

Banksia Bytes

Native Plants Sunshine Coast



www.npqsuncoast.org

Native Plants Queensland

Newsletter

February 2022 Number 27

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From the editor

2022 has started and those of us with gardens are working hard to keep the weeds off our precious plants, all of which are growing vigorously after all the warm weather and rain. Our bunya pine has curtailed our activities in its near vicinity but now the cones have dropped we can resume gardening there too. Bunya pines are a focus in this newsletter. Robert has written an article on *Angophora floribunda* which can be found near Maidenwell on your way to the Bunya Mts. to see the wondrous bunya pines. Joan has put the spotlight on some unusual and eye-catching plants and Spencer describes the lovely *Lomatia silaifolia*.

Wandering around our yard this morning, I was impressed how many plants were flowering - just when I thought flowers were getting scarce. I can recommend this activity as it is easy to overlook the small plants, like the dainty *Lobelia trigonocaulis* which is just loving the weather and scrambling as an understorey through a garden. Despite a tendency to be weedy,

Pseuderanthemum variable is also brightening up areas with its white flowers peeping through the foliage.

Enjoy the newsletter

Wendy



Pseuderanthemum variable



Lobelia trigonocaulis

The program for the next few months of 2022

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation, our program will be advertised as the time gets closer.



From the President

Greetings and Happy New Year for 2022, wishing you all a safe and healthy year with plenty of opportunities to appreciate the amazing native flora of the Sunshine Coast.



As a group, NPSC finds itself in a difficult position as we enter 2022. We have three office bearers resigning, so in need of at least three members to put their hands up and take on the roles of Secretary, Webmaster and Excursion Organiser - all roles come with handover training and can be a rewarding contribution to the success and ongoing viability of our group. However, we also find ourselves in the new reality of Covid 19 becoming widespread in QLD and to put it bluntly, the majority of our membership is in the high-risk group. For the next month or two state health advice is erring on the side of reducing community contact and community transmission where we can.

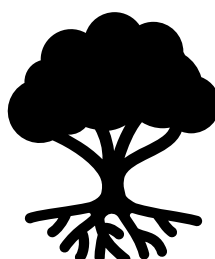
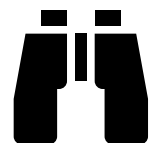
So, coming back to the difficult position, we need to engage and increase participation in our membership, and fill 3 office bearer positions. We would usually be hosting our AGM on the second Sunday of February, all the while maintaining our distance...

To address these issues, we are proposing and proceeding with the following plan. Our AGM will be postponed by a month until Sunday 13th March, with the proposed venue being the open and airy surrounds of the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens. Please make sure you book as per the invite when you receive it. We presume, given the current information, that this will put us past the peak infection period. If this situation changes, again we may need to reassess.

Secondly, “we need you” the membership to step forward in this time of need to fill the roles of Secretary, Webmaster or Excursion Organiser. As mentioned above, all roles come with handover training and can be a rewarding contribution to the success and ongoing viability of our group. Please contact us by email or call me to discuss.

If the “normalisation” / spread of Covid 19 continues as currently predicted over the next few months and we have difficulty filling the roles discussed, I may suggest we put the group on hold at the AGM. Let’s call it a temporary hibernation for 3-6 months, as we adjust to Covid 19’s presence in our community and the ever-changing guidelines from State and Federal Governments.

In the meanwhile, Nature is still our best source of health and well-being, so enjoy growing, looking at and appreciating our fantastic flora.



Less often grown? By Joan Dillon

Curcuma australasica is my favourite native ginger. It is from northern Australia but grows well here and while it will spread vegetatively, is easily controlled and a colourful contribution to the spring garden. It does like regular soil moisture. The flower bracts clustered on short stems can be a really strong pink, standing out against the large pale green leaves. It does not seem to produce viable seed, a bonus in a garden where the denizens of the rainforest and particularly our local *Alpinia caerulea* can be quite invasive, at least on the basalt colluvium.



Typhonium brownii is different with its dark purplish spathes and trifoliate foliage. I acquired the plant some years back, thought I'd lost it in the tangle of forest grasses, but discovered a remnant that I transferred to a trough in the vegetable garden, where it decided to thrive and flower. It looks as though it will spread but shouldn't be difficult to control. It's probably not often seen in gardens but is different from other plants and is native to our region.

Focus on Flora – Crinkle Bush *Lomatia silaifolia*

With Spencer Shaw



This one of the outstanding shrubs of our region that should be in every garden - ok that would get a bit boring! However outside of the botany community too few people know about this beautiful little shrub.

In appearance it resembles some of the small shrubby grevillea cultivars (and it shares the same Family of Proteaceae). It only grows to about one to one and half metres, and in the forest can be single stemmed but in the open can be bushy to about one metre wide. Its finely divided leaf gives it the other common names of Parsley Bush and Fern-leaved Lomatia. The White flowers can be carried throughout the warmer months and can be up to twenty centimetres in length - which makes for a pretty spectacular flower in our native bushland. The fruit is a dry follicle that opens to reveal numerous winged seeds, covered in a delicate yellow powder.

Lomatia silaifolia is a hardy shrub, which can survive bushfire by reshooting from the stem base and roots. They are probably looking their best in woodlands a few years after a burn as it reduces competition and they can get their chance to shine!

Found throughout East Coast Australia this stunning local native is not necessarily common, but widespread in our local open woodland communities. You might come across them in the Glasshouse Mountains National Parks, Blackall Range Great Walk, Ben Bennett and so many more bushland parks that contain woodland with an open grassy & shrubby understorey.

If you are lucky enough to get one for the garden from your local native plant nursery, just make sure you plant in a well-drained position, with plenty of sun.



Are we facing Bunyageddon? By Spencer Shaw

It's not been the biggest of stories in the media over the last year or so, what with Covid, the bumbling ineptitude of some of our senior elected representatives, scandal and celebrity gossip stories dominating the news, you may have missed it. But this is a story that has quite significant implications for the Sunshine Coast hinterland. In a few media reports you may have seen or heard about a disease called Bunya dieback afflicting the Bunya trees at the Bunya Mountains National Park (200km west of here and south of Kingaroy). The story goes that over the last few years many ancient Bunya have died and research is being undertaken to confirm the cause and hopefully reduce its impact. You may think, that it's a shame that Bunyas are dying out west, lucky it's not happening here, well...

First up, let's get a bit of context. In writing from the Blackall Range (Sunshine Coast Hinterland), I acknowledge the Bunya Country traditional owners, the Jinibara people. The Bunya belongs to this place on a scale of deep time that many of us may find hard to fathom. They have survived on this country since before the age of dinosaurs and although once widespread across Australia, they are now found in one fragmented population between here and the Bunya Mountains and an even smaller population at Mt Lewis in North Queensland. Our human relationship with these trees extends back in time for tens of thousands of years as they have been revered and provided sustenance to the Jinibara peoples and their neighbours, especially during the abundance of the Bunya Gatherings. The spiritual and cultural importance of the Bunya to First Nations peoples was defended fiercely during the early days of the British 'settlement'. In 1842, the Bunya Proclamation was issued by the Colony of New South Wales (Queensland was yet to be formed), preventing felling and settlement by Europeans in Bunya country - one of the few instances of such a proclamation by colonial authorities to recognise, if not the First Nations peoples sovereignty on their own land, but recognise a forest on that land. When Queensland was made a separate colony in 1859, the Bunya Proclamation was rescinded and well, as they say, the rest is history... Only fragments of this once great forest have survived clearing, by being tucked away in inaccessible gullies and slopes. The Bunya then goes on to become an icon for some European colonists, and they have been replanted in paddocks, gardens and more recently in revegetation, here and around Australia and the world. Images of Bunya adorn corporate and community logos around the Blackall Range (inclusive of the towns of Maleny, Montville and Mapleton) making them a unique symbol for our area, both ecologically and culturally. First nations people have maintained cultural connectivity to the Bunya throughout this time and shared this culture with the new Australians.

Let's get back to where I started and the big story that we should be interested in on the Blackall Range with regards our iconic Bunyas. The research undertaken at the Bunya Mountains National Park into the cause of Bunya dieback is that a type of Phytophthora, a water mould / oomycetes is responsible. Phytophthora lives in and is transported in soil, and through its life cycle damages the roots of trees, eventually preventing the tree from getting any nutrients or water. The initial symptoms of infection are dieback of the tree crown, followed by death of the whole tree over a few months. The species of phytophthora thought to be responsible for the bunya dieback is *Phytophthora multivora*, which has also caused dieback in the Wollemi pines in New South Wales, and the ancient Kauri in New Zealand. It appears Bunya dieback was introduced into the area by movement of soil, on shoes and/or vehicles. Interesting fact about Phytophthora I learned recently that it is not a fungi (as the name water mould may suggest) but is in-fact an algae!

On the plus side (if there is one?) from studies so far Bunya Dieback doesn't appear to be a pandemic affecting all Bunya. Bunya dieback appears to be compounded by a range of factors, including drought, feral animal damage (e.g. pigs), soil health disturbance, and last but not least, temperature rises ... climate change. Long wet seasons may be ideal for the spread and infection of this disease and damage to occur. If followed by periods of drought, trees that are damaged may then die.

There are an increasing number of records of Bunyas dying on the Blackall Range over the last few years. It does appear our Bunya are also under threat ... are we too facing Bunyageddon?.

Well, without wanting to create a major panic (apart from the invention of the word Bunyageddon!) how can we, who are the current stewards of this country, ensure that these magnificent trees whose origin goes back 100's of millions of years, survive into the future.

Here at Brush Turkey Enterprises and Forest Heart ecoNursery, we've been proactive in contacting National Parks at the Bunya Mountains to find out more about this disease and its implications both there and here and have supplied

Bunya seedlings to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for their research into the cause of Bunya dieback ... I hope they look after them...

So, what's the first step in tackling this issue. Well to start off with, we want to raise awareness that Bunya dieback has arrived on the Blackall Range and gather records of Bunya tree deaths, that we can use to help track the spread of this disease, keep an eye out for a community science solution that were aiming to set up in early 2022.

Demonstrating the resilience of First Nations Cultures connection to the Bunya, February 5th sees the start of the BONYI LIVING CULTURE EXHIBITION at Munnimbah-Dja "Welcome Place", 20 Coral Street (and Forest Heart Nsy). This amazing exhibition will be running for 6 weeks, with a range of events. Check out the website www.munnimbahdja.com for more info.

Through our production nursery we are also helping with preservation of the Bunya by growing 1000's in tubestock and larger sized plants to help get more young Bunyas back onto this country through planting. Together, let us hope that we all, as the current stewards of these amazing trees, can help them to last another 100 million years!



Some citizen science from 1958

Flowering of Bunya Pine by M.A.Cameron

From Nature Notes 20, July 1958 of the QNC and published in QNC News (1957 – 2004).

Bunya Pine, in and around the Yarraman district and as far afield as Chinchilla and Buderim, was observed in April last to be carrying light to fair crops of male amenta (cones).

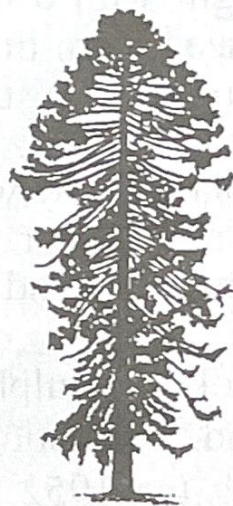
These were up to 3" in length, with a diameter approaching that of a lead pencil and they could be readily seen from the ground with the naked eye. This crop will steadily increase in size until August/September, when, at anything up to 6" or 7" in length and 2" in circumference, they will be mature and shed their pollen. Ripening appears to take place a few weeks earlier near the coast. Most of the flight (of pollen) is over in a week or 10 days under favourable weather conditions but some is always flying early and late extending the season to about 3 weeks.

In the mass, pollen grains look like sulphur. They are cold to the touch and run more freely than fine dry sand. Fantastic numbers of them are produced by healthy open grown trees. During the 1952 flowering one ounce of pollen was obtained from 11 to 12 male amenta. Working from this to the number of male amenta on the average limb, and the number of pollen bearing limbs on the tree, it was estimated that the tree in question had produced 40 lbs of pollen.

After the pollen has been shed the amenta turn brown and if in sufficient numbers, they can give the impression that the tree is dying. In a few weeks they fall from the tree and can be seen lying on the ground. This is the opportunity for anyone who wants to examine them closely.

The female cone is receptive when the pollen is flying but at this stage they are generally too small to be seen from the ground. Usually, the cones are clustered on the upper part of the tree, whereas the pollen is borne in a wide belt about the middle part of the crown.

Although fertilisation takes place in August/September, it is not until February/March, two years later (i.e. 19 months), that the seed ripens and the cone falls to the ground. It is noted here that the Hoop Pine period is 24 months.



The poetry of earth is never dead. Keats.

Editor's Bunya Pine

Our bunya is approx. 60 years old, 25m high and its girth is 2.32m. at breast height.

It regularly drops its cones on or around Australia Day. This year it dropped over 20 cones within a week. At our place, a cone that drops without breaking rolls and waddles its way down the hill and is often never found (by us anyway). The last cones to fall have mostly broken up on impact or were opening before they fell. This latter option may be due to the activities of a noisy group of at least 6 sulphur-crested white cockatoos visiting the tree each day during that week.

Searching the internet found some interesting facts about bunya:

Since the mid-1990s, the Australian company Maton has used bunya for the soundboards of its BG808CL Performer acoustic guitars. The Cole Clark company (also Australian) uses bunya for the majority of its acoustic guitar soundboards. The timber is valued by cabinet makers and woodworkers and has been used for that purpose for over a century.

A. bidwillii has unusual cryptogeal seed germination in which the seeds develop to form an underground tuber from which the aerial shoot later emerges. The actual emergence of the seed is then known to occur over several years presumably as a strategy to allow the seedlings to emerge under optimum climatic conditions or, it has been suggested, to avoid fire.



Angophora floribunda (Rough-barked Apple)

Photos and text by Robert M Price, September 2020

Anyone making a round trip of the drive from the Sunshine Coast to the Bunya Mountains will more than likely pass through the village of Maidenwell, either approaching the Bunyas from the east via Kilcoy and Yarraman or returning to the coast that way after climbing the range from Kingaroy to the north. Only 2 km. from Maidenwell is a place of interest to lovers of the Australian bush: Coomba Falls. Linda and I were there in late August after a dry period and no water was running over the falls into the large waterhole, but it was full. However, it has been known to dry out completely during droughts.



The walking track in from the carpark has recently been upgraded to easily negotiated steps connected by elevated platforms. These lead down through an impressive grove of grass trees in a rocky gully and pass close to a mature Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*).





Taking centre stage on the grassy flat beside the pool is a beautiful specimen of *Angophora floribunda* or Rough-barked Apple, recognisable by the contorted limbs and rough, fibrous bark. The first observed Angophora, *A. hispida*, was thought to resemble an apple tree, hence the common name.



This is not a tree we see growing on the coast where the rainfall is relatively high but members of the genus do occur here: *A. leiocarpa* (Smooth-barked Apple) and *A. woodsiana* (Smudgee). All Angophoras are distinguishable from Eucalypts and Corymbias in having opposite leaves, no opercula or cap on the flower bud and woody fruits with longitudinal ribs terminating in small teeth.



A distinctive feature of *Angophora floribunda* is the contrast between adult leaves which are lanceolate with a short petiole, and immature ones: ovate, sessile (i.e. having no petiole) with a cordate base clasping the stem.



You don't have to venture far from the coast, in this case about 120 km. as the crow flies, to experience quite different vegetation types. Still east of the Great Dividing Range, the area appears to lie in a rain shadow between the Conondale Range and the Bunya Mountains, and species have evolved to cope with the lower rainfall. It's well worth taking a look if you get the chance.

“Wallum” garden by Joan Dillon

This is proving to be the success I had hoped for. The prolonged wet weather has resulted in plenty of growth so that plants are filling in the spaces. It's better to underplant rather than overplant and need to remove the excess. We never know how much individual species will spread in our soil conditions but spread they will.

There aren't many flowers at this time of year but *Hibbertia aspera* never stops and the Platysace is in bud. Local *Grevillea humilis* has been a great success but the surprise has been *Dampiera stricta* 'Glasshouse Glory' which I had regarded as at its best in a hanging basket. The plant in the ground in full sun has not stopped flowering in months. Light pruning of spent flower stems has been beneficial. I should have planted more. Tall *Coronidium rupicola* produced masses of white paper daisy flowers in season was pruned hard after flowering. It now has multiple stems.

All in all, a satisfactory result.



Filling in the spaces

NPQ AGM

This is a notice of our NPQ AGM to be held on Sunday 20 March 2022 at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands 9.30 am for a 10am start.

Please note the date listed in the Activities Calendar of the December Journal was not correct.

I encourage all members to attend. The business part of the event will be brief and our host the Gold Coast branch has organised an interesting program for the morning.



BONYI: LIVING CULTURE

A FIRST NATIONS EXHIBITION FOR BUNYA SEASON

Bonyi-Bonyi (Bunya) have been a foundational part of our governance and kinship since time immemorial—connecting and interweaving our far reaching nations, languages and cultures from across the country, for millennia.

5th Feb - 27th March
Opening Event
12th Feb 2pm

The exhibition will also features an extensive public program in collaboration with Brush Turkey Enterprises, that will engage and emplace the works within the local area and community. The gallery shop will feature an exclusive range of specially curated bonyi-inspired works from Indigenous artists and our allies

ARTISTS IN GALLERY

Aunty Beverly Hand
 BJ Murphy
 Jo-Anne Driessens
 Shannon Brett
 Kieron Anderson
 Libby Harward
 Dominique Chen

ARTISTS IN SHOPFRONT

Uncle Noel Blair
 Jason Murphy
 Cholena Hughes
 Karen Shaw
 Brydie Gordon

Image courtesy of Jo-Anne Driessens Bunya Gathering 2019

Munnimbah-dja & Forest Heart
 20 Coral Street Maleny

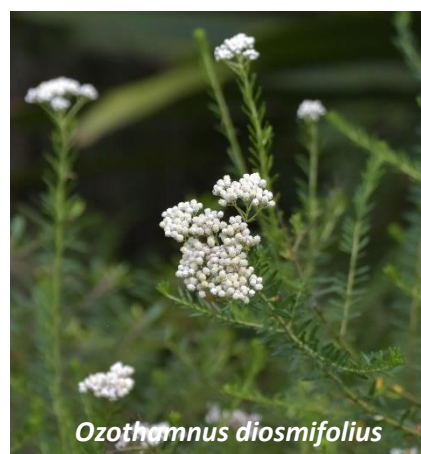


Munnimbah-dja
 welcome place

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Photos from Editor's Garden 13/2/22

Here are some of the small plants flowering in our garden at present:





Scaevola albida



Spathoglottis plicata



Zieria bifida

Here are a few of the plants that are setting seed for the next generation:



Pararistolochia praevenosa



Immature Spore of *Arachniodes aristata*



Evodiella muelleri



Syzygium wilsonii

Thanks to Joan Dillon, Spencer Shaw and Robert Price for their great contributions to this newsletter.

End of Banksia Bytes 27

