needs to be sown really fresh he didn't want to donate the seed to the APS seed list and he asked if there was any other way to get this seed to members.

It was decided to email all APS members, offering the seed on a first come, first served basis. The seed ran out the day after the message was sent, so Alan was unable to fulfil all the requests. However I hope that members who received seed and end up with surplus plants might be willing to offer them to other members, especially those who missed out on getting seed.

ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference: Gardens for Life

The Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) or ANPSA, is the overarching body for all the Australian plant societies within Australia and holds a conference on Australian flora, shared around the states, every two years.This year is Victoria's turn.

The 2024 ANPSA conference will be hosted by the Australian Plants Society Victoria and held in Nunawading, Melbourne from September 30th to October 4th. The theme is 'Gardens for Life' and as well as being able to hear 25 speakers on topics that range from landscaping for conservation, restoration and saving rarity to native plants as food and medicine there will be day excursions to local highlights, all led by very knowledgeable locals.

For more information about ANPSA, the conference and APS Victoria visit **www.anpsa2024conference.com/** and **apsvic.org.au/**.

If you happen to be in Melbourne on October 2nd you might like to attend the AJ Swaby Address by Phillip Johnson. This is part of the ANPSA conference, but open to the public. Phillip is a landscape designer and 2013 Gold and Best in Show winner at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Phillip's topic is 'Connected through Nature' and he will cover the evolution of his work focusing on the importance of working with nature and look at the various design solutions that his team have created to help address the world's extreme weather conditions by mimicking natural environmental systems. The

Have you paid your subscription?

If you have not yet paid your 2024 subscription you will find a final reminder to do so enclosed with this newsletter, Please ignore it if you have paid very recently as you may have done so after the editor received the membership list.

Please do not forget to tell us if your postal or email address changes - we do not want you to miss out on an edition of Pentachondra or Society emails!

lecture will be held at 3.30 pm at the Round (399 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading, Victoria 3131). The event is free to attend but you need to register by emailing **anpsa2024@gmail.com**.

Writing for Pentachondra

As ever, many thanks to all members who have contributed to this issue. Perhaps you might be one of those who writes something for the next issue?

It would be really interesting to know how your plants fared during the wet winter of 2023-24 which was followed, at least in the south east, by a very wet spring. How did your plants fare under these conditions? Were there any surprises? How wet was it? Was wet weather combined with cold weather? It would be very helpful if you could include information on conditions in your garden, especially soil and drainage.

That said, all articles will be welcome. The only is stipulation is that your writing has to have some connection with Australasian plants and their close relatives. ('Australasia' includes Australia, New Zealand and neighbouring islands.) Length is not important, and if you don't fancy writing photographs on their own are fine but please include captions. If you are not confident about writing then the editor can help you put together an article using your material. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Judy at **enquiries@anzplantsoc.org.uk**.

The deadline for the next issue is **15th October 2024**. Please send contributions as word documents or similar (not as a PDF) and please do not compress photographs.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Melanie Hick: Climate-Forward Garden

Melanie Hick is a life-long gardener who grew up in leafy Melbourne in Australia. She changed career in mid-life to become a garden designer, retraining at Capel Manor College. This year she had a design accepted for the prestigious RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival. So if you are going to Hampton Court don't miss her Climate-Forward Garden.

The Climate-Forward Garden is set in a sunny Victorian terrace front garden, re-imagined for a changing environment. It is intended for homeowners who want to turn their garden or courtyard into more climate-friendly retreat. The space is influenced by how Australian garden design has evolved to cope with the demands of harsh climate conditions such as drought and flooding rains. Using recycled gravel creates a soakaway for sudden downpours, and the drought-tolerant planting is also mulched with gravel.

The natural hues of the Australian bush are the inspiration for the colours for the materials in the garden. The dry stones of river beds, the rusty steel of old shearing sheds, the reclaimed galvanised steel of water tanks and raw reclaimed wood are common sights across the southern continent. Visitors can watch reflections on the water in the central pool while surrounded by the aromas and colours of the Australian eucalyptus and crepe myrtle.

Not all the planting is Australasian, but one plant is very personal to Melanie. It's the snow gum, *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *pauciflora* This species grows on Mount Buffalo in the Australian Alps where Melanie used to



Melanie Hick

Climate-Forward Garden

ski as a child. Another key plants is *Leptospermum scoparium* 'Red Damask' which has deep red double flowers.

After the show, the garden will be relocated at Kilmorie School in Lewisham, ready for September 2024.

Terry Raisborough: open garden, June 23rd

Do try to visit Terry Raisborough's open garden. She describes it as a plantaholic's paradise, consisting of several distinct sections and offering visitors a wealth of inspiration for their own gardens. Meandering paths cut through a year-round garden containing life-sized statues, rose arches, colourful borders, alpine beds and areas of sheer enjoyment. Plants are from all over and include the following Australasians.

In pots

Callistemon 'Hot Pink'

Grevillea victoriae

Pandorea jasminoides 'Rosea'

Pandorea jasminoides 'Variegata'

Pandorea pandorana 'Golden Showers'

In the ground

Callistemon sp., yellow flowers, possibly sieberi

Callistemon sp., red flowers

Corokia cotoneaster

Corokia 'Sunsplash'

Corokia variety, brown leaf, name unknown

Podocarpus, 2 varieties, names unknown

Grevillea 'Canberra Gem'

Muehlenbeckia complexa

Correa, 3 varieties

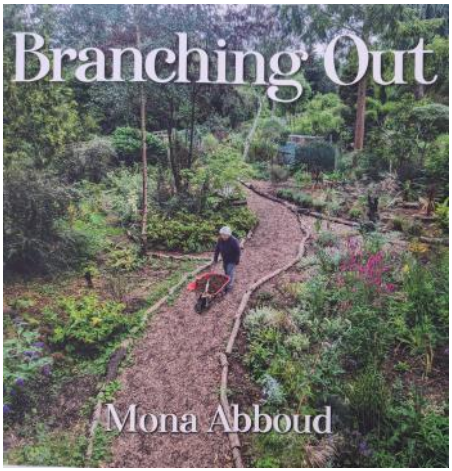
Sophora microphylla 'Sun King'

Sophora tetraptera, seedlings self sown from tree that died

Astelia

2 x10 foot dead trunks of eucalyptus grown from seed 30 years ago

Terry's garden is at White Gables, Breach Lane, Sherfield-on-Loddon RG27 0EU. Parking is available in nearby village car parks. It is open from 1pm to 5pm and entry is £5 for adults, free for children. Refreshments will be available next door. The proceeds from ticket sales will go to St Michael's Hospice and the proceeds from refreshments will be shared equally between St Michaels Hospice and the Alzheimer's Society. (Both organisations are registered charities.)



Mona Abboud: Branching Out

Branching Out is the title of Mona Abboud's new book which came out on March 31st of this year Here it is reviewed by Gary Firth.

APS members may be familiar with Mona Abboud's garden, either through personal visits, Mona's previous book Corokia: My Adventure, or through her various articles in Pentachondra and elsewhere. Her original garden in Muswell Hill, North London is relatively narrow but 100 metres long and has been bequeathed to Perennial, The Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society.

This latest book by Mona is very much the description of her experiences of acquiring a 600 square metre parcel of overgrown land, belonging to a neighbour, at the bottom of her garden. This is not primarily a horticultural text but a very personal account of the trials and tribulations of working with the neighbour, solicitors and others to purchase the land; the enormous effort in clearing the site despite somewhat restricted access; and finally the joys of planning and planting up of the new garden, all over the course of roughly two years.

One of Mona's primary aims was to ensure that the new garden was environmentally sustainable by reusing materials already on site, including logs and branches but also concrete from an old greenhouse base. This she seems to have done admirably.

The final garden includes exotics, Mediterranean style areas, prairie planting, woodland and, of course, more corokias of which Mona is the Plant Heritage National Collection™ Holder.. An appendix of the plants growing in the new garden is included at the end of the book.

Written in Mona's inimitable style this makes an interesting and enjoyable read but be aware that it provides little information on the growing requirements of the plants listed. It is very well illustrated in a 'before and after' style and of course includes a number of images of Mona's beloved corokias.

Branching Out is published by Wood Vale Publishing (March 2024), ISBN 978-1-7385658-0-1 92pp

GARDENS OF LAKE MAGGIORE

Jeremy Spon

A lake in the far north of Italy, in the shadow of the Alps, might not seem like the obvious place to go to see Australasian plants, but Lake Maggiore, straddling the border between Italy and Switzerland, is the location of three gardens, each spectacular in their way, one of which holds an amazing collection of waratahs (*Telopea* species and cultivars.)

During a walking holiday in May 2023, based in Stresa on the shore of the lake, I had a chance to visit all three gardens, and the photos accompanying this article were all taken then. The most famous of the three is probably Isola Bella, an island in the lake where in the seventeenth century the local Borromeo family built a palace and spectacular baroque garden. The garden is a fantastic creation, built up in a series of terraces to resemble a ship sailing on the lake. In planting terms it is relatively conservative, with clipped evergreens and bedding plants for colour, and I decided to pass up the chance to actually land in favour of spending my limited time in the other two gardens I am going to mention. But Isola Bella is one of the great gardens of the late Renaissance, and if I ever return to Lake Maggiore I would certainly want to do more than view it from a passing boat.

The second of the gardens in and around the lake is one created much more recently, in the first half of the twentieth century, by a Scotsman, Neil McEacharn. Villa Taranto is on the mainland, but close to the shore, and like all three gardens benefits from the moderating influence of the lake on the local climate. Summers can be hot, with alternating periods of heavy rain and drought, while winters are generally mild, with the occasional frosts seldom being severe. McEacharn bought the estate where he built the Villa and garden specifically with a view to growing exotic plants, many of which he personally collected from around the world. Now owned by the Italian state, the garden has clearly had its ups and downs, with parts feeling more like a public park than the botanic garden which McEacharn envisaged, and much damage being caused by a freak storm in 2012. But replanting is being done, in a modest way, to continue the spirit of experimentation and acclimatisation which inspired its creator.

Among the Australasian plants I noted were young specimens of *Banksia serrata*, *Metrosideros excelsa*, and an unidentified *Grevillea*, the latter two in flower – all three of these may have been bedded out for summer. There was also a group of *Leptospermum scoparium* hybrids in full flower, a huge *Acacia dealbata* (not in flower but with many seed pods,) and a well-established *Agathis robusta* near to a grove of *Dicksonia antarctica*, and a remarkably healthy looking *Araucaria angustifolia* (Parana pine, Brazilian of course not Australasian, but a rare tree to see growing outdoors in a European garden.) In an interesting building doubling as a greenhouse and winter garden there was a *Dacrydium cupressinum* which was clearly going to be too large for what was a relatively low building, together with two more banksias, *B. serrata* and another species I couldn't identify (labelling in the garden was a bit hit and miss.) Villa Taranto isn't a garden you would visit principally for its Australasian plants, but it does



Jeremy Spon

The green and mysterious Isola Madre



High sheltering hedges

have a fine collection of other rare and beautiful trees and shrubs so is well worth devoting a few hours to.

The garden that is a must see for any APS member who goes to Lake Maggiore, at least in spring, is Isola Madre. This is another island in the lake owned and planted by the Borromeo family, this time much more as a botanic garden. Unlike Isola Bella, which was certainly designed for showing off to passers-by, Isola Madre is secretive, its perimeter largely enclosed by tall evergreens pruned to make enormous sheltering hedges. The shelter is needed, as like Villa Taranto the garden is subject to the occasional violent storm – in 2006 the outstanding tree in the garden, a huge *Cupressus cashmeriana*, was blown over. (Amazingly it was painstakingly winched back upright and has re-established itself.)

As soon as I landed on the island it was obvious that the owners are interested in growing the exotic and tender – as I walked along the path beyond the entrance gate I encountered a *Casuarina equisetifolia* (Coast She-oak) towering above me, shortly followed by a large acacia, probably *A. retinodes*, with clusters of yellow pom-pom flowers, then an equally impressive *Hymenosporum flavum* (native frangipani) absolutely covered in scented cream to yellow flowers. *Leptospermum liversedgei* was also flowering profusely, and dotted further along the path were various pittosporums and coprosmas.



Jeremy Spon

***Hymenosporum flavum* - Native Frangipani**

But the highlight of Isola Madre, and indeed of all three gardens, has to be the collection of Proteaceae. Hidden away in an extra sheltered area of the garden, on a more or less south-facing terrace, is a remarkable collection of members of that family, from both Australasia and South Africa, nearly all growing successfully, and flowering freely, in the ground.

There are various proteas, leucodendrons and leucospermums from South Africa, and banksias and grevilleas from Australia, but the most spectacular sight, at least at the time of my visit, were the waratahs, *Telopea* species and hybrids, in full flower.

I took lots of photos, for which we only have room for a handful, but I doubt whether there many other places in Europe, if any, where you can see such a stunning flowering display of these beautiful plants grown outdoors, in the ground. They were, on their own, well worth the cost of travel to and entry into the garden.

(It is worth pointing out that Isola Madre and Isola Bella are partner gardens of the RHS, so membership of that organisation gives free entry to both gardens.)



Jeremy Spon

Waratahs on the Protea Terrace





Jeremy Spon

Telopeas on Isola Madre (see also photo competition report)

THE EUCALYPTS OF MARWOOD HILL GARDENS

Malcolm Pharoah

In the 1950s and 1960s Dr Jimmy Smart started to create and plant what is now Marwood Hill Gardens. Situated in a valley in North Devon only four miles from Ilfracombe, the original 8 acre garden has a stream running through it which in the 1960s was dammed to make two lakes. In 1979 Dr. Smart retired from being an anaesthetist and, fortuitously, the next field down the valley was for sale. He bought it, making the 20 acres of the present garden.

Even in the 1960s he was planting *Eucalyptus* and they are now quite big. With the acquisition of the new area and visits to Australia to see his nephew (who is now the owner of the gardens after the death of Dr. Smart in 2002) many *Eucalyptus* were planted. Most of these were grown from seed he got in Australia and they too are big specimens now.

The biggest tree in the garden is *Eucalyptus nitens* or 'Big Top'. A huge tree, it is champion of England, though not of Britain however as there is a tree in a forest in Argyle in Scotland which is 6 inches taller. I think by now ours will have overtaken that one in height due to the growth rate in our secluded valley and the amount of rainfall we get in Devon. It is quite a stately tree towering over other Eucalyptus in that area. Sheaths of spent bark peel off its trunk each year and hang like Christmas streamers from its mighty trunk. Amazing also that for such a big tree it has such tiny seeds.



Malcolm Pharoah

***Eucalyptus nitens* showing peeling bark**

The most impressive eucalypt is *Eucalyptus cordata*. Its silvery blue foliage lights up this part of the garden. Situated high up on the far hillside it can be seen everywhere in the garden. Unlike most Eucalyptus this one flowers in the winter, a real boon if you have bees like we do, as its pollen is devoured by the bees and provides much needed energy for them. Juvenile leaves of eucalypts are usually quite different to the adult leaves but not in the case of *E. cordata* where adult leaves are not formed. The foliage remains the same even as it becomes covered in flowers.

The snow gums of the Snowy Mountains around Mt. Kosciusko are spectacular and are some of the hardiest for the U.K. *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *pauciflora* itself has large leaves and trunks and is impressive in the lower reaches of the Snowy Mountains. As you progress higher other subspecies of *pauciflora* are revealed. The popular subsp. *niphophila* has one of the most beautiful trunks, glistening white with pencil markings that are a feature of it. We have several; one in particular is the tallest in England.

Eucalyptus gregsoniana is another snow gum with fine bark and is floriferous in flower, and *pauciflora* subsp. *debeuzevillei* has possibly the whitest stem of all. Ours unfortunately lost part of one side when a ferocious gale in February 2022 brought down another eucalypt that crashed into it. Winds are a major factor in the life of a eucalypt in this country as they grow so big and fast and put on so much growth that the root ball often can't cope with the extreme pressures on the trunk and so is very vulnerable to strong gusts of wind.



Malcolm Pharoah

Eucalyptus gregsoniana

One of the loveliest is *Eucalyptus mitchelliana* with pure white bark as it gets older. Eucalypts go through several phases of growth. It takes a few years for the juvenile phase to pass into the adult phase when the tree starts to flower and the bark peels to reveal its hidden charm.

Perhaps the most unusual snow gum is *Eucalyptus lacrimans*. It used to go under the name of *Eucalyptus pauciflora* 'pendula' until it was realised that all plants from seed were pendulous, so it got a new name. Dr. Smart brought back seed of it from Adaminaby on the way to Thredbo village in the Snowy Mountains. On one of my trips to Australia I also saw it there. A group of them were growing on a corner of a grassy verge. If they were ever to widen that corner the trees would get wiped out and so a dramatic sight would be lost.

Over the years we have grown perhaps over 70 species, mostly ones from Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria. We are now left with glorious large trees that include *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *E. rubida*, *E. nova-anglica*, *E. cinerea*, *E. risdonii*, *E. ovata*, and the spinning gum *E. perriniana* to name a few. *E. perriniana* has unusual foliage as the stem goes through the centre of the circular leaves while the bark peels to reveal a patchwork of colours.

All our eucalypts have white flowers. The red flowered forms from Western Australia are not hardy over here although we did once grow *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* 'Rosea' which has pale pink flowers. It lasted a few years until it succumbed to a hard frost. I'm sure if Dr. Smart came back now he would be very pleased with how his seedlings have thrived and be amazed at the size of them.

If you haven't visited Marwood Hill in the past I'm sure you will be surprised at the range of plants we grow including many Australasian subjects. We are open 5 days a week (closed Mondays and Tuesdays) from February to the end of October and have a great range of plants for sale, most propagated here, as well as a very popular tea room. For more information go to **www.marwoodhillgarden.co.uk**.



***Eucalyptus lacrimans*, the rare weeping snow gum.**

Malcolm comments: "The tree is about 30 years old. It does have a good lean on it, probably more than normal, but that's the nature of Eucalyptus."

Malcolm Pharoah

COROKIA: DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Mona Abboud

There is no doubt that for us who grow and look after plants, 2022 was a challenging year. A series of extreme weather events, and sudden changes in temperature, put many plants, particularly those from the southern hemisphere, under considerable stress. It all started with one of the driest springs on record, followed by an exceptionally hot summer culminating on July 19th with a temperature nearly reaching 40°C in my North London garden. Constant watering became a necessity. Despite that, I lost two of my precious corokias to the drought.

Some people think that all drought tolerant plants should withstand indefinite periods without water. We as human beings can survive thirty days without food I am told, which doesn't mean that we would choose to do so. Plants are the same as far as water is concerned. Even the toughest mediterranean species rely on spring rain in order to survive hot dry summers. However in the spring of 2020 rain proved to be a very rare commodity. The drought conditions continued well into the middle of August, after which time it started raining again.

By contrast the following autumn proved to be very mild and wet, so much so that some spring flowering plants decided to flower again in sheer relief. In November the rain turned into a deluge leading to flooding. On November 30th it was still wet and mild, the temperature still in the mid-teens, whereas on average, the first frost tends to hit us around the Guy Fawkes celebrations. Then suddenly winter arrived on December 8th with temperatures falling below 0 degrees, followed two days later by half foot of snow. The snow sat on the plants for a whole week in sub zero temperatures.

The winter of 2022-23 proved to be particularly brutal, and many gardeners lost treasured plants all over the country. New Zealand plants were decimated, even in the home counties. At RHS Wisley, in their 'alternative to box' area in the walled garden, all their Corokia perished. Thankfully quite a few survived in other areas of the site. Also, as proof of their continued interest in this genus, the Wisley team have planted up a whole area with the *Corokia cotoneaster* cultivar 'Maori Green". Some corokias at RHS Hyde Hall succumbed as well.

My friend Paul Boosey of County Park Nursery in Hampshire lost most of his New Zealand plant collection including corokias. His grandfather Graham Hutchins (1930-2012), the great plantsman and plant collector,



Gary Firth

The bed of *Corokia* 'Māori Green' at RHS Wisley

had introduced many hitherto unknown New Zealand species to the UK, and bred many new Corokia cultivars (see my book, *Corokia: My Adventure*). I also lost three Pseudopanax, commonly known as lancewood, from my own New Zealand plant collection during that fateful winter.

However, sometimes after Death there is Resurrection. Paul Boosey called me during the following summer to give me unexpected news; he had discovered sixty tiny *Corokia* seedlings growing in the gravel area of his nursery. He had potted them up, and said I could have them all. They were of unknown parentage, and considering the number of *Corokia* species and cultivars he had growing on his site at any given time, some of the seedlings will probably turn out to become quite distinctive cultivars.

Needless to say, I rushed over to Hampshire in mid-July to pick them up, and have been looking after them ever since. When I acquired them, they were no bigger than an inch or so, but now, over six months later, some of them are already 15cm tall. Through the natural selection process some of the weaker plants have died, but at this point about fifty are still alive. Hopefully half that number will reach adulthood, and constitute a new generation of this genus. To their number I can add ten of my own *Corokia* cultivars which have seeded themselves in my own garden, including the named *Corokia x virgata* 'Mona's Magic' which is now over a metre tall (see Pentachonda 68, May 2022, page 26: *Corokia x virgata* 'Mona's Magic').

Some these new cultivars are now growing in the new site I acquired in 2022: a new garden for a new generation of corokias!

Mona holds the Plant Heritage National Collection™ of Corokia. To find out more about Mona's garden go to **www.monasgarden.co.uk**.



Mona Abboud

Baby *Corokia* seedlings received from Paul Boosey in July 2023

Native raspberries, limes and geraniums: how did these curious plants end up in Australia?

Gregory Moore

This article was first published in The Conversation on June 2, 2023. It is reproduced here under Creative Commons licence. Gregory Moore is Senior Research Associate, School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, The University of Melbourne.

While plants can't walk, they can certainly travel. Some species have travelled vast distances over millennia, moving by different and varied modes. Some found new habitats when the continent they were riding on slowly crashed into another. Others went on perilous ocean going journeys – think of coconuts washing up on new island shores. Others still have been carried as seeds by birds or other animals – including us. Many have now become local, endemic to their region of Australia. Some may surprise you.

Native nuts – how macadamia trees began

Early in the age of jet aeroplanes, flying to America meant a stop-over in Hawaii to refuel. Here, many Australians tasted macadamia nuts for the first time and probably assumed they were a local delicacy. Imagine their surprise at discovering the truth. Hawaii's macadamia industry began when a few nuts were sent from Australia in the 1880s.

Of course, this was not news to Australia's First Nations people, many of whom had enjoyed macadamia nuts for millennia.

There are four species of *Macadamia*, of which two are the most important nut producers, namely *Macadamia integrifolia* and *M . tetraphylla*. All species belong to the Proteaceae family, meaning they are related to banksias, grevilleas and proteas.

This family connection reveals the genus has a long evolutionary history, dating back about 100 million years. Macadamias travelled with the continent of Australia as it split off from Antarctica and South America.

In their natural habitat across northern New South Wales and southern Queensland, these subtropical trees can reach heights of 25 metres. But even though they are now widely farmed, they're actually threatened – and may be further threatened by climate change.

Oranges, lemons – and native citrus?

Many of us are fond of tart and tasty citrus – oranges from southern China, lemons probably from northern India. All the world's citrus trees stem from an ancestor species which grew in the foothills of the Himalayas, according to DNA evidence. Over time, these trees spread out and new species split off. Eventually, about 8–10 million years ago, they arrived in Australia.

The most well known is the finger lime, *C. australasica*, with tiny globes spilling out of the fruit like citrus caviar. But there are others, like the Australian lime, *Citrus australis* and the desert lime *C. glauca*. Like many citrus, they can be prickly customers with long painful spines. While most are shrubs and small trees, the Australian lime can reach heights of 20 metres.

Native raspberries

In recent years, the native raspberry, *Rubus probus*, has achieved celebrity status as a prickly, quick growing bramble with a good fruit. But like its relative, the blackberry, *Rubus fruticosus*, you have to work hard to get fruit and rarely come away unscathed. That's why it was big news when a thornless specimen was found and propagated. This will make a big difference to the cultivation of our native raspberry.

So how did Australia come to have raspberries? It seems likely their ancestors migrated from North America towards Europe and Asia between 10 and 15 million years ago and eventually made it to Oceania. Exactly how the genus *Rubus* made it to Australia is unknown, but the most likely pathway is a few seeds stuck to the feathers of a migrating bird. It could have happened as recently as a few hundred thousand years ago.



John Moss Wikimedia CC

Our native raspberry is becoming popular



Magnus Manske Wikimedia CC BY SA 3.0

Native geranium? *Pelargonium australe* is the native plant most commonly thought of as a geranium

Native geraniums? It's true

I associate geraniums with my maternal grandmother, who had the most magnificent red geraniums along her back fence. Family folklore had it they were cuttings from a prize winner at a major horticultural exhibition – and I believe it.

While we associate garden geraniums with Europe, they're actually African and only arrived in Europe in the 17th century. But while we all know these geraniums, Australia has its own species. That fact still amazes me after decades of studying plants.

But first, let's clear up the debate over names. In the 17th century, geraniums and closely-related pelargoniums were grouped together in a single genus. But early in the 18th century, Charles L'Héritier – the botanist who first described eucalypts – divided them and there has been confusion ever since.

The easiest way of telling them apart is that geraniums have five petals of

the same size and shape but pelargoniums have two larger petals and three smaller ones.

Most of the Australian native plants commonly called geraniums are in fact pelargoniums. You may have stumbled across *Pelargonium australe*, the most common of our seven species, which is spread across much of southern Australia.

Native orchids: from flying ducks to the Queen of Sheba

There's something about orchids. In the 19th century, so many Europeans went mad for their flowers that the name "orchidelirium" was coined. We have some of the most iconic orchids as natives, such as the remarkable flying duck orchid and the stunning Queen of Sheba. Our 1800 species mostly grow in our tropical and subtropical areas.

Some orchids traced back to the last years of Gondwana. But curiously, we also have tropical species which must have island hopped from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia more recently.

That's only the start of our surprising plants. We have native tamarinds, native rivermint, and a native rhododendron..

And did you know that cloves come from an Indonesian species of lilly pilly? This species is related to Australian lilly pillies, a genus which evolved as the final fragmentation of Gondwana occurred about 65 million years ago. They rapidly diversified and there are now over 1000 species.

Plants move slowly. But they move much more than you'd expect. Their success has enriched the biodiversity and novelty of our ecosystems in surprising ways. As for me, I love an Australian macadamia nut – and I'll always love those imported red geraniums.



Peter Woodard Wikimedia CC generic

Australia's flying duck orchid (*Caleana major*) is world-famous for its resemblance



Michael Svit Wikimedia CC BY SA 4.0

The Eastern Queen of Sheba orchid (*Thelymitra speciosa*) is rightly famous

ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MACADAMIAS

Nicky Zanen

On a recent international flight with Qantas passengers were offered biscuits containing macadamia nuts. This led me to investigate this unique nut.

Macadamias are native to Australia, but today they are grown in many areas in the world. The largest producers are Australia and South Africa (55% of total world production), followed by Kenya, China, USA (Hawaii), Guatemala, Malawi, Vietnam, Colombia, New Zealand and Swaziland.

Macadamias rank number 8 on a list of the ten most eaten nuts in the world. The top three are peanuts, almonds and walnuts. At 9 and 10 are brazil nuts and pine nuts. More than 42 million metric tonnes of peanuts are eaten around the world annually, compared to little more than 50,000 tonnes of macadamia nuts.



Nicky Zanen

Trees lined up on a Macadamia farm



Nicky Zanen

Macadamia flowers

I was visiting South Africa and found a family member using macadamia milk instead of cows milk. It is marketed as being ideal for baristas and totally acceptable for vegans. That milk is produced in the Northern Cape but I have since found something similar for sale in one of Australia's big supermarkets, stocked amongst long life milks, called 'Australia's Own Barista Macadamia'.

Macadamias are lethal to dogs and eating too many nuts is not so good for humans either. But there is a lot of information on the web about the health benefits of macadamias - they can stave off hunger, protect brain cells and have potential to fight cancer. They are also used in beauty products. One source states: *It is high in palmitoleic acid which restores youthful plumpness to the skin*.

Macadamia trees grow up to 20m tall and have a lifespan of 40 to 60 years. Each tree bears sprays or racemes of long, delicate, sweet smelling white or pink blossoms. Flowering occurs in early spring with nuts forming in early

summer, and by autumn, clusters of plump green nuts appear. These are encased in a hard, woody shell, which is protected by a green-brown fibrous husk. When ripe, they fall on the ground. When they are harvested, the husk is removed to reduce heat respiration and facilitate drying. The husk material is usually recycled as organic mulch.

Harvesting begins in late March. Until the 1970s macadamia harvesting involved heavy manual labour. The nuts are not picked but need to fall on the ground. This happens over a 5 or 6 month period, and they are gleaned or regularly collected. A 'finger wheel' harvester was developed in the 1970's which makes this process a little quicker.

Once I started with this article, I found macadamias included as an ingredient popping up everywhere. The last item that caught my eye was a headline: Cape Byron distillery goes nuts and releases a Macadamia Cask Whisky.

A really quirky bit of information came out of my Google searches on macadamias. The 'Nut Rage Incident' colloquially referred to as 'nutgate' was an air rage incident that occurred on 5 December, 2014, at John F Kennedy International Airport onboard Korean Air Flight 086. The Korean Air vice president, Heather Cho, dissatisfied with the way a flight attendant served nuts on the plane, ordered the aircraft to return to the gate before takeoff. All first class passengers were given nuts bagged in their original packaging, but Cho expected them to be served on a plate in first class. The aftermath was that Cho resigned from one of her several executive positions at Korean Air and was found guilty of obstructing aviation safety and given a twelve month prison sentence of which she served five months.

Editor's note

The genus *Macadamia* was given its name by the botanist Ferdinand von Mueller. It recognises the politician John Macadam who was secretary of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria at the time the name was published in the Transactions of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria (volume 2, page 72). Von Mueller's paper, entitled Account of some New Australian Plants, described other new genera and species besides *Macadamia*, but the sole illustration (by Ludwig Becker) is of the type species of *Macadamia*, *M. ternifolia*.



***Macadamia ternifolia* drawn by Ludwig Becker**

Biodiversity Heritage Library

THE RESILIENCE OF *ACACIA DEALBATA*

Natalya Scott

My *Acacia dealbata* came from a local garden centre in Gloucestershire about 10 years ago. Initially it was about 1m high and quite spindly. At first I planted it in the centre of the front garden, but it didn't look terribly happy, so I moved it to a more sheltered position closer to the house. Once in the new location it started to thrive, getting sun from the east in the morning and south at midday. The garden slopes by about 1 in 10 which is good for drainage.

It is in a large planter which is open at the bottom. The planter itself contains imported soil, but the roots went quickly below this into the local soil which is Cotswold brash. Cotswold brash is a shallow soil with a high stone content and overlies oolitic limestone. It is very free draining.

Once happily established my *Acacia dealbata* grew rapidly. Initially it grew so fast that the branches could hardly support themselves and would flop over. Generally flowers appeared in late December and often lasted until March. This is the perfect time of year for a blast of colour! I would then prune it back quite hard after flowering.



***Acacia dealbata* in its prime**

Natalya Scott

We often have frosts in the area and sometimes snow. As long as I knocked the snow off my *Acacia dealbata* it was fine. This was until the winter of 2022-2023 when we had a prolonged period of temperatures below zero, and snow was covering the whole tree. I tried to knock it off, but the snow was slightly icy and had frozen onto the foliage. Sadly pretty much all the foliage then shriveled up and fell off. I pruned the tree, but didn't hold out much hope at the time. It really did look awful.

A couple of months later in the spring of 2023 I spotted some tiny flecks of green on the main trunk. They were epicormic sprouts which are also known as "suckers" or "water sprouts". In response to the damage that had been done my *Acacia dealbata* was growing new branches. It was a very exciting moment!

Since then is has gradually come back to life. The new branches have been growing well and there has been quite an abundance of leaves. I wasn't expecting any flowers in the near future, but in the last couple of weeks there have been a few, which is great. Hopefully in the next year or two my *Acacia dealbata* will be restored to it's former glory!



Acacia dealbata recovering from the freeze

Natalya Scott



Acacia dealbata **by Natalya Scott .**
See more of Natalya's work at
www.scottart.uk

MOUNT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDEN

Malcolm Pharoah

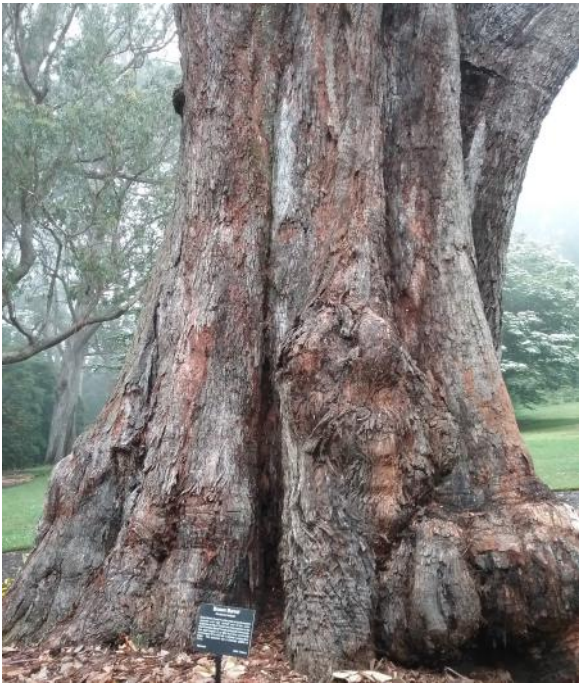
On a recent visit to Australia we visited Mount Tomah Botanic Garden in the Blue Mountains, not far from Sydney.

I have been there a few times before over the years but I still always marvel at the plants that grow there and the wonderful layout of the garden. It is part of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney but they grow more temperate plants rather than the more tropical palm trees, ferns, banana plants and fig trees that grow in the very mild climate of Sydney. Unfortunately there is no public transport to get to the gardens so a car is needed which I think limits the numbers of visitors which they get. I have never seen it busy.

As to the plants, their proteas are spectacular, and they grow many other South African species. However there are lots of Australasian plants there too, with some very large specimens to see. The gardens were formerly privately owned before they became part of Sydney Botanic Garden, with the big trees planted during that period.

Eucalypts of course can get huge and one that caught my eye was *Eucalyptus fastigiata* also known as 'Brown Barrel'. We have one at Marwood Hill Gardens in North Devon and it is in fact a Champion Tree of Britain. However it is dwarfed by the tree at Mt. Tomah. Although it doesn't have a spectacular trunk like the Snow Gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) the bark does peel to give an interesting trunk.

If you are ever in the Blue Mountains region especially near the tourist area of Katoomba do visit Mt. Tomah. It is a fabulous Botanic Garden. For more information go to **www.botanicgardens.org.au/blue-mountains-botanic-garden-mount-tomah**.



Malcolm Pharoah

The size of the sign beside this *Eucalyptus fastigiata* at Mt Tomah indicates just how big a tree it is

GROWING *PANDOREA* OUTSIDE

Judy Clark

Pandorea pandorana, commonly known as the wonga wonga vine, or just wonga vine, is a member of the Bignoniaceae, a large family of mostly tropical plants which also includes the trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*) and the now cosmopolitan jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*). The Bignoniaceae comprises about 850 species, of which the genus *Pandorea* contains just nine. Of these, four are native to Australia. *P. pandorana* is the only one that is not endemic, being found not only in all Australian states plus Lord Howe Island, but also on New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and various islands in the Indonesian archipelago[1].



Judy Clark

The wonga wonga vine

It has been around a long time. It was introduced into England in 1793 by Lee and Kennedy at their nursery in Hammersmith, and first flowered in cultivation in 1805[2]. Nine years ago I happened to see one for sale at Hill House Nursery in Devon. I couldn't resist. I'm fond of climbers and who wouldn't want to try a plant with such a glorious name as the wonga wonga vine?

I put my new acquisition in a large container which I placed in a sheltered spot in my Hastings garden. It got left out during the following winter - I don't remember why I didn't put it in the greenhouse - yet, to my surprise, it produced a few white tubular flowers the following spring. Two years later in 2018, after it had coped with two more winters outside it was time to try it in the ground. Besides, having taken some cuttings, I now had a spare if it went belly up. Having read that it likes moderately well drained acidic soil, be it clay loam, loam or sandy loam[2], it got my clay leavened with grit and topsoil.

Since then there has been no stopping it. Once in the ground it spread vigorously and has now clambered all over the adjacent arch. Its roots and lowest leaves are sheltered but much of it is exposed to everything that the weather can throw at it yet even the 2018 beast from the east didn't cause much damage. I've noticed that if there's an air frost, or a strong cold wind, new growth and buds can suffer, and flowering can be held back, but it quickly recovers. This spring my wonga wonga vine flowered like never before (something to do with mild and wet winter and spring we've just had?) and subsequently I've had to prune it quite hard to stop it getting out of hand.

I did not expect such rampant growth (it is winning the battle with a 'Kiftsgate' rose) but I might have if I'd done my research. The wonga wonga vine has a reputation for vigour in the right conditions, and I might have struck lucky and got a plant whose provenance is such that that it would find conditions here to its liking. As originally defined (Van Steenis 1977) *P. pandorana* is a very variable species[3] which is found in a variety of habitats, including rain forest, open forest, woodland, coastal scrub and inland desert ranges; on a variety of soils; and which is distributed all down the east coast from Cape York to Wilson's Promontory and Flinders Island (part of Tasmania), with a disjunct population in the centre of Australia. Maybe my plant hails from the inland or southern part of its range; seed from those parts is said to be more frost hardy[3].



Judy Clark

***Pandorea pandorana* 'Golden Showers' flowers**

In 2020 I obtained another variety of *P. pandorana*, the cultivar 'Golden Showers' (which used to be sold as 'Golden Rain'). I was browsing Roseland House Nursery's plant list looking for Australian climbers when I came across it. It looked gorgeous, and buoyed by my success with the white flowered version I decided to give it a go. According to the Roseland House Nursery website[4], 'Golden Showers' grown outdoors (in Cornwall) requires a warm wall and temperatures no lower than -3°C. However because it flowers early, typically March and April, and rain tends to knock the flowers off, they recommend growing it in a conservatory to get a good show. (They comment similarly about the white flowered *P. pandorana*.)

I don't have a conservatory, but I do have walls. I bought two 'Golden Showers' with the idea of growing them in large containers, one by the front door (a brick wall) and one by a shed in the back garden (a wooden wall). I hoped the plants would produce some flowers but, being outside, I wasn't expecting much. This year, contrary to all my expectations, we have been treated to a glorious display over the front door, and the one at the back hasn't done badly either. The one drawback is that its predilection for climbing means that most of the flowers are quite high up and I have had to point out the flowers to less observant visitors.

'Golden Showers' was selected in 1967 by the Australian National Botanic Gardens from a naturally occurring wonga wonga vine growing in forest country near Kempsey in northern New South Wales[5]. Kempsey has a warm temperate climate, which doesn't auger so well for 'Golden Showers'

thriving over here. However the same colour form is also found east of Armidale in the northern tablelands of NSW[6] where the climate is cooler and frosty nights are common in winter. Maybe I struck lucky again.

In 2023 I acquired a third *Pandorea* from Shrublands Nursery, *P. jasminoides*, known as the bower vine or bower of beauty. In its homeland it is confined to south east Queensland and the northern coast of NSW, so it might be expected to be tender. Here it is regarded as a classic conservatory plant.

As I have already remarked, I don't have a conservatory. My *P. jasminoides* is in a large container against the shed wall, next to 'Golden Showers'. It survived last winter but lost most of its leaves and for a while looked very poorly. It has now perked up and is putting on new growth. Like *P. pandorana*, *P. jasminoides* is a variable species with several colour forms[3]. My plant didn't come with a variety name but I suspect it will have pink blooms with a deeper pink centre. It remains to be seen whether it will produce flowers for me, let alone bloom as prolifically as its relatives.

References

Websites accessed May 2024

1. These figures come from the Australian Plant Name Index (**https://biodiversity.org.au/nsl/services/search/names**) and Kew Plants of the World Online (**https://powo.science.kew.org/**). Authorities seem to differ regarding how many species there are in the genus Pandorea, and their distribution. See also reference 3.

2. Elliot WR and Jones DL (1997). *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants*, vol. 7, pp 157-161

3. Greg Keighery G and Keighery B (2021) Opening Pandora's Box: Pandorea (Bignoniaceae) in Western Australia. *The Western Australian Naturalist*, 32(2), pp 104-8

4. Roseland House Nursery **www.roselandhouse.co.uk/climbers/**

5. ANBG Pandorea 'Golden Showers' **www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp13/pandorea-pandorana.html**

6. Australian Plants Society NSW, Pandorea pandorana, **https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant/pandorea-pandorana/**



***Pandorea pandorana* 'Golden Showers' growing above the front door**

Judy Clark

BITS AND PIECES

compiled by Judy Clark

Eucalyptus preissiana at Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens

Eucalyptus preissiana is a small tree native to south-west Western Australia where it grows on sand and gravel based soils. Sean Boast of Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens sowed seed some three and a half years ago and in March this year his specimen flowered for the first time. In the wild it only gets to 2 to 3m so is perfect for growing in a pot. Sean's plant is flowering at just over a metre and he was able to leave it outside when night time temperatures were between 6 and 10°C degrees.

The large, yellow flowers may reach 30mm or more in diameter and are very bright. As Sean says, it's a stunner.



Sean Boast

Eucalyptus preissiana



Gary Firth

Sussex Champion *Eucalyptus camphora* at Leonardslee

Eucalyptus camphora at Leonardslee Gardens

Gary Firth writes that, despite regular visits, he had never before noticed that Leonardslee Gardens has a Sussex Champion Eucalyptus, *Eucalyptus camphora* (bell-fruited mallee). According to The Tree Register it measured 15.4m in 2023, nearly as tall as the England Country Champion, a 16m (measured in 2018) specimen growing at Singe Wood Arboretum in Oxfordshire. The tallest *E. camphora* listed on The Tree Register was measured at 18m in 1979. It grew in a plantation in Bovey Tracey, Devon.

There are actually quite a few good sized Eucalyptus spread across the 300 acres of Leonardslee, they just take a bit of finding. Leonardslee also have champion trees of *Olearia lineata* (British and Irish Champion, girth) and *Phyllocladus trichomanoides* var. *alpinus* (England Champion, height and girth).

Bulbinella rossii

Mark Bennett entered a photo of *Bulbinella rossii* in the APS Photography competition, and I think this beautiful plant deserves a wider audience. It is a New Zealand endemic, found only on the subantarctic Auckland Islands and Campbell Island. Mark says it is a very demanding species which you have to keep below 15°C and above 10°C, So, not difficult in Kent at all! Mark has now moved to Somerset where he hopes the conditions might be conducive to naturalising it.

Mark's plant came from Lea Gardens who in turn got it from the famous Inshriach Alpine Nursery (now closed). Their plants had been raised from seed given to Jack Drake, founder and previous owner, by the late David Given, a New Zealand botanist who collected it on Enderby Island (one of the Auckland Islands) many years ago.



Mark Bennett

Bulbinella rossii

Whatever you do, don't use a royal name

Steve Harding had an interesting time trying to name a new *Veronica* (*Hebe*) cultivar. He writes:

The Hebe Society is in the process of becoming the Regional Coordinator for new plant registrations of *Hebe*, *Parahebe* and relatives in the UK and Europe. To get things moving, I wanted to register a plant I had raised in my workplace and, as it came into flower for the first time during the week that Queen Elizabeth sadly passed away, I thought her name was the ideal option for the plant.

Little did I know that you need written permission from the current monarch to use any of the Royal family names, nicknames, property names or anything associated with the Royal Family. Everything



Stephen Harding

Steve Harding's now un-named *Veronica*

"Royal" is trademarked and it's use strictly forbidden. I doubt that my request actually made it all the way through the bureaucratic system of government departments, Royal Aides and advisors to His Majesty and another name will be found. Basically,

don't use Royal family names unless you are prepared for a hefty fine!

Château Pérouse database

APS member Jan-Willem Vos owns Château Pérouse botanical park at Saint-Gilles near Nimes in the south of France. The gardens focus on plants that come from areas with a mediterranean type climate, including Australia, South Africa, Central Chile and California. Over the years a database of all the plants grown there has been developed including information from their own experience and research as well as from books and journals. Even though we don't have a mediterranean climate in the UK I find the database of great interest, particularly when it comes to information about seed germination and growing conditions.

To access the database go to **www.chateau-perouse.com/en/index-en/** and click on Database (top right). You can browse but there are thousands of species so I usually search for the species I'm interested in. Then click on the plant name to access a wealth of information. I often go straight to the section 'Experiences in the garden'. This section reports not only on successes with seed germination and growing plants, but also failures. This is the way we all learn!

Bees and grevilleas

Neil Marriott (Growing Australian December 2023, number 266 page 42) reported that he sees feral honey bees drill holes through the flowers of correas and grevilleas so they can get to the nectar at the base, thereby avoiding pollinating the flowers. By going in the back way, as it were, bees avoid brushing against the pollen and carrying it off to fertilise another flower.

Honey bees were introduced to Australia by Europeans. Their theft of nectar is a problem not only because plants don't get pollinated but also because they would otherwise provide food for native species, including birds, mammals and flower visiting insects.

I have often noticed bumblebee queens, honey bees and other bees that I can't identify buzzing around grevillea flowers in my garden and elsewhere. And I have also occasionally seen holes at the base of flowers (you have to remember to look carefully). However I do occasionally get seed which suggests that sometimes flowers do get pollinated.



Judy Clark

Bumblebee on a flower of *Grevillea* 'Barkly's Daughter'

I would be interested to hear from anyone who has noticed this happening on Australian plants that they grow. I'd like to know what plants, and which insects. Please send any observations to Judy Clark, **editor@anzplantsoc.org.uk**.

Propagation of *Acacia mearnsii*

Acacia mearnsii is commonly grown in southern Brazil, being cultivated for the production of tannin, cellulose and energy. The plantations there are established mainly from seedlings, which brings with it some inherent problems – it results in forests with high genetic variability and reduced productive potential, and in addition a high degree of seed dormancy is recognised making germination difficult. Some researchers in Brazil have looked to circumvent these problems by investigating vegetative propagation of the species as an alternative to seed propagation, and they have recently published the results of this research. The use of vegetative propagation means that the best genotypes can be selected and utilised in forest improvement programs, resulting in increased productivity and quality of new plantations.

Reference:

Gazzana D. et al. Selection of *Acacia mearnsii* for minicutting propagation Ciência Rural, v.54, no. 6, 2024. Available from: **http://doi.org/10.1590/0103-8478cr20220081**

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A. mearnsii (black wattle) is occasionally offered for sale in the UK. It looks very similar to *A. dealbata* (silver wattle) and indeed the former has been known to be offered under the name of the latter, and vice versa. One way of telling them apart is that the two species differ in flowering time. Silver wattle flowers from winter to spring (often in March here) while black wattle mostly flowers in late spring and early summer. I have seen it in flower in July in Hastings. If there are no flowers the species can be told apart



Judy Clark

***Acacia mearnsii*, leaf underside, with jugary and interjugary glands**



Judy Clark

***Acacia dealbata*, leaf underside, with no interjugary glands**

by checking the back of the leaves. *A. dealbata* has glands at the base of each leaflet (jugary glands) while *A. mearnsii* also has glands between some or all of the leaflets (interjugary glands). It's useful to know which is which because black wattle is not as hardy as silver wattle.

Gardening Australia

Gardening Australia is Australia's premier gardening programme , much as Gardeners World is here. Nowadays in Australia, as here there's also a lot more interest in native species, so some of the items on Gardening Australia are of interest to APS members too.

To access Gardening Australia on line go to **www.abc.net.au/gardening/**. The search function seems a bit random if you type in a plant name but I have found using the genus name as the search term produces useful results. For example, 'Banksia' returns episodes about the Banksia Garden at the Australian National Botanic Gardens; pruning banksias; and profiles of lots of different species. But try as I might I could not find a recent piece on growing Sturt's Desert Pea by typing in the name; **https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/plant-profile-sturt-s-desert-pea/103198052** will take you to it.

Another episode I found very interesting (thank you Janet) was a tour of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart. 'Tasmania' will get you there, and so will **https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/tasmanian-collection/103885934**.

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The Australasian Plant Society
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
– Held at Jermyn's House, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens on 15th April 2024

Committee Members Present:

Gary Firth - Chairman
Judy Clark - Newsletter Editor
Jeremy Spon - Treasurer/Membership Secretary
Maria Firth – Events Coordinator
Jude Lawton - Conservation
Gill Groombridge – Social Media
Plus 12 other members.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Tom Hart Dyke, Robbie Blackhall-Miles, Ben Ram, Robin Drodge, Lewis Normand, Janet Miller, Graham Blunt, Steve Harding, Saul Walker, Anne McNaughton, Mary Thomes, Fiona Johnston.

2. Introductions.

Gary Firth welcomed everyone, and asked them to briefly introduce themselves. In lieu of his President's Address, Tom sent his apologies for not being present due to his recent injury and his thanks to Barry for arranging the visit and giving a talk.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting.

These had been published in the May 2023 edition of Pentachondra, and were approved without corrections.

4. Matters Arising.

Payment by PayPal There had been discussion about charging those who pay by PayPal an extra £2 to cover the extra costs (£1 of the £15 fee). Jeremy said that the APS was in good shape financially so could stand the extra cost but people need to be encouraged to change to payment by standing order or bank transfer. The meeting agreed to keep this under review, based on how the finances go.
Bursaries As the APS is in a good position financially there had been discussion about bursaries for young students. There was a suggestion that someone at the RHS might be able to advise on this. Gary agreed to look into this further.

4. Election of Officers.

Tom Hart-Dyke is happy to continue as President and all officers are happy to stay in their current positions although Ben is very busy so would like to hand over his job as Website Manager. There was unanimous agreement on the re-election of current officers.

5. Committee Reports.

(Those that are noted as having been circulated by email are printed at the end of these minutes.)

a) Treasurer's Report (Jeremy Spon)

The report had already been circulated to attendees by email. Jeremy stressed the need to continue to recruit new members. There were no questions or comments and the report was approved.

b) Newsletter Editor's Report (Judy Clark)
The report had already been circulated to attendees by email. Judy noted that she has been doing this job since 2008 and although she enjoys it she needs help. Jeremy has now taken over as production editor but Judy asked that anyone willing to start getting involved in the editing should speak to her. Judy also asked for someone to take on the organisation of the photographic competition in future and Maria offered to do it.

c) Seed List Manager's Report (Janet Miller)
Janet's report, and a supplementary one by Judy, had already been circulated to attendees by email.
No objections were raised by the meeting to the proposal to send out the seed list by email in future, so this change will come into effect as soon as the next version of the seed list is available.
The meeting agreed that the committee should discuss increasing the current charge of £4 as it is expensive to get seed from Australia and New Zealand, and the 30 or 40 members who order seeds are currently being heavily subsidised. The meeting agreed that an increase to £8 would still represent excellent value.
Both reports were approved.

d) Website Manager's Report (Ben Ram)
Due to time constraints Ben is finding it difficult to keep the website up-to-date so someone is needed to take on all or part of the job.

e) Social Media (Gill Groombridge)
Gill has set up an Instagram account as a good way to reach a younger audience and to help promote Pentachondra. Gill asked members to send her photos of Australasian plants with name and a few words of description.

g) Events (Gary Firth)
Gary's report had already been circulated to attendees by email and was approved.

h) Conservation (Jude Lawton)
Jude reported on dispersed collections; there are plans for a Plant Heritage Dispersed Collection of Tasmanian endemic plants to be held by APS members. Though identifying true endemics is surprisingly tricky she hoped to produce a list to circulate to members who can then let her know if they grow any of those on the list and would like to join in or provide propagation material. She also reminded members of the Plant Guardianship Scheme.

6. Venue and Timing of Future AGMs
Gary thanked Barry Clarke and Hilliers for arranging for the meeting to be held there in 2024. He suggested that meetings only be held at Lullingstone in alternate years, but they will have to be in the winter. Gary asked for ideas about future venues and timings for the other years noting that it's difficult for those who work to attend meeting on weekdays. It could be done on Zoom – an annual licence costs £150. The committee would look into this further – any suggestions from members would be welcome.

7. Any Other Business
Beth Smith offered thanks to the committee on behalf of those attending.

8. Conclusion
Gary thanked everyone for joining the meeting, and for their support; he then declared the meeting closed, and we were treated to an excellent talk by Barry Clarke. Sadly due to the high winds, we were unable to undertake the planned tour of the gardens.

Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report (Jeremy Spon)

As the accompanying accounts show, the Society's financial position remains healthy, with income exceeding expenditure in 2023 by over £500. This is partly due to the profits made on plant sales at Hampton Court and Great Dixter. At the former, the costs of creating our display were more or less covered by the grant and prize money received from the RHS, and at the latter we took a considerable amount more in plant sales than the cost of our pitch, even after making a donation to the Christopher Lloyd Bursary Fund.

The Society continues to spend significant sums maintaining the seed-list, although only a minority of members order seed. This means that such orders are heavily subsidised; the majority of members are not taking full advantage of their membership benefits. The costs of printing and posting Pentachondra remain well-covered by subscription income.

The accounts do not show assets held by the Society, apart from money in our two bank accounts, and our Paypal account. However it is worth mentioning that we do currently have 21 copies of 'Australian Plants' by Ross and Irons (the purchase of which was recorded in previous year's accounts) together with 5 copies of the Eucaflip chart (purchased in 2022.) We also have a stock of plants bought in 2023 as liners and being grown on for sale at plant fairs in 2024 (plus labels advertising the Society.) Sales of any of these items will be shown as income in future years' accounts. However, if we continue to acquire and hold assets like this in the future, it may become necessary to value them and include them in our accounts, although uncertainty around when and for how much we might sell them would make such accounting more complicated. (Members who are trained accountants may well have a view on such matters as depreciation – your Treasurer feels bound to admit to not being so trained!)

Newsletter Editor's Report (Judy Clark)

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to recent issues of Pentachondra. I am particularly pleased that contributions come from newer members as well as longstanding ones. In recent years I have been able to reprint articles from various sources but Pentachondra would be a much diminished magazine without members' contributions. Please keep them coming.

The first issue I edited was number 40, May 2008, and the May 2024 issue will be number 72. That's a long time! I hope to retire in the not too distant future so if Pentachondra is to continue it will need a new editor (or parhaps co-editors?). I'm sure Pentachondra would benefit from new ideas and anyway I won't be around forever.

To help ease my workload Jeremy Spon has taken over as production editor, using free publishing software to put Pentachondra together. Thank you Jeremy.

Seed List Manager's Report (Janet Miller)

I will not be at the AGM so Judy will no doubt be telling everyone about the cost & difficulties in obtaining seeds. I can just add that in a normal year, I send out

between 30-40 orders. It appears that the cost of postage will remain at £1.55 per envelope. (Orders which include the araucaria seeds though have to be sent as a parcel - £3.49!) The glassine envelopes are expensive plus the padded envelopes so the cost of actually sending out a regular order will approach £2.

It would be handy if Judy and I were able to alter the online lists to show things added and things I no longer have. I'm sure this would make ordering easier. In previous years, the list has been released before I actually receive the seeds. Lots of members all then tend to order on the same day and I am unable to fulfil the orders because I don't have the seeds. Then, there is a build up of orders.

Seedlist Supplementary Report (Judy Clark)

The difficulties of obtaining seed of Australasian species has not receded, with an expensive phytosanitary certificate required for orders from countries outside the European Union. So in 2023 we placed an order for seeds of New Zealand species with European supplier Jelitto. We also received donations of seed from several members, saved from plants in their gardens. I hope more members will do so in future. Donors are entitled to an extra packet of APS seed for every species donated.

APS member Jan-Willen Vos of Château Pérouse has kindly offered to help the APS purchase seed, as he helps a number of other European and UK organisations. The APS has taken him up on this offer. Thank-you Jan-Willem.

In future new seedlists will be sent out by email rather than included in the May issue of Pentachondra. This will make it easier for the APS to advise members of new stock whenever it arrives. It also means that I need not worry that the May issue will be overweight; more than 100g and price goes up markedly. Arrangements will be made to send printed seedlists to members who do not use digital communications.

Events (Gary Firth)

The most significant APS event over the last year was the joint APS/Hebe Society display in the Plant Heritage area of the floral marquee at Hampton Court Flower Festival. Our efforts were rewarded with an RHS Silver Medal, several new APS members and a reasonable income from plant sales. However, this show requires a significant effort both in terms of planning and staging the event. We have decided therefore that for now we will instead attend smaller one or two day events such as that at Great Dixter. Events booked so far for 2024 include Borde Hill Gardens and Leonardslee in Sussex and Hole Park in Kent.

Visits to some members gardens in 2023 were curtailed as a result of significant plant losses the previous winter. Hopefully more members will be able to open their gardens to members in future years.

Unfortunately it is not easy for the current committee to organise events outside of the South East and we are looking for offers of help from members elsewhere in the country

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Anigozanthos at National Botanic Garden of Wales
(Colin Firth)



Kings Park, Perth
(David Renouf)