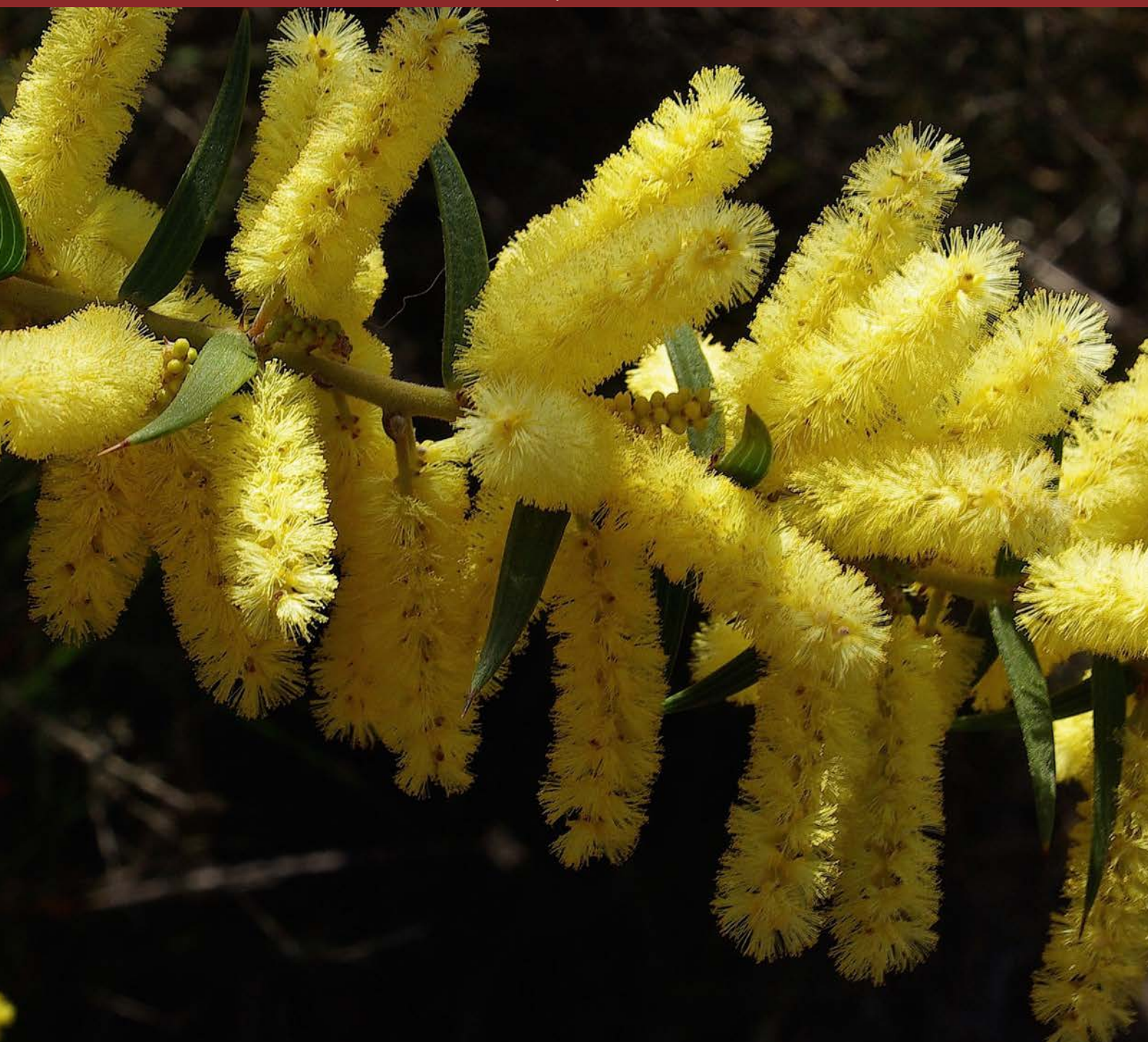


NATURELINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INC.

VOLUME 27 : 3 | SPRING 2020



Acacia oxycedrus. Photo: Rodger Elliot.

On **page 13** find out which species of *Acacia* are indigenous to Cranbourne.

Changes on the RBGV Board

Ken Harrison AM has retired from the Board of the Royal Botanical Gardens Victoria after eight years, seven of them as Chairman. The Cranbourne Friends have always appreciated his and his wife Jill's tireless support of the Cranbourne Gardens. Most memorable for many of the Friends will be the way in which he gave financial and hands-on support for the Cranbourne Garden's entry to the 2011 Chelsea Flower Show, where it was the Gold Medal Winner. The Friends firmly believe this success could not have been achieved without the Harrisons' contribution.

Ken has been involved with many major projects undertaken with the State Government of Victoria, in particular the long-term master plans for both Melbourne and Cranbourne, the new Herbarium and the creation of a Nature and Science Precinct in the Melbourne Gardens. Ken and Jill are keen to continue their deep interest in the Gardens and its supporters, and we're sure all Cranbourne Friends members wish them well and look forward to seeing them again at future functions.

Congratulations, Ken, on your achievements and thank you for all you have done. Time now for you to enjoy those eight grandchildren a bit more!

Ken will be replaced by **Chris Trotman** who brings 20 years of executive experience, including time on the Parks Victoria Board, as CEO of South Gippsland Hospital and Chairperson of the Yarra River Management Advisory Committee. We welcome her to the Board and look forward to meeting her in the Gardens. Other new members of the Board include:

- **Gillian Hund** OAM, Chairperson of Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation, Victoria
- **Tim Jacobs**, former CEO of Arts Centre Melbourne and Sydney Opera House
- **Traci Williams**, diplomat and journalist, current member of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust.



Ken Harrison with his wife Jillian Harrison OAM at the Chelsea Flower Show, United Kingdom, in 2011.



Ms Christine Trotman, the new Chair of the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Cancellation of Cranbourne Friends events for 2020

Due to the uncertainty of the present restrictions and the likelihood of COVID-19 extending for a longer period, the Cranbourne Friends have cancelled all remaining events and activities for the remainder of 2020, except for our Annual General Meeting (AGM). We are required to hold the AGM, but might hold it online this time. It is planned for Sunday 15 November, 2020, however you will be notified later about this.

The **Growing Friends Spring Plant Sale** is not going to go ahead in October, as planned, but it is possible that with the cooperation and help of the Gardens some other smaller plant sale/s may take place at some time.

**Australian Plants Society
FCJ Rogers Seminar
Eltham
24-25 October 2020
*Mint bushes and allied
genera***

This [APS seminar](#) is planned to go ahead and will be a great event despite necessary changes. Lectures will be provided online to registered attendees a week before the event, however garden visits won't proceed if current restrictions are still in place.

Check the [latest newsletter](#) to find out the latest about the Seminar, and register now [online](#) to ensure your involvement.



In the last edition of *Naturelink* I asked 'Where to from here?' Well I wasn't expecting to find us all back in the same place, after there seemed to be so much promise in the country's response to the coronavirus. It is looking as though those early hopes have been extinguished for a while and we are settling in for the long haul. Of course there has been limited activity within the Cranbourne Friends group, as our access to the Gardens has been restricted, but the Committee has been very active. Our association is lucky in that we do not carry big ongoing expenses so we have been able to put our energies into maintaining contact with members while still providing financial support to the RBGV. We have also taken the opportunity to update our role descriptions and administration software.

Whilst there has been no physical activity in the Gardens by the Friends, it has been pleasing to see the members maintaining informal contact. The Growing Friends in particular have kept up a lively exchange of anecdotes and photographs, and of course it was great to see Marjanne Rook receive her online presentation of the Volunteers Award from the Casey Council. Judith Cooke provides monthly reports that are encouraging about the activities of the Friends in Focus group, which provides photos for all our media and other publications, including the options for the new Friends membership card. Our hope is that the *Quicklink* publications and indeed this *Naturelink*, have continued those positive associations. Mention must go to Rosemary Miller and her Communications team of Alex Stalder, Janette Wilson and new member to the committee, Erin Cosgriff, who has really hit the ground running with her work on the website. In my view, and I hope you agree, their publications have been outstanding.

This team also includes Amy Akers and Chloe Foster, who maintain our vitally important social media platforms. Not a meeting goes by without a comprehensive Social Media report showing continually increasing numbers of supporters and a number of contributors. We are approaching our 5000th Instagram follower, so watch this space to celebrate the event!

We have reluctantly had to postpone our events for the remainder of this year, so Barbara Jeffrey and her Subcommittee are looking ahead to next year. However, this hasn't made things any easier for our Treasurer Richard Clarke, who has put in an extraordinary shift during the first part of this year. Not only has he masterminded the transfer of our financial records to Reckon Financial software, he has had to process thousands of dollars of refund cheques for the cancelled excursions and events. Despite all this, he presents the Committee with accurate and streamlined financial reports, which makes our job so much easier. Many thanks, Richard.

One of the more pleasurable aspects of Richard's job, however, is writing cheques for the RBGV and we are very happy to continue to support the Gardens in practical ways. We have recently funded a number of projects - see next page.

Secretary Helen Kennedy has been very keen to update some of the documentation which underlies the functioning of the committee, in particular the role statements which form such an integral part of the orientation of new Committee members. Jenny Potten, another new Committee member, has joined with Helen and me to review these statements, a task which has now been largely completed. We have been very lucky to have the benefit of Jenny's considerable experience to facilitate this process.

The final piece of housekeeping which has kept us busy is the evaluation of new

We acknowledge
the Traditional
Custodians of the
land on which we
work and learn,
the peoples of
the Kulin (Koolin)
Nation, and pay
our respects to
their Elders past,
present and future.

administrative software. In this regard our close association with the [Melbourne Friends](#) has been valuable, and we thank Mary Ward, Jill Scown, Lisa Steven and Georgina Ponce de Leon Huerta who, as well as making their entertaining on-line presentations available to Cranbourne Friends, have been assisting us with the new software package they have recently adopted. Called TidyHQ, it is proving to be an effective program for them. The search for the ideal system has been a long-time project for us, and one which has been difficult to resolve; we hope that we are now a step closer. It makes sense for us to be on the same platform as Melbourne, but our two groups operate in quite different ways, so entering data into the program requires different parameters. However if this problem can be overcome and we can show that the software will integrate with our existing financial package, then we will be in a position to try the program with some of our other procedures. However, we're not there yet. Friends' membership subscriptions are coming in, and these will take time for Alex Stalder, our Membership Secretary, to process. Thank you to every one for continuing to support our beautiful Gardens by renewing your membership.

When we are able to road test the new system properly, we hope to be able to offer a much more streamlined and integrated communication, membership and booking system when we get back to group activities. Amidst all this uncertainty we are exploring contingencies for the holding of our Annual General Meeting, scheduled for November 15. It is quite possible that this will be an online event. We'll keep you updated with arrangements.

I'd like to finish by offering my warm thanks to all of you Friends who are supporting each other and the Gardens during this stressful time, and on your behalf would also like to say a special thank you to all of those named in this report for the amazing contribution that they, volunteers all, continue to make – while in some cases, tackling a range of personal concerns and in others, juggling a full time job as well. That they have found the time to be so creative and resourceful on behalf of the Cranbourne Friends is just outstanding. I hope that you all remain safe and well during the ongoing emergency.

Donations to Gardens

In 2019-2020 the Friends have funded the following projects:

- We contributed \$76,000 to purchase of the new shuttle bus, to travel to and from the station.
- A new sound system and data projector for the Auditorium in the Visitor Centre will be funded with finance we originally supplied for new benches and irrigation for the Nursery (now funded by Government).
- An anemometer - a sophisticated device for measuring and mobile logging of data about wind speed and direction - to increase public safety during bushfire weather.
- Development of a one-hour Climate Watch Community Trail at Cranbourne in liaison with Earth Watch Australia. Using a free app, participants will discover how climate change is affecting some key Australian plants and have the opportunity to learn how to collect valuable data to assist research. The app is already available for download: climatewatch.org.au/trails/royal-botanic-gardens-victoria-cranbourne



The new shuttle bus is ready to roll, but launch of the service has been delayed by the lockdown.



Sound and data projection improvements are coming to the Auditorium, seen here in October 2019 during the highly successful Banksia Workshop. Photo Gwen Elliot

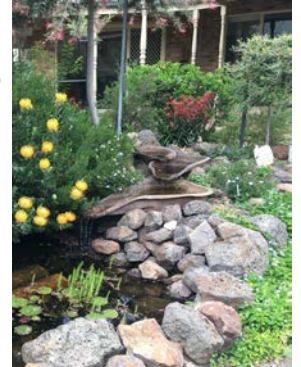
Opening your garden with Open Gardens Victoria

- Helen Kennedy

Do you, like me, love looking at other people's gardens? It's a given that Cranbourne Botanic Gardens – and other large public gardens – are dear to our hearts and visited often. However, private gardens have a different appeal. Have you ever wondered what would be involved in opening your own special place and sharing it with others?



Over a decade ago, I was asked to become a Selector of native gardens for Victoria's Open Gardens Scheme. At that time, Selectors in general were tuned in almost exclusively to exotic plants; Australian flora was unfamiliar territory, so as a gardener with natives for many years, I had the privilege of being offered this role. It was the beginning of a wonderful time. I discovered many exciting new places and met many fantastic people as over the years I roamed far and wide across the state, overlapping other Selectors' boundaries, searching out hidden gems – often helped enormously by local Australian Plant Society groups whose members were opening their gardens for fellow enthusiasts.



The Open Gardens Scheme (which had morphed into Open Gardens Australia when it went national) came to an end in June 2015. After much soul-searching and planning, a group of OGA committee members gathered their courage and in September of that same year, Open Gardens Victoria (OGV) rose phoenix-like from the ashes. From a small beginning, OGV has grown steadily into a huge success, bringing much joy to thousands of loyal garden visitors (who for a while weren't sure how they'd fill their weekends!), to owners who wanted to share their pride and joy, and to many charities and organisations supported by both owners and OGV.

Yallaroo, Dot and Bob O'Neill's property at Narre Warren, was open through Open Gardens Victoria last July, with the aim of raising money for charity. All photos: Dot O'Neill

So, what's involved in getting your garden opened with OGV? The simplest way to start is to email info@opengardensvictoria.org.au, and ask if a Selector can visit your place to have a look. Send a few accompanying photos and include as many relevant details as possible, including location, size, style, etc.

A visit by the Selectors

When Selectors visit, they won't expect a garden to be 'open-ready' – but you will certainly have made it look as beautiful as possible in anticipation of their arrival! The Selector will walk around with you, asking questions, taking notes and photos, and at the end will sit down with you (time for a cuppa!) to discuss further.



What will a Selector be looking for? A garden, whether large or small, should offer at least a half an hour's interest for visitors. The design should convey a sense of overall structure and coherence, of the terrain being handled thoughtfully. The plants should ideally match the overall design approach and be well-grown and maintained. Have any site challenges, like difficult terrain or spaces, been dealt with creatively? Maybe there is one standout feature, such as a significant tree, a beautiful water feature, a collection of unusual plants, a well-matched house and garden. Or perhaps it's a quirky, eclectic mix that excites. Sometimes it boils down to an almost indefinable combination of things just working together – to stimulate the mind and nourish the spirit. Experienced Selectors get the 'feel' of a garden quite quickly.

You will be asked about the garden's 'story': its history, the challenges you've faced and what you've learned; about your favourite places and plants, etc. If it's agreed that you will open, the year, month and possible dates are discussed, also the possibility of pairing with another garden close by, and what activities to also

attract people might be added to the opening, such as plant sales, morning teas, etc. (This list is only as long as your enthusiasm – and imagination! But you don't have to offer anything apart from the garden.) You'll be advised about matters of safety etc. and assured that all insurance and promotional costs are covered by OGV.

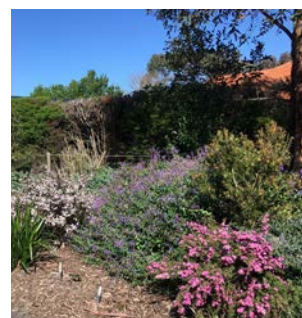
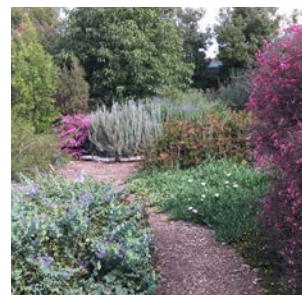
Entry Fee

The gate fee for most gardens is \$8 per person. Entry to very special gardens might cost \$10 or more. The takings are split 50/50 between the garden owner and OGV. Many owners choose to donate their share to a loved charity and as everyone at OGV is a volunteer apart from a tiny handful of administrative staff, most of its money is given away. Information about all openings – and special Events – as well as donations, is on the website: opengardensvictoria.org.au. There is also a private, locked Garden Owners section, giving more detailed information about running the opening, managing the gate, banking, OGV support throughout – everything you could possibly need to know!

Once all the paperwork is done, you will have anything from a few months to over a year to prepare for your opening, which includes writing garden notes and sourcing photographs for the website and other advertising. At this moment, of course, everything is on hold until the coronavirus pandemic no longer poses a threat, but numbers of garden owners are preparing with fingers crossed for a possible opening in Spring this year; several lovely Australian plant gardens are in the mix.

A final personal word: we opened our own garden four times. So I suffered all the predictable anxieties: will we be ready on time, will the weather be kind, how will people react? etc. etc. BUT, as I always tell new openers, after it's all over, it's walking-on-air-time! And it might take some weeks before a proper descent to earth! Should anybody not like your garden, they won't tell you. But many visitors will line up to offer their heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Our garden introduced a lot of people to the beauty of Australian plants in a domestic setting; for that and many other reasons, sharing our place with others was always worth every scrap of effort involved. Maybe you would like to have the same exciting experience!

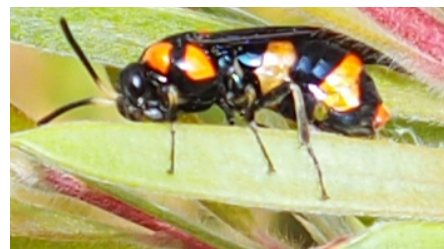
Visit Open Gardens Victoria online [opengardensvictoria.org.au] to find out more and to discover beautiful gardens to visit after the restrictions ease.



Callistemon muncher on the prowl - Alex Smart

In February 2020, Wendy Smart spotted a colourful insect in one of our Callistemons. Bronnie Swartz, a horticulturalist at Cranbourne Gardens who has a particular interest in insects, determined it to be a Callistemon Sawfly. Early in May Wendy noticed an infestation of the larvae attacking the plant. If I weren't so deaf I reckon I could have heard them munching the leaves. The young larvae skeletonise the leaves then, as they grow, they eat the whole leaf.

The good news is that although they might strip the foliage they do not kill the plant. What to do about them? Sure you could spray with Dipel but that is not selective and will also kill beneficial caterpillars. The best option is to don gloves and squash them. Some people are revolted by the thought, but trust me, there is quite some satisfaction in celebrating the green goo they express.



Top: Callistemon Sawfly (February).
Bottom: Callistemon Sawfly larvae feasting (May).

Friend Quiz 1 - Just for fun! - Charles Young

A QUIZ FOR YOU

Eight images, eight questions! The quiz aims to inform and encourage you to learn more about Australian native plants ... not just test your knowledge (although a little knowledge goes a long way!). Finding the answers generally requires a little research (googling or similar) and lateral thinking! The answers can be found on [page 16](#). Enjoy!

1. Scottish botanist Robert Brown met a French botanist in Encounter Bay (South Australia) in 1802. Later, Brown named this genus after his French counterpart but, unfortunately, he spelled his name wrong. What was the full name of the French botanist, what is the genus named after him and what is the common and scientific names of the species pictured (watch your spelling!)?



2. Another Frenchman, while visiting Kew in England, established the genus that this plant belong to. Rumour has it that he was murdered by his son but no one was ever tried for the crime. Who was this Frenchman and what is the genus he established? Pat on the back for those who can identify the species!



3. The Sturt pea (*Swainsona formosa*) is an iconic Australian wildflower. Who was the first European to collect the plant and where and when did he collect it? Bravo if you can (even roughly) translate its original Latin name: *Colutea Novae Hollandiae floribus amplis coccineis unbellatim dispositis macula purpurea notatis*!



4. (At left) This is the 'fruit' of a semi-parasitic tree that, according to its scientific name, has its 'seed outside the fruit' and 'the form of a cypress.' If you have ever done any orienteering in southeastern Australia you'll recognise it as a popular control point. What are the scientific and common names of this tree?



5. Which four landscape architects led the landscape and planting designs seen in the wonderful Australian Garden at RBG Cranbourne? Two of these individuals now have PhDs in landscape architecture. Who are they and which institution conferred the degrees?



6. This beautiful banksia may appear to be named after Australia's longest serving prime minister – but that is not the case! What is the common and scientific name of this species and who was it actually named after?



7. *Prasophyllum* species are commonly called Leek Orchids because their leaves resemble those of leeks (Gk *prasa*). What chemical element is similarly named - because of its leek-green coloured spectral line - and what is its twin (Gk. *didymo*) in the periodic table? The orchid pictured was cultivated in the RBG's Orchid Conservation Laboratory; see rbg.vic.gov.au/science/projects/orchid-conservation.



8. The common name of this attractive Australian native is the constellation we antipodeans claim as our own. What are the common and scientific names of this plant and where is it found 'in the wild'?

Spotlight – Amy Akers and Chloe Foster, our Social media team

MEET OUR TEAM

Are you a social media devotee who would like to join our communications team and assist with the posting of photos and information? Meet Amy Akers and Chloe Foster, who are our social media ambassadors.

Are you lovers of Australian plants?

Amy - Yes, I love those indigenous to my local area, as well as plants native to other parts of Australia. There are so many fascinating species and always many more to learn about. Absolutely!!!

Chloe - The Australian flora is so unique, so tough, so beautiful. It affects me emotionally.

Why are you such keen volunteers in support of RBGV Cranbourne?

Amy - The Gardens showcase Australian native plants and I think it's important for all Australians (as well as overseas visitors) to learn more about our unique flora. I have really enjoyed volunteering my time to assist with this goal, as well as meeting others who are as passionate as me.

Chloe - I want people to realise and appreciate the uniqueness of the Australian flora and learn about how to incorporate it into their own gardens.

When did you first get involved with the Cranbourne Friends?

Amy - I initially joined the Gardens as a volunteer Garden Ambassador in 2013 and then joined the Friends not long after in 2014.

Chloe - I joined as a volunteer Garden Ambassador in 2010 then the Friends membership/committee in 2013.

When did the Friends start using social media (Instagram and Facebook)? Why is it important?

Amy - Our Facebook and Instagram accounts were set up in February 2015 and I have been helping run both since then. They were set up to support and promote the Cranbourne Gardens, to gain exposure to a different demographic, to attract new members, to share our passion for Australian native plants, and to advertise our upcoming events.

Chloe - It was Amy's first act on the Friends Committee to get the Friends on social media, and I have been supporting her along the way. It connects the Friends and Gardens to a whole other audience and also allows us, Amy and me, to communicate with an audience that is similarly like-minded. The hope is that it brings more visitors to the Gardens and members to the Friends so that everyone can learn to appreciate the amazing flora we have.

What are the highlights of managing the Friends social media?

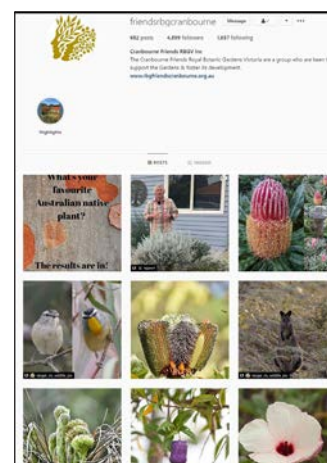
We enjoy seeing others' enthusiasm for the Cranbourne Gardens and Australian native plants, as well as the amount of interest our events have generated (especially our Growing Friends plant sales).

What are some challenges?

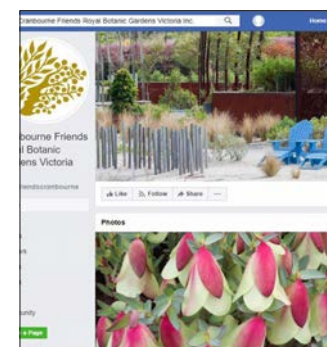
Amy - The biggest challenge for me has been running two social media accounts for over five years without a break. There have been times when I have wanted a break from social media, but I have not taken one, as I run the accounts. However, I would probably feel there was something 'missing' if I were to give it up and was no longer constantly keeping them active and updated.



(L to R), Chloe Foster and Amy Akers at the opening of the Elliot Centre and Growing Friends nursery in 2015.



Above, The Cranbourne Friends Instagram account, and below, the Facebook account.



Chloe - Amy does most of the social media work. I back her up when she goes on holidays, but the constant nature of social media can be very challenging.

How can Friends contribute to your work?

Amy - Links to interesting articles and photos (either taken at the Cranbourne Gardens or of interesting Australian native plants) can be sent to amy.e.akers@gmail.com. If photos of plants are being forwarded, we request that the name of that plant is supplied. We will include your name in the post unless you would like to remain anonymous.

Chloe - If there are any budding social media gurus out there that might be interested in helping out, give us a shout!!! It's a different type of scientific communication, reaching a wide audience.

Are you excited that soon the Friends will reach the milestone of 5000 followers on Instagram?

Chloe - It's awesome!!!! Amy has put in so many hours and endless effort into building the Friends Instagram to what it is today. It will be a huge milestone, as we are able to reach so many people all over the world and share the beautiful Australian flora.

Over to you!

Visit our Instagram account at: www.instagram.com/friendsrbgcranbourne

Visit Friends Facebook at: www.facebook.com/rbgfriendscranbourne

If you interested in assisting with posting to these sites on behalf of the Friends contact us at amy.e.akers@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you.

Friends in Focus - Judith Cooke

Our May meeting took the form of a virtual Show and Tell, with members contributing news and images illustrating life since lockdown. Five members participated actively on the day, while two more sent messages and images earlier. Using a combination of Dropbox and emails, we exchanged photographs and comments for two hours.

Subjects ranged from the latest four-legged addition to the family to the mural under the new Chandler Highway bridge. There were also grandchildren, worms in compost, and the Mornington Peninsula coastal landscape, as well as birds, flowering plants and fungi found in our own gardens.

The event was successful beyond expectations and has provided excellent material for the group's newsletter *The Cranbourne Lens*, which has been set up in lieu of meetings.

Some members had revisited the Gardens while they re-opened and took photographs which have been made available to the group.

I visited Cranbourne on Botanic Gardens Day (31st May) and on June 13, when our June meeting would normally have been held. New planting in the Australian Garden, a range of flowering plants and birds provided plenty of subjects for photography. A walk along Wylies Creek Track revealed several species of fungi in the Bushland on either side of the Track and Greenhoods were beginning to flower. A number of observations have been uploaded to the [iNaturalist database](https://www.inaturalist.org) and posted to social media.

Members are eagerly looking forward to the day when we can get together again and continue making photographic images of the Australian Garden.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



Fungi, Wylies Creek Track, from top:
Earth Star Fungus, *Aleurina ferruginea*, *Podocypha petalodes*.
Photos: Judith Cooke

At the moment, Special Interest Groups are unable to meet. **Growing Friends - Marianne Rook**

It is now July 2020 and at the time of writing, the Growing Friends are still in hibernation. A number of us are actively growing plants at home and by the time of our return we may come back with about 2,000 plants to add to the approximately 3,000 left behind. This will give us a good start for planning a plant sale in whichever form that may be.

About 30 *Brachychiton rupestris* in 20 cm pots, are cared for at home by one of the Growing Friends, Chris Wilson, who has a special interest in them. The following article has been written by Chris. We had hoped to feature this plant at the Winter Plant Sale but had to cancel, and the Spring Plant Sale, in its usual form, may not happen either. Cranbourne Friends will be notified when and how plant sales recommence.

Brachychitons - Chris Wilson

I remember clearly my first *Brachychiton*. I was at a plant market at Cruden Farm in about 2010, and a man had several small trees laid out on the ground, recently ripped from the soil and mostly without roots. He explained that they were bottle trees, *Brachychiton rupestris*, and that 'yes' they handle transplanting like that well. I bought one in a pot to be safe.

That tree has been in my garden for nine years now, and is almost the size of the two at the front gates to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. My interest has developed, and I have grown several hundred more from seed. About two hundred of those are now in my own garden, and many more are in the gardens of family and friends, the local preschool, and my granddaughters' primary school.

Brachychiton is a fascinating genus of Australian plants, and includes *B. rupestris* (Bottle tree), *B. acerifolius* (Illawarra Flame Tree), *B. populneus* (Kurrajong), and *B. megaphyllus* (red-flowered Kurrajong). They are generally hardy, grow in most soils, and bring to our gardens some wonderful features – the brilliant red flowers of the flame tree, and the quirky swollen trunk of the bottle tree, for example.

Interest in bottle trees especially is growing, and they are now often seen in private gardens and public spaces. There are several in Cranbourne Gardens, there is a stunning specimen at Point Leo Estate winery (winery...bottles...get it?), and they feature prominently in the garden at the Cranbourne McDonalds. There are several in the Children's Garden at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, for children to hug.

Because they transplant well, even as mature trees, it is possible to create a stunning effect in a short time. The specimens in our own Weird and Wonderful Garden and those inside the front gate of the Geelong Botanic Gardens are perfect examples of this. However, there is nothing quite as satisfying as growing plants slowly from the beginning. The Growing Friends' current crop of bottle tree seedlings, sown in late 2019, is developing well and is ready for a plant sale. Sown in deep pots they quickly send down a strong tap root, and growth is then usually rapid.

Through trial and error, I am learning of the potential of bottle trees to be coerced or pruned into interesting forms, like intertwined twins. Fascinating shapes can result.



Brachychiton rupestris, in the Weird and Wonderful Garden, Cranbourne (2012).



Brachychiton rupestris, as a feature tree.

At the moment, Special Interest Groups are unable to meet.

Botanical Illustration - Jennifer Potten

'Study nature diligently, be guided by nature ... for truly art is hidden in nature and he who can draw it possesses it' - Albrecht Durer, a German Renaissance artist.

Welcome to the fascinating world of Botanical Illustration, another of our special interest groups. Capturing the arc of the stem, the curve of the leaf, carefully depicting form and composition, the styles of the flower, the many colours and giving emphasis to characteristics unique to a species, artworks provide a detailed illustrative description of a plant, highlighting hidden details visually. This is the challenge of the botanical artist.

It demands a keen eye for detail and a good sense of perspective, as strictly speaking any representation should be within 1 mm of accuracy. Horticultural knowledge and appreciation enable the artist to differentiate one plant from similar plants and to highlight unusual characteristics. Cross-sections of seeds and fruit are common aides to plant identification.

Botanical illustration first evolved as a means of keeping records. Illustrations identified the various purposes for which certain plants or parts of plants could be used, be it for food, poisons or seemingly for medicinal purposes. Drawings were the best way of passing on such knowledge.

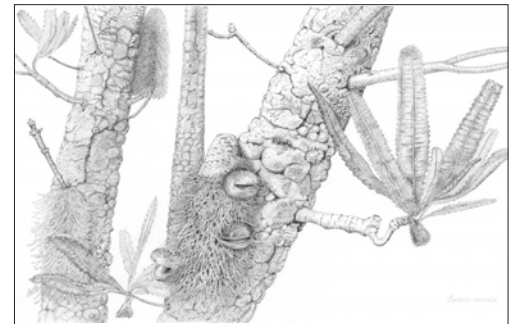
The dawning of the Age of Discovery saw the emergence of a symbiotic partnership between two vastly different, but complementary, professions, the illustrator and the botanist; art and science working together to advance our knowledge and understanding of plants.

When Joseph Banks accompanied James Cook on his expedition to the South Pacific, he was able to work with fellow botanist Daniel Solander and botanical illustrator Sydney Parkinson, to amass an enormous treasure trove of knowledge and specimens including more than 1000 plant species previously unknown in Europe and western science.

Celia Rosser, from South Gippsland, a renowned Australian botanical artist who created *The Banksias* - a three volume series of monographs containing watercolour illustrations, that are scientifically accurate, of every *Banksia* species - worked with a botanical collaborator. The text accompanying her works was written by botanist Alex George and reinforces that the partnership between artist and botanist remains important even today. Although advances in photography and technology have encroached on the role of the botanic artist, the beauty of nature as captured by the botanic artist cannot be surpassed.

Botanical art generally uses watercolour techniques, although the Cranbourne Botanic Illustrators also work using graphite and coloured pencils and ink. Workshops with special guest presenter artists help our group of artists further refine and develop their skills and techniques. Plans were in place to hold two workshops later this year; one with Ian Clarke using scraper boards and another with Geoff Sargent focussing on *Grevillea*. Sadly, it is unlikely these events will happen this year.

Illustrations by members are often exhibited or featured on cards sold at plant sales. For now, please savour these beautiful images the group have chosen for you.



Banksia serrata,
Liz MacDonald.



Solanum avicular,
Karen White.



Xanthorrhoea minor,
Kerryn Robinson.



Syzygium paniculatum,
Jan Maslen.

Visit to Corryong after the fires - Judith V Cooke

The view from the centre of town of the hills to the north was one of almost total devastation. The tree cover had been completely burnt. At the base of the hills the pasture was already green and supporting herds of cattle. Here and there were trees and bushes, some now charred remnants while others remained untouched. A plume of grey smoke arose from a heap of charred timber, indicating that in places the ground was still hot.

In the ravaged bushland, a number of bird species were managing to survive. Various parrots were present, their coloured plumage contrasting vividly with their surroundings, but other forms of wildlife were not in evidence. Sheltered in a ditch by the roadside grew a patch of bluebells, their delicate flowers waving in the breeze.

My objective was to record examples of regrowth following the fires over the December to January 2019-2020 period. I was limited in what I could achieve, as the major areas of bushland were still closed. I reached the entrance to the Mt Mittamatite Regional Park and Flora Reserve to find further vehicle access barred, and had to be content with examining the area just inside the gate and at the side of the road.

At the top of the steep slope a magnificent *Eucalyptus* adorned the crown of the mountain, visible from all directions, like a monument to the magnificence of the Australian bush. Now it was a blackened skeleton, a shadow of its former glory, stripped of its canopy. Yet already it was putting out numerous sprouts of fresh foliage in unusual places along its trunk and branches. I photographed it against its backdrop of the Kosciusko Ranges on the far horizon, standing in bare earth amongst fallen timber, the only survivor of a once thriving and diverse habitat.

Next day, I drove to the Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park farther north, which had been in the path of the inferno that had swept across the Murray from New South Wales to reach the outskirts of Corryong. The park was also closed, with signs posted warning of risks and dangers. My activities were therefore again restricted to taking photographs along the side of the road. Everywhere the bush was initiating strategies for recovery. Bright green and blue-green epicormic growths were erupting all along the trunks and branches of the eucalypts and a variety of understorey species were emerging from the scorched ground.

I continued travelling northward and for two hours drove through an entirely altered landscape. Whole pine plantations had also been destroyed and heavy equipment was working to salvage the blackened trunks leaving vast, cleared areas. There was a constant stream of logging trucks following the Murray Valley Highway.

The magnitude of the calamity was difficult to comprehend. I was conscious of a deep sense of loss and an awareness that this special place will never be the same in my lifetime. I returned to unaffected areas and began the long journey home.

Some of the many photographs I took have been contributed to the Environmental Recovery Research Project on the iNaturalist online database ([inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org)). Since lockdown I have not yet been able to return to continue my investigations.



Top: Landscape from Mt Mittamite to Kosciusko Ranges.

Middle, Bracken and *Rubra parvifolius* resprouting.

Bottom, Vigorous epicormic growth on local *Eucalyptus* species.

Photos: Judith Cooke

What's up in the Bushland: Indigenous *Acacia* species at RBGV Cranbourne Gardens - Mary Thackeray.

Mary Thackeray was a Customer Service Ranger at RBGV Cranbourne for nine years and later also Volunteer Coordinator. She is a long term member of the Cranbourne Friends. Article reprinted from Naturelink vol 24 (1) — Autumn 2017.

There are close to 1000 species of *Acacia* native to Australia, making it our largest genus of vascular (sap-bearing) plants. The common name 'wattle' comes from the wattle and daub huts made by early British settlers in Australia. Various types of *Acacias* were ideal for this work because their cut stems were so flexible.

There are ten indigenous *Acacia* species recorded on site in the Cranbourne bushland, of which three are trees and seven are shrubs. These are indigenous to the sand-belt area with some being locally rare in certain areas, such as *Acacia stricta* in Bayside. A number of the smaller shrubs would make good garden plants, particularly if you are trying to create habitat for small birds, due to their prickly foliage.

Acacia brownii (Heath Wattle) is a small shrub (the smallest of the indigenous wattles on site) with prickly foliage and is considered rare in the Melbourne and Westernport catchment areas. You can see some growing near the gates that lead out to the Woodland Picnic Area (WPA) and in the coach parking area nearby. It flowers from winter (August) to early spring. [To check locations see [online map](#)].

Acacia suaveolens (Sweet Wattle), so named due to the sweet scent of the flowers, is a light, open shrub that can also be seen in the coach parking area and along the path towards the WPA gates from the Entry Orientation Shelter. These were planted, as apparently there were only two plants growing naturally on site, in the ecotonal (transitional) area of the Depot. It is one of the earliest flowering wattles with pale yellow flowers in winter and has attractive seed pods. Hard pruning encourages strong new growth with attractive grey foliage.

Acacia oxycedrus (Spike Wattle) is a medium sized shrub with prickly dense foliage and cream flowers. This is the most common *Acacia* species on site, scattered throughout the heathlands. This species hybridizes readily with the weedy *Acacia longifolia* (Sallow Wattle).

Acacia paradoxa (Hedge Wattle) is a larger prickly shrub with sharp spines and as the name suggests, it would make a good hedge if you wanted to keep animals (or people) out! It has a strong yellow-coloured flower. This can be seen growing typically on the heavier soils on site in various places including on the way to WPA.

Acacia stricta (Hop Wattle) is a medium shrub and is another species which typically only grows on the heavier soils on site, in the woodland.

Acacia verticillata (Prickly Moses), as the name suggests, has prickly foliage which has its narrow phyllodes arranged like spokes of a wheel. The pale yellow flowers are arranged on short spikes.

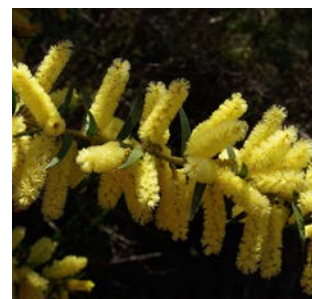
Acacia dealbata (Silver Wattle). The common name of Silver Wattle refers to the silvery fern-like leaves and young, upper branchlets, both due to tiny silvery hairs. Early settlers used the bark for tanning leather. This is the species that is known in Europe in the florist trade as *Mimosa* (from the family name Mimosaceae).



Acacia brownii.
Photo: Rodger Elliot



Acacia suaveolens.
Photo: Eva Kowal



Acacia oxycedrus.
Photo: Rodger Elliot

Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle) is another tree form that looks a bit similar to Silver wattle. Black wattle refers to the black bark. Silver and Black wattle both have bipinnate (fern-like) foliage but they flower at different times. You can tell them apart by looking at the raised glands on the leaves. Silver wattle has a gland at the junction of each pair of leaflets on the underside of the axis and Black wattle has many glands scattered in between. Neither of these acacias is particularly long lived.

Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood) is fast growing and long-lived. The wood is used for furniture making. Blackwood refers to the dark coloured mature timber. Early settlers used the bark for tanning leather.

Acacia ulicifolia (Juniper Wattle) is another fast growing, short lived species with spines which provide great protection for small birds and animals. This *Acacia* also grows typically on the heavier soils on site.

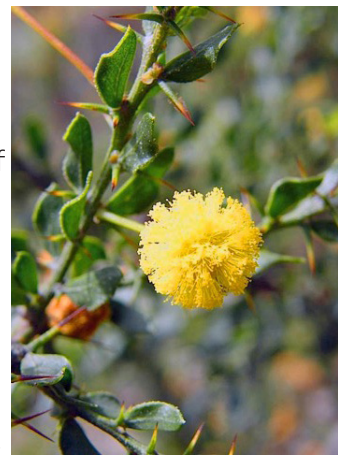
There is one *Acacia* on site that is classified as a weed as it is not indigenous to the area, *Acacia longifolia* (Sallow Wattle). This is one of the main woody weeds on site, along with Sweet Pittosporum. *A. longifolia* subsp. *sophorae* (Coast Wattle) has also been recorded as indigenous on site but is uncommon here.

Acacia species often colonise an area after fire (which promotes seed germination) or opening up of a gap in the forest (due to a large tree falling). These are the fast growing but not long-lived acacias, which rarely live longer than 15-20 years. As they are legumes they fix nitrogen that helps improve the soil for the plants that follow, thereby playing an important part in succession. The seeds usually have a long viability with a hard coat that requires heat or nicking before germination. There are some long-lived acacias, such as *Acacia melanoxylon*, and *Acacia implexa* (Lightwood). The latter is both fast growing and relatively long lived but not found on site. It is widespread but predominantly favours more inland sites.

Acacia species are widely blamed for causing hay fever, and some people are indeed allergic to them, but in most cases this is likely due to the pollen from grasses and other plants that are flowering at the same time. Allergy tests confirm this. *Acacia* pollen is relatively heavy (as acacias are insect, rather than wind-pollinated) and so is not carried long distances by wind.

When out in the bushland you may see sawdust at the base of some Silver and Black wattles. This is a sign of borers which are bark and wood feeding beetles such as longicorn and jewel beetles. You may also see sawdust around the junction of branches and holes disguised by webbing and frass. Borers live mainly in living but generally weakened plants and in severe cases can cause the death of the tree. In healthy trees exudation of gum restricts borer activity and affected old branches break off.

Many thanks to Warren Worboys for his assistance with this article.



Acacia paradoxa showing globular flower and spines.
Photo: Wendy Lawrence

Membership Update

This quarter we are pleased to welcome six new members: Sandra D'Mello, Rosalind Jessop, Iain Miller, Andrew Hughes, Chris Clarke and Liz Schroeder.

If you have any Membership queries, please contact Alexandra Stalder:

- membership@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au
- telephone: 0431 025 733



Seed pod challenge

Many people taking the challenge wondered why seed pods were the focus of Charles Young's recent photomontage. Here he explains the attraction.

Congratulations to Ollie Sherlock for identifying so many of the pods in our seed pod competition! We get so caught up admiring the beautiful flowers of our native plants that it is easy to forget their purpose - to produce seeds for the next generation! Of course, the seed pods (cones, drupes, capsules etc.) are in many cases as fascinating and beautiful as the flowers that precede them. The seed pods also provide protection and nutrition for the seeds, food for native animals and birds and some may be a source of bush tucker!

I first got interested in seed pods as part of discovering more about the full lifecycle characteristics of native plants, from recruitment (including seed germination) to maturity and on to decline and even death. This knowledge helps you be a better gardener and assists the out-of-season identification of plants.

Secondly, I wanted to learn the names of plants and studying the seed pods was often useful in that regard. Why? Well, many common and scientific names refer to the characteristics of the seed pods. Examples include:

- *Ficus microcarpa* (Latin, fig or fig tree, also Greek, *micro* small + *karpos*, referring to the small fruit)
- *Brachychiton* (Greek, *brachys* short + *chiton* tunic, referring to its loose seed coats)
- *Bursaria* (Latin, *bursa* purse, referring to the distinctive purse-shaped fruit).

And as if that was not enough...finally, I just love the look and feel of these beautiful and exquisitely evolved procreation capsules!

If you want to see some truly magnificent photos of seed pods, take a look at pinterest: pinterest.com.au/teribamert/seeds-and-pods/



Seed pod challenge answers

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Native Frangipani (<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>) | 16. Wollemi Pine (<i>Wollemia nobilis</i>) |
| 2. Desert Quandong (<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>) | 17. Angular Hop-Bush (<i>Dodonaea truncatiales</i>) |
| 3. Sea Berry Saltbush (<i>Rhagodia candolleana</i>) | 18. Scaly Zamia (<i>Lepidozamia peroffskyana</i>) |
| 4. Wedding Bush (<i>Ricinocarpos pinifolius</i>) | 19. <i>Pterostylis</i> orchid |
| 5. Burrawang (<i>Macrozamia communis</i>) | 20. Purple Cheeseberry (<i>Cyathodes glauca</i>) |
| 6. Bushy Needlewood (<i>Hakea sericea</i>) | 21. Hill's Weeping Fig (<i>Ficus microcarpa</i> var. <i>hillii</i>) |
| 7. Propeller Banksia (<i>Banksia candolleana</i>) | 22. Pine-Leaf Geebung (<i>Persoonia pinifolia</i>) |
| 8. South Esk Pine (<i>Callitris oblonga</i>) | 23. <i>Banksia petiolaris</i> |
| 9. Bald Island Marlock (<i>Eucalyptus conferruminata</i>) | 24. Plum Pine (<i>Podocarpus elatus</i>) |
| 10. Sticky Wattle (<i>Acacia howittii</i>) | 25. Giant Spear Lily (<i>Doryanthes palmeri</i>) |
| 11. Candlestick Banksia (<i>Banksia attenuata</i>) | 26. Swamp Bottlebrush (<i>Beaufortia sparsa</i>) |
| 12. Mottlecah (<i>Eucalyptus macrocarpa</i>) | 27. Lacebark (<i>Brachychiton discolor</i>) |
| 13. Weeping Pittosporum (<i>Pittosporum angustifolium</i>) | 28. Pine Heath (<i>Astroloma pinifolium</i>) |
| 14. Sturt Pea (<i>Swainsona formosa</i>) | 29. Sweet Bursaria (<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>) |
| 15. Tree Violet (<i>Meliclytus dentatus</i>) | 30. Screw Pine (<i>Pandanus spiralis</i>) |

Quiz Answers (from [page 7](#))

A1: The French botanist was Jean Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour, the genus is *Lechenaultia* and this species is blue Leschenaultia or *Lechenaultia biloba*.

A2: The Frenchman, a civil servant and wealthy amateur botanist, was Charles Louis L'Héritier de Brutelle and the genus he established (in 1789) is *Eucalyptus*. The name is derived from Greek *eu* good/well and *kalypto* cover/conceal/hide, referring to the operculum (cap) that covers the flower buds. The species is *Eucalyptus youngiana*.

A3: The plant was first collected by William Dampier, on Rosemary Island, Western Australia, on 22 August 1699. The Latin name, coined by English naturalist John Ray around 1704, translates as: A Colutea of New Holland (Australia) with large scarlet flowers arranged in an umbel and marked with a purple spot.

A4: The tree is *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, the Cherry Ballart or Native Cherry. The fleshy, edible 'cherry' is actually a swollen pedicel, the true seed-like fruit (an inedible nut) lying at its terminus.

A5: The Australian Garden was designed by TCL – Taylor Cullity Lethlean – with planting design by Paul Thompson. Perry Lethlean and Kate Cullity received PhDs from RMIT University in 2014.

A6: This is the Firewood Banksia (because it burns well) or *Banksia menziesii*. Scottish botanist Robert Brown (see Q1) named the species in honour of Archibald Menzies, naturalist-surgeon on George Vancouver's ship HMS *Discovery*. Menzies brought many plants back to the UK, most notably the Monkey-puzzle Tree (reputedly after saving and planting the 'dessert nuts' from a dinner in Jamaica). He was a bit of an adventurer and led the first European ascent of the Hawaiian volcano Mauna Loa! Neither Brown nor Menzies ever saw the living plant.

A7: The element is praseodymium (element 59, the 'green twin') and its twin is neodymium (element 60, the 'new twin'). They were thought of as 'chemical twins' because they were present in the same ore but were initially very hard to separate and identify as distinct elements.

A8: The common name of this plant is Southern Cross due to the resemblance of the flowers to the stars of the constellation Crux, the Southern Cross. Its scientific name is *Xanthosia rotundifolia* (xanthosia with round leaves). It is a small shrub endemic to the Warren, Esperance Plains and Jarrah Forest biogeographic regions of southwest WA.

Thank you *Charles Young* for providing us with such an absorbing quiz.

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The General Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month (except January) normally at 5.30pm.