

Hakea fraseri



Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

<http://www.anps-armidale.org.au>

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Hello Members,

Winter is almost over and spring is just around the corner. This has been what I call a Melbourne winter – frequent rainfalls which have left the ground sodden and difficult to work. I've been trying to get a bobcat in to do some cleaning up for months and have to keep cancelling the bookings. The paddocks are saturated and dams are overflowing. This all bodes well for an excellent spring. As soon as the weather warms up our plants will jump out of the ground with vigour.

The Solstice luncheon in June was very pleasurable. John and Barbara have consolidated their gardens and built up new beds ready for a spring planting. A soft carpet of sawdust creates a pathway between the beds allowing visitors to catch a glimpse of an amazing number of species of plants including many unusual ones being trialled. The garden has grown very large over the years and we spent quite a bit of time meandering through the collection. Lunch was delicious as usual and we all had some fun with a game of 'Pass the Parcel' which introduced us to a few personal secrets.

The Presentation Dinner in Glen Innes for Jean Mott was a wonderful affair. About 32 people attended and the Crofters Cottage proved to be a perfect venue. Graeme Ingall presented Jean with her badge and some native flowers brought up from the Central Coast and he and Penelope Sinclair gave some excellent speeches about Jean's great contribution to promoting native plants in the Glen Innes district over the years.

We now have some student volunteers helping on our Arboretum working bees but Patrick is always looking for extra helpers even if only for a short time.

Col Bale is our speaker at the August meeting and he will be informing us about the local soils and how we might be able to improve them for gardening. We are planning to extend the trip to Kings Plains for those who would like to make a weekend out of it. On Saturday I will lead a trip to a new reserve in Warialda. We will then stay the night in Inverell and join up with the day trippers at Kings Plains NP on Sunday morning. Anyone interested in going on this trip (either for the weekend or just for Sunday) needs to ring me or send an email for details.

On September 1 we will be celebrating Wattle Day at the new Bunnings store. We will be handing out sprigs of wattle as usual, blowing up green and gold balloons (we have a machine) and promoting the Society.

Bunnings will organise displays of native plants, have a colouring competition and conduct a sustainability tour. We will need a number of helpers for this activity so please let us know if you can help.

Hope to see you all at the next meeting

Maria Hitchcock

Thank you all contributors. The deadline for the next newsletter is Friday 24 September. Reports, articles, snippets, photos (jpeg format 200 -300 dpi & approx 8cm) and ideas are all welcome. Please do not embed your photos in a word document, send them as separate files.

Send hard copy to the Editor: Pam Rooney PO Box 807 Armidale 2350 or email pamrooney@bigpond.com

GROUP INFORMATION

(Group commenced 6th August 1977)

We are a very friendly and helpful group who enjoy monthly meetings, garden visits and field trips to help members enjoy the search for knowledge about our native flora. We range from raw beginners to others who have been at the game for many years - all willing to share their knowledge.

General Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except December, January, June and July) at The Tree Group Woodland Centre where a display of flowers is presented by members. Old and new members and visitors are very welcome to these meetings and to our outings (page 9).

Business Meetings are held monthly – see diary for where - members are welcome to these meetings too.

Annual General Meeting is held in February.

Solstice Function is held in June.

Wattle Day Activity is held on a day closest to 1 September.

December Meeting is taken up by an end of year function, usually a BBQ or picnic.

ALL YOU NEED TO JOIN OUR GROUP IS A GREAT LOVE OF OUR NATIVE PLANTS

Cover: Background is adapted from a drawing of Hakea fraseri in Forest Flora, NSW

Life Membership For Jean Mott

On Sunday 25th July Graeme Ingall, President of the NSW Branch of the Australian Plant Society (APS), presented Jean Mott with the badge of Life Membership. Graeme came from Gosford with his wife to meet with Jean's family, friends and members of the Society from Armidale, Inverell and Glen Innes for lunch at the Crofter's Cottage. In his presentation speech Graeme said that Jean had ably fulfilled the requirements for Life Membership by her promotion of native plants locally and within the region and his recommendation to the Society's AGM had been passed with acclamation.

Jean is well known in Glen Innes as a lover and promoter of the use of Australian plants in our gardens and public places. She has been a member of APS for over 20 years and has been its representative on the Recreation and Open Spaces committee since 2002 where she ensures that native plants continue to be considered by Council for our Reserves and Parks so as to maintain a haven for our birds and wildlife and the biodiversity within the Shire. Jean, with other members of the Society planned and helped establish our native plant median strip along the New England Highway in Glen Innes. This area contains over 50 local species and is currently being extended with money from the Society and contributions from the Council so that grass trees can be added.

Jean's family were represented by two of her daughters, two granddaughters and son-in-law Roger Smith, who on behalf of the family, told the gathering how appreciative the family were for Jean's gentle leadership and her enthusiasm and encouragement in all their endeavours and particularly for the love and knowledge she shared about native plants and gardens.

Penelope Sinclair

Birdscaping your Garden

One of the main reasons for growing Australian native plants in gardens is to attract the local bird population. Gardeners spend small fortunes on fancy bird baths and bird feeders which they hang in prominent positions in the hope of having a natural aviary for their enjoyment and entertainment.

However, it is not the fancy fittings which attract the birds to the garden, it is the hidden food source which will bring them there and a knowledge of which plants are bird attracting will go a long way towards having several species call your garden home.

First you need to know which birds are likely to visit your garden, then find out what they like to eat or what attracts them, then try to provide those plants. You will need to consider planting in large clumps for security and continuity of supply. You will also need to plant species which flower or fruit at different times of the year to ensure that your birds will become residents and not just visitors in your garden.

Correas are well known for attracting honeyeaters. Many species flower in autumn and winter making them an important addition to any garden which has mainly spring and summer-flowering species. They are very adaptable, suited to many soil types and are often drought and frost hardy. You can grow a number of them together in a fairly small space, which makes them ideal for small suburban gardens, in tubs in courtyards or on verandahs.

If Noisy Miners dominate your garden, you won't be able to attract many honeyeaters until you get rid of the Miners. Once the Miners move out, the Wattle Birds take their place and they in turn chase away any unwanted species. Getting rid of Noisy Miners is not an easy task. Generally they don't like thickets or the ferny leaf wattles. On the North Shore of Sydney it was observed that the populations of Noisy Miners seemed to grow with an increase in the number of grevilleas planted in gardens. That appears to be their favoured nectar source. That doesn't mean you should stop planting grevilleas but try to have a balance of other native plants in the garden.

Honeyeaters do not eat honey but sip the nectar from flowers. They also eat berries, fruit, sap and manna from plants and a wide variety of insects. They have brush-tipped tongues which they extend beyond the end of their bill to probe into flowers and mop up the nectar. The structure of the correa flower ensures that pollen transfer takes place during nectar visits. Most Australian honeyeaters are nomadic, moving around to take advantage of nectar flows as different native plants, such as eucalypts, banksias etc come into bloom. To attract honeyeaters to your garden, you need to choose a selection of plants which will bloom over several months.

But they don't live only on nectar. Many are predominantly insect eaters and all of them feed their nestlings on insects to give them a high protein low fat diet for fast growth and feather production. A mixture of Myrtaceae plants like Leptospermums and Melaleucas should ensure a good supply of insects during the warmer months, when they are often covered in flying insects, beetles, native wasps, tiny spiders and sometimes butterflies. These plants also encourage a wider range of birds, including the fairy-wrens, scrubwrens, fantails and thornbills.

Providing artificial nectar is not a good idea as it usually results in attracting honeybees and wasps and care must be taken to make sure the mixture does not ferment in hot weather. You may inadvertently create an artificial 'territory' in your garden. If the food supply suddenly disappears, the birds will slowly disperse into the surrounding territories of other birds.

Place birdbaths near a dense, perhaps prickly bush where the birds can quickly hide from predators such as cats and hawks. Wandering cats soon learn bird-feeding times and will treat your garden as a regular meal stop. Dawn and dusk provide excellent hunting as well, so you should do everything within the bounds of reason to exclude cats from your garden. Your defence against predators is to provide as much shelter as you can.

Many of us gain much pleasure from setting up a birdbath and watching 'our' birds fly in daily for a drink and a bathe. Don't provide a source of water in your garden unless you keep it permanently filled as birds will come to rely on the water and check twice daily in summer. Birds drink and bathe in winter as well, so don't let water stay frozen for long. In deeper water place an object such as a rock or sloping branch to enable birds to climb to safety if the depth takes them by surprise. Small ponds tend not to freeze over and rarely dry out, making them a useful water source for small birds.

Birdbaths need clean and shallow water, non-slip surfaces, thick cover nearby for safety, an overhanging perch, protection from cats and shade from midday and afternoon sun to keep the water and the birds cool. You should provide several different water sources at different heights, above-ground and at ground level. Some parrots enjoy clambering down vines or wires to a birdbath. Wrens, thornbills, honeyeaters and robins will take daily baths in shallow bowls. Set them low beside sheltering bushes that provide safe access to the water. Long, open stretches of water are used by kookaburras, red wattlebirds and swallows for dash-bathing

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From Yallaroo

Prostanthera nivea

A Pair of Prostantheras

Boonoo Boonoo National Park is situated north-east of Tenterfield off the Mount Lindsay Road. The Park is the only place where we have encountered two species of *Prostanthera* growing in close proximity.

In the Morgan's Gully area of the Park *Prostanthera nivea* and *Prostanthera petraea* grow within 150 metres of each other. *Prostanthera nivea* grows in granite outcrops above the gully whilst *Prostanthera petraea* is found in the gully.

Prostanthera nivea, the Snowy Mintbush, is a medium shrub with an open growth habit. The leaves are linear, about six centimetres long and mid to dark green. Flowers are white to mauve, two centimetres long and appear in spring. Blooms are profuse and very conspicuous. The Boonoo Boonoo form has pure white flowers. The image is from a specimen growing in our garden. This form has flowers with a tinge of pink.

Prostanthera petraea was only named in 1992 and is a medium to tall shrub that is said to reach a height of eight metres. The plants observed in Morgan's Gully were about two metres tall.

The leaves are strongly aromatic, ovate, olive-green above and



paler beneath. The conspicuous flowers are two centimetres long, white, carried in terminal sprays and appear in late spring and early summer.

Prostanthera petraea is similar in appearance to some forms of *Prostanthera lasianthos*. Because of its limited distribution it is considered to be rare.

Both species described perform well in cultivation and propagate easily and rapidly from cuttings.

Ants, Butterflies and Wattles

Some decades ago, in a Blue Mountains garden, we observed a number of small caterpillars feeding on the leaves of a bipinnate-foliaged *Acacia*. The caterpillars were covered in small black ants who appeared to be protecting the insects.

We fast forward to February 2006 and we found the same caterpillars in our present garden. They were feeding on the foliage of *Acacia parramattensis*. The caterpillars were also surrounded by small black ants. This time there was also a butterfly perched on a defoliated *Acacia* stem.



Prostanthera petraea

From Yallaroo (contd.)



We identified the insects as the Common Imperial Blue Butterfly (*Jalmenus evagoras*). They feed on many Acacias.

The ants protect both larvae and pupae from predators and in return they are rewarded with nectar secreted by the immature insects.

The butterflies have a fine black tail on each hindwing. When resting the tails flap in the breeze. It is thought that the movement may deceive predators into attacking the tail rather than the head. The butterflies' motto could be: "Tis better to lose a tail than to lose a life".

Since 2006 the butterflies and their guardians have not returned.

Margaret and Henry

Over the years we have become increasingly



Common Imperial Blue Butterfly

interested in Australia's botanical history. After reading Joan Boyd's excellent review of *The Little Giant, the Life and Work of Joseph Maiden* by Dr Lionel Gilbert we were inspired to purchase a copy of this historical masterpiece.

We are particularly interested in two of Maiden's contemporaries who are frequently mentioned in the book.

They are Margaret Flockton and Henry Deane.

Margaret Flockton was a botanical artist who worked at the Sydney Botanic Gardens for 29 years. Margaret worked with Maiden on two monumental works: *The Forest Flora of NSW* and *The Critical Revision of the Genus Eucalyptus*.

The image of *Hakea fraseri* on the Newsletter's front page is one of Margaret's exquisite drawings.

Maiden held her in high regard and named three plant species in her honour. *Eucalyptus flocktoniae* is a native of Western Australia. *Acacia flocktoniae* is a vulnerable wattle from the southern Blue Mountains.

The third species is *Olearia flocktoniae*, the Dorrigo Daisy Bush. Some years ago the late John Williams collected a strange Daisy Bush from the Dorrigo area that he identified as *Olearia flocktoniae*. Prior to this collection the species was thought to be extinct.

John collected material from plants growing in a disturbed roadside area. This is a native plant that requires disturbed ground to regenerate. Without disturbance or propagation the Dorrigo Daisy Bush is likely to drift into oblivion.

Olearia flocktoniae is a short-lived medium shrub with soft, narrow, finely toothed margins. The typical Daisy flower heads are 25 millimetres wide with white petals and a central yellow disc.

Cuttings produce roots rapidly.

Henry Deane was a friend of Maiden and was a man of many parts. He was a railway engineer and botanist. He worked on the Gunnedah-Narrabri railway construction, was responsible for the electrification of the Sydney tram system and was engineer-in-charge of the construction of the Transcontinental Railway. He was in charge of the construction of the Wolgan Valley Railway, one of Australia's great engineering feats.

Henry collected plants during his railway work. *Acacia deanei*, one of our favourite wattles, was collected in the Gunnedah area. He collected specimens of *Eucalyptus deanei* and *Boronia deanei* in the Wolgan Valley area and probably collected *Melaleuca deanei* when working in Sydney.

He also found time to research native hardwood timbers, write papers on plant fossils and was president of the Linnaean Society of NSW.

He passed away in 1924 whilst working in his garden.

Warren & Gloria Sheather

A note concerning the flower colour of *Homoranthus porteri*

I have been growing homoranthus plants in pots for a few years, - I like their unusual flowers, which are sometimes very tiny, as I enjoy the challenge of photographing 'difficult' things. Specimens of *Homoranthus porteri* of various ages have been growing successfully despite the frosts and occasional absences from home. The flowers usually appear in pairs on the shrub, with the fringed calyx lobes protruding beneath the bracts, and each flower has a style up to about 18mm long. The bracts and flowers are often red or pink as in the following three images.

Occasionally throughout the long flowering season white



flowers with no style appear. These flowers can appear in one or two pairs, or as a single flower in a pair with another flower with a style. Other combinations of colour can also appear.

The following two images were taken during one photographic session. Three white flowers with no styles had appeared with one pink flower with a style. On close examination of the photo the central white flower appeared to have a very short



style which had not exited the ends of the calyx lobes. These same flowers were photographed about 18 hours later, and all styles were visible on the four flowers (one style is partly obscured by the pink flower on the left hand side).

The speed at which the styles had appeared surprised me somewhat, so I set up a system which recorded photographs of white flowers each 30 minutes, over a period of about 80 hours. Some selected photographs from this series are shown below:

The emerging styles in the first image (A) grow to nearly full length in the second image (B) in about 5 hours. The third image (C) was taken about 14 hours after the first. Thank goodness for the ability to record data using digital cameras.

It appears that the "white" flowers are immature flowers in which the style has not yet developed. The white buds develop into white flowers which develop styles relatively quickly, and then slowly develop a pink tinge over time regardless of whether they are inside or outside in full sun.

A Photo 1



B taken about 5 hours after A



C taken about 14 hours after A



text & photos Colin Mulquiney

Wattle walks on Sunday August 22

At “Yangoora” 179 Dumaresq Dam Rd where Peter and Sue Metcalfe have over 40 species of wattle planted and sod sown in 2ha of bush garden. Come at any time of the day for a guided or self guided walk around the gardens and bush where the wattles, both trees and shrubs, have been labelled. Most of them will be in flower. Brief notes on each species will be provided. Donations for the Tree Group will be welcome. For visits at other times please ring Peter on 6775 1165 to see what day/time suits.

Saturday - Sunday 21-22 August

We are planning to extend the trip to Kings Plains for those who would like to make a weekend out of it. On Saturday I will lead a trip to a new reserve in Warialda. We will then stay the night in Inverell and join up with the day trippers at Kings Plains NP on Sunday morning. Anyone interested in going on this trip (either for the weekend or just for Sunday) needs to ring me or send an email for details.

Maria Hitchcock

You may wish to receive your newsletters by email, a cost effective option for our Society. The bonus for members is that the photos in the newsletter are in colour. In general the size of the newsletter is 1Mb or less.

If you would prefer newsletters by email please contact the editor at pamrooney@bigpond.com

Markets in the Mall

Pat (6775 1842 or mob 0427 327 719) would like some help with the plant display and sale at the monthly markets.

or drinking. Pigeons, cockatoos and finches drink happily at ground level at natural pools or from dishes.

In the 1991 Garden Birds Survey, gardens were categorised in three styles and recordings of regular sightings were made. The least number of sightings (average 18) were made on suburban lawn with trees and shrub around it, while the highest number came from a woodland style with more or less continuous tree cover (average 30 species). Other positive factors were being close to a natural woodland or park, having a reserve or native parkland less than 0.5 km away and having a constant water supply.

80% of Australia's honeyeaters are accustomed to moving around to follow the nectar flow. They might move from the hills to the coast, or across the plains, as different plants flower. Sometimes the same birds stay in the garden for years. Magpies set up a territory, so do kookaburras and fairy-wrens. If you are trying to attract or keep birds in your garden, it is often a question of providing something to 'bring them down'.

Tall trees indigenous to the area are important. If the upper storey is flowering gums, you can have a mixed garden below and it can still provide appropriate bird habitat if designed well. Thick cover from treetops to ground level at some point in the garden allows small birds to hide, feed under and to sleep in at night. This is an item which is so often missing from the suburban garden. Some birds, such as Eastern and Crimson rosellas nest in tree hollows. New, young trees are of no use to long-lived, tree-hollow-dependent birds. Some trees have just one hollow; others are like botanical apartment blocks, with many hollows and crevices of different sizes.

Eastern spinebills tend to be solitary and have a fairly wide distribution. Their long curved bill goes into tubular flowers such as correas with great ease and can be observed hovering while feeding. Their nests tend to be small, well-hidden cups of grass, moss and hair bound with cobweb. They will take up residence in your garden if there is enough nectar available and they prefer thickets and heaths of low-growing vegetation.

The White-eared honeyeater has a dark head and prominent white eye patch with a yellowish abdomen. Nests are deep cups of bark and grass in a slender horizontal form, often lined with fur plucked from unsuspecting kangaroos. They are common residents in dry forest, woodland and heath in eastern Australia. They love nectar although their beaks are not long enough for the majority of tubular flowers like correas. They therefore resort to being nectar thieves by making a hole in the base of the corolla, thus cheating the flower of pollen transfer.

Superb fairy-wrens are common residents of patchy undergrowth in forests and woodlands, which give both cover and access to open space for feeding. Some disturbed areas

such as parks and private gardens are also used. Only the dominant males possess the bright blue colouring. Their nests are domes made of grass, bark, rootlets and spiderweb, well hidden in long grass, low bushes or reeds and nests have been observed in dianella and lomandra clumps. They eat insects, worms, caterpillars, grasshoppers and other bugs. Thickets of bushy shrubs should provide protection.

Red wattlebirds are generally seen feeding on the nectar of banksias, waratahs, callistemons, grevilleas and correas. They occur naturally in native forests and woodlands and are common in parks and gardens. They also feed on insects and fruit. They can be seen searching intently under eaves and gutters, hunting for spiders to feed to their young. They also snatch large orb-weaving spiders from their webs and insects from the air. Their nests take the form of roughly constructed cups of grass and twigs, lined with feathers, hair or soft plant material and are usually situated in the tree canopy, 4 - 10 metres above ground level.

Crimson rosellas are common in many gardens. The rosella beak is very efficient at tearing open fruits and they are well known nectar-thieves, ripping flowers off correa bushes. A common sight in the morning is to find a correa bush ringed by a border of flowers on the ground. They feed rather quietly and unobtrusively on the ground or in trees and often become tame and are predominantly seed-eaters but they also feed on blossoms and insects and their larvae. The usual nesting site is a tree cavity high in a tall Eucalypt (8-30m above ground).

A thicket of *Correa lawrenciana var rosea* will reach to the lower branches of most Eucalypts and will provide dense cover right down to ground level. Similarly, thickets of *Correa glabra* planted beside the *C. lawrenciana* plants will give added shelter and copious nectar. Both species flower for extended periods and require practically no maintenance except for a judicious tip-pruning in the first few years to ensure that they bush up. *Correa pulchella* varieties are stunning in the garden. Most are small shrubs which can be planted in between other shrubs. They flower from late autumn to spring and there are many beautiful hybrids available. The best way to provide a huge amount of nectar in autumn and winter is to put in a correa hedge. They require little maintenance and can be pruned just like any other hedge to shape. Best species are *C. alba*, *C. backhouseana*, *C. glabra*, *C. calycina*. Some correas lend themselves really well to being tucked into smallish spaces. Plant several together to grow into one another. *C. reflexa* varieties and *C. decumbens* varieties are perfect for this.

So next time you step into your garden, think! Is it for the birds too?

Maria Hitchcock

FOR YOUR DIARY, COMING EVENTS: August - October 2010

August

- Tuesday 10, 5.30pm Business Meeting, Maria Hitchcock's place. All Welcome
- Tuesday 17, 7.30pm **General Meeting Speaker: Colin Bale, a soil scientist who will speak about "Improving the soil in your garden"; Plant of the month: Acacia**
- Sunday 22 **Outing To Kings Plains NP Meet at the Visitor Information car park, Dumaresq Street. (further info see page 7)**
Or visit Peter & Sue Metcalfe's garden (see page 7 for details)
- Sunday 29 Markets in the mall and plant sale. Contact Pat Laher

September

- Wednesday 1 September Wattle Day (see page 1)
- Tuesday 7, at 1:00 pm Arboretum working bee, details: contact Patrick Laher.
- Tuesday 14, 5:30 pm Business meeting venue: Don & Maria Hitchcock's place. all welcome.
- Tuesday 21, 7:30 pm **General meeting at Tree Group Nursery Topic: Cuttings workshop**
- Saturday 25, 1:00 pm Outing to Tea-tree Creek with botanist, John Hunter
- Sunday 26, 8:00 am Markets in the mall Details: contact Patrick Laher.

October

- Tuesday 5, 1:00 pm Arboretum Working Bee Details: Contact Patrick Laher.
- Tuesday 12, 5:30 pm Business Meeting Venue: Don & Maria Hitchcock's place. All Welcome.
- Tuesday 19, 7:30 pm **General meeting at Tree Group Nursery Speaker: Liisa Atherton "A native rose by any other name ...": Plant names'**
- 30-31 October **MOLE STATION WEEKEND** or SLEX - Sustainable Living EXPO Armidale

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM for Australian Plant Society (ABN 87 002 680 408)

MEMBERSHIP TYPE: please tick appropriate box	Annual Fee	Concession
Single:	\$50	\$42
Joint: (2 adults at the same address)	\$58	\$50
Concession applied for:	Limited Fixed Income	Full Time Student
PERSONAL: Joint members please complete a) and b)		
a) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other.....	b) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other.....	
Given Name (s):.....	Given Name(s):.....	
Surname:.....	Surname:.....	
Postal Address:.....		
..... Postcode:.....		
Tel: Home ()..... Work: ().....		
Fax: ()..... email:.....		
PAYMENT: Payment of \$..... is enclosed by:		
Cheque	Money Order	payable to APS Armidale Branch

Please return this completed form with your payment to :
 Membership Officer APS Armidale Branch PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

I do NOT wish my contact details to be made available to other members. Signature



**If not able to be delivered return to
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