



ACN 002 680 408

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2019

Ettrema Gorge is located within the Morton National Park, which takes in part of the southern extremity of the Sydney Basin. The dramatic scenery is caused by the Ettrema Creek deeply dissecting the plateau of Permian sediments which overlay older layers.

From Nerriga, we followed Route 92 some distance further before venturing north along a 4WD track. The walking track was to the east, and began with heathy patches intermixed with open forest. The first flower encountered was the brightly coloured yellow star bush, *Asterolasia trymalioides*, from the Rutaceae family. We also saw a number of *Grevillea* in flower including the white *G. patulifolia*, and *G. baueri*, named after the German botanical illustrator brothers, Bauer.



Asterolasia - a relative of *Boronia*, *Philothea* etc

Soon the track wound through Scribbly Gum forest, where a bevy of birdcalls gave evidence of a wide diversity of local inhabitants. Thornbills and Pardalotes flittered through the canopy, while honey eaters went about their business. A Superb Lyrebird was spotted on the drive out, and again by Frank along the walk. Species typical of Scribbly Gum forest include, of course, the dominant species *Eucalyptus sclerophylla*, as well as *E. rossii*, the inland Scribbly Gum or White Gum, *Corymbia gummifera* or Red Bloodwood. Various members of the group took the opportunity to break for a cuppa, soaking up the serenity of the forest setting.

After some time the open forest gave way to heathland. This was dominated by *Baeckea brevifolia* and *Kunzea ambigua*, unfortunately known as Poverty bush or Tick bush, both from the Myrtaceae family. There were also *Hakea teretifolia*, Dagger Hakea, and *Persoonia mollis*, Soft Persoonia. The flat sandstone which form the Ettrema Plateau can experience long periods of water logging as well as extreme dry. The soil is sandy and low in

nutrients, with patches of sandstone still evident through the thin layer of soil. There had been showers the night before, so there was some evidence of how the water may lie for a time after rain.

The path meandered over the plateau, eventually arriving at the edge of the gorge, where the group enjoyed the view, while lunching.



A glimpse of part of the southern section of Ettrema Gorge on an overcast and misty day

Here, snuggled into the ledges on the rock face were the impressive spikes of *Dracophyllum secundum*, of the Ericaceae family. Peter also spotted it growing right on the cliff edge.



Dracophyllum secundum - would be a garden favourite if available

Interestingly, in 1938 the area was first gazetted as the "Moolattoo Primitive Reserve", when 45,000 hectares were set aside for the protection of wilderness values. Two weeks later Mr Mark Morton, member for Wollondilly, who had actively worked to protect the area, died in his sleep, aged 74. Little was done to manage the area until after the hostilities of the war ended. Several strenuous attempts to gain approval to begin logging operations within the reserve were

actively fought off, resulting in the area being made into a National Park in 1961. The earlier Aboriginal name was replaced, remembering instead the man who had worked to protect the area for future generations.

There was interest among the group in returning to the Ettrema Plateau when more of the species will be in flower. It is certainly an area worth getting to know better.

(Pauline)

MORE ON ETTREMA

As Pauline mentioned above, interest was expressed in going back to Ettrema quite soon. Ashlea and Greg have already done so and came back with further plant listings including some from areas some distance from our walk. Their findings serve to convince us of the diversity in the area. It can also be said that some of the plant identifications are quite difficult, often leading to a choice of two names. In fact, a few specimens will be taken to the herbarium at the Canberra Botanic Gardens so that the experts can adjudicate.

WETLANDS WORKING BEE

On Wednesday 16 October a small group of helpers got stuck into some of the maintenance tasks required in our gardens at the Wetlands. We refreshed the gravel walk in the Woodland Garden and watered in some fertilizer for the gardens around the main car park. We also transplanted some *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* which was overgrowing the pathway, so hopefully it will become a golden border to the car park in the future.

A big "thank you" goes out to Bob, Stephanie, Jen, Greg, Frank and Ray as well as to Dave, a FROGS colleague, who all assisted to achieve much in one morning.

On the second Saturday of November (9th) the mulch will need to be topped up, as well as a bit more weeding, so anyone available to assist with that task will be most welcome at the Wetlands.

OCTOBER 12 EVENT

We had our stall at the TGG Sustainability Festival as planned. Despite the weather being a bit dull with occasional drizzle, it was judged successful. Enquiries were answered and information leaflets taken by some people. All comers were impressed by the floral display and towards the end of the event, the display went to some of the admirers.

ETTREMA WALK SPECIES LIST

A question mark indicates some uncertainty regarding the correct identity of the species in question. A brief comment on each species follows most species names.

Acacia elongata - open shrub to 2m
Acacia floribunda - large shrub
Acacia hamiltoniana - slender shrub to 2m
Acacia leprosa(?) - upright wattle to 3m
Acacia maidenii - uncertain - no parent plants seen
Acacia obtusifolia - shrub to 2m -similar spread

Acacia terminalis - shrub to 1.5m
Aotus ericoides - pea plant - size: prostrate to 1.5m
Asterolasia trymalioides - the first flowers that we noticed
Astroloma pinifolius – prostrate
Baeckea brevifolia – wiry shrub short leaves – rel. to tea trees etc
Banksia ericifolia – shrub to 3m – red flower spikes
Banksia spinulosa – common shrubby Banksia
Bossiaea heterophylla - pea plant - open - to 1.5m
Bossiaea kiamensis - pea to 1.5 m - first sighting
Caladenia carnea - small orchid
Calytrix tetragona - open shrub - local occurrence
Conospermum taxifolium - upright shrub - damp areas
Corymbia gummifera – red bloodwood – also found Greenwich park
Dampiera stricta - small herb with blue flowers
Darwinia taxifolia ssp macrolaena - small red/purple flowers
Dillwynia brunioides - shrub to about 1m
Dillwynia elegans (?) - a bit away from expected occurrence
Dillwynia ramosissima - pea plant to 1m - slightly spiny
Dracophyllum secundum - cliff-dwelling epacrid
Epacris calvertiana - taller than average Epacris
Eucalyptus obstans - mallee to 4m
Eucalyptus radiata - narrow leaf peppermint - occurs Taralga
Eucalyptus rossii - local scribbly gum
Eucalyptus sclerophylla - a scribbly gum
Eucalyptus stricta - mallee similar to E. obstans
Glossodia minor - small orchid
Goodenia heterophylla - low herbaceous
Grevillea baueri - red/creamy flowers
Grevillea patulifolia - white flowers
Haemodorum sp - upright herb - bloodroot
Hakea dactyloides - open shrub to 3m
Hakea teretifolia - prickly grey-green leaves
Isopogon anethifolius - to 2m - yellow 'drumstick' flowers
Kunzea ambigua – dense shrub to 2m
Kunzea parvifolia - mauve pom-pom flowers - widespread
Leptospermum squarrosum - damp areas - flowers pink/white
Leucopogon ericoides - attractive epacrid - pink/white flowers
Leucopogon neo-anglicus
Lindsaea linearis - a fern
Melaleuca capitata - small wiry shrub - bottlebrush-type pods
Mirbelia oxylobioides - pea plant - not common locally
Olearia viscidula - sticky-looking leaves to 2m
Patersonia sp. - lily - blue/mauve flowers
Persoonia mollis ssp leptophylla - shrub to 1.5m x 1.5m
Pomax umbellata - tiny - flowers etc arranged like umbrella spikes
Pultenaea blakelyi (?)
Pultenaea daphnoides - pea plant - tall shrub
Pultenaea divaricata

CALENDAR

Sun Nov 3	Riversdale plant stall
Sat Nov 16	Walk - Penrose State Forest
Sat Dec 7	AGM + end of year function