



Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang

South East NSW Group

Newsletter 206

April 2024

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For your diary:

Next meeting, May 4th,

742 Little Bombay Road,
Bombay. Gerard Nicol's Property.
Seeking out purple *Banksia
spinulosa*.

Future meetings

June 1st Speaker ERBG

Native Plants Images in Art.
Di Clark will present a talk
highlighting interesting facts about
plant images and their creators.

July 6th

**Wallaga Lake Bermagui
Cemetery. This visit to be
confirmed.**

August 3rd TBC

August 31st

**Garden visit John Elton
Coolangatta and Shoalhaven
Native Botanic Garden**

Hello everyone,

Another month of crazy weather and it looks like we are heading back into wet wet wet again. My advice is use it while it's here; an opportunity to plant out and get established before it dries out again. Also, a time to reflect on the importance of growing a wide variety of plants from a range of populations. With such wild shifts in conditions, we are all bound to lose plants, but diversity is the key to resilience and accepting change provides us with unique opportunities to try different things in our gardens.

On a brighter note, it looks like there will be plenty of plants to fill any holes in the garden created by a wet winter, with a good turnout for the propagation workshop at the April meeting. A big thanks to John for being so generous with material from his garden, there was some real treasures on offer.



**One of the beautiful
plant specimens
provided– *Grevillea
pimeloides* (WA)**

As many of you will be aware, John is passionate about trying to get us all to grow plants that have proven reliable over many years and may have fallen out of favour, are new to gardens and/or are rare and endangered. We are all eagerly waiting to see now how successful we were, but I'm sure after John's guidance there will be plenty of success. And remember, just because you didn't make it to the prop day doesn't mean you can't have a go on your own.

If anyone has any questions about propagating, especially those of you that weren't able to make it this month, please don't hesitate to send me an email, I'm only too happy to help.

Next month should be a great meeting, and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Dylan

Next Meeting: Saturday 4th May 2024,

742 Little Bombay Rd, Bombay NSW

Meet at the carpark north side of Batemans Bay Bridge at 8:30am for 9:00 am departure for carpooling. This will allow for a brief stop in Braidwood if required. Contact Di 0402 555 330 if any problems.

Gerard advises that google maps are accurate and easy to follow to the property, but reception is patchy so make sure you have maps loaded before leaving Braidwood. We plan to be there from 10am for a morning tea. Bring your own seat, food etc.

Next meeting we will be visiting the property of Gerard Nicol at Bombay. Like us, Gerard is passionate about native plants and has been developing native gardens on his property as well as learning about the plants that occur naturally on his block. His keen eye led him to finding a purple flowered *Banksia spinulosa* that has since been given the cultivar name Palerang Purple.

Staff from the Indigrow nursery in Sydney have been involved with the propagation of this plant, and the story was covered by the ABC.



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-14/purple-banksia-spinulosa-native-plant-discovered-braidwood-nsw/102951088>

Banksia spinulosa is hugely variable, not only in size and form but also in flower colour and flowering habit. Some of the smallest forms, such as *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles' stay under half a meter, whilst some of the largest forms grow to around three meters (although plants have been recorded up to 6m).

Flowers can be held tightly amongst the foliage, or proffered free of the foliage, the latter making some of the finer garden specimens. They occur in a range of colours, and colour combinations, with style colour ranging from pale yellow, bright golden yellow, orange and red through to purple and black.

Widely regarded as a species complex, *B. spinulosa* currently has 3 recognised varieties and two that have recently been elevated to separate species status, although more work is needed to clear the muddy waters and reach a widely accepted consensus.

From the APS website:

- *Banksia* var. *spinulosa* – small shrub to 1.5 metres with a lignotuber; leaves generally narrow, linear with recurved margins. Found in several disjunct populations between southern New South Wales and North Queensland.
- *Banksia* var. *collina* – small shrub to 1.5 metres with a lignotuber; similar to var. *spinulosa* but with broader and serrated leaves. Found from the central coast of New South Wales to southern Queensland.
- *Banksia* var. *cunninghamii* – large shrub without a lignotuber; leaves flat with serrated or entire margins. Found in several disjunct populations along the Great Dividing Range from southern Queensland to eastern Victoria. Recognised as a distinct species (*B. cunninghamii*) in New South Wales.

Two recently described species that were previously regarded as forms of *B. spinulosa* are:

- *Banksia neoanglica* – medium to large shrub, similar to *B. spinulosa* var. *cunninghamii* but having a lignotuber. Occurs in the New England plateau in New South Wales though to south-east Queensland.

- *Banksia vincentia* – semi-prostrate shrub with a lignotuber known only from 14 individual plants in the Jervis Bay area of New South Wales.

Some intergrading between *Banksia* var. *spinulosa* and *Banksia* var. *collina* occurs where the ranges overlap and natural hybrids between *B.spinulosa* var. *spinulosa* and *B.ericifolia* subsp. *ericifolia* have been recorded in New South Wales.



Yellow buds forming this year (2024)

It is unknown whether Palerang purple will hold its deep purple colour between flowerings, or if it was perhaps a one-off flowering. As you can see in the photo sent by Gerard, the flowers forming this year are starting off a deep golden yellow with only a hint of purple. It will be interesting to see when we are there how the colour has developed.

The property itself sits near the base of Mt. Palerang, near the Tallaganda and Burrin Burrin conservation areas, and is further surrounded by Misery Mountain, Mt. Major, Gourcock and Lowden summits, and further to the south Tallaganda National Park and State Forest. It will be interesting to see what else is growing on-site and find out what Gerard's vision for the property is.

We will also include a show and tell session on this day.

PROTEACEAE REPORT April 2024

The rain has continued and we have not yet had to implement our watering roster. At our last working bee we spent time cleaning up sticks and small branches that had blown down and removing the most obvious weeds. We also managed to plant 15 plants, taking advantage of the moisture in the ground and the warmth in the sun. We concentrated on the playground end of the garden to make the planting more impactful. Thanks to those people who keep having a look at the garden. Please let us know if you see anything that needs attention. Our aim for this year is to keep planting, organise signage and continue with documenting and labelling.



Thanks also to those hardy workers seen in this photo.

Di Clark

Last Meeting – April 6th

Propagation Day at the ERBG

Photos by Dylan Morrissey

Despite the bleak morning, a few brave souls faced the elements and met at the ERBG for the propagating workshop. Like last year, it was a comfortable amount of people to have in the nursery and John Knight brought along a large selection of goodies – many rare, unusual, endangered or hard to find in cultivation. John ran us through a thorough demonstration for each species, and covered all the basics for successful plant propagation.

The following is a summary of John's notes from last year, with some additional tips and tricks thrown in at the end.

Select the cuttings before the heat of the day, preferably before the sun hits the plant. Cuttings should be placed in plastic bags, lightly sprayed with water and kept cool until needed. Any soft tips should be removed to prevent wilting. Once a cutting loses turgidity, it is difficult for that piece to recover, and the cutting will likely fail. The cutting material should be bent from the tip back around past 90 degrees. Suitable material will spring back to its original shape. If the cuttings remain bent or snap they are too mature/immature.

Preparation of the cuttings requires clean and sharp tools. The paper test was demonstrated by John, and only tools which provided a clean cut, without ragged edges, were considered sharp enough. Secateurs or blades should be dipped in methylated spirits regularly to ensure disease pathogens were not transferred to other cuttings.



Example of Grevillea cutting before preparation and after.

Selecting a suitable hormone is a matter of personal choice. Cuttings will produce roots without the addition of hormones, but as has been shown over many years, adding root promoting hormones improves the root mass, and usually produces roots more quickly, which can be an advantage. At ERBG, 3 grades of Clonex Gel containing Indole Butyric Acid (IBA) are used. Clonex Green, containing IBA at 1500ppm (parts per million) is used for softer material such as herbaceous shrubs. Clonex Purple (3000 ppm) is used for the majority of woody shrubs. Clonex Red (8000 ppm) is used on harder wooded plants, and also trialled for difficult to root species. Prepared cuttings are dipped into the gel and inserted directly into the propagation media, or coir plugs. Esi-Root is another hormone used. This is added to water and the prepared cuttings are either dipped in the liquid for at least 15 seconds at the higher (dipping) dilution, which is 5ml in 200ml of water, or soaked in a more dilute solution, 2.5ml in 1 litre of water for at least 15 minutes, and up to 24 hours. The mix can then be bottled and used over the next few days to spray the cuttings. Esi-Root contains IBA 1600 ppm, and NAA (Naphthylacetic Acid) also 1600 ppm.

There is as many recipes for striking cuttings as there is pots to hold the mix. A tried and true propagation mix comprising 3 parts sharp sand to 1 part peat moss, has been a standard for many years. However finding clean, quality sharp sand is not easy, and anyway it is very heavy. In recent times many new recipes have been trialled, using lighter materials such as perlite as the main ingredient. It is important that the perlite is not heavily firmed, as the material is easily crushed, turning the mix into a soggy mass. Also be aware that the perlite is quite dusty, and should be dampened before use. Wearing a mask is also advisable when handling, as the dust can prove harmful to lungs.



John explaining all about propagation.

Propagation mixes need an air-filled porosity (AFP) of at least 20% - 25%. This can be readily measured with a simple home test, giving a reasonably accurate measurement. ➤ For convenience, use a clean 1 litre plastic lidded container, such as that which you buy fruit like peach slices. In the lid, drill 4 equally spaced 8 – 10mm holes, the purpose of which will become obvious later. ➤ Fill the container with propagation mix, firmly tamping the container on a table, but not forcing the mix tight by pushing fingers into the mix. Continue adding more mix, and tamping, until the container is filled. ➤ Do not yet screw on the lid. Place a piece of gauze over the open end, held tight with a rubber band to prevent any

mix from floating out, and plunge the container into a bucket of water, ensuring water covers the top of the container to a depth of at least 50mm. Leave this in the bucket for around 10 minutes or more to ensure the mix is saturated. ➤ Remove the container from the bucket, remove the gauze and screw on the lid. ➤ Now you need a shallow tray, and 2 x 100mm long pieces of dowel or similar material about 12-15mm in diameter. With two fingers of each hand covering the holes in the lid, carefully invert the container and rest on the dowels. Remove your fingers, and allow the container to drain into the tray for around 30 minutes. Assuming the container was fully 100% saturated, water must have filled all the spaces within the mix. By measuring the volume of water which has now drained from the saturated mix, this tells you the amount of air now in the drained mix, having replaced the water which now resides in your tray. If the water volume measures more than 200ml, (1 litre = 1000ml) the AFP is more than 20%, and therefore suitably drained for propagation purposes.

Some FAQ

I don't have a glasshouse, can I still have success with cuttings? The simple answer is yes, with both John and Dylan describing the use of Plastic lidded tubs with sand or perlite in the bottom as a cheap and easy way to house cuttings and keep high humidity. Both have had success using this method, with the added bonus of being able to go away and leave cuttings unchecked for weeks at a time. Other suggestions included a polystyrene fruit box with a clear lid cut to fit, and a layer of sand on the base about 25mm deep to hold water for humidity, with the cutting pots just nestled to the sand but above the water reservoir.

Do I need a heated bed for cuttings? Whilst heat might be desirable in a commercial nursery where many plants are continually propagated, at home this is not necessary. However, during the cooler months, cuttings can be encouraged to root quicker with some help from a heated base.

Tip of the day!

John showed how short side shoots can still be used to propagate-an especially successful method for Grevilleas.

Firstly, remove the leaf below the growth. Then quickly pull the sideshoot downwards peeling away part of the stem creating a long heel. Trim the heel to roughly 5mm long and prepare as normal. This is a good way to create an extra node on short material without making it too small, and many plants will callus and root well from this point.

A selection of plants propagated on the day.

Name	Common Name	Hormone	Description
Grevillea chrysophaea	Golden Grevillea	Purple Clonex	Vic. Spreading shrub to 2.5m. Dull to golden yellow flowers with a red style. Rare and threatened.
Grevillea linearifolia (Prostrate)	White Spider Flower	Purple Clonex	NSW. A prostrate form of G. linearifolia. White flowers.
Grevillea masonii	Mason's Grevillea	Purple Clonex	NE NSW. Low shrub to 0.5m. Green and red flowers. At risk due to small natural range.
Grevillea johnsonii x wilsonii	Grevillea Bon Accord	Purple Clonex	Both WA species. Upright shrub to 2m. Bright red flowers.
Grevillea leiophylla	Wallum Grevillea	Purple Clonex	QLD. 1mx1.5m. Pink flowers.
Grevillea ornithopoda	Bird's Foot Grevillea	Purple Clonex	WA. Up to 3x3m. White flowers and unusual foliage.
Grevillea granulifera		Purple Clonex	NSW. Shrub from 2-5m depending on form. Pinkish flowers. Newly discovered and rare in cultivation.
Grevillea alpina x rosmarinifolia	Grevillea Bonnie Prince Charlie	Purple Clonex	Dwarf Grevillea developed by Bywong Nursery. Grows to 1m, bright yellow and red flowers.
Grevillea Hot Lava	(G. lanigera hybrid)	Purple Clonex	Fast growing groundcover with masses of bright red flowers (well named).
Grevillea oleoides	Red Spider Flower	Purple Clonex	NSW (Sydney Basin). To 3m with red flowers.
Grevillea olivacea	The Olive Grevillea	Purple Clonex	WA. Red flowered form. Dense erect shrub from 1-4m.
Grevillea filipendula (syn. diffusa subsp. filipendula)		Purple Clonex	NSW. Dark red flowers (almost black), very attractive.
Grevillea pimeleoides		Purple Clonex	Southwest WA in Jarrah Forest. Good plant for shade. Up to 2.5m. Very bright orange and yellow flowers. Rare and near threatened.
Austromyrtus tenuifolia	Narrow Leaf Myrtle	Green Clonex	Sydney. Similar to A. dulcis. Also edible. Likes moist soils.
Guichenotia ledifolia		Green Clonex	WA. A favourite food of Quokka. Grows to 2m and has attractive mauve flowers.
Dampiera Cobalt (linearis)		Green Clonex	WA. Groundcover 30-40cms. Vibrant blue flowers as the name suggests. Easy from cuttings.
Zieria citriodora (Nimatabel)	Lemon-scented Zieria	Green Clonex	Vic/NSW. Small rounded shrub 20-30cms. Attractive scent and small white flowers.
Boronia megastigma	Brown Boronia	Green Clonex	WA. 1-2m. Yellow and brown flowers. Very strong and beautiful scent, although anecdotally not detectable to all.
Boronia Show off	B. pinnata x muelleri	Green Clonex	Small upright shrub with massive of pink flowers.
Brachyscome Fresco Purple		none needed	Bright purple flowers.
Sannantha pluriflora	Tall Baeckea	Green Clonex	NSW. 2-4m. Very tough once established. Masses of white flowers in spring.
Callistemon forresterae	Forrester's Bottlebrush	Green Clonex	Vic. Threatened. Bright red bottle brush flowers on 2-3m shrub.
Leptospermum Seclusion		Green Clonex	Bright pink flowers on shrub 2-4m. Attractive blueish foliage.
Leptospermum Outrageous		Green Clonex	Low spreading shrub to 1.5m. Red flowers that fade to pink.
Isopogon Pink Sparkler	Isopogon formosus	Green Clonex	A small, hardy shrub growing 75cm x 1m. Intricate grey foliage with a profuse display of mauve pink flowers
Correa reflexa	Native Fuschia	Green Clonex	
Commersonia dasyphylla	Kerrawang	Green Clonex	Attractive, tough shrub 1-4m with white flowers.
Leptospermum unknown		Green Clonex	

There was no formal show and tell on the day as so many plants were looked at as propagation selections. I thought I would show a couple of plants that are found in my garden at the moment. One of my favourites is a form of *Pimelea linifolia* that comes from the ERBG. It was originally collected from Mullimburra Point, a coastal area north of Bingie. The plant has retained its low mounding form in cultivation, and is much more compact than other *Pimelea linifolia*, but I do help it along with a bit of deadheading after flowering.



Pimelea linifolia close up of a flower head and the plant growing in the garden.



The other plant is *Pectinopitys ladei*. Otherwise known as *Prumnopitys ladei* or *Podocarpus ladei*. I purchased this QLD conifer (family Podocarpaceae) from a market stall in Bermagui.

It is a slow growing plant with bright green leaves and grows naturally on Mt Spurgeon, Atherton Tablelands, Qld. There are male and female plants with either small pollen cones or a fleshy blue seed.

The plants can be grown from seed or cuttings, but I will need to wait a few years before I know if mine is male or female. The plants make good pot specimens or even may be used as an indoor plant.

Specimen of *Pectinopitys ladei* growing in an 8inch pot.

In my Garden

We have taken the opportunity to use this space to continue on with the discussion of pests harming *Macrozamia communis* raised in the last newsletter.

Macrozamia communis - Part Two

Photos supplied by Lesley Vincent

“If your plants have been munched, crunched, chomped, rasped or ripped, the most important thing to do is make sure you have correctly identified the culprit. Knowing what you’re up against is essential to know what you need to do to treat the problem.”

These lines are a quote from the Sustainable Gardening Australia website and are relevant to our vegetables and our native gardens.



Last newsletter (March 2024), we read about how Lesley Vincent’s macrozamia plants were being damaged and that the suspected culprit may have been the Cycad Moth. In this case Lesley decided to investigate further and found that the description of the larvae of the cycad moth did not match the larvae that she found in the middle of her cycads and also the type of damage taking place was not the same. Lesley’s plants were being eaten from within.

Larvae and damage in frond base.



After much research Lesley has confirmed that the beetle found on her plants is called *Siratón internatus* (trunk-boring cycad weevil) which burrow into the trunk where the larvae chew through the base of the frond and the caudex from the inside.

Cycad Beetle



In a scientific article (Hsiao & Oberprieler, 2020) Lesley read that some cycad pests are of only minor concern in their native regions and can be naturally maintained there in low densities. Likewise, with the Australian trunk-boring cycad weevils which generally do not kill healthy cycads and only build up population numbers in stands of sick or dying plants such as those affected by drought, bushfires and other stresses. Lesley suspects that this may be the case with her macrozamia.

On advice, Lesley has treated all her macrozamia within the cultivated garden with a solution of **Yates Success Ultra** which can control the larvae

but not the beetles. (This product can also be used to treat the larvae of the Cycad Moth). Hopefully this will help bring the garden back into balance.

Other activities in the shire and beyond.

It's Fungi Festival time. It is proving to be a fabulous season for fungi viewing, so this years festival will be full of specimens to discover and learn about. To see what wonderful activities are being held over the winter months from Batemans Bay to Eden, check out the Fungi Festival Website.

www.fungifeestival.com.au



Last year I attended an information evening and listed to Alison Pouliot speak with great knowledge and enthusiasm about her travels and working life looking at fungi. The love affair was contagious so I purchased a couple of her books. I will present a book review next newsletter.

More ERBG News

The From the Forest Art show will be ending on 28th April, so you may just have time to visit the ERBG to see this wonderful collection of forest inspired art. While you are there why not listen to the Chamber Orchestra on Sunday 28th or book the kids in for a children's discovery walk. See the ERBG website for details.

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