

Banksia Bytes

Native Plants Sunshine Coast



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www.npqsuncoast.org

Native Plants Queensland

Newsletter

November 2017 Number 13

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From the Editor:

I hope you are all enjoying the rain and the cool weather. Our garden has survived the long dry spell with very few losses and is looking rather lush and green again. But it is not just dry spells that put plants and animals at peril. It could be fire, flood, disease, habitat loss, or other disruptive occurrences. For some of the species a recovery plan can be devised and implemented by groups like ours. Chrissie reports on such an activity with our threatened species propagation group. John B. suggests that we could, by propagation of resistant plants, ensure the survival of some of those species thought lost to myrtle rust. And there is a Threatened Species Recovery Hub looking to record the work done by 'citizen science' in groups such as ours.



*It is not a design feature but we have a significant number of white flowers in our garden at present, including *Lomatia silaifolia*. Spencer has given us a lovely profile of *Lomatia silaifolia*. It is a very desirable plant for your garden.*

Wendy



Meeting Dates for your Diary

Sunday, December 10: 10.00 am Let's celebrate 10 years for Native Plants Sunshine Coast at The Orangery, Cairncross Cnr, Maleny. The carpark entry is in Mountain View Rd.

Cost: \$12.00 per person for coffee/tea and a range of cakes and pastries – all made on the premises and includes gluten free options.

Money to Joan Abercrombie on the day. NPSC have to pay a deposit based on the numbers attending, so RSVP to Marie by 5th December: npscevents@gmail.com or 5494 9187 or 0427 152 022.



2018

Sunday, February 11: 8.30 am at Russell Family Park, Montville. A walk led by Eric Anderson and Diana O'Connor. Eric and Diana have been leading the revitalization of this beautiful park and it is a tribute to their dedication. Enter the car park at the Information Centre. Morning tea after the walk is an option.



Sunday, March 11: 9.30 am at Deb Wagner's home, 16 Cycad Place, Mapleton. AGM, morning tea, garden explore. If you have not seen Deb's garden make this a "must do" event.



For Information about outings contact....

Chrissie	0408 792 227
Marie	0427 152 022
Anne	0417 733 991



Mapleton Plant Sale

Saturday, December 2: 8.00 am to 1.00 pm Mapleton Library Fair.

NPSC will have a plant sale. This is a very enjoyable, friendly fair with plenty of people interested in learning more about native plants. If you would like to help enthuse the locals about native plants, contact Marie npscevents@gmail.com



Opportunity Knocks

After many years contributing to our Branch as minutes Secretary and then Excursions Officer, Gretchen Evans is stepping down. We are all grateful to Gretchen for the tremendous work she has done in keeping us entertained and informed.

Who is going to fill her shoes as Excursions Officer? Let your creativity loose as you find exciting outings for NPSC.

Don't worry about handling the administrative detail as the Secretary can do that; don't worry about early 2018 as both February and March are organized and there are a number of ideas on the table.

This is your opportunity to contribute – go for it! There is no formal interview!

Let Marie know on npscevents@gmail.com if you can help in 2018.



Native Bees Update

Native Bees – a boost for the locals

Ann Ross from Hive Haven at Beerburrum has been attending NPSC events and loaning her prototype hive for our displays throughout 2017.

Hive Haven have just received a State Government Innovation Grant for \$100,000 and this money will go to the following research:

- University of Queensland to reduce the water content of native honey to stabilise its shelf life which would improve its appeal as an export product.
- Queensland University of Technology to temperature test the hives.

Congratulations to Ann and a win for our local native bee industry.



A Welcome Flower

by Wendy Johnston

On our recent stay in the west, there was one melaleuca in the house garden. It was covered in bud when we arrived and we watered and watched it to catch the first flower opening. Rain hadn't fallen for months. The garden had 2 birdbaths that attracted an amazing number of birds – friar birds, honeyeaters, crows, doves, bowerbirds and finches among others. It seemed that we weren't the only ones waiting for the first flower on that melaleuca. I was alerted to the opening (and it really was barely opening) by the birds. They spent a lot of time in



the tree that day, and many to follow – calling to mates, discussing, sipping, arguing, etc. Even the resident bowerbird spent time in the tree - I imagine checking what all the fuss was about. The tree bloomed very well and the birds' attention was followed by that of the bees and butterflies. It seemed the tree was an oasis in a landscape of dry, dusty and drooping vegetation.

The rain came 2 weeks later on October 1st and I believe the landscape is now green and clean.

Focus on Flora – Crinkle Bush *Lomatia silaifolia*

With Spencer Shaw of Brush Turkey Enterprises

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.



HAPPY 10th BIRTHDAY NPQ SUNSHINE COAST

From the archives:

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting of Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Branch of SGAP Qld Region Inc.

The Inaugural Meeting was held on Sunday, 21st October 2007 at the residence of John and Joyce Pennie, 16 Middleton Rd, Witta at 2.30 pm .

David Hockings, as a member of the Qld Regional Council, outlined the basic requirements for formation of a branch. viz. 1. A minimum of 6 interested financial members of SGAP Qld Region Inc.



Meeting at the home of Geoff Harvey, an avid collector and propagator of Hibiscus, Sept 2008



Giant Ironwood, Triunia NP, Nov. 2008

Ten years on we are still relishing the company of like-minded native gardeners and naturalists, propagating, looking for good forms, collecting seed and cuttings of rare and endangered plants, visiting interesting wild local places, exploring the relationships between flora and fauna, and encouraging others to grow and enjoy our wonderful native flora.



Mooloolah NP, Apr. 2017

Rare and endangered propagation

by Chrissie McMaster

As many members know, NPQ Sunshine Coast ran a program of propagating rare and endangered species several years ago. We focussed on local species, with the intention of re-establishing more viable populations in protected reserves. Often it is difficult to get sufficient propagation material for rare plants, but fortunately we have had support from Council officers, as well as members who have specimens of some of these rarer species on their properties. One of our early successes was to propagate *Graptophyllum reticulatum* and *Corynocarpus rupestris* from cuttings, and in addition we managed to grow a few *Triunia robusta* from seed.

Council's Environmental Officer, Marc Russell, has recently advised that these young plants have been successfully returned to the wild, in Triunia Reserve.



Graptophyllum reticulatum

Marc says:

"There was an area along a creek bank which had broadleaf paspalum, so this has been removed, then the area replanted with your plants. This was done by contractors, who were instructed to water in thoroughly and to mulch each plant. While there is some concern that the plants may have been planted in a very dry period, I will hand water them by bucket from the nearby waterhole until they are well established."



Photo: G.Leiper

Corynocarpus reticulatus

Ed: This is a great outcome.



Photo: G.Miller

Triunia robusta

Ed: **Save our Flora** now has a website

<https://saveourflora.weebly.com/>

Maria Hitchcock is looking for contributions, especially good photographs of R&E plants. She would like to develop a gallery on the website. Some of our keen photographers might like to contribute.

MYRTLE RUST

By John Birbeck

Myrtle Rust has been with us for several years now and I am sure most members have observed its disastrous effects on some groups of plants. Remember the once abundant *Rhodomyrtus psidioides*; populations are now devastated, or *Austromyrtus* 'Blushing Beauty'; almost gone, *Eugenia reinwardtiana*, *Lenwebbia* spp. and *Rhodamnia rubescens* – the list goes on and on. It appears now that there is some hope from reports of members growing or observing signs of recovery in some plants; plants hardly



affected or plants growing at times when myrtle rust is less active.

The thought has occurred to me that we as a society might utilize our combined skills in the horticulture of native plant collection, propagation and cultivation to seek out resistant populations and/or plants and commence cultivating these resistant strains. Breeding and selecting disease-resistant plants has been part of horticulture for as long as humans have been cultivating plants after all!!

Something to Consider

Members or the Society Branches could adopt a species or several species from their area and

actively seek out those more resistant plants or group of plants and propagate from these individual populations. Give native plants a hand in other words.

The mechanics of a breeding/selecting program to establish myrtle rust resistant plants can be worked out over time. Perhaps a breeding/selecting program could be discussed within the branches. I am certainly going to promote the idea in my local branch. **A thought to consider.**



From the Threatened Species Recovery Hub

Are you involved in a citizen science program working to recover threatened plants? If so we want to hear from you.

Australia has over 1200 species of threatened plants! Compared to about 500 threatened animals. However, TSR Hub researchers have found that less than 10% of Australian Citizen Science programs working on threatened species contribute to our understanding of threats and recovery of our native plants.

One of the few groups we have found doing this critical work is Threatened Plants Tasmania. They have been conducting volunteer led monitoring of threatened orchids in Tasmania since 2008.

If you know of other citizen science programmes that are working on threatened plant species recovery, we want to hear from you. Please contact Rochelle Steven - r.steven@ug.edu.au

<http://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/>

Recovery of the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat – a threatened species By Wendy Johnston

In the 1990s the northern hairy-nosed wombat numbers were down to 65 in the wild. Dogs were attacking the wombats at the only known population in Epping Forest NP (10 wombats killed in 1 week), so a fence was built (~1998) to keep the dogs out. The side-effect, of keeping the wombats in, unexpectedly solved the mystery of the sex imbalance (distinctly in favour of the males), as it is the females that explore for new territory, risking dog attack. The balance is back to 50/50 and the population is growing – currently around 250.



Twelve wombats live in an enclosed area at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge. The first were relocated there from Epping Forest NP in 2008 as part of the recovery program. This year saw the arrival of the first joey there in 5 years.



Mum and joey in a bonding moment



Wombat country, with an *Eremophila mitchelli* flowering in the foreground



Recovery of the Bridled Nail-tail Wallaby – a threatened species

by Wendy Johnston

This small wallaby (up to 700mm high and weighing less than 8kg) had been recorded in the brigalow areas in Qld up until 1937. It was subsequently thought to be extinct but in 1970 a grazier again recorded some on a property near Dingo. The area is now preserved as Taunton NP and the wallabies protected by programs to control the dogs, cats and foxes. For population security, a small group were relocated to suitable brigalow habitat at Avocet Nature Refuge near Springsure. Within that refuge is an enclosure where wallabies captured during trapping exercises and weighing less than 3kg, are held until they get up to 3kg, this being the weight that it is considered a cat won't attack them. Those of us old enough will remember the government schemes to entice people to the brigalow belt specifically to remove the brigalow and its associated 'woody weeds' in order to cultivate the fertile soils. These wallabies don't survive outside a brigalow scrub, where they can hide in the *Carissa* understory, but the brigalow ecosystem is now an endangered ecosystem.



The bridled nail-tail wallaby, sometimes called a flashjack because of his speed, is also a smart-looking fellow.



Photo: A. Ross

Trapped, checked and ready for release.
Must be trying a yoga position!



Photo: from The Conversation website

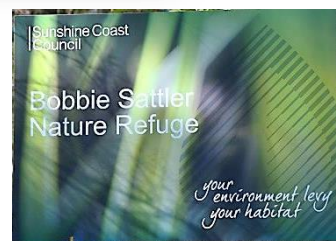
Brigalow scrub

Meetings and Outings Reports



August 2017 - Bobby Sattler Nature Refuge

In August a good gathering of NPQ Sunshine Coasters and members of the Wallum Study Group were led on a walk into Bobby Sattler Nature Refuge by Conor Jenkins. The reserve is at the back of an industrial estate in Caloundra. There were plenty of trees, lower-storey plants, sedges and ferns for us to pore over, discuss and photograph. At that time Conor discussed the fire regime. I don't think he envisaged that a week later the area would indeed be on fire. Lots of flowers were seen.



Dianella sp.



Hakea actites



Philotheca queenslandica



Hibbertia stricta



Mirbelia rubiifolia



Persoonia sp.



Billardiera scandens



Patersonia glabrata

Bobby Sattler Nature Refuge Update

Shortly after our visit in August fire burned through the National Park adjacent to the Nature Refuge. Yesterday, 3 months later, we went for a walk in the area. The nature refuge was only partly burnt but the National Park through which we walked to get there had been burnt out. Signs of recovery were everywhere.



The Hakea fruits had opened.

The landscape is revealed more clearly after fire and exposed the pitted and uneven ground – definitely not friendly for going cross-country. Water is currently lying around in the holes.



September 2017 – Natives Naturally

Natives Naturally in September was a roaring success. The Friends of the Maroochy Gardens and NPSC combined to have a Native Bees day with displays, speakers and workshops about the incredibly popular native bees. NPSC had so much interest in our brochures and so many enthusiastic people asking questions about attracting native bees to their gardens.



The car park at the Gardens overflowed, the speakers had full houses and workshops were totally booked. Requests for repeating the event have been made by a number of people as they could not find a park.

If you are interested in supporting our native pollinators you can join the Brisbane-based Pollinator link

<https://pollinatorlink.org/>

October 2017 – Witjuti Grub Nursery

After an enjoyable cup of coffee in Mapleton, we car pooled to Witjuti Grub nursery at its new location in Obi Obi. Veronica Cougan, who is an entertaining speaker, gave us a tour of the property and pointed out the various mother plants and their characteristics. It was a fascinating insight into how a commercial propagator works.

We were treated to a bush tucker drink and food and, mostly importantly, had a chance to browse the nursery. Who could resist when the plants were all bursting with vigour. It must be those 2 secret ingredients in the potting mix – Veronica was not going to share all of her trade secrets!



November 2017:

The Friends of the Gardens provided both the venue and the fantastic morning tea. Our thanks go to the Friends for their on-going support. A special thank you to Deb Ducrou and her team who consistently provide the best morning tea on the Sunshine Coast.

Hilary Pearl gave an entertaining and very clear explanation of the work she is under taking in her PhD study of the Wallum and a concise outline of what is involved in setting up specimens for an Herbarium.

The audience was from a range of groups with interest in the Wallum: Friends of the Maroochy Gardens, Coolum Coast Care, Wildlife Queensland Sunshine Coast and Coolum Community nursery as well as Wallum Study Group and NPSC members listened with rapt attention. Wide ranging conversations were buzzing over morning tea and everyone enjoyed the “cross pollination” with other groups.



NPQ Events



Saturday, December 9: NPQ Christmas Gathering at Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha.

This end-of -year gathering will be staged in the new Rare Plants section in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha. We shall have a bring-your-own morning tea at about 10.00am and a bring-to share lunch at 12 noon. There will be a talk about the rare plants in this part of the gardens and there will be guided walks. Hot water, tea, coffee, sugar, milk, a few tables and a few small marquees will be supplied. Please bring a chair. We expect to finish about 2.30pm.



Saturday, March 31st: Native Plants Queensland Autumn Gathering and Annual General Meeting – hosted by Caboolture Daytime Branch at the Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre (CREEC), 150 Rowley Road, Burpengary.

This gathering will follow the format of previous Regional Gatherings with a morning tea provided by the host branch and a bring-to-share lunch. The AGM will be followed by a guest speaker and there will be opportunities for walks in the extensive grounds and a visit to the nursery.

Ed: I found these large white balls of fungus today at the base of a large old tree trunk.



End of Banksia Bytes No. 13